
The BBI BULLETIN

Training Workmen That Need Not Be Ashamed

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Berean Bible Institute, Inc. admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Institute Update

In every generation the greatest need is for young men and women who will stand up and take the place of those Ambassadors of Christ who have been diligently laboring “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery” as they pass off the scene. And this is the very purpose for the existence of *Berean Bible Institute*. *BBI* began with a balanced program designated to provide the foundational Bible education and ministry training needed to equip *dedicated* individuals to be effective in the work of the ministry of the Gospel of the Grace of God. Our goal is to continue to improve *BBI* to make it as effective as possible in carrying out its purpose of ministry. This means a proper balance between academics and application. We want to equip able ministers of the Gospel who will not be shipwrecked on the “shores of academics,” run aground in the “fog of error,” stranded in the “shallows of compromise,” or be sunk in the “depths of extremism.” Instead they will, by the *proper application of sound doctrine*, be able to safely navigate the “seas of confusion” over which “every wind of doctrine” blows, and that they might teach others how to follow the “course of truth” also.

We have no unrealistic expectations of producing *super ministers* who will immediately set the world on fire. But we do expect, by God’s grace, all *sincere* students who take advantage of *BBI*’s program in order to equip themselves, to develop into balanced ministers of God’s Word *rightly divided*, to learn through their mistakes, grow through their trials, and to be there *over the long run*. Ambassadors of Jesus Christ who will, in the years to come, serve as the guardians and propagators of that most *precious deposit*, the message of God’s Grace in Jesus Christ as revealed to and through the Apostle Paul. Here at *BBI* our goal is to train faithful ministers of God’s Word who in turn “*shall be able to teach others also*” (see II Tim. 2:1-2). With God’s help we are laboring towards this goal.

(continued on page 4)

The Four Gospel Records of Christ's Life and Ministry

By Dr. W. Edward Bedore

Introduction

The first four books that are found in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), are most commonly referred to as the Gospels. Our English word *gospel* is derived from the Anglo-Saxon term “god spell,” which meant *good tidings* or *good news*. This word is used as a literal translation of the Greek word *ευαγγελιον* (evangelion) which also means *good news*. Since these four books record the history of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ while He was on earth, the term *Gospels* has been applied to them. This is because the Good News of God’s provision for the redemption of lost sinners is dependent on His life, death, and resurrection from the dead, and there is no salvation available to anyone other than through His blood, therefore the story of His life is Good News. Nevertheless, there has been some confusion over exactly what the message of these books is, why they were written, and who they were originally written to. In other words, exactly what is the Good News that is proclaimed in them, why was the Good News proclaimed, and who was this Good News proclaimed to? Hopefully we can shed some light on these important matters as we also answer the question “How do the Gospel Records of Jesus Christ’s life and ministry relate to the present Dispensation of Grace?”

A most interesting title that is applied to the Promised Messiah in the Old Testament is “The Branch (literally ‘a shoot’),” which speaks of both His heritage and the new life that He provides. Others have noted that this title has a fourfold application in reference to the identity and work of the Messiah that characterizes the four Gospel Records.¹ Our purpose here is to look at the different characteristics of Jesus Christ and His ministry that the title *The Branch* emphasizes in regard to His genealogy and different prophetic offices.

So, as we shall see, the four Gospel Records of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on earth present us with four different aspects or characteristics of who He was and is. While each of the four accounts confirms and reinforces all four of these distinct and important characteristics, each one especially emphasizes one particular characteristic of the prophesied **Branch**.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

The Gospel Record of Matthew

Matthew presents the Person of Jesus Christ as the Promised **Righteous King** of Israel, who is “*the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*” (Matt. 1:1).

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15; Isa. 11:1 cf. Zech. 6:12-13).

The genealogy of Jesus Christ given in Matthew traces His lineage down to His adopted father, Joseph, from Abraham through Solomon showing Him to be the legal heir, not only to David's throne, but also to the Covenants of Promise given to Abraham, who is the father of the nation of Israel. It is upon this promise to make Abraham a great nation that all the Covenants of Promise to national Israel are founded (see Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-18; 17:15-16; 20-21). Special attention is given to Christ's relation to David the king (Matt. 1:1,6-7,17), because God has promised to establish the “throne of David” forever with David's heir, his greatest Son, ruling over the Messianic Kingdom (II Sam. 7:1-17; Jer. 33:14-15).

The Gospel Record of Mark

Mark presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the **Perfect Servant** of God; “**...For behold, I will bring forth My Servant, the BRANCH**” (Zech. 3:8; 6:12).

The service of God belonged to the Levites and priests of Israel, but Christ came as the ultimate High Priest of a new order, the order of Melchizedek of which no genealogy is required (Heb. 6:19-7:11 ff), hence no genealogy is given in Mark's record of Christ's earthly ministry. He is seen entering into the earthly ministry of service He was called to without any introduction or information about rights of inheritance being given. This narrative moves along swiftly with the words “straightway,” “immediately,” and “forthwith” being used often, giving note to the fact that this **Perfect Servant** was continually and ardently serving God.

“And speak unto him, saying, 'Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both'” (Zech. 6:12-13).

The Gospel Record of Luke

Luke gives the picture of Christ Jesus as the **Perfect Man**; “**...Behold the Man whose name is the Branch...**” (Zech. 6:12).

Instead of going from Joseph back through Solomon, Luke traces Jesus Christ's genealogy through Heli, His mother Mary's father, back through David's son Nathan and on to Adam, the first man. This Man, sent by God, is the Son of Man who descended through the family of Israel. He came in fulfillment of the promise given of a Prophet greater than Moses who would one day come to speak to God's chosen nation.

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deut. 18:18).

“And he said unto them 'What things'? And they said unto him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people'” (Lk. 24:19).

Thus the **Perfect Man** came as God's Supreme Spokesman to the nation of Israel. “The Man” will be a Priest-King and the Counselor (spokesman), who will speak on behalf of both of these mediating offices, the One who will pronounce judgment and offer the way of salvation (deliverance) and entrance into God's Messianic Kingdom of Peace on Earth (see Zech 6:12-13). He is also Israel's “near kinsman” and all of mankind's kinsman as His genealogy goes back through Jacob, Isaac, Abraham and beyond to the first man, Adam. As such, He has the right to redeem not only Israel, but the whole world. As the Son of Man He also has the right to rule the world, and one day He will return to earth to claim that which is His (Lk. 23:66-69; Matt. 26:62-64; Mk. 14:61-62 cf. Dan. 7:13-14; Ps. 2:1-12).

The Gospel Record of John

John reveals and exalts Jesus Christ as the **Son of God**; “**In that day shall the Branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious...**” (Isa 4:2).

One day the Messiah will appear in all of His splendor and power. Of this day the prophet Isaiah tells Israel “**...Behold your God!**” (Isa. 40:9).

The genealogy given in this record of Jesus Christ is that of the **BRANCH** from God who has forever existed with God.

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1-2,14).

Not one son of Adam could be found who was worthy to claim the right to fulfill the prophecies made concerning the Redeemer of national Israel. So God Himself sent His own Son as the *Promised Messiah*, who is the **RIGHTEOUS KING**; the *Servant of God*, who is the **HIGH PRIEST** without sin; the *Perfect Man*, who is the **GREATEST PROPHET** of all; as the *Son of God*, who is the **RIGHTFUL HEIR** of all things in heaven and earth, for He, is the **CREATOR HIMSELF**, as it is written:

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (Jn. 1:3 cf. I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3).

Understanding the Gospel Records of Jesus Christ's Earthly Ministry

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John contain the history of what Jesus Christ did and said during His life on earth. They are not a complete history of His life, but record all that is necessary to understand who He was, why He was here on earth, what He accomplished in His life's work, the exalted position He holds today, in regards to the promise of His future return to earth. Of course, these books do not stand by

themselves, but give substance to the types and shadows of the Old Testament. Christ's earthly ministry was prophetic in nature and the historical record of it is not as much revelation as it is "realization." Jesus Christ is the reality of prophecy fulfilled and the guarantee of the fulfillment of God's promises for the future.

The four Gospel Records were all written primarily for the Jews, not as is commonly taught Matthew for the Jews, Mark for the Romans, Luke for the Greeks, and John for Christians. The Old Testament prepares the way for Christ and the Gospel Records tell of His manifestation to Israel, God's chosen people. From the time of Moses, the prophets of Israel had told of a coming Redeemer Messiah. In the Gospel Records Jesus of Nazareth is revealed to be the Promised One (Jn. 1:29-32,40,45,49).

It had been 400 years or more since God's servant, the prophet Malachi, had spoken his "burden" (prophecy) against Israel. And now Israel was under the yoke of Rome and looked for the Promised Messiah to deliver them and restore the kingdom as it had existed in the days of David and Solomon. More precisely they looked for the Promised Son (descendant) of David who would come as a mighty conquering King and restore Israel to a place of prestige and glory among the nations of the world. A Righteous King who would execute perfect justice on earth (Jer. 23:5-6).

There is no record of God speaking from Heaven to anyone from the time of Malachi until He sent an angel to announce the coming birth of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:5-14) who would be the forerunner who would introduce the Messiah to Israel (Lk. 1:76-77; Matt. 3:1,11-13; Jn. 1:19-31). Now the time had come for God to visit His people. But this time it would be different. He would not be speaking to them through His servants, the prophets, but through His own Son who would take upon Himself the form of flesh. He became a man and actually lived among God's people, Israel. The Living Word of God would Himself speak to Israel as God's greatest Servant, the Prophet who would supersede even Moses (Deut. 18:15-19 cf. Jn. 1:1-4 [1-18]; Heb. 1:1-4).

That many in Israel were looking for the Messiah, the Promised One, becomes evident as one studies the historical records of Jesus Christ's earthly life and ministry. However, there are differences found in the four Gospel Records of Christ's life. The differences found in these four records of His life and ministry are not contradictory to each other, but are complementary. That is they each reinforce the validity of the others while emphasizing a particular aspect of Christ's life and ministry.

From the time of Daniel, when the Jews were carried to Babylon in the first captivity (605 B.C.), Judah had been in servitude to various Gentile powers, except for a period of about 100 years of "conditional independence" under the Hasmoneans. The hope of Israel was for the 12 tribes to be reunited under one Righteous King who would cause God's will to be done on earth when the Lord God Himself would dwell among His people Israel.

Because of Israel's rebellion God had sent prophet after prophet to bring a message of impending judgment on His chosen people. And this was always followed with a message of hope. A message of future renewal and blessing on the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel. That Jesus Christ understood that His mission was to reign as God's Anointed over Israel can hardly be denied considering His many statements to that effect. But neither can it be denied that He understood that He must first suffer and die for their sins in order to accomplish His mission.

It was not merely the circumstances of His life and ministry that caused Him to predict His coming death. Although the opposition to Him by the religious leaders of Israel made it very likely that He would pay with His life if He persisted, it was a matter of far greater certainty that caused Jesus Christ to flatly announce that He would suffer and die. He taught ***"That the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Elders, and of the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again"*** (Mk. 8:31 cf. Matt. 26:54; Lk. 13:3; 17:25). The key is that He "must" suffer. Why? because "it is written" (Mk. 9:12; 14:21 cf. Mk. 14:49; Matt. 26:54; Lk. 18:31). Christ came to fulfill the Scriptures even though those who followed Him misunderstood exactly how He would do so. They simply overlooked the fact of Messiah's suffering in favor of His Glory in the coming Messianic Kingdom (cf. Matt. 11:1-6; Lk. 24:13-21).

Of great importance to understanding the Gospel Records is understanding that Jesus Christ lived under the Mosaic Law and that His ministry was in accordance to specific prophecies found in the Old Testament. He came as the Promised King, Priest, and Prophet of Israel!

The only way the Gospel Records of Christ's life can be properly understood is by reading them as a continuation of the Old Testament and not reading the epistles of the Apostle Paul back into them. This is vitally important because the Dispensation of Grace was still a "mystery" hid away in the mind of God during the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ to Israel. We must always remember that the mystery, or secret, doctrines of the Dispensation of Grace were not made known to anyone until the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ revealed them to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 3:1-11; Gal. 1:11-12; Rom. 16:25-27; etc.). But yet, at the same time, we must never forget that the wonderful message of salvation by grace through faith, that today is being offered freely to both Jew and Gentile without national distinction, is only possible because of Christ's finished work of redemption as recorded for us in the Gospel Records. Jesus Christ's sacrifice of Himself for sins was *once and for all*.

¹ Bullinger, E.W., *The Companion Bible*, KJV (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 1990) page 1304.

Baker, C.F., *A Dispensational Synopsis of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grace Publications, 1989) page 15.

Mail Received At Box 40



FROM WISCONSIN:
“Here’s a check to help out. My prayer for *BBI* is that it will always be true to the Gospel Paul preached and Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery.

Also that the Lord will keep it going until He returns for His Church. May *BBI* be used to train many for the ministry.” (Amen, this is our prayer too, and hopefully the prayer of all those who love the Grace message, Dr. B.).

FROM INDIANA:

“I am very interested in attending the *Berean Bible Institute*. Please send me the latest information pertaining to the School. I feel that I have been called to be a pastor and I believe *BBI* is the best way to go.”

FROM ILLINOIS:

“Just a note to let you know we haven’t forgotten you! We pray for you and the School often. Thanks for the wonderful work you are doing.”

FROM WASHINGTON:

“Again we have the privilege and opportunity to pray for *BBI* and render some material support. Your ministry at *BBI* is in our thoughts and prayers as we know how important is the spiritual impact on those young minds that, through the Holy Spirit, you are molding and preparing for a lifetime of service to the Lord.”

FROM OHIO:

“May *BBI* continue to grow and flourish to the glory of God is in my prayers.”

FROM COLORADO:

“We hope everything is going well with you and your School. And that you have graduates with a good understanding of God’s Word rightly divided.” (We work hard towards this end, Dr. B.).

FROM FLORIDA:

“We really are rejoicing that your School is training men and women to go into the ministry with the Gospel of Grace. Praise His name!”

FROM ARIZONA:

“We need more Grace ministers to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Keep up the good work.”

FROM NORTH CAROLINA:

“The Lord has laid on our hearts to give a little each month to your ministry as He enables us.”

FROM PENNSYLVANIA:

“Enclosed is a check to help out. I am in hopes that one day soon I will attend. But in the meantime I will help others to further the cause for Christ’s sake.”

(continued from page 1)

Institute Update

Please pray for this ministry. Pray for strength and wisdom for the faculty and staff of *BBI*, pray for endurance for the students of *BBI*, pray for adequate financial support for *BBI*, and pray for more students who are willing to make the sacrifices necessary to properly prepare for the ministry. And I want to thank each of you who have been co-laborers with us through prayer and financial support. It is appreciated tremendously.

Although *BBI* is funded partially by tuition from its students, it is a “faith ministry” which is primarily supported by the free-will love gifts of those of “like precious faith” who believe that the work *BBI* is doing is important. So if you have not already done so, I would like to invite you to “prayerfully” consider becoming a co-laborer through regular monthly support of *Berean Bible Institute*.

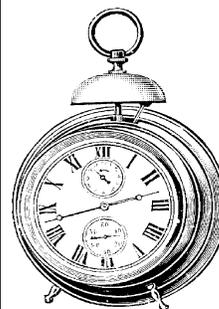
Yours, in Christ’s service,

Dr. W. Edward Bedore,
Executive Director

The *BBI Bulletin* is the official newsletter of the *Berean Bible Institute Inc.* It is published quarterly and is sent free of charge to any who request it.

*Only one life;
’twill soon be past.
Only what’s done for
Christ will last.*

THE CLOCK



The clock of life is wound but once,
and no man has the power to tell
just when the hands will stop
at late or early hour.

To lose one’s wealth is sad indeed.
To lose one’s health is more.
To lose one’s soul is such a loss
that no one can restore.

—Selected