

He gave us Gospels

I. Introduction

A. "Lend me your eyes I can change what you see"

B. Questions

1. What do you think of when you think of "the gospel"?
2. What do you think of when you think of "the kingdom of God"?

C. Overview

1. What is a Gospel?
2. The redemptive-historical context of the Gospels
3. Theological themes in the Gospels
4. The literary context of the Gospels

II. What is a Gospel?

A. Backgrounds

1. Isaiah 40:1-11; 52:7

* The gospel refers to “good news” delivered by a herald about something that happened *there and then* that has significance for *here and now*.

* Waking up the morning after a close election to read the news

2. Graeco-Roman backgrounds: royal announcements (e.g., births, accession, etc.)

B. The gospel comes in both *oral* and *written* forms.

1. Examples of oral gospel

a. Peter: Acts 10:36-43

b. Paul: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

2. What is *the* gospel? The gospel announces how God the king has fulfilled his sovereign purpose for the world (as promised in the OT) through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of his divine Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

a. Announcement

b. God the king

c. Fulfills his sovereign purpose for the world (the “fullness of time”)

d. Promised in the OT

e. Jesus: his person, his story

f. Announced by eyewitnesses

OT → Jesus → NT

3. What is *a* Gospel? The gospel *in narrative form*

* Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

C. In order to rightly interpret and understand the Gospels, we must understand their (1) theological message, (2) redemptive-historical context, and (3) literary form

III. The redemptive-historical context of the Gospels

* The Bible tells the unfolding story of God's kingdom. Where do the Gospels fit in that unfolding story?

A. The fullness of time: Mark 1:14-15

* In Jesus and Jesus' ministry **God's sovereign plan for history** reaches its **fulfillment**. In Jesus and in Jesus' ministry the **arrow** of history reaches its **target**.

B. At the fullness of time, Jesus brings about the fulfillment of the OT scriptures. How so?

1. Jesus is the fulfillment of OT promises, patterns, and prophecies.

a. In him, all of God's promises are fulfilled: e.g., Abraham, David, kingship, temple, Israel, the nations.

b. Example: Matthew and Luke's genealogies

2. Jesus is the surprising fulfillment of the OT scriptures.

a. In him, **God's secret/hidden plan** for history is **revealed**.

b. **Matthew 11:25; 13:35**

c. **OT riddles “hidden” in plain view:** various *roles, patterns, plot lines*—*who* and *how* will they be fulfilled?

* “Casting calls”

d. **Mark 9:10:** Jesus’ person, Jesus’ story brings about the surprising fulfillment of the OT

e. As parents, we enjoy giving our children good gifts. But we especially enjoy **giving our children gifts at Christmas**. We enjoy hiding them in plain view. We enjoy watching them open them on Christmas morning.

* OT = hiding them in plain view; NT = opening them on Christmas morning

IV. Theological themes in the Gospels

A. According to Jonathan Pennington, the central theme of the Gospels is the *life* of a particular person (*bios*, life, “biography”), Jesus, and to the *way of life* that he founded.

B. In focusing on the life of Jesus, the Gospels address the question, “Who then is this?” (Mark 4:41).

1. Jesus’ actions provoke questions about his **identity** (Mark 2:7; 4:41; 6:2).

2. Jesus is *the Son of God* who shares the *divine name, divine authority, and divine worship* with his Father.

a. Mark 1:1-11: YHWH returns to Zion in the person of the Son of God

b. Matt 11:25-27; 28:18-19: divine name, divine authority

c. John 5:18; 5:23: not a blasphemous competitor but one who deserves to be honored with his Father

3. Jesus is the Son of God who came to fulfill the role of *Servant(s)*.

a. Isaiah's Servant: Mark 1:11b; Matt 11:28-30; 12:17ff

b. Other servants: Prophet Greater than Moses and Elijah; son of David; etc.

4. Jesus is the Son of God who came to fulfill the role of Servant *on a path of suffering and glory.*

a. Jesus was destined for glory

i. Daniel's Son of Man; David's "Lord" (Ps 110)

ii. Jesus was anointed to anoint: Mark 1:8

b. How would he enter this glory?

i. The great (but *necessary*) surprise: Mark 8:31; 9:31; 12:10

ii. John 1:29; 3:16

iii. Mark 10:45

B. In focusing on the life of Jesus, the Gospels not only tell us *who* he is; they also tell us *what* he came to do.

* *How* does Jesus bring about the surprising fulfillment of God's sovereign purpose for history?

1. His incarnation and birth

2. Public ministry: preaching/teaching (**Matt 5-7**), miracles (**Mark 1:44**)

3. Crucifixion, death, burial (1/4-1/3 of the Gospels: "**passion narratives with extended introductions,**" Martin Kähler)

4. Resurrection, ascension, and enthronement at the Father's right hand

C. The Gospels also focus on the way of life that Jesus founded, i.e., discipleship.

1. Jesus came to (re)*build* the church/*assembly*: Matt 16:18

a. Jeremiah 1:10

b. Jesus' person and work not only lay **the foundation of the church's *existence*** (Mark 12:10); they also lay the **foundation of the church's *moral life*** (Matt 7:24-25)

2. The path of discipleship is well-summarized in Mark 1:15: “repent and believe in the gospel”

a. **Believe**: John 14:1; 20:31 – the Gospels are *about* Jesus

b. **Repent**

i. Jesus calls us to **deny ourselves**: Matt 16:24

ii. Jesus promises us that, in following him, we will **find ourselves**: Matt 16:25

3. The path of discipleship is expounded at length in places like Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, which portrays the life of discipleship—with the suffering it entails—as *the good life*.

* “Beatitudes”

4. Jesus' yoke is *easy*, his burden is *light*: Matt 11:28-30. His service is “perfect freedom” (Mark 10:45).

V. The literary context of the Gospels

A. The Gospels are *narrative* portraits of the life of Jesus and of the way of life he came to establish.

1. Review principles for interpreting OT narrative
2. Showing vs. telling
3. Details, details, details (e.g., word repetition)
4. Setting (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount)
5. Plot
6. Character (descriptions, actions, speech)

B. Interpreting Gospel narrative: the example of Mark 12:1-12

1. The text

* A summary of Mark's Gospel in **parable form** (Jack Dean Kingsbury)

- a. How is Jesus characterized?
- b. How is Israel characterized?
- c. How are the Jewish authorities characterized?
- d. Trace the plot
- e. OT quotations and allusions (Prophets; Psalm 118)
- f. Repeated terms: "rejected" (Mark 8:31)

2. The immediate context

- a. The question: Mark 11:28
- b. Mark 12

- i. 12:1-12: the parable of the wicked tenants
 - ii. 12:13-17: paying taxes to Caesar
 - iii. 12:18-27: the resurrection of the dead
 - iv. 12:28-34: the Greatest Commandment
 - v. 12:35-37: the question about David's son
- life { way of life {

3. The broader context: Mark 1:1, 11; 15:39

Teaching Women to Teach
Assignment 1
Mark 11:12-25

1. Read Mark 11:1-12:37. What are the major incidents and themes of these chapters?
2. What are the major incidents and themes of Mark 11:12-25?
3. What words are repeated more than once in Mark 11:12-25?
4. What is the setting of Mark 11:12-25 (distinguish the three settings of 11:12-14, 11:15-19, and 11:20-25)?
5. Who are the main characters in Mark 11:12-25 and how are they characterized?
6. What Old Testament texts are cited in Mark 11:15-19? Look at the original context of these Old Testament texts. What are these texts about? Why do you think Jesus cites these Old Testament texts in Mark 11:15-19?
7. What is the relationship between the three episodes in Mark 11:12-15, 11:15-19, and 11:20-25?
8. Why do the events of 11:12-25 provoke the questions of 11:27-33? How does Mark 12:1-35 answer the questions of 11:27-33?
9. Write a one sentence summary that conveys the main point of Mark 11:12-25.