

The Gospels

Part 1

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[00:00:01] What I have to say this afternoon does not exclude anyone that's here.

None of us need consider ourselves to be too old to hear what is said and understand it.

And likewise, there are none of us so young that we can say, well, this is going to be too complicated for me. I had hoped to make one of these sheets out to put on the wall to aid our concentration, but having been supplied with some sheets, I found that my pens had atrophied and dried up due to lack of use.

So, I have several of these sheets which summarise what I have to say tonight.

At some time in our lives, it does cross our mind because people tackle us about it, is the Bible really reliable? [00:01:08] Is it really the Word of God?

And I become increasingly convinced that the best way to satisfy ourselves that the Bible is the Word of God is to read it and read it regularly and to see how it dovetails in so happily together. And one of the happiest studies to convince us on those lines is to read and compare the Gospels. Now, it wasn't my choice, but I was pleased to be invited to give a short series of brief talks on comparison of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

So the intention is that we have five sessions together, a basic introduction today, and then one each on the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And the next one, I believe, is scheduled for some time in January. [00:02:05] Now, the basic thought this afternoon is this.

God is consistent. God is reliable. God is exactly what he says he is.

And the more we read the Bible and compare one part with another, the more we get convinced of that. And from time to time, God has revealed himself. God has manifested himself.

He's shown through the writers of the Bible the sort of God that he is. And one of the ways in which to study these four scriptures that I've suggested for our study today is to think how it tells us about God. Now, I've suggested a verse in Ezekiel, and if you look in the left-hand column, the second bottom row, [00:03:01] I'll say there that this verse tells us about the attributes of God in government.

If you look at the schedule, you're allowed to pick it up now, Arthur.

Left-hand column, second bottom row, the attributes of God in government, G for government. When we look at a verse in Luke, we'll see the attributes of God in grace. And when we come to Revelation, we'll see the attributes of God in glory. God is the same God, whether he's acting in government, whether he's acting in grace, whether he is showing his glory. And we shouldn't be surprised if the same sort of thing is revealed when he's acting either in government, in grace, or in glory. And the proposition is that when we look at a verse like Ezekiel 1, verse 10, we are seeing, as well as God acting in government, [00:04:04] we get an indication in prophecy of the sort of Christ that God is going to bring into the world. So I've summarised that by saying Christ in prophecy. Luke 10, I've said there, that as well as showing us the attributes of God in grace, the bottom row, we see Christ in the Gospels. Philippians 2, 5-11, Christ in the epistles, and Revelation 4, verse 7, Christ in glory.

And my proposal is this, that when we look at the Bible, which comes from God, whichever writer he uses, whatever stage of Revelation that we are shown, that we are going to get the same basic threads coming through because it's the same God showing us different aspects of himself. Now, with that, I want to read Ezekiel 1, verse 10.

[00:05:05] As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side, and they four had the face of an ox on the left side. They four also had the face of an eagle.

Now, if we were having a specific study on the book of Ezekiel, we would be talking about the way God governs things on the earth. And we'd be looking not at things which tell us directly about the Lord Jesus, but we'd be learning things about God and the way that he governs. Now, with that hat on, I just want to say things which are summarised in the left-hand column. First of all, this picture of a lion, and if we are thinking of the way that God governs things on earth, [00:06:02] when we think of a lion, we are thinking of something which is strong, and we are thinking of something which shows itself in majestic power. And as we think of the lion as the king of beasts, this thought of strength, power and majesty comes through. If we think of the ox, we are thinking of the ability to go on and on, to bear the burden, to do the work, to endure, to keep on going when everyone and everything else is dropping down. And we have this picture of steadfast endurance. When we think of the man, we think of the supreme intelligence. You remember when Adam was created, it was said of him and to him, that he was the head of creation on behalf of God, and to equip him to have dominion over all creation on God's behalf, [00:07:06] he was given superior intelligence relative to all the creation upon earth.

And because of that, it is fair to attribute supreme intelligence to the picture of a man. The next one, the eagle, we think of a creature which is eminently swift, shows great rapidity of movement, perfectly at home in the presence of heavenly glory, and putting those four things together, we get a picture of God's government as that which, summarising in brackets there, the government of God can overpower, we would say overpower, it's just to get the alliteration of the word out, overpower, outlast or outweigh, outthink or outwit, outdistance or outpace anything that man can produce.

[00:08:06] Now, when we think of the book of Ezekiel, we are thinking of those attributes of God shining through all that he does. So, let us bear that in mind as a picture of the government of God. And also let us just tuck away at the back of our minds the thought that if God is eventually going to come into the world in human form as a man, we shouldn't be too surprised if God manifest in the flesh shows the same sort of features, the same sort of qualities as God has previously shown in a general way by way of government. Now, I've said from that, I've moved on to the third column, Luke 10 verse 27.

Now, the first column, Ezekiel 1 verse 10, I suppose you will find on your shelves, [00:09:01] in many of your standard textbooks. These comments on Luke 10 verse 27, I can't say that I've heard it from anywhere or anybody else, but it certainly appeals to me in this way. It also means that having said that, the next half dozen books that any of us open at random will refer to this verse in this sort of way. That's one of the things that happens in our studies. Luke 10 verse 27.

He answered and said, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. It does occur to me that we would readily agree that when the Lord Jesus was here, if there was anybody at any time that lived in line with the Ten Commandments, [00:10:02] God's law for God's earthly people, it was the Lord Jesus. He was, after all, among many other things, the perfect Jew, the perfect Israelite. And if anybody lived his life in a way that was a complete answer to that verse, it was the Lord Jesus. And, of course, we shouldn't be surprised at that. But it does seem to me that it does bear striking similarity to the things that we've said about God in government. And if we now put a different hat on and think that God is acting now in grace, in the person of Jesus, living on earth, do these things come shining through? Well, if we look at the word here, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy strength. Was there anybody that ever lived on earth showing out the majesty and the grandeur [00:11:04] of what it was to represent God on earth, like the Lord Jesus as depicted in the Gospel by Matthew? The dignity, the majestic way in which he moved about, the imperial way in which he said things and did things, shines through in a way that you never get anywhere else so pointedly in the Bible. And I would say that Matthew's Gospel, among other things, could be summed up as that Gospel which tells us about the Lord Jesus as one who loved the Lord his God with all his strength. The next one, the mind. I'm thinking these in the order of the Gospels, not in the order in which the words come in Luke 10, 27. The mind.

One thing that must be true of a perfect servant [00:12:03] is that instead of doing his own thing, going his own way all the time, he is prepared to submit his will to the will of his master. He applies his mind not to conjuring up his own ideas, but to accept the mind of his master.

And I would think in that way, if ever perfect service was shown, we get it in Mark's Gospel where we find that there indeed was a servant living upon earth who loved the Lord his God with all his mind. Perfect, devoted, subject service.

I think that fits very well. The next one, the soul.

I think perhaps we could have a long discussion about this, but certainly, among other things, when we think of the soul, we think of the feel of the thing.

[00:13:04] We think of the overriding spirit which governs us when we do things.

The inside, the inside experience and attitude rather than the outside circumstances. And if all we ever get, the feelings, the compassion, yes, the love of a man who was utterly devoted to the will of God, it's in the Gospel by Luke. And I would suggest that if we want to see a picture of one who loved the Lord his God with all his soul, it's in the Gospel by Luke.

The heart.

Or if I was to ask you regular students of the Bible and of the Gospels, which Gospel tells us most about the heart of God, I think you would tell me John's Gospel, where we get the heartbeat of the

blessed God [00:14:04] in revelation of himself and the way that those who are brought into the privileges of Christianity respond, that heart response which is due in answer to the revelation of the heart of God. And I certainly think as we read the responses of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel by John, as we read the prayer in John 17 that we noticed this morning, again and again we get the impression of one who loved the Lord his God with all his heart. Now, let's keep moving. Among other things, it tells us, bottom of that column, Christ in the Gospels.

Philippians 2, 5 and 11.

Perhaps the best known of all these, this kind of scripture which collects together [00:15:01] the things that the Gospel tells us about the Lord Jesus. Philippians 2, verse 5.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[00:16:03] Imagine you've never considered these verses in this way before.

Imagine you've read the Gospels. Imagine you're coming freshly to the epistle to the Philippians, and you read these verses. Just think again how they would strike you as summing up what you've read in the Gospels, because that, after all, is the approach we're taking this afternoon. We are starting from square one, basic thoughts to define for us outstanding features to look at. And as we read verse five, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, and it says, who?

Well, our mind stops there. We're going to learn something about Jesus. It's going to be worthwhile. What can we gain from this which will be good for our souls? And immediately we read this about him, who, being in the form of God, [00:17:01] thought of not robbery to be equal with God. And if we've read the Gospels, we'll say, of course we could put that as a heading over the Gospel by John. And we read it again, and think how God tells us about the deity of Christ, how that he is God, how that he's no less a person than God himself, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Well, we'll continue to look with interest, won't we? But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant. Oh yes, we'll say, that's Mark's Gospel. This, what did we look at? Steadfast endurance that was shown in the ox. The devoted mind to the will of God, Luke 10, 27. And here in verse 7, someone who was prepared to take the servant's place and do everything that God said. Verse 8, being found in fashion as a man.

[00:18:04] The Gospel by Luke.

Here we get an outline again of the one who loved the Lord his God with all his soul. The one who applied his supreme intelligence in order that the will of God might be accomplished. Verse 9, wherefore God has highly exalted him, given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. The Gospel by Matthew. What more fitting picture could we

have of a king in that everyone looks up to him, acknowledges his authority, bows the knee, bows the heart, is prepared to do what he says and acknowledge that his authority is supreme. So here again we have one of these happy little summaries in the New Testament, [00:19:01] as I've said on the sheet Christ, in the epistles, summing up what we can learn in the various Gospels. And now lastly, Revelation 4 and verse 7.

If ever you study Revelation in detail, either with other Christians in discussion or you read books, you won't get very far before you read or hear a comment. Of course, you cannot really understand the book of Revelation unless you've first read the book of Daniel. And you cannot really understand the book of Daniel unless you've first read the book of Ezekiel. And certainly the imagery in Revelation is taken from Ezekiel and Daniel. And there's no doubt that the picture we get in Revelation 4 is lifted out of Ezekiel 1.

So we'll read Revelation 4 and verse 7.

The first beast was like a lion. [00:20:03] The second beast like a calf.

It's an ox calf.

The third beast had a face as a man. The fourth beast was like a flying eagle. Now, again, in its setting, I suppose, we are beginning to see that God, who revealed himself in government in Ezekiel 1, the one who manifested himself in grace, in the Gospels, in the person of Christ, the one who has expounded himself in the epistles now manifests himself at the end of the age in glory. And we shouldn't be surprised if the same sort of features come out in a setting where the glory of God is acknowledged, where the claims of God are seen as having been fully met. We shouldn't be surprised if they are the same features [00:21:01] as we saw in Ezekiel. And the same comments that were made about Ezekiel 1, verse 10, can also be made about Revelation 4, verse 7.

I suppose many of you are saying, well, look, we knew all this. You haven't said anything new today. It's not the intention. The intention is to stir us up again, to marvel at how dovetailed Scripture is with Scripture, and that we might look freshly at it in the next four little talks of this series, so that when we look at them one by one, we don't take it as an isolated study, but that we look at it as fitting into the whole. And to crystallise our minds, the second column, when we look at something of the detail of the Gospel by Matthew, we will be looking for the royal supremacy, the regal splendour of Jesus shining out.

[00:22:05] In answer to this quotation, behold your King.

Now that is a quotation from Zechariah 9.

The next one, when we look at Mark, we'll be looking at the Lord Jesus as the perfect picture of enduring service.

And we'll be looking for an answer to Isaiah 42, behold my servant.

When we look at the Gospel by Luke, we'll be looking at a picture of dependent manhood, Jesus the perfect man, in answer to the prophecy, behold the man. Zechariah 6, but again quoted in derision, irony, I don't know, by Pilate, behold the man.

And when we look at John's Gospel, it will be the filling out of that essential deity [00:23:02] that was depicted in Isaiah 40, when we got the prophecy, behold your God. Going down, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John then, behold your King, Zechariah 9.

Mark, behold my servant, Isaiah 42.

Luke, behold the man, Zechariah 6 and John 19.

And John, behold your God, Isaiah 40.

Now, let us, as we lay this sheet to one side, not forget about it before the next session.

I understand that it will be sometime in the middle of January. We are all busy people. We all have a lot to do. But if we really apply ourselves, there's no reason why we shouldn't, before the middle of January, in addition to everything else we do, read at least the Gospel by Matthew, [00:24:01] which is the best way of conditioning our minds to hear whatever might be said on that occasion. The way God has talked about himself and the things God has taught about himself has varied from time to time.

But there are certain basic fundamental things about himself that always shine through.

So we should not be surprised when God manifests himself in flesh, in the person of Jesus, that certain of these fundamental features about God shine through again.

And in our introduction last time, we looked at certain things [00:25:01] that God has taught men about himself in different ways.

And I just want to refresh the memories of those who were here and just to prime those who weren't able to be here. It will help if those who were here last time will consult their notes.

And if there are one or two who weren't here, I have one or two spare copies. There wouldn't be enough for everyone. It would help if those who are here this time would present his.

I'm all confused.

There wouldn't be enough for everyone. [00:26:01] No more copies can be obtained. And I started off, some might think laboriously, by pointing out that, for instance, in the first chapter of Ezekiel, God said about himself that he has majestic power.

And this was seen in the lion.

That God has attributes of steadfast endurance.

This was seen in the ox.

That in the man, supreme intelligence comes to light.

And the eagle represented that about God, which we understand as rapidity of movement at home in

the heavens and that kind of image.

And we looked together at that in some detail in the four living creatures that are described in Ezekiel chapter 1. [00:27:02] And I suggested that God was telling us about some of his attributes as seen in government, the attributes of God in government. Another way of looking at it is to say, in an overall way, Christ in prophecy.

The next column, I went straight to what my major propositions are going to be in these talks. That Matthew presents the royal or the regal supremacy of Jesus as depicted in that prophecy, Behold Your King.

In Mark, we see the enduring character of the perfect servant as the prophet says, Behold my servant.

Luke tells us about the dependent manhood of Jesus. Behold the man.

And John emphasises his essential deity, [00:28:03] Behold your God.

And we then looked, and I won't go into the detail now, we looked at further scriptures, Luke 10, Philippians 2, Revelation 4, which give, with a kind of parallelism, things about Jesus which match, which fit each of the Gospels in turn.

And I looked at them suggesting that in Luke 10, we saw the attributes of God in grace, or if you like, Christ in the Gospels. In Philippians 2, verses 5 to 11, we get the presentation of Christ in the epistles, and in Revelation 4, we see the attributes of God in glory, and if you like, Christ in glory. So we shouldn't be surprised that because Jesus is God, that when he comes into the world, he continues this trend of teaching basic things [00:29:05] about God himself.

And I thought that would be a little revision for those who were here, it's a few weeks since we looked at that, and it gives us the opportunity of leading in to this week's.

A favourite family proverb in our family is to say that there are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream. In other words, there are many ways of achieving the same object. And so it is in a comparative study of the Gospels.

We can see trends in any one Gospel, or we can examine the same basic features in each of the Gospels by turn to see the different emphasis that each Gospel takes. There are certain things that shine through, [00:30:01] which emphasise the point. And if I was to consult one of the specialists in the study of the Gospels, like Mark Hodgard, and I said to him, young man, how many verily verilies are there in John's Gospel? Like that, he would say 25. No he wouldn't.

Being experienced, he would say at least 25, because he spotted 25. But because if he said 25, someone else would come along tomorrow and say, Mark, it's 26.

He safeguards that by saying at least 25, don't you? That's the way to...

But you can see a trend in certain things that come to light in the different Gospels. So I would like, first of all, for speed, just to read a list of a trend in Matthew's Gospel which I've noticed, and which

others can add to, which supports my initial proposition that in Matthew's Gospel, [00:31:02] we are directed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the King.

Now I've noticed this trend. In Chapter 1, we get the King's genealogy.

In Chapter 2, the question is asked, where is the King?

In Chapter 3, the King is announced.

Chapter 4, the King appears.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, we get the word of the Kingdom. In Chapters 8 and 9, we get the power of the Kingdom. In Chapter 10, the servants are commissioned to go out and preach the Kingdom. In Chapters 11 and 12, the King is refused. At the end of Chapter 12, a new relationship is revealed. In 13, the form the Kingdom will take in the King's absence is detailed, [00:32:03] and then so it goes on. And when we get to Chapter 27, the King is crucified and buried.

In Chapter 28, the King is raised from among the dead and elevated.

Now that's the kind of study that I find to be very worthwhile indeed, to show how the King is announced, presented, the response to him, what happens as a result of that, and how all that fits in with the presentation of the Lord Jesus as the King in Matthew. Now that's a continuous trend in Matthew, which I would commend to your study. Another way is to take certain basic things in the Gospel and to say, what is the difference in the various Gospels? And I'm going to suggest that we take that tack this afternoon. I enjoy this partly because it's what I would like to consider [00:33:09] to be original thinking. You sit down with the Bible in your hand and you say, now Lord, which way shall I study this? And there's a special joy in the Lord showing something to you that you haven't read in a book. Having said that, the next six books you pick up will probably refer to it. But there is a special joy, isn't there, in personal study. And certainly when I looked at the Gospels in this way, there was a special joy because of that. I want, with each of the Gospels, to say, well, what is the Gospel? We'll fill that in. And there'll be sheets for each of these. What is the key word or phrase? What is the key thought? And then I've suggested that down the left-hand side we list certain things we want to look at. And then, if you can understand the shorthand, in the Gospel we are looking at, Matthew this afternoon, [00:34:04] is this event in the Gospel or is it not? In other words, a tick or a cross. If it is in, if it is a tick, whereabouts is it? Chapter and verse.

If it is in the Gospel, why is it appropriate to be in Matthew? If it's not in Matthew, why is it appropriate that it is not in Matthew? And then, final comments. It's one way to look at it.

Now, I have suggested that we look at what Bible students sometimes call the seven pillars of wisdom, pulling out a little phrase from the book of Proverbs. Wisdom hath hewn her out seven pillars. And these seven crises in the appearing on earth of the Lord Jesus are vital indeed.

His birth, his baptism, [00:35:03] the temptations, the transfiguration, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. And I think that it will be very enlightening indeed if we take the Gospels in turn and we say to ourselves, is it in this Gospel? If so, why? If not, why not?

Now, and then, of course, if we have time, what I like to do is that each of us gets these and fills them

in for ourselves. But because of the lack of time, I'll give these out.

Of course, if there isn't enough time, you'll have a special joy of seeking them out for yourselves. But you'll be able to follow them up with many other facets of the Gospel. [00:36:09] Now, I wonder if we could exercise a little self-discipline now, not hasten on to the bottom right-hand corner. Let's start at the top right-hand corner and allow me just for ten minutes or so to take you through the results of my studies. And then, how you take it up in other aspects of the Gospels is up to you.

But I would like to think in these weeks that we have together that we get a germ of interest sown in our minds and that we follow these things up. [00:37:01] Now, I've said Matthew's Gospel, top left-hand corner. Key verse, chapter 1, verse 1.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

I've suggested that that is a key verse and that a key thought is that it tells us about the King. Behold your King.

See, nothing difficult about this, very straightforward, but write down the results of your studies and it helps.

I've put two verses there to confirm.

We will always find that while certain scriptures concentrate on a subject, others refer to it as well.

And this is obvious in eternal things that, to use the scriptural expression, the branches spread over the wall. You get other indications in other scriptures confirming what, as a specialist study, [00:38:02] you find in a special way in Matthew. So if you'd turn please to Zechariah 9, and verse 9.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.

He is just, having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

Now, that is just what happened, wasn't it, that we find in the Gospels. And that really could be put as a heading over the Gospel by Matthew.

And we shouldn't be surprised that that scripture is quoted verbatim [00:39:02] in Matthew 21.

Matthew's Gospel is obviously one of the Gospels where the Holy Spirit would include that quotation because it fits into the setting of the Gospel by Matthew.

But it does come to light in other Gospels, and John 19, verse 14.

From time to time, men are allowed to speak beyond their own experience under the constrained influence of God.

And here, whether in sarcasm, whether because he felt it to be right.

We read that it was the preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour, and Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, you are king.

So there we have conditioned our minds by getting a key verse and a key thought [00:40:04] about the Gospel by Matthew. Now, with these seven pillars of wisdom. First of all, his birth. Tick or cross?

I've said a tick.

If it is included where? Chapter 1, verses 18 to 25.

Read it, please, in your personal studies. Then I put my thinking cap on and say to myself, why is it appropriate that the birth of Jesus should be recorded in the Gospel, which in a special way tells us that Jesus is the king?

And I put here, the genealogy of a king must be determined and verified so as to establish his right to the throne. A king has to have the right pedigree, his claims to the throne must be established. Now, that's basic.

Comments?

[00:41:01] Matthew, writing to the Jews, writing to a Jewish audience, gives the legal genealogy the only one which would have any weight with the Jewish mind. Now that's the kind of thing I would suggest that you look for in studying Matthew. He's writing for Jewish minds.

And as everything has to be established in a proper, orderly way before it would be accepted by the Jews, one of the things that they would be looking for, that the one presented to them as king would have the right pedigree, the right genealogy.

As you know, the genealogies in Matthew and Luke vary. We'll go into that when the time comes, but as far as Matthew is concerned, the legal genealogy through Joseph had to be emphasised. [00:42:02] And this is why there is that emphasis in the genealogy in Matthew.

The second pillar, the second crisis, baptism.

Is it included? Yes.

Chapter 3, verses 13 to 17.

If so, why?

The Lord Jesus was pleased to identify himself with the godly remnant of Israel. He was the perfect Jew.

It fits.

Some of you were baptised not so long ago. All of us were reminded at that time that one key word about baptism is identification, association.

Yes, that's true of me.

I want to be linked with that, whatever you're being baptised to. And the Lord Jesus, as a perfect Jew, [00:43:02] identified himself with the preaching and the teaching of John the Baptist, and that was how God brought to light at that time the Jews who were right with God. Now, we can see the wisdom that where there might have been a cleft between the teaching of John the Baptist and the teaching of Jesus, John was saying, there's one coming along behind me who will supersede me. But it's nice, isn't it, that Jesus, rather than be seen to despising what John the Baptist says, agrees with what John the Baptist says. John the Baptist's right. And just to demonstrate that I accept what he says is right, all godly Jews at this time should be baptised to identify themselves with John's ministry, and the Lord Jesus linked himself with that movement at that time. [00:44:03] I think I can see that it fits in very well that the baptism was included in the Gospel by Matthew. The Temptations.

Chapter 4, verses 1 to 11.

Some of you have on your shelves a book called The Forty Days of Scripture. If you have read it, you will have noticed that 40 is a number used in the Bible by God to draw our attention to the fact that there's a test going on. Something is being proved, put to the test.

And so it was in the Temptation. And I have said here, the full test, 40 days, demonstrated that Jesus was morally fit to take up the government on his shoulder. We had that at Christmas, hadn't we? Isaiah 9, verse 6.

[00:45:01] The government shall be upon his shoulder. It needed to be demonstrated to the Jewish mind and in our turn to our minds that no one is more fit to be the king, to be in charge, to be in control, to be sovereign than the Lord Jesus Christ. And I have said that in verse 1, let's look at it.

Matthew 4, verse 1.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Now, those of you who try and find out exact meanings of words, which are often worthwhile, we find that this word for led into the wilderness [00:46:04] varies, or the way that the Lord Jesus was conducted or presented with this trial, these temptations, varies from gospel to gospel. And the word that is used in Matthew is Isaiah's word, which means not that he was sent there or driven there or made to go there, but as a king would be conducted instead.

So he was carried up into the wilderness in order that this proving period and proving testing time might be born.

And I think that is a nice little touch in the gospel by Matthew. Conducted instead so that he may demonstrate in regal dignity his moral fitness to occupy the throne.

I think that's a nice touch in the gospel by Matthew Is the transfiguration in Matthew? Yes. [00:47:01] Chapter 17, verses 1 to 8.

The king's exaltation needs to be emphasized.

Or, if there was only one gospel where the transfiguration, the exaltation on the holy mount was seen,

with our knowledge of the gospels now, we would say, oh yes, of course, Matthew would be directed by the Holy Spirit to include a comment to that effect. And therefore we would expect it to be in. His death and resurrection.

I've linked these together in this gospel. His death, chapter 27, verses 33 to 61.

His resurrection, chapter 27, verse 62 to chapter 28, verse 9.

And as a global comment, I would suggest that the kingdom and all pertaining to it, both its blessings and its justice, are based on the death and resurrection [00:48:02] of the rightful king. You see, you can look at the same event in each of the gospels. And the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus appear in each of the gospels. And we aren't surprised at that. But the reason why it was necessary to include them in each of the gospels vary from one to the other. And I think we can see, can't we, that it is suitable, that it is seen, that all the blessing of the kingdom and the kind of justice, the righteousness, that the king will exercise in the control of that kingdom will be on the basis of his work upon the cross, his death and resurrection.

His ascension.

Now, I think we learn as much from the omissions of scripture as we do from the inclusions. And at first we say, hello, why is there no reference [00:49:03] to the ascension?

Because as far as I can tell, I haven't yet found a reference to the ascension of Christ in the gospel by Matthew. The last touch that we get in Matthew's gospel is that the king, having died to establish blessing for his subjects, having been raised from among the dead in order that assurance might come to his subjects, we find that the last touch is that he is seen on earth, but in a very exalted way on the top of the mountain. Oh, I think that's good. There's going to be an earthly kingdom.

We speak of it, we read of it as the thousand years reign of Jesus upon earth.

The millennium, the world to come, of which we read in scripture [00:50:01] from time to time.

And if there's one gospel rather than others, which would emphasize that there will be someone in a place of personal exaltation who will control the earth for God, we would expect to find such a picture in the gospel by Matthew. And so it is.

It's no adverse reflection upon the dignity of Jesus that he's not seen to be taken away to heaven.

We get an earthly presentation of things in the gospel by Matthew, and that will color our studies as we look into the detail in the future. But it is nice to think that there is one gospel which looks on to the time when then there'll be an exact fulfillment of that lovely scripture God has appointed a day in which he will rule the world [00:51:01] in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he has given assurance unto all in that he has raised him from the dead.

So Jesus died for the sake of his subjects.

He was raised from among the dead that his subjects might have that assurance. We've quoted Acts 17, 31 to confirm that.

But then we have this touch right at the end, looking on to the time when there shall be a man in complete charge on God's behalf. And we have this exalted location of the Lord Jesus looking on to the time when he shall not only be king of Israel but king of kings.

I hope you've enjoyed that little preliminary look into the gospel by Matthew.

Obviously, it would have been so easy to swamp ourselves with thoughts and words this afternoon. [00:52:02] I thought it better just to give a little introductory study as a sample, as an example of what we can all do day in, day out in order to get impressions about what God has to teach us.