

The Four Gospels (Route 66)

All right, let's turn in our Bibles TO... the New Testament... Today we resume our series, called (creatively) "Route 66," wherein we work our way through the ENTIRE BIBLE in about a YEAR-AND-A-HALF...

Now, last year, we covered the OLD TESTAMENT, from February all the way up to DECEMBER... You can FIND all of those studies on our WEBSITE, or YOUTUBE CHANNEL... We've got study guides to go along with each of those books...

And—THIS YEAR, between NOW and the SUMMER—we are going to cover the NEW TESTAMENT...

And, TODAY, we BEGIN... by looking at THE FOUR GOSPELS... And, I hesitate to tell you WHICH particular Gospel to TURN TO... Simply because...

This is gonna be more of a study ABOUT the Four Gospels than a true study "OF" the Gospels, or "THROUGH" the Gospels... just because we don't have the TIME...

So, this MAY be a study where it's actually MORE USEFUL to TAKE NOTES, jot down REFERENCES, look them up LATER...

I suppose, if I HAD to pick a THEME VERSE for today's study, it would come from John's Gospel, Chapter 20, where John says that these things "are written [so] that [we] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing [we] may have life in His name."

John ADDS that "Jesus did many OTHER signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written"... In fact, he says—in Chapter 21...

There are so many "things that Jesus did, which if they were written... the world... could not contain the books that would be written."

So, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE THESE FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS... It's important to remember they are NOT INTENDED to be... a COMPLETE RECORD of EVERYTHING we COULD know ABOUT the LIFE and MINISTRY of Jesus... Don Stewart writes:

"The Gospels are not intended to be a history or biography of the life of [Jesus] in the modern sense of the term. Each author is selective in what he portrays." — BUT...

We do TRUST that—as the Holy Spirit is the One who INSPIRED & AUTHORED Scripture—God has put down everything we NEED to know about the LIFE & MINISTRY of Jesus...

So, this is more of an INTRODUCTION TO—or an OVERVIEW OF—the Gospels...

And—if nothing else—I hope we send you out the door with at least a LITTLE better understanding of... how they RELATE to one another... WHO the authors—and AUDIENCES—WERE... the differing THINGS they emphasize...

And, perhaps you'll discover which one of these Gospels is the BEST ONE for YOU to START with... In case you didn't know, I'm a HUGE FAN of SCRIPTURE...

And, I believe that EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US—young & old—should be spending REGULAR, INTENTIONAL time just READING our Bibles...

And—as BIG of a fan as I am of the OLD TESTAMENT—I'll be the first to admit that it can be DAUNTING... and knowing WHERE to start can be TOUGH to figure out... BUT...

If we'll just FALL IN LOVE WITH JESUS... and MEET HIM... and START THERE... then HE becomes the One Who will DIRECT us—and ILLUMINATE us—as we study our Bibles...

Luke Chapter 24, I think, PICTURES this well... It's AFTER the resurrection, and TWO DISCIPLES are walking along the Road to Emmaus... and they ENCOUNTER Jesus... But—it says—“**their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.**”

But THEN it says that “**beginning at Moses and all the Prophets**”—that's the OLD TESTAMENT... “[Jesus] expounded to them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” – And then we read: “**their eyes were opened and they knew Him...**”

THAT'S what we need... to MEET JESUS... to WALK WITH HIM... and have HIM—BY **HIS** SPIRIT—ILLUMINATE THE SCRIPTURES to us... And the GOSPELS are a GREAT PLACE to START on that journey... Having **SAID** that...

It **IS** difficult to **PRIORITIZE** one Testament **OVER** the other... The Bible Project writes: *“(The gospels) are constantly—and from the first moment—tying the “Jesus story” **back** to the Hebrew scriptures. There isn't a story or teaching about Jesus [in the Gospels] that isn't packed with Old Testament allusion.”* – See, it's ALL BEEN LEADING TO THIS...

EVERYTHING we studied last year—from GENESIS... and the first mention of the “**Seed of the woman**” (the Proto-Evangelium) in Chapter 3, Verse 15...

And the Abrahamic Covenant... to MOSES, and the LAW, the SACRIFICES, the PRIESTHOOD, the TABERNACLE... KING DAVID... the TEMPLE... The Prophecies of Micah, Isaiah, and Psalms... Jeremiah & Ezekiel's descriptions of ‘The New Covenant’ ...

All the way up to **MALACHI**'s **declaration** that God will send “**the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight (says the Lord)... He is coming.**” – That's ALL been LAYING THE GROUNDWORK for **THIS** ... “**GOOD NEWS**” ... the REVELATION of Jesus Christ.

That's what the word "**GOSPEL**" means—GOOD NEWS... In the Greek, it's *euaggelion*... It appears 93 times in the Bible—**ALL OF THEM** in the New Testament. – It's where we get our English words “*evangelist*,” or “*evangelical*.”

It is GOOD, it's EXCITING, it's CELEBRATORY and LIFE-CHANGING because God—in JESUS—is **FULFILLING His PROMISES!**

Now, it isn't that the entire Old Testament is **ABOUT** Jesus ... (I actually think that's a bit of a MIS-NOMER)... There is LOTS in the Old Testament that is **ABOUT** King DAVID or SOLOMON... or MARRIAGE, or WAR and WICKED KINGS... the JUDGES...

It's not that it's all **ABOUT** JESUS... But it's all been **POINTING** to Jesus...

This is why JOHN—in HIS Gospel—BEGINS with: “**In the beginning...**” – It's a very CLEAR ALLUSION to Genesis 1:1... He says: “**In the beginning was the Word... And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.**” – That's JESUS...

“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” – But then, he writes: “**the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father... And of His fullness we have all received... For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. [But] The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.**”

David Guzik writes: “*This remarkable, profound portion [of scripture] is not merely a preface, or...[an] introduction. It is a summation of the entire [Bible].*” – Marcus Dods writes:

“*This description is given in order that we may at once grasp a continuous history [from] an unmeasured past, and the identity of the Person who is Subject of that history*”—JESUS...

Now... having JUST quoted two commentators... (And—according to Jon Courson—“*Some tators are more COMMON than others!*”... That's an old Jon Courson joke)...

I **WILL** TELL YOU that I rely VERY HEAVILY on TWO SPECIFIC RESOURCES this morning... BOTH of them online at **BlueLetterBible.org**... One is the article “*Why Are There Four Gospels,*” by Don Stewart... And the OTHER is:

“*The Gospel According to Matthew, Mark, Luke, [and] John,*” by Dr. J. Vernon McGee...

Now, we're talking about the **GOSPELS** as an ACCOUNT, this morning... There is the **GOSPEL**, which is a MESSAGE... [the Bible makes that CLEAR]...

A GOOD SUMMATION of the Gospel **MESSAGE** can be found in 1st Corinthians Chapter 15... Paul writes: “**I delivered to you... that which I also received... which is of FIRST IMPORTANCE: that Christ died for our sins... according to the Scriptures... and that He was buried, and... rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...**”

This is a MESSAGE which must be **PREACHED**—or PROCLAIMED... and one that must be **BELIEVED**, or RECEIVED... And—in BELIEVING it—one experiences the **SALVATION POWER**—the REDEMPTION—of God... That's why it's GOOD NEWS!

Now, we are talking MORE about the **GOS—PELS**, this morning, as WRITTEN, HISTORICAL **ACCOUNTS**... Not necessarily the Gospel **MESSAGE**... Once again—please REMEMBER—we're not going to cover EVERYTHING...

We're just trying to provide an OVERVIEW... And, we'll really talk MOSTLY about the **GOSPEL WRITERS**... AS WELL AS their INTENDED **AUDIENCES**...

Because UNDERSTANDING THOSE THINGS helps us appreciate **WHAT**—or, perhaps, what they **DIDN'T**—write... Now—**CONTENT-WISE**—the Gospels can be broken-into SEVERAL SECTIONS:

We have the **LINEAGE** of Jesus... There's details about the **FAMILY** of Jesus... The **BIRTH** of Jesus... Not much is written about the **EARLY LIFE** of Jesus (except for ONE INCIDENT at the age of TWELVE)...

We have the **BAPTISM** of JESUS, and the **MINISTRY** of Jesus—which consists of His **MIRACLES, TEACHINGS... PARABLES and HEALINGS**...

His **RELATIONSHIP** with His **DISCIPLES** (and OTHERS close to Him)... His **INTERACTION** with the **RELIGIOUS LEADERS** and **MULTITUDES**...

And it all revolves around the **MISSION** of Jesus—sent BY God to FULFILL OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY... live a SINLESS LIFE, FULFILL the LAW... To then BE BETRAYED...

And His sacrificial **DEATH, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, and COMMISSIONING** of the **DISCIPLES**... Now, that is a **VERY BRIEF ANALYSIS** of the Four GOSPELS...

Forgive the comparison, but... Trying to summarize them **QUICKLY** is like trying to summarize the **STAR WARS** films, or the **LORD OF THE RINGS**... Their **EPIC**!

Incidentally... There **are** OTHER writings that **CALL THEMSELVES**—or **CLAIM** to be “**GOSPELS**”... And—as a PASTOR—I HIGHLY RECOMMEND... **STAYING AWAY** from them...

One author writes: “*These writings are not considered part of the New Testament and are widely regarded as inauthentic by [modern] scholars. They have been deemed as imitations... and are often characterized as trivial, highly theatrical, disgusting, and even loathsome.*”

Sometimes, they're called the **Pseudo-Gospels**, because they have—largely—been PROVEN **NOT** to BE GENUINE... For a few EXAMPLES...

- ‘**The Gospel of Philip**’—compiled in the 4th century, and is really more a collection of sayings, than a narrative...
- ‘**The Gospel of Judas**’—presenting an “alternative perspective” on the role of Judas, portraying him as the hero instead of the villain...
- ‘**The Acts of Peter**’—which includes Peter’s ability to turn himself into a dove... and his encounter with a talking dog.
- ‘**The Infancy Gospel of Thomas**’—portraying Jesus as performing miracles as a Child

And, there’s SEVERAL OTHERS... But we actually have writings from as early as 200 AD where Serapion of Antioch told church leaders NOT to read the ‘Gospel of Peter,’ and condemned it as a forgery. – One author writes:

“The non-canonical gospels... are often said to be the best evidence for the canonical... We have only to compare our New Testament [Gospels]... with other literature of the kind to realize how wide the gulf [is] which separates them.” – “There is no question of anyone’s having excluded [these books] from the New Testament: they have done that for themselves.”

Now, a **COMMON MISCONCEPTION**... that people will OFTEN bring AGAINST the Bible is that the CHURCH... met together at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., and just sort of “decided” what books to put into the Bible... So, people say, “*How can that be trusted?*”

Michael Kruger—who is a Professor of New Testament & Early Christianity—said: “*The concept... is that [Biblical] documents were written [as] just sort of ‘friendly advice’ to the church. And that it wasn’t until the 4th century that the church decided, ‘These are great books. We should make them Scripture...’*”

The PROBLEM IS... It just ISN’T TRUE... I HATE to quote this SOURCE, but... I DO to demonstrate that THIS should be COMMON KNOWLEDGE... But, even Wikipedia states:

“There is no record of any discussion of the biblical canon at the council of Nicea... The main source of [this] idea... seems to be Voltaire,” who was a HUGE CRITIC of the Bible... “*The [earliest source] of this ‘fictitious anecdote’ is the *Synodicon Vetus*, a pseudo-historical account of early Church councils from the ninth century.”*

In other words: It isn’t until the **9th CENTURY**... that a source appears which claims that the church decided the canon of scripture in the **4th CENTURY**... And, it was **POPULARIZED** by a **CRITIC**... (Can anyone say “*Fake News?*”)

The article states: “*Modern scholars reject [this] notion and deem the development of the Christian biblical canon nearly complete... by the time the Muratorian fragment was written.*” – Around 170 AD, which **INCLUDED** all the CURRENT New Testament books except Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, and 3rd John.

In fact, the Chester Beatty Library (in Dublin, Ireland)... Has a FRAGMENT—called **Papyrus 45**—from about the FIRST or SECOND CENTURY AD...which INCLUDES the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—WITH the Book of Acts...

WHICH MEANS... Those FOUR GOSPELS were already being **CIRCULATED TOGETHER... PRIOR** TO the Council of Nicea...

Their website reads: “*This manuscript is the earliest undeniable example of a four-gospel codex... and 30 of the original 112 [pages] survive.*”

In fact, the four gospels **IN** our current Bibles are the **ONLY** Gospels to date from the FIRST CENTURY... All the OTHER (so-called) ‘Gospels’ which I’ve mentioned... all date from MUCH LATER... (which means they COULDN’T have been written by eyewitnesses)...

By the way... Based on the **2 TESTS** that historians use to PROVE THE RELIABILITY of an ancient document, there is more EVIDENCE to support the BIBLE than ANY OTHER DOCUMENT... More than Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Homer, Caesar’s Gallic Wars...

We have over 6,000 COPIES of Greek New Testament texts... We also have over 7,974 manuscripts in Armenian, Coptic, Gothic, Ethiopian, Syriac, Georgian and Slavic... PLUS... over 10,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate dated from the 3rd CENTURY AD...

So, we see the emergence of a BIBLICAL CANON as early as the 2nd CENTURY... (Again, **BEFORE** the Council of Nicea)...

That word “*Canon*” just means “*standard*.” – Bruce Metzger—who is considered the TOP manuscript scholar of the last century—said: “*The Biblical; Canon is a list of **authoritative books**... more than... it is an **authoritative list** of books.*”

MEANING... The AUTHORITY FOR THE BOOKS IN THE BIBLE is **IN THE BOOKS THEMSELVES**... not the **PEOPLE** who said: “*These books belong.*”

So, the ONLY thing that **ANY** of the EARLY CHURCH COUNCILS DID was just **RECOGNIZE** the Books that were **ALREADY ACCEPTED** by the early church...

Now, Dr. J. Vernon McGee writes: “*The question has been asked from the beginning, ‘Why 4 Gospels? Why not 5? Why not 3?’ [And the answer has been given]: ‘Three is not adequate... and five is superfluous, so we have four.’ But there must be a better reason than that.*”

And, he actually advises AGAINST what is often called ‘*The Harmony of the Gospels*’—which is an attempt to TAKE ALL 4 GOSPELS and make them NEATLY FIT **TOGETHER**...

He says: “*You’ve probably heard the story about the lady who went into the shoe store. The clerk... asked, “What size do you wear?” She said, “Well, I can get into a size 4, but 5 is my [actual] size, and since 6 feels... good, I always buy a size 7.” That’s the way they harmonize the Gospels. We do not need a harmony of the Gospels; we need a dis-harmony. There is a vast... divergence among the Gospel records. Each was written for a particular purpose to meet the need of a separate segment of the world population. We need to recognize this and let the Gospels conform to this... pattern. If the Holy Spirit had wanted one Gospel, He would have given us one Gospel. But He gave us four in order that they might meet the needs of mankind.*”

Again... ONE of the “criticisms” that comes AGAINST the Gospels, specifically... is that they DON’T MATCH UP... And BECAUSE of this, they are considered INCONSISTENT, or CONTRADICTIVE of one another... And there’s ALL kinds examples... For instance...

Mark 10:46 says: “As [Jesus] went out of Jericho with His disciples... blind Bartimaeus... sat by the road begging.” – But, Luke 18:35 says: “...it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.”

So, some people will say, “See! One Gospel says He was coming IN to Jericho, the other says He was going OUT of Jericho! That’s a contradiction!” – UNTIL we learn that:

“...in light of [recent]] archaeology, [it was] discovered that by Jesus’ time there were **two cities of Jericho**: the ancient city, and the newer Roman city. [This particular] miracle happened in-between these two cities of Jericho, as He was leaving one and entering the other.”

There’s a GREAT ARTICLE—online—at **Zondervan Academic** where they do a DEEP DIVE into this topic... And, they GIVE THE EXAMPLE:

“If you were to ask a husband and wife what they did last Saturday, you’re going to get different responses. The husband [may] tell you that they worked in the yard, went to the hardware store, and went out for lunch. The wife, on the other hand, might tell you, “We planted rosebushes, talked to our friends Jarrid and Allie (who they ran into at the store), and got into an argument (because the husband ordered a milkshake even though he’s lactose intolerant).” These two stories don’t represent discrepancies; they highlight differences in perspective. For the wife, running into their friends was a bigger deal than going to the hardware store, so she focused on the important point and omitted the other. The husband had already forgotten about the argument, and remembered lunch as a high point. This example represents the differences you expect to encounter with people describing the same event. We run into the same kind of thing with the Gospels... They each focused on some details while ignoring others entirely. On the surface, it’s easy to assume they are contradictory, but... [that’s] not so.”

So, the Gospel of **MATTHEW**—who was one Jesus’ APOSTLES—was written between 70—90 AD... And, it was PRIMARILY WRITTEN to a **JEWISH AUDIENCE**—a person FAMILIAR with the Old Testament...

J. Veron McGee says this represents the **RELIGIOUS PERSON** in the world today... This is why—in Matthew—Jesus is portrayed as the **MESSIAH**, the “**King of the Jews.**”

Don Stewart says: “Matthew records how the promises God made in the Old Testament... are fulfilled in Jesus. [He] begins his book by [outlining] the family tree of Jesus... [and] this genealogy [shows] that Jesus is the rightful heir to the kingdom that was promised to David... It sets the tone for the [rest of the] book, emphasizing Jesus has the credentials to be the Messiah.”

Matthew’s Gospel is considered to be the most STRUCTURED... The phrase “**kingdom of heaven**” appears NOWHERE ELSE in the Bible, but it appears 32 TIMES in the Gospel of Matthew...

Now, the Gospel of **MARK** was NOT written to those who were familiar with the Old Testament... It was written to a **Roman** audience... J. Vernon McGee says represents the **SELF-RELIANT PERSON** in the world today...

It is the most DRAMATIC... and is considered the EARLIEST Gospel account—probably written around 50 AD... it contains more LATIN words & phrases than any other Gospel...

But—considering the audience—Mark's Gospel doesn't open with the BIRTH of Jesus or His FAMILY TREE... It JUMPS-RIGHT-IN with the beginning of His earthly ministry... See, Roman culture was very FAST-PACED...

So Mark's Gospel is the SHORTEST... It's considered a Gospel of ACTION... Jesus is portrayed as a Servant, doing the **JOB** that God sent Him to do. – Once again, Don Stewart writes: "*Mark shows that Jesus got the job done. [His] gospel records more miracles of Jesus.*"

David Guzik adds: "*In this Gospel, Jesus seems [to be] the **busiest**, quickly moving from one event to another. One of the key words in [this] Gospel is '**immediately**,' occurring over 40 times! The emphasis [in this Gospel] is... the DEEDS of Jesus more than the WORDS of Jesus.*"

Even though Mark was NOT one of the **12 Apostles**, it's commonly believed that PETER is relating his eyewitness account to Mark...

LUKE was written to the **GREEK CULTURE**—J. Vernon McGee says this represents the **INTELLECTUALS** of modern society... His is the LONGEST, and most THEMATIC Gospel... It contains the MOST PARABLES of Jesus... Written between 80—100 AD...

Luke STATES HIS PURPOSE with this opening prologue: "**Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.**"

David Guzik writes: "*[These] first four verses... are one sentence in the original Greek. They are... refined, academic, [and] classical [in] style.*" – Don Stewart writes: "*Luke is not writing as an eyewitness but as one... recording eyewitness testimonies.*"

It's commonly believed he interviewed MARY, the mother of Jesus... Which is where he would have received PERSONAL INFORMATION about the BIRTH—and FAMILY—of Jesus...

He writes: "*[Luke] portrays Jesus as the perfect man... He focuses on those events in Jesus' life that stress His humanity. The Greeks in their art and literature were always looking for the perfect man, [and] the Gospel of Luke reveals [Jesus as] that man.*"

Now, these first THREE Gospels are sometimes called the **SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**, because they share a similar perspective... The word "*synoptic*" literally means "*together sight.*"

About 90 percent of Mark's **content** is found in Matthew... 50 percent of Mark appears in Luke. All the parables of Jesus are in the Synoptics (the Gospel of John contains no parables)... And so, there's a lot of **SIMILARITY** between these first three Gospels...

JOHN—on the other hand—**WAS** an Apostle of Jesus... His Gospel is considered to be the **LAST WRITTEN**... It is the most **THEOLOGICAL**... And his audience was the **COMMON MAN**... his emphasis is the **DEITY** of Jesus—that He was the “**Son of God**.”

In fact, John is the **ONLY GOSPEL WRITER** to record all of Jesus' famous “**I AM**” statements... “**I am the Way**”... “**I am the door**”... “**I am the Shepherd**”... “**I am the Light of the world**...”

If anyone tries to tell you that Jesus never claimed to be God, take them to John's Gospel Chapter 8... As Jesus is interacting with the religious leaders, He says: “**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.**”

“**Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”**” – Now, IMMEDIATELY, we read: “**Then they took up stones to throw at Him...**”

David Guzik writes: “*This demonstrates that the religious leaders understood perfectly what Jesus meant. With this dramatic phrase Jesus [was telling] them that He was the eternal God... and they regarded it as blasphemy. They felt He was worthy of death & intended to carry it out at that moment.*” – Don Stewart writes: “*John wanted his readers to exercise faith [in] Jesus.*”

This is why I actually **RECOMMEND** the Gospel of John as a good **STARTING POINT** for **ANYONE** looking to either start reading through the Bible, or—perhaps, **MORE** importantly—**MEET JESUS** for the first time... and just **ENCOUNTER** Him in Scripture...

We actually have **COPIES** of the Gospel of John that we've made available for you, this morning, called “*Living Waters.*” – It's just a **GREAT RESOURCE** to have...

If you already have a Bible—there's no need to take one of **THESE** (unless you **INTEND** to give it out to someone)... Otherwise, leave **THESE**... for those who may **NOT** have a Bible...

But—ONCE MORE, to quote Don Stewart—he says: “*We can sum up the testimony of the Four gospels in [this] manner: In Matthew, Jesus is the Son of David... In Mark, Jesus is the Son of Man... In Luke, Jesus is the Son of Adam... [And] in John, Jesus is the Son of God...*”

And, the Gospels become the **DOORWAY** to the **REST** of the New Testament! – They're like a **LINCHPIN** upon which the **ENTIRE** **SCRIPTURES** **SWIVELS**...

Up to **THIS** point, the **OLD TESTAMENT** has been leading-**UP** to and **POINTING TOWARD** the arrival of the **Messiah**... It's been about the **LAW** and the **PRIESTHOOD** and the **DEVELOPMENT**—and **PRESERVATION OF**—the **Nation of Israel**...

But—in the Gospels—Jesus arrives on the scene... this PROMISED MESSIAH... He FULFILLS the law, and offers **ONE**, FINAL SACRIFICE for the ENTIRE sins of mankind...

He ushers in the **NEW** COVENANT, and pours His Spirit out into the HEARTS of man... He gives BIRTH to this INCREDIBLE NEW WORK called the ‘Church’...

But then, He LEAVES... and He COMMISSIONS HIS DISCIPLES to go INTO THE WORLD and CONTINUE the work which He began with them...

And the rest of the Bible is CONNECTED to the Old Testament—it has it’s ROOTS in the Old Testament... but it’s Jesus Who gives BIRTH to it...

And we IMMEDIATELY see the Disciples carrying-out the work of GOSPEL MINISTRY next week in the “**Book of Acts**,” or the “**Acts of the Apostles**.”— In fact, the OPENING CHAPTER picks-up RIGHT where the Gospels leave-off... It is a very neat **SEQUEL**...

And, I REALLY DO want to encourage you to READ the Book of Acts before next Sunday... It is a FANTASTIC BOOK... One of my personal favorites...

And, I’ll close this morning with THIS quote... It’s been said: “*There are [actually] 5 Gospels... Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, & the Christian... Most people will never read the first 4.*”

MEANING... There are LOTS of people who will never pick-up the Bible and read the historical accounts of Jesus’ birth, life, ministry, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension...

But they should be able to LOOK at us, and see the **LIFE** of someone IMPACTED... CHANGED... SAVED FOREVER—because of the “Good News.”

If you’ve never put your faith in the GOSPEL... this **message “IS the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”**— Don’t leave today without talking to someone MORE about Jesus Christ...

And then, come back next Sunday as ROUTE 66 CONTINUES with the wonderful Book of Acts... Let’s close in prayer as our Worship Team gets into place...