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THE

# Bible

STUDENT

THE ENTRANCE OF *THY WORD* GIVETH LIGHT

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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# THE GOSPELS

By E. W. ROGERS

(Continued)

6. *The Design and Structure of Mark's Gospel.* This second Gospel presents the Lord Jesus as the diligent and faithful Servant of Jehovah. The Greek word *eutheos*, or *euthus*, meaning forthwith, immediately, straightway, and anon, is characteristic of this Gospel and constantly recurs. Here is the record of One who loses not a moment: He is serving Another: indeed, on occasions He finds it difficult to get time to eat even. It is appropriate that this should be the particular theme of John Mark, who, in his early missionary enterprise, failed at a certain point and turned back. But there is no failure with Him of whom he records.

His Gospel is very similar to Matthew's, except that it is much shorter: Matthew records how the Lord Jesus tested Israel: Mark shows Him serving them, and even after he records His resurrection he mentions that, having ascended, He is at the right hand of God, still working for and with His people on earth. He is still serving. Mark's is a Gospel of *deeds*. There are 18 miracles, whereas there are only seven parables. Matthew's Gospel, you will recollect, is full of discourses. Matthew writes for Jews; Mark for Gentiles and therefore he interprets Syro-Chaldee terms and explains Jewish customs.

Mark records *no genealogy*, which is consistent with his purpose in writing. Who is concerned with the genealogy or birth of a servant? The great matter is, is he competent to do the work intended? And has he done it? This leads us to remark that, whatever is peculiar to any particular Evangelist should be carefully noted, since its relevance to the particular aspect of Christ's work therein presented is most instructive.

It does not appear that Mark adheres strictly to chronological order. There are both dispensational and moral panels, set side by side. The former teach the ways of God with humanity as such, the latter teach His ways with individual persons. Nor does there seem to be any logical argument presented: Mark has no particular point to prove: He writes a biography of One who is without peer and yet who took the lowest office, so that He might serve both God and Man. Therefore, you should note not merely what He did but how He did it: His self-effacement in the midst

of the popularity: His compassionate look, and at times His angry glance. All who would be servants of God in the ministry of the Word should closely study this Gospel in order to learn what is to be done and the manner in which to do it.

7. *The Design and Structure of Luke's Gospel.* Luke's and John's Gospels have this common feature that each tells us the purpose for which they wrote. Luke does so at the beginning (ch. 1:4). John does so at the end (ch. 20:30, 31). Luke's Gospel is unlike all the other three in that it is addressed to an individual, who is described as Theophilus, 'the most excellent'. In the Acts, also written by Luke as a continuation of his Gospel, this epithet is omitted. How could it remain, we might say, after Luke had presented HIM Who has no equal? Luke was a Gentile, spoken of by Paul as 'of the circumcision' and, therefore, his writings are the only ones that have come from Gentile source. It is also the longest Gospel, and there is much in common with Paul's doctrine in it. It is interesting to trace the correspondence between Paul's teaching and Luke's illustrations. It is as though Luke had written in order to illustrate Paul's teaching, so as to make his great themes easy to be understood. Matthew was a publican: of Mark we know nothing as to his secular calling: Luke was a physician, and John was a well-to-do fisherman.

This Gospel is the product of a thorough and exhaustive search with a view to ascertaining the facts, so that Theophilus might be assured of the truth of the things in which he had been orally instructed. It is pictorial and vivid. It is divided into two main parts at chapter 9:51, where the journeyings to Jerusalem commence. It traces the footsteps of the perfect Man, from His birth to His resurrection, and in all respects He is what man ought to be and God intended him to be. He is truly man, possessing human spirit, soul and body. His grace is unlimited, as His maiden address indicates available for both Jew and Gentile alike. He was not, however, an ascetic as John was, but 'a friend of publicans and sinners'. He is the Son of Man in His own creation, not presented here, however, as Lord but as 'friend'. He is never out of place in whatever circumstances He is found. He is never irritable, but ever approachable by all. When he died one of the common people exclaimed, 'Certainly this was a righteous man.'

The Gospel is written in an educated style and is not limited by Jewish nationalistic prejudices. The commencement of His

public ministry is set within the framework of world-history, as appears from chapter 3:1 and 2. Luke traces Jesus from Nazareth to Capernaum, from Capernaum to Jerusalem, and in the Acts the same author traces the disciples from Jerusalem to Antioch and from Antioch to Rome. His is thus a 'word-view' of the scope of the Gospel Jesus came to inaugurate.

The birth of the Lord Jesus is recorded in greater detail here than anywhere else, which is as might be expected having regard to Luke's profession as a physician. The word 'must' is characteristic, and the student will find it profitable to trace this throughout the Gospel with the aid of a Greek Lexicon, seeing the word is variously rendered.

Seven godly souls are here presented in vivid contrast with seven of the world's great men in chapters 1 to 3. Further, Luke puts things in pairs by way of *contrast*, as for example when he writes of two debtors, the two sons, the two worshippers, and the two robbers. Prayer is also a theme to which he constantly reverts throughout the book, as the One of whom he writes being so truly a Man of Prayer.

8. *The Design and Structure of John's Gospel.* While it is not easy to trace any clear method or argument in either Mark's or Luke's Gospel, it is quite apparent in Matthew's and John's. John tells us in chapter 20:30, 31, the purpose of his writing. It is to furnish the reader with certain evidence which should lead him to believe that the Man Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, and the Son of God too. He writes to affirm also His dual nature: He is both God and man. Likewise His dual relationship: He is God's anointed and God's Son. In believing this vital truth and reality, one obtains *life*, eternal life, in His name. Such faith is not the product of human reason, for John everywhere in his Gospel shows that human responsibility and divine sovereignty; divine election and man's free will, operate concurrently. Man is responsible to accept, to believe: when he does so it is because God purposed it.

John 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', was a fisherman, but his orderliness is amazing, specially having regard to the fact that he wrote when advanced in years. To him was given the honour of being the most intimate of all with the Lord. Chapters 1 to 12 present the Lord Jesus as He was seen to the public. Chapters 13 to 17 show Him in private among His own. Chapters 18

and 19 furnish another and more tragic view of Him in public. Chapters 20 and 21 present Him among His own again in private. Chapters 1 and 2 respectively deal with His Person and His character. Trace out His many names and titles in chapter 1. Then see Him in the house and in the Temple in chapter 2. What He was indoors He was out-of-doors. There was marked consistency in all His ways and works. Chapters 3 and 4 show Him to be Saviour of men, women and children. Nicodemus was a Jew; the woman was a Samaritan, and the boy a Gentile. Whether religious, wicked, or diseased, all alike found Him sufficient for their individual need. Chapters 5 and 6 go together also; in the former we are shewn the resource and implications of His Deity: in the latter we are reminded of His humanity as the Bread of God come down from heaven. In similar manner chapters 7 and 8; 9 and 10; 11 and 12, are paired. Throughout this section seven miracles which John calls signs are recorded. All required not merely supernatural power to perform, but were in themselves, significant of His glory and of His grace towards mankind, and of His divine origin.

Chapters 13 to 17 reveal the Lord in the privacy of the upper room with His own disciples. He reveals to them the advent of the Holy Spirit, who would ensure the continuance of the work He had inaugurated, and would safeguard the interests of the Lord in the hearts of His people during His absence in heaven.

Then in chapters 18 and 19 we are shewn the sufferings and the death of the Son of God. John has thus far, as it were, taken us through the Tabernacle from the Holiest sanctuary and brought us here to the Brazen Altar. We can view it somewhat as follows: In chapter 1 we are in the Holiest and the meaning of the Ark of the covenant is explained. In chapter 4 we see the Golden Altar of incense, speaking of worship. In chapter 6 it is the Table of showbread, for He was the Bread of God come down from heaven. In chapter 8 we find the Golden lampstand; for He is the Light of the world. In chapter 13 we read of the Laver; and now in chapters 18 and 19 we are at the Brazen Altar, and behold the Lamb of God put thereon. Finally, chapters 20 and 21 again present Him in the privacy of His own company and the commission to evangelize the world is given, and its effects are dispensationally set forth.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that all the foregoing is

in barest possible outline, and it can only be of use to the student who himself pursues the lines of thought indicated, and who by personal and diligent study 'discovers' the book for himself by personal study and prayer.

## THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP AND WORK

A STUDY OF THE DISPENSATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE  
OF JOHN 17

By ROBERT RENDALL (Orkney)

The Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—record outward history: the book of The Acts extends this narration of events. Together, they form an account of God's self-revelation among men, first in His incarnate Son, and later, through the apostles and their successors, in His Spirit. The Gospel of St John not only supplements the history, but interprets it, giving the inward and spiritual significance of the whole movement. The first twelve chapters cover the work of the Son upon earth, and account for the course of events recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: chapters 13 to 17 provide a like commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, showing how the work of God first manifested in the incarnate Son is now continued from heaven through the apostles upon earth. The Gospel of John therefore gives us a conception of God's work in redemption and revelation covering a wide field of time. It has that same breadth of vision, that same sweep of outlook, which characterizes prophecy.

This relation between John's Gospel and those of the Synoptics appears in much detail. Where Matthew and Luke, for example, give in plain narrative the birth of Jesus Christ, John's Gospel treats of the Incarnation. So is it also with the account of the Lord's approaching Passion: Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell of His agony in the garden, when He fell on His face to the ground, and prayed, 'Father, let this cup pass from Me'. John tells how He lifted up His eyes to heaven, conscious of the glorious issues of His work as the incarnate Son, and how He could say in the