

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 01

Narrator: Luke

Primary Scriptures: Mark 1-5

Story Summary: Culture, political, and geographical background of the Gospels

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Mark 1:11, 1:15, 3:29, 3:25, 4:18-19, 4:40, 5:19

The writers of the New Testament didn't spend much time writing about the economics, cultural, political, and geographical facts of their time. Their original readers knew these things.

However, modern readers often get lost while reading the Gospels, since they are not familiar with the geography of Israel, the culture of New Testament times, or the politics surrounding different time periods of the New Testament. Its events are not always placed in chronological order, making it even more difficult for modern readers to understand.

Back then, just as we see today, business dominated much of daily life. The most important trade route across Israel was the Via Maris. This was a main route with many spurs branching from it—travel across this route and its spurs critically impacted many Gospel narratives. The Via Maris explains many things, like why Jesus located his headquarters in Capernaum, how Herod the Great got so rich and influential, and how the Christians would quickly fulfill Jesus' command to make disciples in other nations. (see Reference 5 for a map of trade routes)

The Gospels are set in a time of economic prosperity in the Roman Empire, a prosperity brought about by the policies of the first Roman emperor, Augustus. He ruled from 27 BC until his death in 14 AD, making him emperor when Jesus was born in about 5-3 BC. Under his effective leadership, the Roman Empire expanded and there was internal peace throughout the Empire. This period was known as the Pax Romana, which lasted almost two centuries.

During the time of the Gospels, Israel was occupied by the Roman Empire. The vast majority of the citizens of Israel were Jews, and they greatly resented paying taxes to the Romans and obeying their laws. The Romans controlled Israel through their representatives who lived at Caesarea, their soldiers, and various "kings" who ruled under the largesse of Rome. The Jews were led by the Sanhedrin, made up primarily of the two powerful parties, the Pharisees and Sadducees. There was always political tension during the time of the Gospels.

When you read the Bible, you get the sense that Israel is an important country around which all important things revolve. During the time of the Gospels, Israel was a tiny country in a vast empire. Israel and its inhabitants were insignificant. Except for one of them. He would change everything.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was Rome's emperor when Jesus was born? Who was emperor during Jesus' three-year ministry?
 2. During the ministry of Jesus, which Herod ruled most of Israel? What interactions did John and Jesus have with Herod?
 3. What was the name of the main trade route across Israel? What would have been Israel's fate if it had not had this route?
 4. Mark 1:22 says Jesus taught with authority, not as the teachers of the law. What does that mean to you?
 5. In Mark 2:20, how did Jesus demonstrate he had authority to forgive sins?
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1. Augustus was the emperor when Jesus was born. Augustus caused an economic boom for Rome that was enjoyed by all of its citizens. His son, Tiberius was emperor when Jesus preached and was executed. 2. Herod Antipas. 3. Via Maris 4. The teachers often quoted each other, and argued about what was right. Jesus' words seemed true to them, and were backed up with miracles and healings. 5. By healing a paralytic.

Application Questions:

1. Do you think of Herod Antipas, Augustus, and the other character in the Bible to be real people, or more like mythical heroes? What would it mean if the opposite was true?
2. Mark 1:35 says Jesus prayed before dark in a solitary place. Do you set yourself up to pray in a special way? Why or why not?
3. Mark 2:13-14 tells of the time Matthew (Levi) started following Jesus. Would you be willing to give up what he did to follow Jesus? How did Matthew change the way he thought about money and its importance to his life?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Can you think of a five-minute time frame during most days in which you could pray? Are you willing to put away your phone and other electronic devices during that short period? What might happen if you experimented with praying for a month?
2. Matthew gave up his good job to follow Jesus. What are you willing to give up to follow Jesus?
3. Does learning about the real history of Israel and the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus change anything about the way you feel about the Gospel stories? If so, what changed and why? If not, why do you suppose that is?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 02

Narrator: Mark

Primary Scriptures: Mark 6-10

Story Summary: Passages selected from the Gospel of Mark

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Mark 6:6, 11, 52; 7:8; 8:29, 33, 34, 36; 9:7, 23, 29, 35; 10:15, 43

Virtually the entire book of *Mark* is found in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*. Only 3% of *Mark* is exclusive material; 76% of *Mark* is found in both *Matthew* and *Luke*; 18% of *Mark* is found in *Matthew*; and, 3% in *Luke*. This episode does not repeat very much of the material presented in the Eyewitness Luke Series.

Unlike *Matthew* and *Luke*, *Mark* does not address the birth or genealogy of Jesus, and many of the events found in *Mark* are told in less detail than in the other Gospels. Unlike the author of *Matthew*, the author of *Mark* does not quote the Old Testament extensively.

Mark is by far the shortest of the Gospels; many scholars believe it was the first Gospel written and that much of the author's material came directly from Peter. This episode presumes John Mark is the author of *Mark*.

This episode gives a summary of the life of Jesus, but it also alludes to something that is almost impossible for a typical reader of the Bible to see. As pointed out in the video, Mark and Luke did not accompany Jesus during his ministry, so their accounts read much more like a collection of stories placed in roughly chronological order. Matthew accompanied Jesus, but he was not trying to write a travelogue. Modern readers can easily get the impression that Jesus wandered around the countryside, delivering random sermons and performing miracles for people he happened to encounter.

Much more likely, Jesus had very specific plans about his travel schedule. Especially at the end of his ministry, it appears he traveled to specific places to get away from Herod Antipas and gain more private time with his apostles without having to provide for their safety. As his end approached, he traveled with clear purpose to Jerusalem, although he did not always go in a direct path.

Mark 7:31-35 is the story of a deaf man being healed, and Mark 8:22-26 is the story of a blind man being healed at Bethsaida. Mark is the only one who records these two miracles. It seems that both of these were done in private, and both required a significant effort from Jesus. The healing of the blind man is the only recorded healing done in two stages. Perhaps the apostles needed to learn that not every healing would be instantaneous.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are two miracles that only Mark recorded?
2. Mark 6:1-6 tells the story of Jesus returning to his hometown of Nazareth. Why were the people offended by him? Why couldn't Jesus do many miracles at that event? Do you ever get offended by people with whom you are familiar?
3. Mark tells the story of Herod Antipas beheading John the Baptist. In what ways would that execution affect Herod's thoughts about Jesus?
4. Peter declared Jesus to be Messiah at Caesarea Philippi. What is the difference between Caesarea and Caesarea Philippi?

1. The healing of a deaf man, and the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida. 2. They were offended by him because he was acting far above what they thought a hometown boy should be capable of. 3. He would fear that Jesus was John come back from the dead. He would keep a close watch on Jesus. 4. Caesarea, also known as Caesarea Maritima, was a port city on the Mediterranean Coast. Caesarea Philippi was a small city near Mount Hermon in far north Israel. It had been a center for pagan worship.

Application Questions:

1. Mark 6:7-11 tells of Jesus sending out the apostles in pairs. Why do you think Jesus sent them in pairs instead of as singles? Does that give any wisdom for how missionaries should be sent?
2. The Greek woman in Tyre humbled herself when begging Jesus to heal her daughter. Would you be more willing to humble yourself to heal one of your children or to heal yourself? Why?
3. What was the importance of Peter's declaration in Mark 8:29? Are you willing to make that same declaration in the way you live?
4. Read Mark 9:23. Do you believe those words of Jesus apply to you?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida was not instantaneous. Are you willing to be patient for healings in your life and in the lives of others? Why might God not want people to be healed instantly?
2. What does it mean to have a hard heart? What is the antidote for a hard heart?
3. Read Mark 8:36. What do you value too highly? How can you change your value system? If you changed your values, would some of your behavior change? Can you ever be happy if your value system is messed up?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 03

Narrator: Paul

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 1-4, 8-12

Story Summary: Various passages in Matthew to demonstrate Old Testament use

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:19; 9:12, 37; 10:12; 11:28-30; 12:50

About 80% of the material in *Matthew* is also found in *Mark* and *Luke*. Since the episodes in the *Luke* Series contain much of what is in *Matthew*, the purpose of this episode is to emphasize how much Matthew uses the Old Testament to add validity to his account.

Matthew's main audience is his fellow Jews. They were very familiar with what we now call the Old Testament and valued those Scriptures as sacred and true, with some passages pointing to a coming Messiah—someone who would essentially reestablish King David's kingdom. After the Messiah's arrival, the Jews would be rulers of their physical land, independent of Rome.

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew took passage after passage out of the Old Testament and showed how they predicted Jesus to be the Messiah...but a totally different Messiah than was expected. Jesus came to give them spiritual freedom, not physical freedom.

In addition to that, Matthew showed God to consist of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This three-fold nature of God seemed to be different from the most basic Hebrew teaching, found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

These two major differences caused the Pharisees to turn from curiosity to hatred. The more Jesus taught about love, the more they hated him. The more he showed them about the true nature of God, the harder their hearts turned.

As you read through the assigned chapters, notice that Matthew seems to put his material in a more chronological order than Luke did. This is likely because Matthew accompanied Jesus through most of his ministry while Luke gathered his information about the ministry of Jesus from various sources.

Only Matthew and Luke record events around the birth of Jesus, though they provide different genealogies, which has led some scholars to believe that one is of Joseph and the other is of Mary. They both agree that Jesus was a descendant of King David.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was the main audience for Matthew, and how did he accommodate them?
2. Why might have Matthew written in a more chronological order than Luke?
3. What is one reason to think that Matthew and Luke may have used some of the same reference material?
4. What is one reason to think that Matthew and Luke drew on different additional sources of information?
5. What is one reason that Matthew and Luke's writings are different in style?
6. Why do Jesus' genealogies of Matthew and Luke differ?

1. The Jews were his main audience. Matthew accommodated them by using Old Testament passages to prove his points. 2. Matthew accompanied Jesus through most of his ministry, but Luke did not. 3. Much of their Gospels include almost word-for-word passages. Copying material from other sources was common, accepted practice. 4. They do have a significant amount of writing that is different. Among other reasons, Matthew was with Jesus for almost three years and certainly knew more about Jesus and his ministry than Luke did. 5. Matthew wrote to convince the Jews, while Luke wrote to convince Theophilus and other Gentiles who were not intimately familiar with the Old Testament. 6. Possibly one is through Joseph and the other through Mary. They come through Solomon, but they could just be different branches from there.

Application Questions:

1. Matthew was able to tailor his presentation of the Gospel to his audience. Are you also able to do that? How much familiarity with the material and your audience is needed to do so? Is that one reason why it is important to establish relationships with those who need to hear the Gospel?
2. If someone asked you to explain the nature of God, how would you do it?
3. Assuming that both Matthew and Luke wrote through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, how are ways he might have guided them (hint: read Luke 1:1-3)

Application Questions for Teens:

1. We will never completely understand the nature of God; nevertheless how would you describe it? What does God's nature have to do with you?
2. John the Baptist was to announce Jesus and prepare the way for him, and then get out of the way. By doing so he became a great person. How can you prepare the way for Jesus in the lives of those around you? Can you think of a time you announced Jesus and then "got out of the way"? What was that like? Was it difficult for you or easy?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 04

Narrator: Matthew & Paul

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 5-7

Story Summary: Sermon on the Mount

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 5:3-10, 17, 37, 44-45; 6:1, 9-13, 19-20; 7:7-8, 12

Matthew shows the early ministry of Jesus to consist of traveling through Galilee while teaching, preaching, healing every sickness and disease, and casting out demons. Consequently, large crowds from all over Israel started following him. Matthew says Jesus saw the crowds, went up on a mountainside, sat down, his disciples came to him, and he began to teach “them.” It is not entirely clear if Jesus was teaching just the disciples, or the disciples and the crowd. This episode presumes Jesus was teaching everyone gathered there.

Although Matthew does not say where Jesus gave this teaching, one tradition holds that it was near the north end of the Sea of Galilee. In fact, there is a depression on a hillside located there where a speaker could sit and be heard for more than a hundred yards while speaking in a normal voice (it has since been planted in banana trees!).

Matthew presents the Sermon on the Mount as the words of Jesus, but it is very possible Jesus had already presented some or much of this material on other occasions while he was teaching and preaching. Although the teaching seems very long, it can be spoken in a normal voice in less than fifteen minutes.

In Matthew 15:17, Jesus insists that he has not come to abolish the Old Testament teachings, but to fulfill them. Throughout this talk, he teaches the Old Testament differently than the teachings they may have heard from others. You can only imagine the bewilderment, and possible delight, of the crowd as they heard his original and authoritative teachings. This would have especially been so because he was a plain Galilean, like most of the crowd, while many other teachers were highly educated and from the big city of Jerusalem.

The elite religious teachers generally tried to make themselves look good while downplaying the righteousness of poor people. Jesus made it a point to downplay the righteousness of the rich and religious rulers. His teachings threatened the whole order of Jewish society, and the Jewish leaders would respond harshly to the threat.

Though it may not have happened this way, imagine Jesus at the top of the hill teaching his disciples. After every couple of sentences, one of the apostles turns to the crowd and repeats the teaching in a loud voice that carries down the hill. As the sound of his words die, another person repeats them to the rest of the crowd. Words and concepts that have never before been uttered, penetrating the people’s hearts over and over and over.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what chapters can the Sermon on the Mount be found? How can you put these chapter numbers in your memory so that you don't forget them?
 2. Does Matthew say that he records the entire Sermon on the Mount?
 3. In this teaching, does Jesus teach like the other Jewish teachers?
 4. How did the crowd react to the Sermon on the Mount?
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1. Matthew 5, 6 and 7. 2. No. It is possible that Matthew's words are only part of the teachings that Jesus gave that day. 3. No, he gives very brief teachings on numerous topics. He does not quote any other religious leaders to support his conclusions. 4. Matthew 7:28 says the crowds were amazed because he taught with authority and not as the teachers of the law.

Application Questions:

1. Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with the verses known as the Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:3-12. In these, he states that people who have certain situations or traits are specially blessed. Pick one of the Beatitudes that fits you, and visualize what it means to be blessed in the way Jesus describes. For instance, if you are a peacemaker, what does it really mean to be a child of God?
2. Matthew 5:14 says you are to be a light of the earth. Are you currently involved in any dark situations where you can be a light of righteousness and truth?
3. Matthew 5:22 indicates that anger is figuratively the same as murder. Do you currently carry any anger that you need to be relieved of?
4. Matthew 5:43 says to love your enemies. Do you have anybody in your life that you actively treat as an enemy? If you forgave them, would you be able to love them?
5. Matthew 7:12 says to do to others what you would have them do to you. Name something you have proactively done recently to positively affect someone else.

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Matthew 6:21 says your heart is where your treasure is. How do you spend your free time? What do you tend to stress about? How do you spend your money?
2. Matthew 7:1 warns about judging others. What is the difference in judging people and make a fair assessment of them so you know how to better interact with them?
3. Matthew 7:20 says you can be recognized for who you are by the fruit that you bear. Do you bear fruit? What does that say about you?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 05

Narrator: Matthew & Paul

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 13-20

Story Summary: Miscellaneous chapters in Matthew

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 13:17, 22, 35, 58; 16:16-18, 24-26; 17:20; 19:17, 21-22

As noted in other study guides, the majority of the verses in *Matthew* are found in *Luke* and *Mark*. The primary scriptures for this section are Matthew 13-20. Of those chapters, the main scriptures not found in *Luke* or *Mark* are:

- Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 Parable of the weeds and its explanation
- Matthew 13:33 Parable of the yeast
- Matthew 13:44-53 Parables of the hidden treasure, pearl, net, and house owner
- Matthew 14:28-31 Peter walking on the water
- Matthew 16:17-19 Jesus giving Peter the keys to the kingdom
- Matthew 17:20 Faith as small as a mustard seed
- Matthew 17:24-27 Payment of the Temple tax
- Matthew 18:12-35 Parable of lost sheep, forgiveness of sinning brother
- Matthew 20:1-16 Parable of landowner's payments to his workers

Matthew was with Jesus during his ministry, but Mark and Luke were not. Matthew gives us unique information on nine parables, three subjects, and two instances regarding Peter.

You might come to two other conclusions. These are exactly the sorts of stories and information you would expect to hear from an eyewitness. And, the fact that Matthew agrees with Luke and Mark on so many other passages lends credibility to those too.

The parable of the lost sheep is an example of understanding context. Jesus told the parable while explaining the value of a child. Children in the Roman world had little value and no legal standing, so Jesus used them as an example of people who are spiritually helpless and dependent. Also, when he says a man owned a hundred sheep, the crowd would be amazed. Anyone owning that many sheep was incredibly wealthy. The loss of one would be negligible.

Jesus indicates that God, who is immeasurably wealthy, considers every person to be invaluable. So valuable, that God is not willing that any of his spiritual children is lost.

Discussion Questions:

1. Of the four Gospel writers, who were eyewitnesses to the bulk of Jesus' ministry, and who were not?
 2. What kind of information might an eyewitness relate?
 3. In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, what information about God might the listeners have learned?
 4. A parable is an illustration or story that is designed to teach a lesson. The Gospels portray at least fifty of Jesus' parables, which comprises about one-third of all of his recorded teachings. Why did Jesus use parables?
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1. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses: Mark and Luke probably were not. 2. An eyewitness might relate small details and small stories, and might put information in better chronological order. 3. God is a loving god who loves every one of his spiritual children; God will go to great lengths to recover any of his lost children. 4. Everyday stories often impart spiritual truths easily without getting lost in religious jargon or intricacies; parables are easy to remember; people with no formal religious training could gain truth quickly and easily.

Application Questions:

1. Jesus often taught using stories and parables instead of using theological discourse. How might you explain an aspect of God's nature using a story?
2. Which do you remember better: the parables of Jesus or Paul's writings? Why?
3. In the parable of the lost sheep, the owner valued every sheep highly. When you think of taking the Gospel to the whole world, do you value the people in faraway countries as much as people in your own city? Why?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Matthew 20:1-16 is a parable of a wealthy boss who pays his workers the same amount even though they worked a drastically different number of hours. If that happened to you, how would you feel if you were hired early in the day? Late in the day? The parable is about the nature of God. Do you think that God treats people fairly? What do you mean when you say something is not fair?
2. Matthew 14:28-31 is the story of Peter walking on the water. Do you have a situation in your life where you could step far out of your comfort zone because you trust in Jesus? How much faith would that require? Peter started to sink when he began to doubt. What sorts of things in your life cause you to doubt the power of Jesus? How do you think Jesus feels about that?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 06

Narrator: Peter

Primary Scriptures: John 1-3

Story Summary: Early ministry of Jesus

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 1:1-3, 14, 18, 29; 2:11, 19; 3:3, 5, 16-18, 30,

The first four books of the New Testament (*Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John*) are known as Gospels, meaning “good news.” The books are named after their traditionally accepted authors. The first three (*Matthew, Mark* and *Luke*) are called Synoptic Gospels because they share many of the same stories, and some common passages have similar or identical wording.

In contrast, the contents of *John* are comparatively distinct from the Synoptic Gospels. *John* was likely written two or three decades after the others, and its writer included different information, and wrote in a different style than the Synoptic Gospels, with much more symbolic language and various themes.

It is traditionally assumed that the author of *John* is the Apostle John. He was with Jesus throughout his ministry, and likely refers to himself when he mentions “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” In fact, the subject of love often features in John's writings.

The opening words of *John* are reminiscent of those in *Genesis*, which opens with the beginning of the heavens and the earth, while *John* opens with the beginning of everything. It is widely interpreted that John uses the term “Word” to refer to Jesus.

The verses in John 1 are very important to gaining an understanding the nature of God, the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the humanity of Jesus. The information in John 1 about John the Baptist is also helpful in understanding just how important he was.

John is the only gospel with the story where Jesus turns water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana. John specifically points out that it is his first miracle.

John is also the only gospel writer who mentions Nicodemus. He describes a long discourse between Nicodemus and Jesus in John 3, and mentions him again on two other occasions. It is likely that the conversation with Nicodemus and Jesus was longer than the portion John recorded, but even so, that portion is full of gems. John 3:16 is possibly the best-known of all New Testament verses.

Throughout *John*, it is important to keep in mind that the author is being very selective about the information he provides. We know that because he says as much in John 20:30-31. Why is he being choosy? He chooses the things needed to make sure his readers will become believers in Jesus!

Discussion Questions:

1. Why might John's gospel be written differently than the other three gospels?
 2. What was in the beginning?
 3. Why is John 3:16 such a popular Bible verse?
 4. What was the first miracle of Jesus? What did it signify?
 5. How much water did Jesus turn into wine?
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1. *John* was written much later, probably after the other gospels were well known. There was not reason to duplicate their information. John had other goals in mind than the other gospel writers. 2. According to John 1:1, Jesus and God were in the beginning, and Jesus was God. 3. Most importantly, in a few words, John presents the entire gospel message. Less importantly, in the 1970s and 1980s, Rollen Stewart attended many televised sporting events in the United States wearing a rainbow-colored wig and holding up a sign prominently displaying "John 3:16." He single-handedly made the verse well-known. 4. He turned water into wine at the wedding festival at Cana. It signified that the new way to worship God is much better than the old. 5. More than 120 gallons.

Application Questions:

1. Throughout the book of *John*, you will be presented with many word images of the nature and relationships of God, Jesus, the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Spend time thinking about John 1:1, and keep this in mind as you study the rest of *John*.
2. Nicodemus was a teacher, yet he was open-minded enough to seek out Jesus to hear his teachings. Are you open-minded about learning more about God? How will you protect yourself against false teachers and false teachings?
3. Do you think Jesus wanted to do the miracle at Cana? Why do you think that way?
4. Most modern Christians spend little time studying John the Baptist. What do you know about John the Baptist that would be important to apply to your own life?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. It is popular to say that Christians should behave like Jesus. What do you think that means? How would you take into account that Jesus could do miracles?
2. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, probably so he could talk to Jesus without anybody knowing about it. Is it possible for you to get to know Jesus in secret? Do you know anybody who tries to be a secret Christian? How might that work?
3. John the Baptist was supposed to prepare the way for Jesus, then get out of the way. What kind of characteristics does it take for someone to do the hard work in order for someone else to get the credit?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 07

Narrator: John the Apostle

Primary Scriptures: John 4-8

Story Summary: Early ministry of Jesus, “I AM” statements

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 4:23; 5:24, 39-40; 6:29, 35, 51, 65; 7:37-39; 8:7, 12, 31, 34

In the time of Jesus’ ministry, the Jews were hoping for the coming of a Messiah, though the precise meaning of that expectation varied from person to person. Some expected a prophet like Moses, some expected a king like David, some expected a military leader to free Israel from the domination of Rome. In the gospel of *John*, Jesus overturns all those expectations.

In Sychar, Jesus reveals himself as a savior of Samaritans, not just Jews. He portrays himself as the water of life and as a prophet who can reveal the meaning of all things. In the first big evangelical rally, many of the residents of Sychar became believers in Jesus.

The second miracle of Jesus was healing the official’s son from a long distance. This miracle revealed Jesus as a messiah who heals physically, and is not limited by space and time.

At the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus revealed himself as one who is the lord of the Sabbath, and the one who gives eternal life. Through discussions about the Sabbath, Jesus reveals himself as the Son and as the one that the Scriptures testify about.

With the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus is publicly shown to be kingly... someone who would fulfill the dreams of many people. With that, Jesus begins revealing himself to have characteristics that were entirely unpredictable.

Throughout the book of *John*, Jesus says many things about himself. Seven of his statements are known as the “I AM statements.” The form of these statements essentially equates Jesus with God, because God called himself, “I AM.” Jesus says he is the:

- Bread of life (John 6:25-59)
- True gate (John 10:1-6)
- Resurrection and life (John 11:1-43)
- True vine (John 15:1-17)
- Light of the world (John 8:12-30)
- Shepherd (John 10:7-21)
- Way, truth and life (John 14:5-14)

Modern Christians read these statements from a positive, reassuring viewpoint. Keep in mind that the Jewish leaders would have heard them as vicious blasphemy, each deserving death.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would the Samaritans in Sychar have been surprised that Jesus spent time teaching them?
 2. Describe the circumstance when God first called himself "I AM".
 3. Why were the Jewish leaders upset that Jesus healed the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda? Why did Jesus command the healed man to pick up a mat that he would no longer need?
 4. Starting in John 5:19, Jesus called himself "son", and calls God his father. Why did that infuriate the Jewish leaders.
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1. The Jews generally despised the Samaritans and would not associate with them. Although the Samaritans worshiped the God of the Jews, they did not follow Jewish traditions and were not allowed to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. 2. Exodus 3 tells the story of Moses and the Burning Bush. In Exodus 14:3, God names himself "I AM." 3. Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, when it was not allowed to work. When the man picked up the mat as Jesus commanded, he was working...according to the Pharisees. 4. The Jews recognized God as one entity. When Jesus called himself the son, he was indicating that God had an entirely different nature than the Jews thought.

Application Questions:

1. Jesus asked the paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda if he wanted to get well. The man immediately thought Jesus was referring to physical health. To what else could Jesus have been referring? Do your immediate problems sometimes obscure your ability to see the bigger picture?
2. In John 5:12, the Jewish leaders were incensed that the man was carrying a mat on the Sabbath, but they neglected that the man had been miraculously healed. Do you ever miss important things because you are focused on getting your way?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. The ancient Jews believed they were the only ones worshiping God correctly. Do you ever feel that way when discussing religious matters with others? How important is this kind of "correctness" to you? How do you measure whether you are worshiping God in the manner God wants?
2. In the modern world, it is popular to believe that there are many ways to please God. In John 14:6, Jesus says he is the way, the truth and the life... and no one comes to the Father except through him. Does Jesus really mean what he says in that verse or is he being overly dramatic? Do you tend to believe Jesus or societal norms? How can you reconcile that verse with current cultural perceptions?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 08

Narrator: Lazarus

Primary Scriptures: John 9-12

Story Summary: Later ministry of Jesus, seven miraculous signs

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 9:3, 5, 25; 10:11, 14, 29; 11:4, 25, 41-42; 12:7, 25-26, 50

The video for this episode concentrates on a selected set of miraculous signs by Jesus. These are:

- Changing water into wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- Healing the official's son from a distance (John 4:46-54)
- Healing the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-5)
- Feeding the five thousand (John 6:5-14)
- Jesus walking on the water (John 6:16-24)
- Healing the man blind from birth who washed in the Pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7)
- The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-45)

Each of these miracles seems to be carrying multiple themes. Jesus isn't just changing water to wine—he's also showing that a new way to worship God has arrived, and this new way is better than the old. The healing of the official's son shows the importance of faith, and that Jesus is not limited by normal limitations. The healing of the paralytic shows that Jesus is ruler of the Sabbath, the feeding of the five thousand that Jesus gives true life, and walking on the water that Jesus is the ruler of all nature.

The Bible doesn't say where the blind man was when he met Jesus, but more than likely he was a fair distance away from the Pool of Siloam, which is located at the end of the tunnel built by King Hezekiah and is downhill from most of Jerusalem. As he gained his sight, the man would have been able to see the Temple Mount about one-half of a mile uphill to the north. He must have been amazed!

In John 9:1-2, Jesus upends the notion that people's sins always make them materially or physically disadvantaged. This would have been a direct threat to a common teaching of the day that disadvantaged people were that way because of sin, while advantaged people were that way because of righteousness.

The resurrection of Lazarus shows that Jesus rules over death and can bring life into any situation. The one thing all these miracles have in common is this: they all point to the fact that God is to be glorified in every situation because he is the Master of All.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the important things to know about Jesus' miracle of changing water into wine? (John 2)
 2. What was the second miracle that Jesus performed in public, and what are some important things to know about it? (John 4)
 3. Name some important things about healing the man born blind from birth? (John 9)
1. The miracle of changing water into wine was the first miracle Jesus performed; it signifies that a new religious order has arrived and it is better than the old; the superabundance of wine signifies the overwhelming benevolence of God; that Jesus has control over the natural order of the world. 2. Healing the official's son from a distance. The official was from Capernaum, soon to be Jesus' headquarters. The official was a royal official, probably for Herod Antipas who ruled from nearby Tiberias. It never hurts to have friends in high places, so there is no telling how he might have influenced things over the coming years. 3. Jesus used the situation to declare that underprivileged people are not being punished for their sins, and that declaring God's glory is paramount. The man had to have faith to walk to the Pool of Siloam to get healed. The Pharisees wielded the weapon of putting people out of the Temple to threaten the man and his parents. To the blind man, his healing trumped all religious arguments.

Application Questions:

1. In John 9:2, the disciples of Jesus could see only two alternatives to the reasons that people suffered. Do you find that you limit your alternatives to obvious or accepted answers? With religious questions, do you tend to want a clear answer rather than answers that require uncertain or multiple interpretations?
2. In John 10:27, Jesus says that his sheep listen to his voice. How do you listen to his voice? If you are not listening, are you one of Jesus' sheep? How can you learn to listen better?
3. In John 11:44, Jesus commanded that others help Lazarus take off his grave clothes. Why might he have done that, and how might that principle apply to you and your faith community?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. You might hear people use the miracle of changing water into wine as "proof" that Jesus approves of people drinking wine. Without regard to whether drinking wine is right or wrong, is that an appropriate way to use this story? How can you be careful not to misuse Bible verses?
2. In John 11:49-50, Caiaphas makes a big assumption and tries to convince others it is true so he can justify his upcoming actions. Does this happen today among people in positions of authority? What can you do about it if so?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 09

Narrator: Philip the Apostle

Primary Scriptures: John 13-17

Story Summary: The last Passover meal of Jesus and walk to the Kidron Valley

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: John 13:16, 34; 14:1-3, 6-7, 13-16, 23; 15:1-8, 15; 17:3-4

What would you do if you had only twenty-four hours left to live? Spend it with your family, go skydiving, ask forgiveness of any you have offended, go to work? Jesus chose to eat Passover dinner with his twelve closest friends. The first few of his last hours consisted of eating the ritualistic Passover feast and giving his final instructions and farewell message.

According to *John*, the evening started with Jesus ritualistically washing the feet of his apostles, a task normally reserved for household slaves or servants. This act signified that the apostles were to be servants as they acted as the messengers of the Gospel.

Following this act of humility, Jesus prophesied several things, including: Judas would betray him, Peter would deny him three times, Jesus would go to be with the Father, and Jesus would send back the Holy Spirit.

John 14-17 comprise some of the most detailed and mysterious of all of Jesus' teachings. Even though the apostles had gone through three years of intense training, these teachings stretched them to the maximum. Starting in John 14:9, Jesus talks about "being in," "remaining in," or "abiding in," as per John 14:9, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." That terminology permeates much of the teaching. In fact, Jesus said in John 15:6, "He that abides in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. Without me, he can do nothing."

There are few times when Jesus expressly commands something, but he does so in this farewell talk. In John 15:12, Jesus commands the apostles to love one another, just as he has loved them. He follows that up by telling them that they are his friends if they do whatever he commands them to do.

In John 16, Jesus gives the apostles fair warning and encouraging words about what will happen to them after he is gone. He ends that section with a very encouraging statement: "I have overcome the world." Note that he did not say he "would" overcome the world, but that he already had.

John 17 is a long prayer for his followers. John 17:3-4 are two of the most informative verses in the Bible. They provide a definition for eternal life, and they provide a good summation statement of Jesus' work and purpose on earth.

Discussion Questions:

1. According to John 14:6, how many ways are there to come to the Father? What does that verse mean?
 2. In John 14:6, Jesus tells the apostles they can ask Jesus for anything in his name, and he will do it. Does that apply to every Christian or just the apostles?
 3. Based on John 15:8, how do you bring glory to God? What is much fruit?
 4. According to John 17:3, what is eternal life? So, when does eternal life start?
 5. How did Jesus bring glory to God, according to John 17:4?
-
1. The only way is through Jesus. 2. The Bible does not say. 3. Eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. So, eternal life starts when someone knows God and Jesus. 4. By finishing the work God gave him to do.

Application Questions:

1. In your life, what would it mean for you to wash someone's feet? Are you willing to do that? Who for?
2. It is currently popular for people to say that all religions have equal value and that there are many ways to God. Does John 14:6 impact how you view that view?
3. John 14:15-17 talks about the Holy Spirit. In light of those verses, what can you learn about the Holy Spirit? What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to live inside of you? In John 14:20, what does it mean for Jesus to live inside of you?
4. John 14:23 says that anyone who loves Jesus will obey his teaching? Based on that verse how would you evaluate your love for Jesus? How do you know what his teachings are?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. If you are a Christian, do you deserve to lead a trouble-free life? What type of life does Jesus promise in John 16:33?
2. What does eternal life mean to you? Does that fit with John 17:3?
3. John 17:4 is a one-sentence summary of how Jesus evaluated his life How would you evaluate your life in one sentence? Are you satisfied with what that sentence describes? Are you doing what it takes to lay the groundwork to change that sentence to what you want it to be someday?
4. When did God the Father start loving Jesus? (John 17:24) Did he start loving you at the same time?
5. John 13-17 reveals what Jesus did with his final few hours before he died. If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you be concerned with?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 10

Narrator: Joseph of Arimathea

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 21-27, Mark 11-15, John 18-19

Story Summary: The last week of the life of Jesus

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 21:22; 22:21, 29, 37-40; 24:14, 35, 44; 25:23, 35-36, 40; 26:41. Mark 12:24, 43-44; 14:36. John 18:36-37; 19:38

All four Gospels record events from the last week of Jesus' life. Reading about this time period in a parallel Gospel account is very helpful, mindful that each writer has his own information sources and goals, and the Holy Spirit inspired them. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses of this time period, while Mark got his information from other sources, with Peter probably being his primary resource.

During his last week, Jesus generally entered Jerusalem in the morning, taught the people and jostled with the authorities during the day, and then retired from Jerusalem in the evening to the Mount of Olives.

Although the order of events is not perfectly clear, it is likely that Jesus' last week begins with his triumphal entry, an event recorded in all four Gospels. Possibly the next events are the cursing of the fig tree, and the cleansing of the Temple when Jesus challenged the moneychangers.

Another well-recorded event is known among scholars as the Olivet Discourse, when Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and gave a long discourse about the future events, especially the future of Jerusalem. Matthew 24-25 is the most detailed of the recordings. Jesus tells at least five parables, and ends with the well-known story of the separation of the sheep and goats when the Son of Man comes.

All four Gospels portray the Last Supper, but John 13-17 provides the most details of the evening. At the end of the Last Supper, Jesus leads the apostles to Garden of Gethsemane, located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Jesus prays in the garden and prepares his apostles for the end, then Judas and a contingent of up to two hundred men arrive to arrest Jesus and take him back to Jerusalem for trial.

Although the order is not absolutely certain, events probably transpired as follows: the trial before Annas, the trial before Caiaphas while Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard, the trial before the Sanhedrin, the first trial before Pilate, the trial before Herod Antipas, the second trial before Pilate, the approximately six hours of crucifixion, and the burial of Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the people in the Kidron Valley would have seen of Jesus' Triumphal Entry.
 2. Why would Jesus have been angry at the moneychangers?
 3. What did Jesus mean when he told his opponents to give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's?
 4. What do you think Matthew 24:14 means?
-
1. It was Passover week, so there were many thousands of people camping out in the Kidron Valley. News of the resurrected Lazarus had surely circulated among the crowd, and the rumor of Jesus' arrival had spread. When Jesus came over the crest of the hill on a donkey, they would have seen him as the king prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. The crowd throughout the valley would have reacted in a joyful frenzy. 2. The moneychangers were profaning the Temple of God by making a big profit on the changing of the money of the helpless people arriving to sacrifice at the Temple. Perhaps Jesus remembered that they had taken advantage of his own poor parents. 3. The fact that his opponents were in possession of a "profane" coin proved their hypocrisy. Jesus only had to point out how they were trying to use religious rules that were meant to make them pure to help them avoid paying taxes.

Application Questions:

1. The moneychangers profaned the Temple by their actions. Are there things you can do to profane the place where you worship? If your actions endanger the reputation of your church, do you profane God's house?
2. The Pharisees had a tendency to use their religious rules to help them avoid doing things they did not want to do. How could you use your faith in a hypocritical way?
3. Matthew 24:24 says that people will be deceived by great signs and miracles. How can you keep from being deceived by false teachers?
4. How can you use Matthew 24:44 to avoid being misled?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Matthew 25:21 has the phrase, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Many adults say that this phrase is what they want to hear when they arrive in Heaven. Is this what you want to hear? If so, what are you doing to receive that blessing? If not, what would you like to hear?
2. Why did Judas betray Jesus? Why did he do it for so little money? Have you ever betrayed Jesus to avoid criticism or embarrassment?
3. The custom of washing people's feet is not often used in the modern world. What is a modern equivalent that you could do to demonstrate humility?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 11

Narrator: Mary Magdalene

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 28, Mark 16, John 20

Story Summary: Jesus comes back to life after being dead; a week following

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Mark 16:6. John 20:18, 20, 29-30

This episode covers approximately the week after Jesus was raised from the dead. When reading the relevant passages from the four Gospels, the exact order of events is a little unclear. One possible ordering of events is: the tomb is visited by women, the stone is rolled away, the tomb is found empty by the women, the tomb is found empty by Peter and John, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, Jesus appears to other women, report of the soldiers, Jesus appears to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who report to the apostles, Jesus appears to the ten apostles, and Jesus appears to Thomas and the rest of the apostles.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Jesus on Friday afternoon. They did not have time nor expertise to bury the body properly. Perhaps it was the job of the women to prepare a dead body. In any event, the women were not involved and went home to prepare spices and perfumes. They rested on Saturday in accordance with the Law of Moses.

At first opportunity, dawn on Monday, Mary Magdalene and other women took spices and perfumes to anoint the body of Jesus. They arrived either as the angels were rolling away the stone in front of the tomb or just after they had done so. When the women looked into the tomb, they found it empty. While they were in a stupor, the angel(s) told them Jesus had come back to life, just as he said he would.

The women ran to tell the eleven apostles, who were in disbelief. However, Peter and John ran to the tomb and also found it empty. When Peter saw the headcloth was folded by itself, he ascertained that things were askew, but was not convinced Jesus had risen from the dead.

At some point, Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb and Jesus appeared to her. He instructed her to tell the apostles to meet him in Galilee. Jesus also appeared to the other women.

That same day, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They could not recognize him in his resurrected body, but he eventually revealed himself. Importantly, he explained how the scriptures in the Old Testament testified about him. The two returned to Jerusalem and told the apostles.

Jesus appeared to ten of the apostles without Thomas, and later appeared to all eleven of them. So Jesus rose from the dead as he foretold. How would that change things?

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was the first person to find that the tomb of Jesus was empty?
 2. Was the man in white or the two men in gleaming clothes at Jesus' tomb angels?
 3. How would people know that the rumor spread by the soldiers that the disciples of Jesus stole his body was false? (Matthew 27:62-66, 28:11-15)
 4. Why did the two disciples on the road to Emmaus not recognize Jesus?
 5. How did John choose to record what he did instead of other things about the life of Jesus?
-
1. Depending on the account, it was either: Mary Magdalene, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, or several women. 2. According to Matthew 28:5, yes. 3. If the soldiers were Roman, they would have been executed for letting someone steal the body while they were asleep. If they were Temple guards, they would have surely been discharged. In either case, they would not have talked about such a humiliating event. 4. They were kept from recognizing him. 5. John 20:31 So that his readers may believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Application Questions:

1. John 20:31 says that John wrote about the things he did so his readers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing they may have life in his name. Did John convince you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If not, is there anything else he could have said that would convince you?
2. You probably don't have the personal experience of watching someone come back from the dead. Do you find the Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection convincing? What did Jesus tell Thomas about this? (John 20:29)
3. What did Mary Magdalene do to receive the blessing of being the first to see the resurrected Jesus? (had been faithful a long time, continued to act in faith even when all seemed lost) Have you ever been faithful to Jesus when all hope seemed lost? What characteristics will aid you in keeping your faith through hard times?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. When they arrived at the tomb, Peter and John saw it was empty, but did not consider Jesus resurrected because they did not understand how the Old Testament Scriptures had said he would. Are there things in your life you cannot understand because of limitations in your scriptural understanding?
2. It is scientifically impossible for someone to come back from the dead in the manner Jesus reputedly did. Does that keep you from believing Jesus actually did so?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 12

Narrator: Thomas

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 28:16-20, John 20:19-21:25, Acts 1:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:5-7

Story Summary: The forty days after Jesus was resurrected

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 28:18-20. John 20:25, 27, 29, 30-31; 21:22, 25

Some of the most important information about the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus is not found in *Matthew*, *Mark*, or *John*. *Luke* has the most detailed account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as well as an account of the first encounter with the apostles and a brief description of his ascension. Meanwhile, *Acts*, a continuation of *Luke*, notes Jesus was on earth forty days after his suffering and gives an account of some of his activities during that time. *Acts* also gives more details on his ascension. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, Paul says that Jesus appeared to more than 500 people at the same time, most of who were still living at the time (about twenty-five years after Jesus' death), and to James and the apostles.

Considering that Jesus was on earth for about forty days after his resurrection, the Bible gives us precious little information and timing. Here is one possibility of Jesus' appearances and activities: appears to Mary Magdalene and the women, appears to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, appears to ten apostles, appears to all eleven apostles, meets with seven apostles at the Sea of Galilee, meets with eleven apostles in Galilee on the mountain, appears to the five hundred, appears to James, meets with apostles in Jerusalem, and ascends into Heaven.

It is a bit curious that Jesus met with the women and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus before meeting with the apostles. When he finally appeared to ten of the apostles, it seems he mildly castigates them for not believing the reports of his resurrection before immediately offering them peace and fellowship. In a critical moment, Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit to them. In a meeting with all eleven apostles, Jesus reconciles with Thomas, too.

Three huge events are detailed, fortunately. Jesus' appearance to some of the apostles on the Sea of Galilee includes a long conversation between Peter and Jesus. Jesus gives Peter the opportunity to affirm his love three times offsetting Peter's three denials.

Matthew gives an account of a meeting on the mountain in Galilee. It is at this meeting Jesus gives the Great Commission, a mission that has been accepted by Christians through the centuries. Matthew does say that after his resurrection appearances, "some doubted."

In *Luke* and *Acts*, Luke tells about the ascension of Jesus. With the exception of a small portion of *Mark*, these are all the accounts we have in the Gospels about that.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you learn everything about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances in the four Gospels?
 2. How long was Jesus on earth after his resurrection, and how many people saw him?
 3. How did the resurrected Jesus first prove his true identity to his apostles?
 4. Did John write about all of Jesus' miracles? Why or why not?
 5. While the apostles were waiting in Galilee, what is one of the things they did? What did Jesus tell them to do that he had once told Peter to do?
1. No. You have to read Acts 1:1-12 and 1 Corinthians 15:5-7, too. 2. At least forty days, and more than 500 people saw him. 3. He had them touch him, showed them his hands and feet, and ate a piece of fish. Thomas touched his hands and put his hand into Jesus' side where the spear had pierced him. He talked to them. 4. No, he did more. John wrote about enough of them to convince his readers to believe in Jesus. John 20:30-31, 21:25. 5. They went fishing. After not catching anything, Jesus told them to cast their net again. Luke 5:4, John 21:6.

Applications Questions:

1. What is a scriptural characteristic of God or Jesus you have a hard time believing? Is your struggle related to personal experience, intellectual thoughts, or something else?
2. It is hard to catch the nuance in English, but in Peter's conversation with Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, it appears Peter is unwilling to fully commit to Jesus. Rather than giving Peter a lecture, Jesus told Peter to act: feed his sheep and follow him. In your life, what does it look like to feed his sheep and follow him?
3. Matthew 28:18-20 is the Great Commission. Jesus tells the apostles to make disciples. Do you think that commandment applies to you? Do you obey this commandment? How could you follow it better?

Application Questions for Teens

1. The apostles doubted Jesus came back from the dead until they saw him. Even after being with him, some of the apostles doubted... but they still believed (Matthew 28:17). It is very possible you have learned to believe only things that can be proved scientifically, so you may doubt many things about Jesus. Can you believe in Jesus and still have doubt? Would it surprise you to find out that most people have some level of doubt about many things?
2. Luke 24:44 says that Jesus fulfilled everything that was written about him in the Old Testament. Is that important to you? Should it be? Why or why not?

Episode: Three Gospels Series No. 13

Narrator: Angel

Primary Scriptures: Matthew 28

Story Summary: A summary of the life of Jesus with emphasis on angel appearances

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Matthew 28:5-6, 10, 18-20

This episode has a subtle twist. It assumes seven appearances of unnamed angels dealing directly with Jesus shown in the Gospels are all by the same angel (not including Gabriel's appearances). Using that twist, the backstory of the angel and its thankfulness are part of the story line. The seven appearances are:

1. To tell Joseph about Mary (Mat. 1:20-24).
2. Announce the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:9-15).
3. To tell Joseph to take Jesus to Egypt to avoid Herod's wrath (Mat. 2:13-14).
4. To tell Joseph to move from Egypt back to Israel (Matthew 2:19-23).
5. To attend to Jesus after the wilderness temptations (Matthew 4:11).
6. To strengthen Jesus at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).
7. To roll away the stone of Jesus' tomb and inform the women (Matthew 28:2-5).

It is quite reasonable to wonder why God didn't physically protect Jesus while he was on earth. Even Satan recognized that God could have easily done so. During the temptations in the wilderness, Satan applied Psalm 91:11-12, which says that God can command his angels and they will protect him to the extent that he won't even hit his foot on a rock. With one word, God could have sent ten thousand angels to protect Jesus, as one song suggests.

Why didn't God protect Jesus physically? The Bible doesn't specifically say, but possibly it was to allow Jesus to fully experience his human nature. In any event, it is clear that the Gospel writers did not record any events where angels were used to protect Jesus. With the exception of Gethsemane, angels were used only for their primary purpose of being messengers.

Looking at the list of scriptures above, it is apparent that angels were involved in Jesus' life on earth from start to finish. In fact, they were probably involved even after he left. When Jesus ascended into heaven, Acts 1:10-11 says two men dressed in white tell Jesus' followers that Jesus went to heaven and would return in the same manner. The most likely conclusion is that those two men were angels.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why didn't God use his angels to protect Jesus physically while he was on earth?
 2. How did the angels directly involved with Jesus communicate with humans?
 3. In which two Gospels are all of the appearances of angels written?
 4. How many appearances of angels are written about during the main part of Jesus' ministry?
 5. Concerning humans, what is the main purpose of angels?
-
1. The Bible doesn't say, but reasons could include ensuring that Jesus fully experienced being a human. 2. Through dreams, audibly talking 3. Matthew and Luke 4. None. Only at the start and finish. 5. To bring messages from God.

Applications Questions:

1. God didn't choose to physically protect Jesus to keep him from any harm or pain. Should that impact how you think God should protect you?
2. Do you think angels still deliver messages from God to humans? If so, how should you expect an angel to bring a message from God to you? Do you think you have ever received a message that way?
3. This video episode was used to quickly tell the story of Jesus' life. Could you summarize the life of Jesus in a few minutes? What parts would you emphasize?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Do you think popular media correctly portrays angels and demons? Do movies tend to make demons repulsive or attractive? Evil or good? Do movies tend to portray angels as coming from God?
2. If you got a message delivered by an angel, how would you know it was an angel from God?
3. Do you think God should protect Christians more than he does others? Why or why not?
4. Do you think God should keep Christians from pain and suffering? Why or why not?