**Jesus in the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, and Luke- The Synoptic Gospels**

Why look at Jesus?

* Christ reveals man to himself- GS 22, JPII
* The more we understand Jesus the more we understand ourselves
* Jesus teaches us who we are and who we are called to be
* Reveals God’s love to us and for us
* Primary resource on Christ is the Gospels

Where do the scriptures come from?

* Divinely Inspired
* 1st century accounts, during the time of the Apostles ministry
* Matthew and John were apostles
* Luke and Mark were close associates of the apostles
* The 4 Gospels set by the 2nd century, St. Irenaeus speaks about this and says 4 as that the good news is to go out in all four directions

Why these three together?

* Similar Content, Similar story line, Similar emphasis on various aspects of Jesus

Matthew- Apostle of Christ

* Written by the apostle for Jews in Palestine area, he addresses multiple Jewish concerns
* Central Theme is Kingdom of Heaven- appears 33 times
  + Found in preaching of Jesus, SJB and apostles
  + It is the claim that God the Father is now working through the Messiah to establish his will on earth, as it is in heaven
  + Jesus is the focus of this divine and kingly activity
  + Jesus is the new David, royal king who provides for his people
  + 1. The Kingdom of Heaven is Ethical
    - It summons hearers to repentance and a life time of discipleship
    - Observe the golden rule and have childlike humility
    - Forgive those who offend us
    - Pray fast and give alms
    - Disciples who build their lives upon the teaching of Jesus will come safely to the blessedness of Eternal Life
  + 2. Kingdom is Ecclesial
    - Its saving power is made present through the Church
    - Only Gospel with explicit reference to the Church 16:18 and 18:17
    - The authority to bind and loose given to Peter
    - Apostles sent to build up the kingdom in the Great Commission
  + 3. Kingdom is eschatological
    - Fulfilled completely in the future
    - Coming of the kingdom awaits Christ coming in Glory
    - The great hope that when Christ comes he will separate the good from the wicked and give the everlasting inheritance of the kingdom to the faithful

Mark-Disciple of Simon Peter

* Written for Gentile believers in Rom, he explains Jewish customs that would be unfamiliar
* Points to Christ as the savior, two climaxes- Peter’s confession 8:29 and soldier’s statement Truly this man was the son of God.”
* Themes
  + Focus on Jesus’ Mighty Works
    - He is an active healers and exorcist
    - Uses immediately over 40 times
    - Asks rhetorical questions such as “What is this? A new teaching!, Why does this man speak like this?, But who do you say that I am?” They invite every believer to look at Jesus with the eyes of faith, embrace him in hope, and imitate his heroic love
  + Focus on the identity of Jesus
    - Secret- people would misunderstand his mission, thought that the messiah would liberate from political oppressors
      * Jesus labors to reconfigure messianic expectations through his example of servanthood and suffering
      * The true messiah liberates God’s people from burdens of Satan, sickness, and sin, not the yoke of an earthly empire
    - Sonship: The divine Sonship is a leading theme in Mark, goal of the gospel to point this out
      * Mark introduces Jesus as the God of God from the start, Mark 1:1. The demons are aware of it, God the Father proclaims it in the baptism and transfiguration
      * Surrenders life to the Father at the end of his life

Luke- a Gentile physician and companion of St. Paul, wrote Acts of the Apostles as well

* Only Gentile author to compose a New Testament book
* Written to Theophilus, possibly a Roman official who paid for the publication of the work
* His larger audience was Gentile Christians through the Mediterranean world
* Has the most details about the infancy of Christ
* Key theme is the Universal Message of Salvation
  + Christ has come to gather all people and nations into the family of God
    - 1. Salvation of Israel, Jesus seen as savior of God’s Old Covenant People
    - He depicts Jesus as the royal Messiah who comes in the line and legacy of David to reunite the scattered tribes of Israel
    - 2. Salvation of the Nations, the forgiveness that Jesus extends to Israel reaches also to the Gentiles
    - Simeon call Jesus a light for revelation to the Gentiles
    - SJB says that all flesh can to Christ for salvation
    - 3. Salvation for the lowly, especially women, children, poor, and outcasts
    - Luke’s image of Mary is unparalleled in NT
  + Most Parables of any of the Gospels
* Beautiful hymns of Mary’s Magnificant, Zechariah’s Canticle, Simeon’s departing words, and then Gloria sang on Christmas night