

The Gospels

Historical writings indicate the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke including the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John were considered one book, referred to as The Gospels.

This presentation generally uses Luke's account as the first reading followed by John, Matthew and Mark. Therefore, no attempt was made to arrange them in chronological order. Since there are multiple readings these studies may be somewhat longer than other studies.

Studies from the Gospels [Luke, John, Matthew and Mark]

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Birth of John and Jesus

Setting: Rome ruled most of the world yet the Greek language was spoken as the primary language. People freely traveled all over the empire. There was one nation, one language and freedom of travel over most of the known world. So, at just the right time God sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice.

Text: Luke 1-2; John 1:1-18 and Matthew 1:1 - 2:23

Key Point: The Word was God and by action of the Holy Spirit the anointed one of the Lord, the Messiah, the Christ, became flesh by being born of Mary. All, even the Gentiles, who obey his word, He gives the right to become children of God.

Word Study:

Luke 2:25 – Consolation of Israel - a name for the Messiah in common use among the Jews,

Luke 2:11 – Lord's Christ - anointed one of Lord or God.

Early Life of Jesus

Setting: At about 30 years of age in the deserted region of Judea, John began preaching repentance preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus came to John to be baptized.

Text: Luke 3-4:13; John 1:19-1:51; Matthew 3:1 - 4:25; Mark 1:1-20

Key Point: God spoke from above, the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus, John testified and the Devil

acknowledged that Jesus was God who had come in the flesh.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

Setting: Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness and then to a deserted place to be tempted by the Devil.

Text: John 2:1-4:42

Key Point: No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Then Jesus came to John to be baptized and fulfill all righteousness.

Early Galilean Ministry

Setting: John had acknowledged that Jesus was the Lamb of God, Jesus was baptized by John at which time God stated that Jesus was His Son, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in bodily form and the Devil acknowledged that Jesus was the Son of God.

Text: Luke 4:14-6:16; John 4:43-5:47; Matthew 8:1-9:17; Mark 1:21-3:19

Key Point: Jesus was providing proof as to His identity by unheard of feats of healing. During this time, he selected men to be eyewitnesses of things He would say and do over the next few years.

Sermon on the Mount

Setting: Jesus had been acknowledged as the Son of God and the lamb that takes away man's sins, had selected twelve men to be his closest followers, had been tempted by the Devil and was being followed by large crowds after performing several miracles.

Text: Matthew 5-7 and Luke 6:17-49

Key Point: He taught the crowd unlike other religious teachers. He ended His discourse by saying whoever hears these words of mine and does them is wise. The crowd was amazed because he taught as one having authority rather than as one of their teachers.

Later Galilean Ministry

Setting: Following His discourse on the Mount He went into Capernaum, a seaport city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Text: Luke 7:4 – 8:3; Matthew 9:18 – 12:50; Mark 3:20-51

Key Point: Eyewitness proof “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor.” What more proof is needed?

Word Study:

7:32 Dirge – to lament, wail

Related References:

Unpardonable Sin [Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit] (Appendix 1)

Deny the Holy Spirit (Appendix 2)

Parables, Healings and Thousands Fed

Setting: Around the Sea of Galilee including Capernaum and Gerasenes.

Text: Luke 8:4 - 9:17; John 6:1 - 7-71; Matt. 13:1 - 14:36; Mark 4:1:6:52

Key Point(s):

Your light must shine but consider carefully how you listen for whoever has more will be given. Even the demons witness that Jesus is the “Son of the Most High God”.

Word Study:

8:31 Abyss – abode of demons, the bottomless pit. The demons do not wish to be sent to their place of punishment before their destined time. (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft)

Jesus With The Apostles

Setting: Probably in the area around Caesarea, Philippi about equally distant Capernaum, Galilee to the south and Tyre, Syria to the west.

Text: Luke 9:18 – 9:50; Matthew 15:1 – 18:35; Mark 7:1 – 9:42

Key Point: God stated “This is my Son I have chosen listen to Him.”

Judean and Perea Ministry

Setting: On the way from Capernaum through Samaria to Jerusalem where Jesus would be betrayed.

Text: Luke 9:51 – 10:42; John 7:1 – 10:21

Key Point: To inherit eternal life one must “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’.” One’s fleshly desires are to be abandoned.

BibleWay Publishing Related Study:

Body, Soul and Spirit Where Do They Go When You Die?

Word Study:

10:27 Soul – breath, breath of life, life, physical animation

Jesus Setting His Face Toward Jerusalem

Setting: Apparently in the vicinity of Jerusalem as He had visited in the home of Martha and Mary.

Text: Luke 11:1 - 13:21

Key Point: Prepare yourself and be ready for service knowing that whoever has much, much will be required.

Word Study:

11:2 Hallowed – sacred or holy, consecrate

Jesus’ Final Trip to Jerusalem

Setting: Jesus on His way to Jerusalem - some three to four days before arriving.

Text: Luke 13:22 - 17:10; John 10:22 – 11:57

Key Point: If you are not trustworthy in material things you will not be trustworthy in spiritual things. Anyone who does not give up everything he has cannot enter the Kingdom of God. One must give up fleshly desires.

Word Study:

14:2 Dropsy – the face of the patient is often very much bloated.

Jesus, Going to His Death in Jerusalem

Setting: Setting His face toward Jerusalem Jesus and His disciples are traveling on the borders between Galilee and Samaria.

Text: Luke 17:10 - 18:34; Mathew 19:1 - 20:34; Mark 10:1 - 10:45

Key Point: Life does not consist of the material and whoever lives for the material will lose his eternal life, as the Kingdom of God is within man's attitude, heart and mind.

Approaching Jericho

Setting: Jesus and His disciples were on the way to Jerusalem near Jericho.

Text: Luke 18:35 - 19:27; John 12:1 - 12:11; Mark 10:46 - 10:52

Key Point: Christ as the nobleman gives us some of his possessions. If we are faithful and work with them he gives us an increase now and a greater reward in eternity when He returns.

Jerusalem – Crucifixion Week

Setting: Approaching Bethphage and Bethany going toward Jerusalem

Text: Luke 19:28 - 20:40; John 12:12 - 12:43; Matthew 21:1 - 22:23; Mark 11:1 - 12:27

Key Point: Christ has come to establish His Kingdom, the church, people who have given themselves by trust and obedience to Him. Some people will treat His servants shamefully and do not deserve any reward. His faithful servants obey Him and take His Message to the spiritually poor to "come unto me for my feast is ready." Some of them come unprepared and will be cast out.

Friday Crucifixion Is Near

Setting: Pentecost was approaching as it was Friday the day of Preparation. Jesus taught by day in the Temple and went to the Mount of Olives at night.

Text: Luke 20:41– 22:71; Matthew 22:34 – 26:75; Mark 12:28 – 14:72

Key Point: The Chief Priest and leaders of the Jews asked Jesus "Are you then the Son of God?" Jesus answered "You are right in saying I am."

Death, Burial and Resurrection

Setting: Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin being tried in violation of their Law and their traditions. Then he was on trial before Pilate and Herod.

Text: Luke 23 – 24; John 18:28 – 22; Matthew 27 – 28; Mark 15 – 16

Key Point: The Son of Man was delivered into the hands of sinful men, Jew and Gentile. He was found innocent by Roman authority but crucified to satisfy a Jewish mob. He rose on the third day from the grave overcoming death and victory over Satan's hold over man, death. He told His followers to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations.

Unpardonable Sin

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

Blasphemy is defined as follows:

- 1 a: the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of respect or reverence toward God; b: the act of claiming the attributes of God; 2. Irreverence toward something considered sacred. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary
- ... The Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost Matt. 12:32; Mark 3:28, consists in attributing to the power of Satan those unquestionable miracles which Jesus performed by "the finger of God" and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is plainly such a state of willful, determined opposition to God and the Holy Spirit that no efforts will avail to lead to repentance. Smith's Bible Dictionary, Riverside Book and Bible House, p. 94.

Matthew 12:31-32 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. NKJV

Many people consider the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of Matthew 12 and the Sin unto Death from 1 John 5 to be the same but they appear to be different. Blasphemy is not even mentioned in 1 John and the phrase 'Unpardonable Sin' is not in Matthew.

"What is the 'Unpardonable Sin'?"

There is really no such thing. Neither the phrase nor the idea which it connotes appears in the sacred writings. The implication in it is that it is possible for one to so sin as to find it impossible to obtain forgiveness. There is no such situation. Taught repeatedly and with the greatest emphasis throughout the New Testament is the glorious fact that when (a) one genuinely repents of all wrong-doing, (b) ceases *the practice thereof* and (c) complies with the conditions applicable, pardon full and complete is by our Lord gladly and graciously bestowed. This indeed has been the divine assurance through the ages. In the long-ago Isaiah penned these comforting words, "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah 55:6, 7.) And, God promised through the new covenant, "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 9:17.) With such comforting assurances the scriptures abound.

The passage usually, but erroneously, designated as teaching the doctrine of "unpardonable sin," is 1 John 5:16, where reference is made to the "sin unto death." But, this is simply a sin which a brother will *not* confess—a fact which the larger context clearly shows. The Lord will forgive *every* sin a brother confesses (1 John 1:9); but, there is a sin which the Lord will not forgive (1 John 5:16); therefore, the sin which the Lord will not forgive is simply a sin which a brother will not confess. The context corroborates this view and the premises lead logically to this conclusion. If I witness sin on the part of an erring brother or sister and such may be brought to penitence and confession, I not only may, it is my duty, to pray for such with the assurance that the Lord will hear and answer the petition made. (James 5:16.) But, if the brother or sister persists in such rebellion it is a vain and useless exercise to pray for the forgiveness of impenitent persons, and the Lord will not hear and answer such a prayer for the brother or sister involved.

The "sin against the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 12:31, 32), is, in principle, the rejection of the revelation which the Spirit, the third person of the godhead, made, first through our Lord, and then through his representatives. It is the denial of the Spirit's message initially by direct inspiration, and then through the Book, the practical effects of which is the rejection of the deity of our Lord, the repudiation of his sacrificial death, the annulment of the atonement and the implication that a sacrifice will yet be made. Those who thus do would crucify Christ "afresh" from the allegation that he who died on the cross was an imposter and that the Suffering Saviour must yet appear and suffer. Salvation is denied those of this category, not because it is not offered to them, but because they have permanently rejected it. (Hebrews 6: 1ff; 10:25-28.) The ever-flowing waters of the Well of Life are always available to those who desire to come and to quench their thirst. How we should rejoice that "There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains." Guy N. Woods, GOSPEL ADVOCATE, July 16, 1981 p 443.

Appendix 2

Deny the Holy Spirit

Whenever a person allows the Gospel to produce obedient faith, they will do whatever Christ requires for them to become His new spiritual creation without sin. They will acknowledge Jesus as God (Lord), change from a sinful life (repent or die to sin), be buried (*baptistheís* from *baptizo* in Greek but transliterated as baptized in English meaning immersed or totally submerged) in water, receive the Holy Spirit and resurrected and added to Christ's Body by God to live a righteous or holy life. The Holy Spirit intercedes with God on one's behalf whenever he sins while the Blood of Christ continually cleanses him. Thus, anyone in Christ, the Body, the church, a Christian, who denies the existence of the Holy Spirit, blasphemes the Holy Spirit leaving no avenue open for him to seek forgiveness.

Acts 19:1-5 shows this is not so for non-Christians for twelve disciples had heard only of the baptism of John and were not even aware of the existence of the Holy Spirit. After more teaching they were baptized into Christ. Therefore, they had an avenue open to forgiveness.

Paul stated in Romans 8:26-9 the Spirit makes intercessions for Christians according to the will of God. Verse 37-9 clearly shows that nothing outside ourselves can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, 1 John 1:7 states without mentioning the Holy Spirit "But if we walk in the Light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all unrighteousness." Therefore, an avenue is always open for anyone who is willing to forsake self, put Christ first trusting in His power by acknowledging sin, changing from evil and corrupt way of life and pleading to God through prayer for the Christian and baptism for the non-Christian.

However, if denying the existence of the Holy Spirit is sinful, perhaps even blasphemy, and one refuses to repent, his condition may be best described as sin unto death as mentioned in 1 John 5:16. Christians are to desire whatever is best for fellow Christians, therefore we must help those who have denied the existence of the Holy Spirit to come to a clearer understanding while praying for them to have an open mind and heart desiring to know God's will so their denial will not lead to a sin unto death.