



SESSION EIGHT

## What are the Synoptic Gospels?

1

### The New Testament Books

Synoptic “seeing together”	Matthew Mark Luke John Acts of the Apostles Romans I Corinthians II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I Thessalonians	II Thessalonians I Timothy II Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James I Peter II Peter I John II John III John Jude Revelation
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2

## What is a Gospel?

NOT a biography or “hero story”, NOT a history

NOT a theological or philosophical treatise

( It's about what Jesus *did* as much as what he said )

Gospel = Good News!

Gospels are Proclamations of Faith in Jesus Christ

Written by and for a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Community of Faith

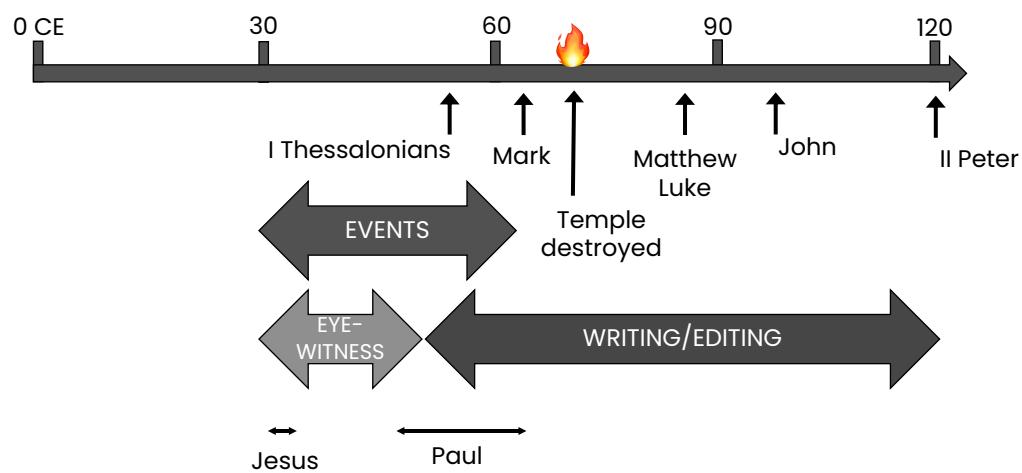
The four canonical Gospels were widely read and respected by many ancient churches. Many other Gospels and Christian writings existed but were not included in the canon.



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3

## The New Testament



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4

## Context of the Gospels

- The gospels were written at a time when many churches had been established throughout the Roman Empire
- Each gospel addresses concerns contemporary to its time and audience
- Common concerns in the mid/late 1<sup>st</sup> Century:
  - Conflict between Jews and Christians
  - Roman persecution of Christians
  - Emerging heresies within Christianity (e.g. Gnostics, Marcion in 2<sup>nd</sup> Century)
- Notorious events
  - 64 CE – fire in Rome and purge of many Christians by Nero
  - 70 CE – Rome destroys the Temple in Jerusalem



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5

## The Synoptic Gospels

Synoptic = “seeing together”

All but 24 verses of Mark appear in Matthew and/or Luke

Earliest gospel by ~30 years

**Mark**

**Q**

Unknown collection of sayings of Jesus

**Matthew**

**Luke**

?

Unknown source(s) Luke used



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6

# Parable of the Sower

## The Parable of the Sower

Mark

**4** Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. **2** He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: **3** "Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. **6** And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. **8** Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." **9** And he said, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"

## The Parable of the Sower

Matthew

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. **2** Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. **3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. **5** Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. **6** But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. **7** Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8** Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **9** If you have ears, <sup>[a]</sup> hear!"



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7

# Parable of the Sower

## The Parable of the Sower

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## The Parable of the Sower

Luke

**4** When a large crowd was gathering, as people were coming to him from town after town, he said in a parable: **5** "A sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed some fell on a path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. **6** Some fell on rock, and as it grew up it withered for lack of moisture. **7** Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. **8** Some fell into good soil, and when it grew it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"



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8

## The Genealogies of Jesus

Mark

No genealogy

Matthew

Genealogy traced back to Abraham

Luke

Genealogy traced back to Adam



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9

## The Gospel of Mark

### Author

Unknown. A Greek writer with Hebrew roots. Traditionally either Mark, an interpreter of Peter but not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry, or by John Mark, a companion of Paul

### When

Around 70 CE. Mark is the earliest gospel, a unique document in ancient literature, and a model for future Christian writings

### Audience

An apocalyptic, Gentile community in early Christianity, likely near Antioch in Syria or perhaps Galilee. Mark was likely the founding document of this community.

### Emphasis

This community likely believed that Jesus was returning very soon, giving an immediacy to the message. Prepare for the new age!

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10

# The Beginning of Mark

## The Proclamation of John the Baptist

**1** The beginning of the good news<sup>[a]</sup> of Jesus Christ.<sup>[b]</sup>

**2** As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,<sup>[c]</sup>

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,<sup>[d]</sup>  
who will prepare your way,

**3** the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight,' "

**4** so John the baptizer appeared<sup>[a]</sup> in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with<sup>[f]</sup> water, but he will baptize you with<sup>[g]</sup> the Holy Spirit."

Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus

There is no infancy narrative

## The Baptism of Jesus

**9** In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. **11** And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved," with you I am well pleased."

11

# The Ending of Mark

Mark likely ended at 16:8

There are no post-resurrection appearances

## The Resurrection of Jesus

**16** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. **2** And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. **3** They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" **4** When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. **6** But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." **8** So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.<sup>[a]</sup>

## THE INTERMEDIATE ENDING OF MARK

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.<sup>[b]</sup>]]

## THE LONG ENDING OF MARK

### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

[[**9** Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. **10** She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. **11** But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

12

## The Gospel of Matthew

<b>Author</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown. A Jewish Christian who knew both Hebrew and Greek. traditionally the apostle Matthew</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matthew reproduces about 80% of Mark; Q</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 90 CE</li> </ul>
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jewish Christians perhaps in Palestine or Syria.</li> </ul>
<b>Emphasis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and the Church as the new Israel. Matthew's gospel is the most critical of the Jewish establishment.</li> </ul>



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13

## Aspects of Matthew

Matthew's language and structure is more complex than Mark's

Each section contains narratives followed by a sermon

Only in Matthew

The Wise Men – Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5-7

Parables of the hidden treasure and pearl – Matthew 13:44-50

Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard – Matthew 20:1-16

Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees – Matthew 23:1-36

Parables of the Ten Bridesmaids – Matthew 25:1-13



The Last Judgment (sheep and goats) – Matthew 25:31-46 [www.glenmarumc.org](http://www.glenmarumc.org)

The Death of Judas – Matthew 27:3-10

14

# The Beginning of Matthew

## The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

**1** An account<sup>[a]</sup> of the genealogy<sup>[b]</sup> of Jesus the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the son of David, the son of Abraham.

**2** Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,<sup>3</sup> and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram,<sup>4</sup> and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,<sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,<sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,<sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>8</sup> and Asaph<sup>[a]</sup> the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah,<sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,<sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos,<sup>[f]</sup> and Amos<sup>[g]</sup> the father of Josiah,<sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

**12** And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel,<sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,<sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,<sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,<sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, who bore Jesus, who is called the Messiah.<sup>[h]</sup>

**17** So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah,<sup>[i]</sup> fourteen generations.

15

# Matthew 23

Matthew reflects tensions between Jews and Jewish Christians

## Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

**23** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,<sup>2</sup> "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat;<sup>3</sup> therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it, but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.<sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,<sup>[a]</sup> and lay them on the shoulders of others, but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.<sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others, for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.<sup>6</sup> They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues<sup>7</sup> and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to have people call them rabbi.<sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters.<sup>9</sup> And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father, the one in heaven.<sup>10</sup> Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you will be your servant.<sup>12</sup> All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

**13** "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!<sup>[c]</sup> For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in you stop them.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell<sup>[d]</sup> as yourselves.

**16** "Woe to you, blind guides<sup>[e]</sup> who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.'<sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred?<sup>18</sup> And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.'<sup>19</sup> How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?<sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it,<sup>21</sup> and whoever swears by the sanctuary swears by it and by the one who dwells in it,<sup>22</sup> and whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

**23** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!<sup>[f]</sup> For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.<sup>24</sup> You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

16

## The Gospel of Luke / Acts

The Gospel of Luke and Acts are a two-volume set!

<b>Author</b>	Unknown. A highly educated Gentile familiar with the literary styles of sophisticated Greek and Roman readers. Traditionally, Luke, a Greek physician and companion of Paul, but not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry
<b>Sources</b>	~35% from Mark, ~20% from Q, about 35% unique.
<b>When</b>	Around 90 AD, perhaps near Antioch in Syria or in Asia Minor
<b>Audience</b>	Gentile (Greek) churches, serious Greek/Roman readers
<b>Emphasis</b>	Jesus' concern for the "least, last, and the lost", and that the gospel is for all people.

17

## (Some) Material Unique to Luke

The "traditional" infancy narrative – Luke 2:1-20

The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:29-37

The Rich Fool – Luke 12:13-21

Healing on the Sabbath – Luke 13:10-17

The Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

The Unjust Manager – Luke 16:1-13

The Rich Man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

18

# The Beginning of Luke

## Dedication to Theophilus

Stylized introduction common in 1<sup>st</sup> Century writings

**1** Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, **3** I, too, decided, as one having a grasp of everything from the start,<sup>[a]</sup> to write a well-ordered account for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4** so that you may have a firm grasp of the words in which you have been instructed.

## The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

**5** In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **6** Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. **7** But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

**8** Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, **9** he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. **10** Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. **11** Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. **12** When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. **13** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. **14** You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, **15** for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. **16** He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." **18** Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." **19** The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. **20** But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

19

# Luke 15

## The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke's language is among the most sophisticated in the Bible  
Luke often arranges material to highlight theological ideas

**15** Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. **2** And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

**3** So he told them this parable: **4** "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? **5** And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. **6** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.' **7** Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

## The Parable of the Lost Coin

**8** "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? **9** And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' **10** Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

## The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

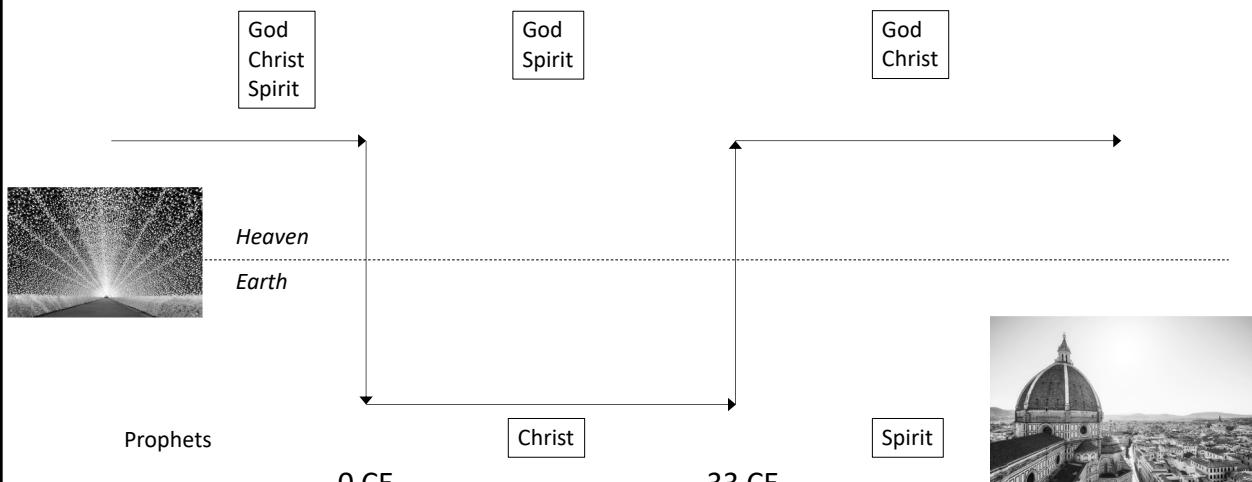
**11** Then Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> said, "There was a man who had two sons. **12** The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. **13** A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. **14** When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. **16** He would gladly have filled his stomach<sup>[b]</sup> with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. **17** But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! **18** I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." **20** So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. **21** Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'<sup>[c]</sup> **22** But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, **24** for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.



20

## Epochs in Luke-Acts

Luke establishes the *ongoing* mission of the Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit



21

## The Central and Common Message

Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:29-31

He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 22:37-40

He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.” And he [Jesus] said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

Luke 10:27-28



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22