

THE GOSPELS

- I. Recognize that each Gospel was written to a different audience
 - A. Matthew (Jews)
 1. Heavy emphasis on Christ's fulfillment of Messianic promises
 2. Genealogy demonstrates Christ's credentials as the Son of David
 - B. Mark (Romans)
 1. Mark's audience was likely very unfamiliar with the Old Testament
 2. The author emphasized Christ as the Son of Man - He came to do the Father's bidding
 3. The author emphasized Christ's activity (miracles) and servanthood
 - C. Luke (Greeks)
 1. Luke's recounting of eyewitnesses' experiences was directed to the Greek world
 2. Luke stressed Christ's humanity
 - D. John (Universal)
 1. John emphasized Christ's deity
 2. The gospel is centered around 7 miracles and "I Am" statements
 - E. The four different gospels provide a well-rounded though not comprehensive perspective on Christ and His earthly ministry
- II. Recognize that the Gospels are Old Testament - Dispensational Distinctions
 - A. Christ came as Israel's Messiah - a King not a suffering savior
 1. Zacharias prophesied by the Spirit - Lu. 1:67-75
 - a) Israel's expectation was obvious
 - b) Israel expected the Messiah to deliver them from their enemies - Gentile nations not the flesh, Satan, and the world system
 2. Christ preached about His kingdom - Ma. 4:17
 3. The Jews wanted to make Him King - Jo. 6:15
 4. The disciples requested to serve as rulers in His kingdom - Ma. 20:21
 5. Christ stated that His ministry was to the nation of Israel - Ma. 15:22-28
 6. Christ was accused of claiming to be King - Lu. 23:2
 7. Christ never denied that He was the King of Israel - Ma. 27:11
 8. The apostles were still anticipating Christ's earthly kingdom after His resurrection - Acts 1:6
 - a) Even as late as Christ's ascension the apostles still misunderstood God's plans
 - B. Jesus Christ was a Law observant Jew
 1. Christ was born under the Law - Gal. 4:4-5
 2. Christ came to fulfill the Law, not destroy it - Mt. 5:17-18
 - a) The accusations that Christ violated the Law of Moses were inaccurate
 - (1) Christ fulfilled the Law - Ro. 10:4
 - (2) Even the breaking of one point of the Law made one guilty of all - Ja. 2:10
 - (3) Christ disregarded the commandments of men that were added to and given equal authority with the Law of Moses
 - (a) *"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* - Mt. 15:9

- (b) *“...Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?...[then Jesus said] For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.” - Mk. 7:5, 8-9*

- b) Christ fulfilled the Law of Moses and brought grace as a way of life for the believer

- (1) *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” - Jo. 1:17*
(a) This passage does not teach a works based salvation
(b) John is referring to a way of life before God
(2) The Law was never a means of salvation it's purpose was to convincingly demonstrate to mankind that we are incapable of living up to God's standard
(a) *“...for by the law is the knowledge of sin” - Ro. 3:24*
(b) *“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” - Ro. 7:9*
(c) *“...But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” - Ro. 7:13*

C. How was one saved during Christ's Earthly Ministry?

1. Nathaniel believed that Jesus was the Son of God - Jo. 1:49
2. Jesus told Nicodemus that if anyone does not believe on the Son of God they are condemned - Jo. 3:18
3. The disciples believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God - Jo. 6:68-69; Lu. 9:20
4. Jesus asked the blind man if he believed that He was the Son of God - Jo. 9:35
5. Martha believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God - Jo. 11:27
6. Jesus foretold His death, burial, and resurrection
 - a) Peter rejected Christ's prediction about His death and resurrection - Mt. 16:21-23
 - b) The disciples were upset by Jesus prediction - Mt. 17:22-23
 - c) Christ reminds the disciples of his prediction - Mt. 20:17-19
7. Jesus stated that the disciples (except for Judas Iscariot) were saved despite the fact they did not believe or understand that He was to die and rise again - Jo. 13:5-11
8. The disciples finally believed Jesus' predictions about His death, burial, and resurrection when they arrived at the empty tomb - Jo. 20:3-10
9. Paul states that the gospel for salvation during the church age is Christ's death for sins, burial, and resurrection - 1 Cor. 15:1-4
 - a) Either the disciples were not saved during Christ's earthly ministry or there was a different object of faith for salvation during the Gospels

III. Warning: Do not read the Church into the Gospels

- A. Christ Introduced brand new concepts to the disciples in the Upper Room to prepare them for the Church

1. Christ gave a new kind of commandment than the one previously given to Israel - Jo. 13:34
2. The Comforter will be given (future) - Jo. 14:16
3. In that day (future) Christ will be in the believer and the believer in Christ - Jo. 14:20

4. Christ stated that the disciples would no longer be servants but friends (future) - Jo. 15:15
5. The Holy Spirit would convince the world of sin (future) - Jo. 16:8
6. The Holy Spirit would guide believers into all truth (future) - Jo. 16:13
7. The Holy Spirit would glorify Christ when He departed - Jo. 16:18
8. Christ introduced a new way of asking ("in my name") - Jo. 16:24
 - a) Christ's teachings in the Upper Room served as the basis for something completely different from how God had been dealing with the nation of Israel
 - b) Christ's Upper Room teachings are expounded on in the New Testament epistles
- B. The Church was a New Testament Mystery
 1. The revelation that Gentiles and Jews would be made into one new thing together by faith in Christ was a mystery
 - a) *Mysterion* - "In the NT it denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit." - Vine's
 - b) A mystery is something that has been previously hidden -
 - (1) *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."* - Eph. 3:9
 - (2) *"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints."* - Col. 1:26
 - c) The Church's relationship to Christ was a mystery - Eph. 5:32
 2. Paul was arrested because he spoke the mystery concerning the Christ - Col. 4:3
 - a) Why was Paul in jail?
 - b) Paul's teaching about salvation in Christ results in Jew and Gentiles being one in Christ - Acts 21:28
 3. Even as late as 5-6 years after Christ's death, Peter still had difficulty accepting God's plans including Gentiles in the Body of Christ - Acts 10:28

IV. Recognize the Nature of the Hypostatic Union

- A. Hypostatic union - Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, added a complete human nature, comprised of a body, soul, and spirit, to His divine person (100% God and 100% man)
 1. Jesus did not use his divine nature as a cheat code
 - a) Temptation in the wilderness - experienced Satan's attacks as a perfect man by relying upon the Father's promises and the Spirit's enablement - Ma. 4:1-11
 - (1) The Spirit drove him into the wilderness - Mk. 1:12
 - (2) His fasting left Him hungry - Ma. 4:2
 - (3) Three times Christ relied upon the words of God - Ma. 4:4, 7, 10
 - (4) Angels ministered to Him - Ma. 4:11
 - b) Samaritan woman - Christ was exhausted along with his disciples as a result of their hike through Samaria
 - c) The Cross - experienced the suffering of the cross as a man without divine help
 - (1) Christ was whipped - Ma. 27:26

- (2) Christ suffered spiritually as a man - “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” - Ma. 27:46
 - (3) Christ continually relied upon God (the One Who Judges Righteously) - 1 Pe. 2:23
- d) Christ experienced the full gamut of temptations of the human experience (apart from the sin nature) - Heb. 4:15
 - (1) Because He shares in our humanity only He is qualified to uniquely represent men before God the Father
 - (2) Although we are tempted, the believer in Christ has been freed from the power of the sin nature
- 2. At any one time, Christ was either operating in one or the other of His two natures, divine or human - there was not some meshing of the two to create a spiritual superman
 - a) Human nature and the Divine nature - Luke 2:42-2:52
 - b) Divine nature
 - (1) Understanding the thoughts of men - Ma. 9:4
 - (2) Miracles - Jo. 5:2-9
 - (3) Transfiguration - Ma. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lu. 9:28-36