



A five-week Bible Study Guide

February 2017



"Who is Jesus?" is the most important question anyone can ask. Jesus made claims that demand our attention and require a response.

In this 5 week study, we will look at how the Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John answer this question.

This study is a follow-on to "*The Invitation*." That series started in Genesis and looked at how the Bible answered five major life questions:

Who is God?
Who is man?
What has God promised to do?
What did Jesus do?
What are we to do?

In this series, we will look at the person and work of Jesus in more detail.

To complement your study, you can listen to the sermon series, "Who is Jesus?" on the EquippedToDisciple.org website. There is a message that corresponds to each section of this study series.

May the Lord bless your study as you seek to know "Who is Jesus?" Ray Cardwell Teaching Pastor

Overview of our Study

There are five sections in this booklet:

- 1. **The Introduction of Jesus**Starting Premise & John 1-2
- 2. The Authentication of Jesus' Claims
 Luke 4-6
- 3. **The Turning Point** Matthew 10-13
- 4. The Final Week Mark 11-16
- 5. How Do We Respond?
 John 3

The Plan

Each week we will examine one of the Gospel accounts of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

- Record your observations and comments.
- Meet with another person to discuss your observations.

The Goal: That at the end of five weeks, we will gain a better understanding of who Jesus is and what He did.

Section 1: The Introduction of Jesus

Who is Jesus?

There is a lot of confusion about Jesus; some even deny Jesus ever existed. Despite the denials, millions of people have put their lives on the line for Jesus Christ, even when it led to great sacrifice and persecution.

We start this series with three major premises:

I. Absolute Truth Exists

Take a look at what Paul wrote to Timothy:
1 Timothy 2:3-6

1 11110dily 2.5 0
What is the two-fold desire of God? 1) 2)
vs 5-6 Examine this statement of absolute truth:
There is
There is one between God and men
That is
What did Jesus do?

2. The Bible is the Source Document

Since the Bible is the source document for Christianity, in our quest to answer the question, "Who is Jesus?", we will look to the text of Scripture rather than the church, denominational creeds, theologians, or other learned men.

What does Peter say about the Bible? 2 Peter 1:19-21

What does Paul say about the Bible? 2 Timothy 3:16-17

3. There were Eyewitnesses

2 Peter 1:12-18

To what event is Peter referring? (Matthew 17:1-8)

What makes eyewitness accounts so important?
(Hint: What is it about spiritual truth that makes it so hard to confirm?)

The Four Gospel Accounts

There are four accounts of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Matthew: written to Jews, references the OT Mark: written to Romans, emphasizes action Luke: written to Greeks, emphasizes facts

John: written to everyone, emphasizes message

To get a complete picture, we need to piece together all of these accounts which we will attempt to do over the next 5 lessons (similar to a detective piecing together multiple eye-witness accounts of a crime).

This week we will focus on John's account, but first, note how Luke sets up these events.

Luke 1:1-4 Introduction

Describe the approach of Luke.

What is Luke's goal?

Luke 3:1-3 The Historical Context

Name the 5 Roman rulers & 2 Jewish leaders. Why is this important?

The Bible Narratives are about Real People, Real Events, in Real Places.

The First Events

Let's walk through the first two chapters of John. Record your observations, including any questions.

John 1:19-34 Declaration of John

vs 23 prophecy of Isaiah 40:3

vs 29 Who is Jesus, and what has He come to do?

vs 30 What does John claim regarding Jesus?

John 1:35-51 The First Followers

vs 38 What is the question from Jesus?

John 2:1-11 The First Miracle

vs 9-10 What do we know about the wine?

This is not a cheap magic trick. Jesus transformed the molecular structure of the water into fine wine.

What does this demonstrate about Jesus?

The First Passover Feast

Each year, all of the males of Israel were required to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Many times, the entire family would travel to Jerusalem. (Deuteronomy 16:16)

During the ministry of Jesus, there are 4 Passover feasts mentioned, the last one being in the week Jesus was crucified. The mention of these Passovers is how scholars have concluded the earthly ministry of Jesus lasted 3 years.

John 2:13-25 Jesus in Jerusalem

- vs 15 "And He made a scourge of cords" (basically a whip). Jesus was intentional about what happens next. What did Jesus do?
- vs 16 What is the claim of Jesus?
- vs 18 What do the Jews demand from Jesus?
- vs 19-22 What will be the sign?
- vs 23-25 What does Jesus do the rest of the week? What is the response?

Summary Observations from John 1-2

John the Baptist declares Jesus is the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

What does the miracle at the wedding demonstrate about Jesus?

What does Jesus claim in the temple?

What will be the ultimate sign to validate the claims of Jesus?

What else have you learned about Jesus?

Going Deeper

Read the personal encounters of Jesus: with Nicodemus, John 3:1-21 with the Samaritan woman at the well, John 4:1-30

What must happen for a person to enter the kingdom of God?

Section 2: The Authentication of Jesus' Claims

In section 1, we ended with Jesus throwing the money changers out of the temple. John continues the narrative of that week with Jesus talking with Nicodemus in chapter 3. On the way back to Galilee, Jesus passes through Samaria and talks with the woman at the well. (John 4:1-30)

John 4:43 After two days in her city, Jesus heads back to Galilee. Initially, Jesus was well received because many had seen and heard what Jesus did in Jerusalem during the Passover Feast (vs 45).

John 4:46-54

What does Jesus do? What does it say about Jesus?

The Accounts of Luke 4-6

This week we focus on the accounts in Luke where Jesus demonstrates His authority.

Luke 4:16-30 Fulfillment of Prophecy (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Notice Jesus stops mid-sentence in reading the prophecy. What does Jesus claim?

This is the first hint that Jesus will come twice: first for salvation and second to establish the Kingdom.

vs 28-30 What is the response?

Luke 4:31-32 Teaching in Capernaum

What is the response of the people? What is different about His teaching?

Demonstrations of Authority

For each of the following accounts, summarize the event and identify the area of authority over which Jesus has control.

Luke 4:33-37 Demon Possessed Man

Authority over
Luke 4:38-41 Many Healed
Authority over
vs 43 What is Jesus compelled to do?
Luke 5:1-11 First Followers
Authority over
•
vs 10-11 The invitation of Jesus and their response

More Demonstrations of Authority

Luke 5:12-16 The Leper

Leprosy, the most dreaded, contagious, disease - scorned by all. Summarize the event:

Autho	rity over		
vs 15	What is hap	ppening?	

Luke 5:17-26 The Paralytic

vs 17 Note who is in the crowd: Summarize the event:

- vs 20 What does Jesus say?
- vs 21 What is the response of the Pharisees?
- vs 23 "Which is easier to say?"
- vs 24 What does Jesus say next?

Jesus claimed authority over _____

vs 26 What is the response of the people?

Summarize the event: vs 30 What is the accusation? vs 31-32 How does Jesus respond? Jesus came to ______ to R_____ Note: Matthew invited his friends, his workmates to meet Jesus. Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus? Luke 6:1-5 The Sabbath The Pharisees were looking for accusations to undermine the credibility of Jesus. What is the accusation here? vs 5 Jesus claims authority over the Luke 6:6-11 Man with the Withered Hand Describe the event: vs 11 What is the response of the Pharisees?

Luke 5:27-32 The (Levi) Matthew Party

(Note how Mark 3:6 describes their response.)

Luke 6:12-16 Jesus Selects 12 Disciples

Note what Mark 3:14-15 adds to the purpose of why Jesus selected these men.

So that they would be $_$	Him
And He could	them out to preach
And to have	to cast out demons

Going Deeper

The next major event in the ministry of Jesus is the Sermon on the Mount. We will not cover that teaching session in this booklet, but I recommend you read it through. It is the most famous "sermon" in the Bible.

Matthew 5-7 The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus describes what it looks like to live life according to the principles of God. He clarifies many misconceptions taught by the religious leaders.

Summary Observations from Luke 4-6

Luke has strung together a series of events that demonstrate Jesus has authority over every realm of life:

Sickness and Disease, Demons, Nature (animals), Religion, and even The Authority to Forgive Sin.

These events take place during the first year and a half of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus has healed hundreds of people and cast out multitudes of demons. News of Jesus continues to spread throughout the entire nation. Lk 4:37; Lk 5:15

The religious establishment is determined to destroy Jesus. Lk 6:11; (also Mark 3:6)

After a night of prayer, Jesus selects 12 disciples to follow Him. Lk 6:12-16; (also Mark 3:13-19)

What other observations have you made about Jesus in these accounts?

Which is Easier to Say?

Let's go back to this question Jesus asked of the Pharisees in Luke 5:23. Why are these miracles of Jesus so important?

Jesus made an <u>invisible</u> claim, to forgive sin. Anyone could make that claim. What Jesus did next proved the validity of His claim. Jesus commanded the paralyzed man to get up and walk.

The credibility of Jesus is grounded in His ability to speak truth and to exercise authority over all areas of God's creation.

Jesus provided verifiable, eye-witness evidence of His claim to forgive sin, an act that only God can perform. Jesus demonstrated He is God.

The most significant evidence is yet to come. What is it? John 2:18-22

Matthew 12:39-40

Acts 17:30-31

Through these last two weeks, we have surveyed the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. He has been presented to the nation and has validated His claims. The response has been mixed. The chart on the next page gives a more complete summary.

Recap of the Major EventsThe First 18 months of Ministry

The Presentation of Jesus	
John the Baptist, Call to Repent	Matthew 3
The Temptation by Satan	Matthew 4
First Miracle at the Wedding	John 2:1-11
First Public Events in Jerusalem	
First Passover, "My Father's House"	John 2:13-25
Nicodemus, "unless you are born again	″ John 3
Samaritan Woman at the Well	John 4
Demonstration of Authority in Galilee	
Over Disease, Nobleman's son	John 4:46-54
Fulfillment of Prophecy	Luke 4:16-30
Over Demons	Luke 4:31-37
Over Sickness	Luke 4:38-41
Over Nature (animals)	Luke 5:1-11
Over Disease, Leper	Luke 5:12-16
Over Sin	Luke 5:17-26
To Call Sinners to Repentance	Luke 5:27-32
Over Religious Tradition	Luke 5:33-39
Over the Sabbath	Luke 6:1-11
Commissioning of the Twelve	Luke 6:12-16
Presentation of Kingdom Living	
The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5-7

Section 3: The Turning Point

This week we will spend most of our time in the gospel of Matthew. Matthew is writing to Jews to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. His account is filled with Old Testament references.

The Disciples are Sent Out

Matthew 10:1-7

In the second year of His ministry, Jesus selects 12 disciples, gives them spiritual authority, and sends them out to announce to the nation of Israel, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 10:8-42

In the remainder of chapter 10, Jesus gives the 12 disciples specific instructions on where to stay and whether or not to give a blessing based upon the response they receive.

vs 16-23 He warns them this will be hard.

vs 24-36 More instructions, do not fear

vs 37-39 The high standard of discipleship (following Christ)

vs 40-42 Jesus promises great reward.

With the sending out of the 12, the entire nation is given the opportunity to learn about Jesus.

Matthew 11:2-6 John the Baptist has Doubts

John is in prison. Clearly things have not worked out as he expected. How does Jesus answer John's question?

vs 11 Jesus commends John, no one greater, except...

Jesus Addresses that Generation

After praising John the Baptist, Jesus declares a very different assessment of the generation that has witnessed all of the miracles of Jesus.

Matthew 11:16-24

vs 16-19 What is Jesus saying to that generation?

vs 20-24 Jesus has provided that generation massive evidence through miracles that He is God. What does he say to that generation?

Principle: The amount of revelation given will impact the level of accountability on the day of judgment.

Matthew 11:25-30 The Invitation of Jesus Who is invited?

What is the promise?

What is the process involved? (What does a double yoke illustrate?)

What is the result?

National Rejection of Jesus

In the first part of chapter 12, Matthew sets up the growing opposition to Jesus by the religious leaders over traditions regarding the Sabbath, including healing someone, (note vs 14).

Matthew 12:22-32 The Messianic Miracle (Isaiah 35:4-6) vs 22 What does Jesus do?

vs 23 What is the response/question? (What does this say about the miracle?)

vs 24 How do the Pharisees answer?

vs 25-29 How does Jesus challenge their accusation?

vs 30-32 Jesus declares this act of rejection by the religious leaders to be the unpardonable sin. The Pharisees have attributed the power of the Holy Spirit working through Jesus to be the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. This moment is the **Turning Point** in the earthly ministry of Jesus. The national leaders of Israel have formally rejected their Messiah.

vs 30, 33-37 There is no middle ground with Jesus!

What other observations do you see in this passage?

Give Us One More Sign

The religious leaders have just witnessed the healing of a blind and mute demon-possessed man. Then they ask Jesus for a sign!!

Matthew 12:38-42

vs 39-40 Jesus says there will be one more sign. What will it be?

Key Interpretation Point:
Notice how Jesus refers to Jonah and
the sea monster as an event that really
happened. Just as He would literally be
in the earth for 3 days.

vs 41-42 Who are the two witnesses against that generation?

What is Jesus saying to that generation?

Summarize that Generation:

What has that generation seen? What has Jesus said about that generation?

Parables of the Kingdom

After the national rejection turning point recorded in chapter 12, Jesus begins to teach in parables in public settings.

Matthew 13:1-9 The Sower

Summarize the parable:

vs 10 "Why do you speak in parables?"

This question gives us a clue that this is something new. Jesus is teaching in a different manner.

Matthew 13:10-17 Why Parables?

The key to understanding these verses is in the quote from Isaiah 6:10. Through continued rejection, the heart of that generation had become dull. Their ears did not hear, they had closed their eyes. Due to their rejection of what Jesus had revealed, that generation had lost their ability to understand additional spiritual truth. From that point on, as Jesus taught in parables, only those who chose to seek and follow Jesus would understand His teaching.

The parables in this chapter indicate the kingdom that had been promised to the nation of Israel would now be delayed into the future.

Matthew 13:18-23

Jesus explains the parable of the Sower:

Summary Observations from Matthew 10-13

Jesus delegates spiritual authority to the 12 disciples and sends them out to preach to the entire nation of Israel.

Jesus pronounces judgment on that generation, due to their rejection of the amount of revelation they had received.

The Turning Point: National Rejection. The leaders attributed the power of Jesus to demonic power.

There will be one more sign, the sign of Jonah.

From that point on, Jesus teaches in parables, and the focus of His ministry is on preparing the disciples for what lies ahead. Matthew 16:21

The Personal Invitation of Jesus still stands:

"Come unto Me... and I will give you rest..."

Matthew 11:28

What else have you learned about Jesus this week?

Section 4: The Final Week

Mark 11-16 What happened on the Cross?

Last week we saw a turning point in the earthly ministry of Jesus. The religious leaders rejected Him as the Messiah. Throughout the rest of the 2nd year and into the 3rd year, Jesus shifts His focus to preparing the disciples for what lies ahead. There are some prominent miracles, but most of His effort is on teaching His disciples and close followers. In Matthew 16, there is the first mention of the Church which would be established after Jesus completed His work on earth.

This week we are going to fast forward and pick up the narrative of Mark on the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Mark 11:1-11 Palm Sunday Entrance

Matthew 21:4-5 explains this was in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. Jesus is declaring He is their king.

Mark 11:12-19 Monday

What does Jesus do in the temple? This is the second time, John 2:13-22

Mark 11:20-13:37 Tuesday, a Day of Teaching (Matthew records more detail in Matthew 24-25) Record your observations:

Mark 14:1-11 Wednesday, a Calm Day

vs 3-9 Jesus is anointed with oil, (preparation for burial) vs 10-11 Judas arranges to betray Jesus

Mark 14:12-52 Thursday, Last Supper

vs 12-25 Jesus institutes the Lord's Table from the Passover meal. After the meal, Jesus gives His last instructions to the disciples.

(John records more detail in John 13-17.)

vs 26-31 They walk to the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus warns His disciples that they will deny Him

vs 32-42 The Prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane vs 36 What do we learn about what lies ahead? What do we learn about Jesus?

vs 43-50 Jesus is arrested, and the disciples flee. Through the night until sunrise, Jesus endures six secret trials.

Annas John 18:12-14, 19-24 Caiaphas Mark 14:53-65

Sanhedrin Mark 15:1
Pilate Mark 15:1-5
Herod Luke 23:6-12

Pilate Mark 15:6-15, condemned

These trials were the ultimate miscarriage of justice - done in secret with no substantiated evidence.

The Crucifixion

The Roman soldiers take Jesus to their barracks, the Praetorium, and physically abuse and mock Him. Then they bring Him to Golgotha to be crucified. The Jewish hours are marked from sunrise, 6 am. The 3rd hour would be about 9:00 am.

Mark 15:22-47

vs 24 fulfillment of prophecy, Ps 22:18 vs 25 Crucified the third hour, 9:00 am vs 33-34 Darkness 6th hour to 9th hour, (noon to 3:00 pm) What does Jesus cry out? What is happening?

Jesus was bearing the penalty of the sin of the world! The penalty of sin is spiritual death, eternal separation from God. As Jesus bore our sin, He was separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Gen 2:16-17; Rom 6:23; Heb 10:3-4, 10-14

vs 37 Jesus cries out and breathes His last breath.

John 19:30 tells us what He says:

It is ______ (completed, accomplished)

The penalty of sin had been paid!

vs 38 What happened? What does it mean?

(consider the OT sacrifices & Heb 10:19-22)

vs 39 What do the Roman soldiers conclude?

vs 42-47 Joseph of Arimathea obtains permission from

Pilate to bury the body of Jesus.

Jesus Arose from the Dead

Mark 16:1-8

The resurrection is the ultimate proof that Jesus is who He claimed to be. This is the final sign of Jonah (Matt 12:38-42).

All four of the Gospel accounts cover the events surrounding the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Here are the other three:

Matthew 28

Luke 23

John 20

Read through them and record your observations.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

What does Paul say happened after the resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

vs 19 What does Paul say regarding the historical accuracy of the resurrection of lesus?

The credibility of the Christian faith stands or falls on the historical reality of the resurrection.

But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31

Summary Observations from Mark 11-16

What is Jesus saying to Israel by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey? Zechariah 9:9

During the week Jesus gives two major teaching sessions: On end times, Matthew 24-25 On how to live after He leaves, John 13-17

Jesus instituted the Lord's Table as a reminder of what He has done for us.

On the cross, Jesus suffered ______ death in our place.

Jesus was raised from the dead on the 3rd day just as He said, proving He is who He claimed to be,

"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

John 1:29

What other observations have you made this week?

Summary of Sections 1-4

- Week 1: The Introduction of Jesus
 "The Lamb of God who takes away
 the sin of the world."
- Week 2: The Authentication of Jesus' Claims, Jesus demonstrates authority over every realm of the world, giving visible proof.
- Week 3: The Turning Point,
 Israel's national rejection of Christ as their
 Messiah by the religious leaders. The
 promised kingdom to Israel will be delayed.
- Week 4: The Final Week,

 Jesus experienced <u>spiritual</u> and physical
 death on the cross in our place and rose
 from the dead on the 3rd day.

The narratives of the Gospel writers, taken together, give us a balanced answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

The Remaining Questions:
How will you respond?
What will you do with this information?

This is information that demands a personal response.

Section 5: How Do We Respond?

Christianity has one major difference from all other religions of the world. Other religions are based on man trying to gain God's approval through his own effort. The definition of living a good life varies among religions, but the overall approach is the same. Individuals try their best to be good people and hope God will accept them. They live under the bondage of a religious system, never sure if they will be good enough, wondering if God will accept them.

The message of the Bible is very different. Man is separated from God due to sin, and there is nothing man alone can do to overcome sin. No amount of good works will take away our sin. God has done all the work through Jesus Christ who came and bore the penalty of sin. Based upon that completed work, God now offers us the "gift" of eternal life. But a response is required; we must choose to accept the "gift".

Let's begin by looking at the famous "Born Again" passage:

John 3:1-19

vs 3 Jesus gets to the point: `	You must be				
vs 4-8 Jesus compares/contrasts what and what?					
What does vs 8 say about spiritual birth?					

vs 14-15 Jesus uses an illustration from the Old Testament, Numbers 21:6-9 The people who were dying needed only to look to the bronze serpent to be saved from death. There was nothing they needed to "do."

One Condition

John 3:16 is one of the most famous verses in the Bible. According to this verse, what must a person do to receive eternal life?

John 3:17 What is the purpose and desire of God?

John 3:18 & 36 There are two options:

He who Believes:	He who does not Believe:
vs 18 is not	has been
vs 36 has	shall not see

What do the following verses say about eternal life?

John 1:12

John 11:25-26

Acts 16:22-31

1 John 5:10-13

According to these verses, a person either "has life" or "does not have life." There is no middle road. There is no working toward God and hoping to be good enough in the end.

The question is: Have you been "born again?" Have you been born spiritually?

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

You would think this is obvious, but it is on this point that confusion abounds. What exactly must a person do to be saved? The answers are many:

"Give your heart to God.

Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ.

Make Christ the Lord of your life.

Turn your life over to Jesus.

Invite Jesus into your heart. Repent and be baptized.

Come forward and confess Christ publicly.

Put Christ on the throne of your life.

Say the sinners prayer.

Make a personal commitment to Christ.

Make Christ your personal savior."

The Bible consistently gives one answer: **Believe**. But what does that mean?

It is one thing to "believe" George Washington is our first president, it is quite another to "believe" whether a hurricane warning is true. The hurricane warning demands a response, and so do the claims of Jesus Christ.

What Does it Mean to Believe?

To believe in Christ includes:

- Intellectual agreement—I understand and agree I am a sinner, that God is righteous. I understand Jesus bore the penalty of my sin. He is offering me the gift of eternal life.
- Personal application—This applies to me.
 I must choose to respond, to accept or reject the invitation of Christ.
- A <u>Decision</u>—I choose to entrust my eternal destiny to Christ and what He did for me on the cross.

"Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

Have you made the most important decision of your life - the decision that determines your eternal destiny?

Have you chosen to believe in Jesus Christ?

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

John 1:12

Did We Accomplish the Goal?

We set out to answer the question, "Who is Jesus?"

The Gospel accounts were written so that we might know the truth about Jesus.

"It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."

Luke 1:3-4

John stated his purpose for writing near the end of his account:

"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:30-31

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16

How will you respond?

The Bible is a love story. It is about the God of love who seeks to restore His intended relationship with all mankind—including you.

Don't Stop Here

It is normal to have more questions that need answers before you are ready to respond. We encourage you to seek out those answers.

If you are interested in continuing with a similar study, there are additional booklets available on the EquippedToDisciple.org website. We also recommend *Growing in Christ,* a 13 week study guide published by NavPress.

Seek out a person who professes a relationship with Jesus and knows the Scriptures to continue the dialogue. Also, locate a church where the pastor teaches from the Bible. There you will meet folks that can help you find the answers to your questions.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

Matthew 7:7-8

If you live close by, we welcome you to attend Arcola Bible Church. You can visit our church website, ArcolaBible.org for more information.



Arcola Bible Church

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