



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

KNOWING JESUS

The Life and Ministry of Jesus

A Beginner Guide to Who He Is, What He Taught, What He Did, and Why It Matters

The short answer

Jesus is the eternal Son of God who became human, announced God's kingdom, revealed the Father, welcomed sinners, gave His life for our sins, rose from the dead, and calls people everywhere to trust and follow Him.

“The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14 WEB

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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE

Begin with Jesus Himself

This Companion was not written to replace your Bible. It was written to help you fall in love with it. Every page is intended to send you back into God's Word with greater confidence, deeper understanding, and a clearer picture of Jesus Christ.

Foundational truth

Christian faith is not mainly a list of rules or ideas. It begins with Jesus—who He is, what He accomplished, and His invitation to follow Him (Matthew 11:28–30; John 14:6).

What you will learn

01

Who Jesus is

Meet the Son of God, promised Messiah, Son of Man, Savior, Lord, and King.

02

What Jesus announced

Understand His message about God's kingdom, repentance, faith, and new life.

03

What Jesus revealed

See God's character through His words, compassion, authority, holiness, and grace.

04

What Jesus accomplished

Follow the story toward His sacrificial death, bodily resurrection, and continuing mission.

How to use this guide

Read the listed Gospel passages in your own Bible. Let this overview help you see the path, but let Scripture introduce you to Jesus.



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MEET JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

Four witnesses give one faithful portrait

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the true story of Jesus from complementary perspectives. They select and arrange material for particular purposes, but all proclaim the same crucified and risen Lord.

01

Matthew

Highlights Jesus as the promised Messiah and King who fulfills Scripture. Read Matthew 1:1; 5–7; 28:18–20.

02

Mark

Moves quickly through Jesus' authority, service, suffering, and the cross. Read Mark 1:1; 8:27–38; 10:45.

03

Luke

Emphasizes careful testimony, prayer, the Holy Spirit, compassion, and good news for all people. Read Luke 1:1–4; 4:16–21; 19:10.

04

John

Emphasizes Jesus' divine identity, signs, "I am" sayings, and the gift of eternal life. Read John 1:1–18; 20:30–31.

A helpful reading plan

Begin with Mark for a clear, fast-moving account. Then read John for a closer look at Jesus' identity. Continue with Matthew and Luke to see more of His teaching and the wider biblical story.



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HIS ARRIVAL

The eternal Son entered our world

Jesus' life did not begin at Bethlehem. John identifies Him as the eternal Word who was with God and was God, and through whom all things were made (John 1:1–3). At the right time, He truly became human without ceasing to be divine (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4–5).

The birth accounts show God keeping His promises

- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38).
- He was born in Bethlehem, the city associated with David and the promised ruler (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1–6).
- He was announced as Savior, Messiah, and Lord (Luke 2:10–12).
- He grew in a real family and lived within Israel's covenant story (Luke 2:21–52).

Why the incarnation matters

In Jesus, God came near. The Son shared our humanity, revealed the Father, obeyed where humanity failed, and became able to represent us in His saving death (John 1:18; Hebrews 2:14–18; 4:15).

Memory anchor

Jesus is fully divine and truly human—the eternal Son who came to save.



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PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

The Father identifies His Son

Baptism

John the Baptist prepares the way by calling people to repentance. Although Jesus has no sin to confess, He is baptized to fulfill righteousness and identify with the people He came to save. The Spirit descends, and the Father declares His pleasure in His beloved Son (Matthew 3:1–17; compare Isaiah 42:1).

Temptation

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, where Satan tempts Him. Jesus answers with Scripture and remains faithful. Where Adam and Israel failed under testing, Jesus obeys the Father (Matthew 4:1–11; Deuteronomy 6–8).

01

He identifies with sinners

Jesus enters the waters of baptism without sharing their guilt.

02

He is anointed by the Spirit

His public ministry unfolds in the Spirit's power (Luke 4:1, 14, 18).

03

He is affirmed by the Father

Jesus is the beloved Son before His public works begin.

04

He resists the tempter

Jesus trusts and obeys God's written Word.

Why this matters

Jesus does not merely tell us to obey. He is the faithful Son who obeyed on our behalf and now helps those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).



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HIS CENTRAL MESSAGE

The kingdom of God has drawn near

Jesus begins by announcing, "The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News" (Mark 1:15 WEB). God's kingdom is His saving rule breaking into the world through the King.

What Jesus calls people to do

01	Repent Turn from sin, unbelief, and self-rule toward God.
02	Believe Trust the good news and place confidence in Jesus.
03	Follow Learn from Jesus, obey Him, and let Him reshape every part of life.
04	Receive Enter God's kingdom with humble dependence rather than self-importance (Mark 10:13–16).

Already present—and still coming

God's kingdom was present in Jesus' words, healings, deliverance, forgiveness, death, and resurrection (Matthew 12:28). Its complete public victory still awaits His return (Matthew 6:10; Revelation 11:15).

Beginner memory anchor

The kingdom is God's rule, Jesus is the King, and the right response is repentance, faith, and following Him.



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HIS INVITATION

Jesus called ordinary people to follow Him

Jesus called fishermen, a tax collector, political opposites, doubters, and others to become His disciples. A disciple is more than a listener—it is a learner who stays with Jesus, receives His teaching, and follows His way.

What discipleship looked like

- They left old loyalties and learned to trust Jesus (Mark 1:16–20).
- They watched Him pray, serve, teach, confront evil, and show compassion.
- They often misunderstood and needed patient correction (Mark 8:31–33; 9:33–37).
- They were sent to announce the kingdom and depend on God (Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–20).
- They were taught that greatness means humble service (Mark 10:42–45; John 13:1–17).

Grace before perfection

Jesus did not choose disciples because they already understood everything. He called them to be with Him, transformed them over time, and restored them when they failed (Mark 3:13–15; Luke 22:31–32; John 21:15–19).

For us today

Following Jesus means trusting Him, learning His Word, obeying His commands, loving others, and depending on the Holy Spirit.



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HIS TEACHING

Jesus taught with authority and aimed at the heart

Jesus did not merely add rules. He revealed God's intent, exposed outward religion without inward faithfulness, and called people to wholehearted love for God and neighbor (Matthew 5–7; 22:34–40).

Recurring themes

01	God as Father Jesus taught His followers to trust the Father's care, holiness, generosity, and knowledge of their needs (Matthew 6:5–34).
02	Heart-level righteousness Anger, lust, hypocrisy, pride, and unforgiveness matter because God desires truth within us (Matthew 5:21–48; 6:1–18).
03	Grace for the lost Jesus told stories of a seeking shepherd, searching woman, and welcoming father (Luke 15).
04	Costly discipleship Following Jesus requires surrender, endurance, and allegiance above every competing loyalty (Luke 9:23–26; 14:25–33).
05	Love expressed in action Mercy, forgiveness, enemy-love, generosity, and service reveal a life shaped by God's kingdom.

Read next

Read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 slowly. Ask what each section reveals about God, the human heart, and life under Jesus' rule.



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HIS WORKS

Jesus' miracles reveal His authority and compassion

The miracles are not entertainment or random displays of power. They are signs of Jesus' identity, compassion, and kingdom authority. They also give a preview of the restoration God will complete.

01

Authority over sickness

Jesus heals disease and disability with compassion and power (Mark 1:29–34, 40–45; 2:1–12).

02

Authority over creation

Wind and waves obey Him, and He provides food in the wilderness (Mark 4:35–41; 6:30–44).

03

Authority over evil

Jesus frees people from demonic oppression and demonstrates that God's kingdom has arrived (Mark 1:21–28; Luke 11:20).

04

Authority over death

He raises the dead and announces that He is the resurrection and the life (Mark 5:21–43; John 11:17–44).

05

Authority to forgive

Jesus' healing of the paralyzed man confirms His authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:1–12).

A careful expectation

The Gospels show Jesus' unique messianic authority. Christians may pray boldly for healing while trusting God's wisdom and remembering that complete freedom from sickness and death comes in the resurrection and new creation (2 Corinthians 12:7–10; Revelation 21:1–5).



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HIS HEART FOR PEOPLE

Jesus moved toward people others overlooked

Jesus was perfectly holy, yet people burdened by sin and shame drew near to Him. He did not affirm sin or exploit weakness. He offered truth, mercy, forgiveness, dignity, and a call to new life.

Notice whom Jesus welcomed

- Tax collectors and publicly known sinners (Luke 5:27–32; 19:1–10).
- Women who were suffering, grieving, learning, or serving (Luke 7:36–50; 8:1–3; 10:38–42; John 20:11–18).
- Children whom others treated as interruptions (Mark 10:13–16).
- Gentiles and outsiders who approached Him in faith (Matthew 8:5–13; 15:21–28).
- The poor, sick, disabled, unclean, and socially isolated.

Jesus also confronted

He warned proud religious leaders, exposed hypocrisy, cleansed the temple, and called everyone to repentance (Matthew 21:12–13; 23:1–36). His love is never separated from truth or holiness.

Welcome and transformation belong together

Jesus welcomed sinners without pretending sin was harmless. He offered forgiveness and called people to repent, believe, leave sin behind, and follow Him into a new life (Mark 1:15; Luke 5:27–32; John 8:10–11).

What this reveals

God sees individuals, receives the humble, opposes pride, seeks the lost, and is able to transform lives that others have written off.



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WHO IS JESUS?

His words and works reveal His identity

01	Messiah or Christ Jesus is God's promised, anointed King. "Christ" is a title, not a last name (Matthew 16:13–17).
02	Son of God This title reveals His unique relationship with the Father and, in John, His divine identity (John 5:17–23; 20:31).
03	Son of Man Jesus' favorite self-designation joins true humanity, suffering, authority, and Daniel's promised heavenly ruler (Daniel 7:13–14; Mark 8:31; 14:62).
04	Lord Jesus exercises divine authority and is confessed as the risen Lord (John 20:28; Romans 10:9).
05	Savior He came to seek and save the lost, give His life as a ransom, and take away sin (Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10; John 1:29).

The question every reader must face

Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15 WEB). The Gospels do not allow us to reduce Him to only a teacher, healer, or moral example.

Memory anchor

Jesus is the promised Messiah, divine Son, suffering Savior, risen Lord, and returning King.



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A CLOSER LOOK AT JOHN

Jesus' "I Am" statements

John records several memorable statements in which Jesus uses ordinary pictures to reveal who He is and what He gives. These are not merely inspirational sayings; each one invites us to trust Him.

01	"I am the bread of life" Jesus alone satisfies our deepest spiritual hunger and gives eternal life (John 6:35).
02	"I am the light of the world" Jesus reveals God, exposes darkness, and leads those who follow Him (John 8:12).
03	"I am the door" Jesus is the entrance to salvation and the Shepherd's protecting care (John 10:7–9).
04	"I am the good shepherd" Jesus knows His sheep and willingly lays down His life for them (John 10:11–15).
05	"I am the resurrection and the life" Jesus has authority over death and gives life to those who believe (John 11:25–26).
06	"I am the way, the truth, and the life" Jesus does not merely show a path; He brings us to the Father (John 14:6).
07	"I am the true vine" Spiritual life and fruitfulness come from remaining in fellowship with Jesus (John 15:1–5).

One more important moment

Jesus also says, "Before Abraham came into existence, I AM" (John 8:58 WEB). His hearers recognize this as an extraordinary claim reaching beyond ordinary human existence.



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HIS SAVING MISSION

Jesus deliberately went to the cross

The cross was not an unexpected defeat. Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He would suffer, be killed, and rise again (Mark 8:31; 9:30–32; 10:32–34). He went willingly in obedience to the Father and love for His people.

The final week

- Jesus enters Jerusalem as the promised humble King (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1–11).
- He confronts corruption in the temple and teaches publicly.
- At the Last Supper, He interprets His death through Passover and the new covenant (Luke 22:14–20).
- He prays in Gethsemane and willingly submits to the Father (Mark 14:32–42).
- He is betrayed, unjustly condemned, crucified, and buried.

What His death accomplished

Jesus bore our sins, suffered in our place, defeated the powers of evil, reconciled believers to God, and established the new covenant. Isaiah says the Servant was pierced for our transgressions and that the Lord laid our iniquity on Him (Isaiah 53:4–6). Jesus says He came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Substitution in simple words

Jesus took the place sinners deserved and gave believers a right standing they could never earn. “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21 WEB; see also Romans 3:23–26; 1 Peter 2:24).

At the center

God’s holiness and love meet at the cross. Sin is not ignored; the Son willingly bears judgment so that sinners may be forgiven and brought near.



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HIS VICTORY

Jesus rose bodily from the dead

On the third day, the tomb was empty and Jesus appeared alive to His followers. The resurrection is not a symbol of optimism. It is God's decisive victory over sin and death and the confirmation of Jesus' identity and saving work (Luke 24; John 20–21; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8).

01

Jesus is vindicated

The One rejected and crucified is declared Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:22–36).

02

Forgiveness is proclaimed

Repentance and forgiveness are announced in His name to all nations (Luke 24:46–47).

03

New creation has begun

The risen Jesus is the “first fruits” of the resurrection still to come (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

04

Believers receive living hope

Because He lives, those united to Him will also live (John 11:25–26; 1 Peter 1:3–5).

Ascension and mission

Jesus ascended, reigns at the Father's right hand, poured out the Holy Spirit, intercedes for His people, and will return (Acts 1:6–11; 2:32–36; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). He sends His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20).

The Gospel conclusion

Jesus is alive. His ministry did not end at the tomb, and His followers do not serve only a memory. We belong to the reigning Lord.



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A SIMPLE GOSPEL MAP

Follow the main movements

The Gospels are not modern biographies arranged in exactly the same way, but this map helps beginners see the overall movement of Jesus' earthly life and ministry.

MOVEMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	READ
Arrival	The eternal Son becomes human	Matt. 1–2; Luke 1–2; John 1
Preparation	Baptism and temptation	Matt. 3–4
Invitation	Jesus calls disciples	Mark 1:14–20
Ministry	Teaching, healing, signs, compassion	Matt. 5–7; Mark 1–8
Revelation	His identity becomes clearer	Matt. 16–17; John 1–11
Journey	Jesus moves toward Jerusalem	Luke 9:51–19:27
Saving work	Cross and resurrection	Matt. 26–28; John 18–21

A simple way to read

After each section, ask: What does Jesus reveal about God? What does He reveal about the human heart? What invitation, warning, promise, or command should I notice?

Keep the destination in view

The story moves toward Jerusalem, the cross, and the resurrection. Individual teachings and miracles make their fullest sense within Jesus' saving mission.

Suggested next step

Read one chapter of Mark each day. Record one truth about Jesus, one question, and one response of faith or obedience.



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PART TWO · WANT TO DIG DEEPER? · INTERMEDIATE

Three ways to deepen your study

01

Compare the Gospels carefully

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they share much material and a similar viewpoint. John is more selective and reflective. Differences in selection or order are not automatically contradictions.

02

Trace the kingdom's stages

God's kingdom is promised in the Old Testament, inaugurated through Jesus' first coming, experienced through the Spirit, and completed at His return. This is often described as "already and not yet."

03

Study Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King

Jesus speaks God's final Word, offers Himself and intercedes for His people, and reigns as David's promised King (Deuteronomy 18:15; Hebrews 7:23–28; Luke 1:32–33).

Chronology requires humility

The Gospels provide real historical locations, rulers, festivals, and sequences, but they do not give a complete day-by-day calendar. Some events are arranged thematically, and careful harmonies may differ on details. We should distinguish what Scripture states from a proposed reconstruction.

A major turning point

After Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus begins teaching plainly about His coming suffering, death, and resurrection (Matthew 16:13–28; Mark 8:27–38). The disciples must learn that His kingship is revealed through sacrificial suffering before glory.

Intermediate memory anchor

Jesus' identity, kingdom, cross, resurrection, and mission belong together. Removing one distorts the Gospel portrait.



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REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Meet Jesus in the text

Identity

Which title for Jesus became clearer to me? _____

What passage supports that conclusion? _____

Message and ministry

How would I explain the kingdom of God in one sentence? _____

What miracle or teaching most clearly reveals Jesus' character? _____

How did the Holy Spirit work in Jesus' ministry? _____

Cross and resurrection

Why did Jesus go to the cross? _____

Why does His bodily resurrection matter? _____

Response

What is Jesus inviting me to trust, surrender, learn, or obey? _____

One faithful summary

Jesus is the eternal Son who became human, revealed the Father, announced and demonstrated God's kingdom, died for our sins, rose in victory, reigns as Lord, and calls us to repent, believe, and follow Him.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT INVITATION

Would you like to begin with Jesus?

The Bible's message is good news. God created us to know Him, but every one of us has sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God, and we cannot repair that relationship through good works, religion, heritage, or effort.

God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived without sin, died for our sins, and rose from the dead. Through Him, God offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life as a gift of grace (Romans 5:6–8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Ephesians 2:8–9).

How do we respond?

01

Turn toward God

Repentance means turning from sin and self-rule toward God. It is not becoming perfect before you come to Him (Acts 3:19).

02

Believe in Jesus

Trust that Jesus is Lord and that His death and resurrection are sufficient to save you (John 3:16; Romans 10:9–10).

03

Call on Him

Confess your need, place your trust in Jesus, and ask Him to forgive and lead you. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13 WEB).

A prayer can express your faith

Jesus, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn to You, ask for Your forgiveness, and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Help me follow You and grow in Your Word. Amen.

A prayer is not a magic formula—the words themselves do not save us. Jesus saves everyone who truly comes to Him in faith. If you have trusted Christ, begin reading His Word, tell another faithful Christian, connect with a Bible-believing local church, and learn about baptism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:38–42).