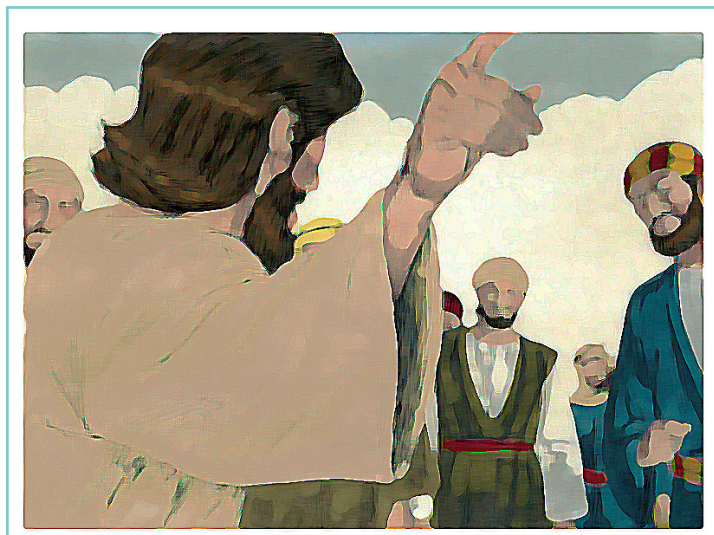


Lesson 5: Identity



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

This story is found at the center point of the three synoptic gospels.

The New Testament: Foreshadow

Throughout the Gospels, we see that not everyone who encountered Jesus knew who he really was. People gathered to listen to him as a Rabbi (teacher). Other came to witness his miraculous signs. Some hoped that he would be a military leader who would drive out the occupying Roman Empire. But Jesus had his own mission, which he revealed only to a few.

Biblical Background

At the halfway point in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, just prior to the story of the Transfiguration, Jesus measured the response of the people by asking who the crowds thought he was. Most considered him a prophet or miracle-worker. But Peter, standing up among the disciples, identified Jesus as “the Messiah, Son of the Living God.” It was at this point that Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem and began to tell the disciples of his coming death on the cross.

Introduction

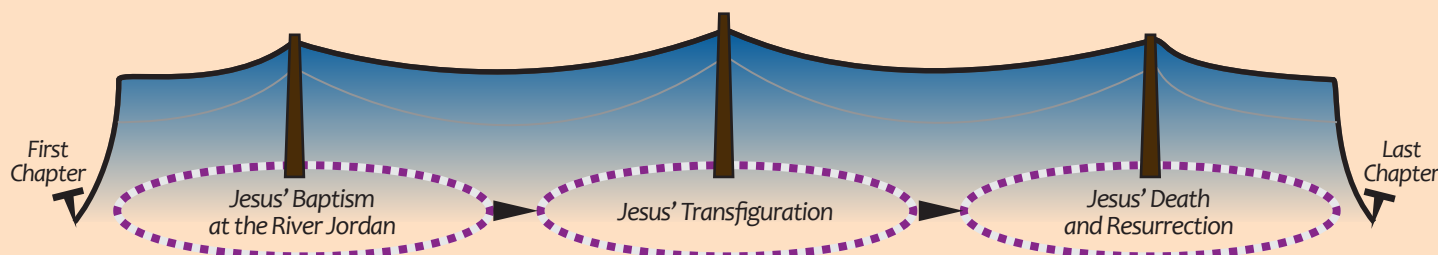
After Jesus had been with his disciples for some time, teaching among the people, he asked the disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They offered several different answers. But then Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” This is the same question that Jesus asks of us as well.

Read: Matthew 16:13-25

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

One way to think about the structure of Jesus’ story in the Gospels is to picture a three-ring circus tent built over three amazing events. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each look at Jesus’ life by following this same basic pattern. At the very center of these books you will find the story of the Transfiguration.



Discuss: Matthew 16:13-25

1. This story serves as a turning point in the narrative. What had Jesus been doing prior to this? After this, what was he focused on?
2. The title “Son of Man” was how Jesus often referred to himself. In a literal sense, how is this an accurate description? Compare Daniel 7:13-14. How is the Son of Man described here?
3. The Jewish people had long awaited the coming of the Messiah — the Christ, the anointed one, the chosen leader who would defeat their enemies. What “enemies” did Jesus actually come to defeat? How was he going to do it?
4. Peter referred to Jesus as “the Son of the Living God.” How can Jesus be a human (son of man) and, at the same time, Son of God?
5. Jesus says that Peter did not come up with the answer on his own. Who revealed this truth to him? When it comes to faith in our own lives, why must God himself make it happen?
6. The “keys of the kingdom of heaven” refers to the power Jesus gave his followers to forgive sins in his name. Why is this a central part of our mission as Jesus’ disciples?
7. What did Peter get wrong about the mission of the Messiah (v. 22)? What did Jesus say *must* happen? Why? What does it mean for us to take up *our* sacrificial cross (v. 24)?
8. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. In what sense do believers share the same fate as Jesus? What promise does Jesus give us in the midst of suffering and loss?

Where in the World?

The map to the far right shows a close-up view of the northern part of the Holy Land, called **Galilee**. This is the region where Jesus did most of his early ministry. Many stories in the Gospels take place on and around the Sea of Galilee.

Draw a line to connect the names of these Galilean towns with the biblical events that took place in them. Use reliable sources to check your answers.

Caesarea Philippi	
Capernaum	where Jesus changed water into wine
Cana	where Jesus raised a widow’s son
Nain	the town where Jesus grew up
Tiberias	city built in honor of the Emperor
Nazareth	where Peter said, “You are the Christ”
	where Jesus first met Peter and Andrew

