



# Gospel Portraits

DISTINCTIVE THEMES, STYLES, CHRISTOLOGIES,  
AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CANONICAL GOSPELS

# “As I Search the Holy Scriptures” (hymn no. 277)

1. As I search the holy scriptures,  
Loving Father of mankind,  
May my heart be blessed with wisdom,  
And may knowledge fill my mind.

2. As I search the holy scriptures,  
Touch my spirit, Lord, I pray.  
May life's myst'ries be unfolded  
As I study day by day.

3. As I search the holy scriptures,  
May thy mercy be revealed.  
Soothe my troubled heart and spirit;  
May my unseen wounds be healed.

4. As I search the holy scriptures,  
Help me ponder and obey.  
In thy word is life eternal;  
May thy light show me the way.

# The Four Gospels



- **How are the gospels related?**
  - Mark and John do not seem to know of the others
  - Matthew and Luke seem familiar with Mark
  - Luke may have known Matthew
- **Harmonizing vs. Individual Approaches**
  - A harmony attempts to blend the four canonical accounts to give a comprehensive account of Jesus' ministry and teachings
  - However, a consistent chronology is almost impossible to establish
  - **Harmonizing obscures the individual way that each gospel organized its material and emphasized its themes**
    - Still, for this purpose of this class we will sometimes harmonize
    - **Generally we will look at one account, often Mark, the earliest, and note parallels—or—we will select important unique elements of each gospel**
- **Traditional symbols of the Four Evangelists or gospel authors**
  - Taken from the four beasts of Revelation 4:7 (cf. Ezekiel 1 and 10)
  - **Matthew=Human/Angel; Mark=Lion; Luke=Ox; John=Eagle**
    - These were not always consistent, however (see [http://myweb.lmu.edu/fjust/Evangelists\\_Symbols.htm](http://myweb.lmu.edu/fjust/Evangelists_Symbols.htm))

## Rel A 250: Jesus Chri

Eric D. Hun

- JCWNT *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*
- JWOT *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament*
- GSLW *Huntsman, God So Loved the World*
- GTGJ *Huntsman, Good Tidings of Great Joy*
- MJ *Huntsman, The Miracles of Jesus*

The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles  
 Historical Background of the Hebrew Bible. . .  
 Background of the Greek New Testament. . . .  
 Course Introduction; What Is the “Gospel” of Jesus Christ?  
 Huntsman, “Teaching through Exegesis” . . . . .

### Types and Anticipations in the First Century

Creation, Fall, and the Need for Redemption  
 Abraham and the Covenant (*JWOT*, 51–57, 84–90)  
 Saving God’s People (*JWOT*, 62–69, 84–90)  
 Mothers and Sons, Prophetesses and Deliverers  
 Royal Psalms (*JWOT*, 228–29, 233–36) . . .  
 Immanuel and the Suffering Servant in Isaiah  
 The Son of Man in the Hebrew Bible (*JWC*)

### The Mortal Ministry. . . . .

Gospel Portraits (Strathearn and Judd; Huntsman)  
 Son of David (Huntsman, *Ensign*, *GTGJ*, 3)  
 Promised Savior (Huntsman, *Ensign*, *GTG*)  
 Miracles of Jesus (Huntsman, *MJ*, 1–5, 65–70)  
 Sermon on the Mount (*JCWNT*, 71–72, and



# The Distinctive Testimonies of the Four Gospels

## Appendix

Judd Jr.

## THE GOSPELS AS SOURCES, A CHRONOLOGY, AND SYMBOLISM

*These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

—John 20:31

Judd Jr. and Frank E. Judd Jr.  
 Professors of ancient scripture at BYU.

Understanding a few issues will help us better appreciate both the events of the last week of Jesus’ life in mortality and the way the scriptures present them to us. The first issue is about sources, because knowing some basic features of the four Gospels helps us prepare better for Easter and increases our testimonies of Jesus Christ and his mission. The second centers on chronology. Christians commonly refer to the last week of Jesus’ mortal life as Holy Week, and in many traditions specific events are associated with and commemorated on each day of the week leading up to Easter Sunday. The final issue consists of symbolism that teaches important doctrinal points about Jesus as the Messiah, or “anointed one,” emphasizing not only who he was but also what he came to do.

Mark, Luke, and John generally use this method to reconstruct the life of Jesus from the gospel accounts and hypothesizing a common thread: Tatian, an early Christian, attempted to create one single harmony, the Diatessaron, which was very influential in Syria during

### JESUS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

To better understand and appreciate who Jesus was and what he did in the final week of his life, it is important to know how he is depicted in the four Gospels; however, approaches to using the



# The Gospel according to Mark

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“Few any longer doubt the pivotal place of the Gospel of Mark not only in the coming forth of the other records of Jesus’ ministry but also in the transmitting of the essential message of Jesus’ messiahship . . . It is the record closest to the ministry, both in time and in tone.” (S. Kent Brown, *The Gospels* [SS5], 61)

# Marcan Authorship

- **Like all the gospels, Mark is formally anonymous**
  - *It does not say anything directly about the author*
  - Internal evidence does give clues, however: **the author was probably Jewish**: knew Jewish customs, the Aramaic language, and was familiar with Jerusalem (though not necessarily with the rest of the Holy Land)
- **Early Christian sources are unanimous that a “Mark” was the evangelist**
  - Papias (early 2nd century): “**Mark**, indeed having been **the interpreter of Peter**, *wrote accurately, although not in order*, all the he recalled of what was either said or done by the Lord . . . He followed Peter, who used to adapt his instructions to the needs [of the moment or audience]” (Euseb. EH 3.39.15-16)
    - **Kērygma, or apostolic preaching, as source; Peter as authority**
    - Mark’s structure follows **Peter’s speeches** in Acts: **baptism, ministry, focus on Passion and resurrection**
  - References in other post-biblical Christian sources (“patristic” sources) all agree an author named **Mark**
  - Usually assumed to be the **John Mark** of Acts 12:12, 25; 15.37–39; sometime companion of Paul (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24) and Peter’s companion in Rome (1 Pet. 5:13)

# Audience and Date

- **Internal evidence: written for a western Gentile audience**
  - Unfamiliar with Jewish customs, Aramaic terms, and Palestinian geography
  - Pervasiveness of Latin terms and Roman customs
  - Concerned with opposition, civil upheaval, and the possibility of failure in the face of persecution
- **Patristic evidence**
  - In Rome after Peter's death c. A.D. 64 (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.1)
  - In Rome before the execution of Peter, who read and reviewed it (Clement of Alexandria = Euseb. *EH* 6.14.6-7)
- **Suggested audience: Rome or Italy in the late 60's**
  - Christians had suffered persecution in the capital after the A.D. 64 fire
  - Earliest written of the gospels, although authorities from Irenaeus to Augustine thought that Matthew had come first
    - *Modern studies suggests that Mark was a source for Matthew and Luke*

# Structure of Mark: “A Drama in Three Acts”

- Heading (1:1, **introduction**)
- Prologue (1:2–13, **dramatic episodes**)
- **Act I: Authoritative Mission in Galilee (1:14–8:30)**
  - Starts with the *baptism* that preceded the opening of the formal ministry
- **Act II: On the Road to Jerusalem (8:31–10:52)**
  - *The passion predictions begin: “the shadow of the cross falls across the narrative”*
- **Act III: Climax in Jerusalem (11:1–16:8)**
- ***Note the geographic and thematic, not chronological, progression***



# Marcan Christology

## *The Person, and Personality, of Jesus*

- **Son of God**

- Jesus is ***pronounced the Son of God at his baptism***: “. . . Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Mark 1:11); **adoption christology**
- Mark notably lacks an infancy narrative
- Mark is emphasizing that Jesus’ sonship is best evidenced by ***his Father’s approval*** and by ***the authoritative mission that follows***, particularly as witnessed by his powerful deeds

- **Man, and Teacher, of Nazareth**

- The Marcan Jesus is ***a real, human figure***—good and wise to be sure but a man of passions and human feelings
- His teaching fits the context of ***a rural preacher, a man of the people***
- ***But his miracles in particular set him apart as God’s servant***

- **Sacrifice**

- The powerful Son of God figure becomes ***the powerless sacrifice***, descending below all things

- **Risen Lord**

- ***The empty tomb scene and the angel’s testimony***
- Post-resurrection appearances? [manuscript difficulties make these uncertain]

## Not that I would try to characterize the Marcan Jesus . . .



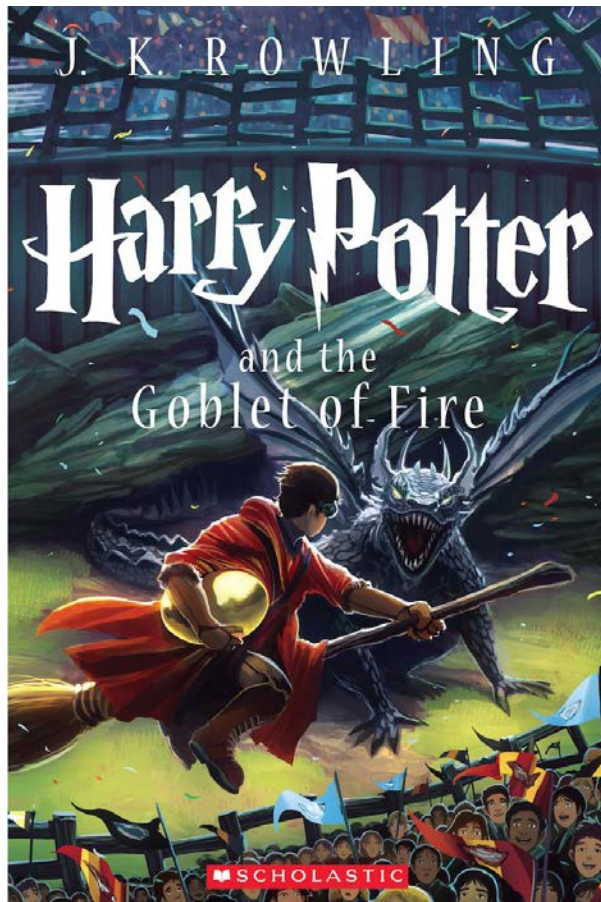
- but if I did . . .
  - It would be the John Wayne Jesus!
  - A good, strong man, occasionally rough around the edges!

# Marcan Christology

## *The Work, and Works, of Jesus*

- Emphasis in the ministry is on **deeds**—in particular miracles and signs—that demonstrate that he is the Son of God come to usher in the kingdom
  - **Healings** are closely associated with forgiveness of sins, making them types of greater, spiritual healing
  - **Casting out demons** is portrayed as overthrowing the kingdom of Satan
- Even though **the glorious, final coming of the Lord** remains in the future, hints are given in strong **eschatological language**, images of rent heavens (e.g. at baptism and Transfiguration), and Jesus' final prophecies regarding Jerusalem (the “**Little Apocalypse**” of Mark 13)
- Overall the focus is on **the suffering and death of Jesus** which brought salvation

# Not that I would characterize the Marcan Gospel . . .



- but if I did . . .
  - It would be the Harry Potter gospel!
  - Fast-moving, exciting, and full of powerful deeds and magic!

# The Gospel according to Matthew

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Rembrandt, "The Evangelist Matthew  
Inspired by an Angel"

“More than any other book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew has defined the shape and contours of Christianity. With its inclusion of the Sermon on the Mount and its development of a church separate from Judaism, the author of the Gospel of Matthew paved the way for the first’s Gospel’s eventual dominance in church history.”

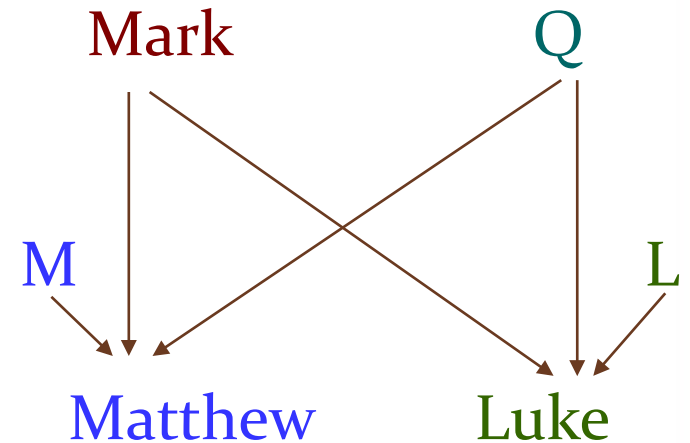
(Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*, 62)

# Matthean Authorship

- Like the other gospels, **Matthew is anonymous**; the superscription is late
  - The JST, however, does not correct it (other than changing “gospel” to “testimony”)
- **Indirect evidence from the text itself**
  - *A conservative-minded Jew, perhaps a scribe, well-trained in Jewish law and texts*
  - Does not seem to be a translation from Hebrew or Aramaic, but a composition originally in Greek; often corrects Mark’s Greek!
  - *Has apparent connections with Mark and Luke, producing the so-called “Synoptic Problem”*
    - “Synoptic” means the same point of view and refers to the similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke (more below)
- **Postapostolic evidence (patristic references) identifies the author as “Matthew,”** assumed to be Matthew the tax collector (publican) who was called as one of the Twelve
  - Matthew 9:9, 10:3 ; this figure is identified with Levi of Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27

# Composing Matthew

- Matthew and Luke largely follow Mark's order of events, *but both include "sayings," large passages of discourse, not found in Mark*
  - **Two-Source Theory** suggests that Matthew and Luke both used **Mark** and another, now-lost, **body of sayings of Jesus** called "**Q**" (from the German *Quelle* for "source")
  - This is only a theory!
- Matthew and Luke each have some unique material, called "**M**" and "**L**" respectively
  - **Matthew = Mark + Q + M**
  - **Luke = Mark + Q + L**
  - *But why in particular would Matthew wait for Mark to publish his gospel before writing his own?*



# Audience and Date

- Probably **a mixed Jewish and Gentile audience**
  - **Jewish interests**, particularly the use of Jewish scriptures and the *fulfillment of OT prophecies dominate*
    - Role of *Jesus as Lawgiver*
  - **Gentiles** are frequently included and symbolized (as with the *Magi* or the centurion at the foot of the cross)
    - *Jesus as Bringer of Salvation* (important theme in Hellenistic and Roman period)
- Use of Greek suggests **an audience in the Diaspora**
- Date: **probably post A.D. 70 (destruction of the temple)**
  - Matthew has a clearer idea of how Christ's prophecies of the destruction were played out than Mark (see Matthew 21:13 and 22:7)
  - Focus on conflict with the Pharisees points to the emergence of Pharisee-rooted rabbinism in the post-temple period



# Matthean Christology: *Jesus the Jewish Messiah*

- **Son of God**

- By the inclusion of an “**Infancy Narrative**,” Matthew’s gospel more fully answered what it meant that Jesus was
  - *Jesus was the Son of God because of his divine conception and miraculous birth*

- **Messiah**

- **Royal Son of David**
- **The anointed one, or “Christ”**

- **“Son of Man”**

- the most common title of Jesus for himself (81 times in the gospel and not used elsewhere in the NT)

- **Fulfiller of prophecy**

- Fourteen “**formula quotations**”
- Fulfillment of God’s purposes in the person of Jesus
  - This fulfillment find expression in **Jesus’ Church** (Only Matthew uses the Greek *ekklēsia* or church)

- **Jesus a New Moses**, a lawgiver, a teacher

- *To this end Matthew includes lengthy sermons*

- **Suffering and death of Jesus**

- **More developed account of the resurrection**

# Structure of Matthew

- **Prologue: Infancy Narrative (1:1–2:23)**
  - **Part 1:** Proclamation of the Kingdom (3:1–7:29)
    - **Discourse:** Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29)
  - **Part 2:** Galilean Ministry (8:1–10:42)
    - **Discourse:** Mission Sermon (10:1–42)
  - **Part 3:** Opposition to Jesus (11:1–13:52)
    - **Discourse:** Sermon in Parables (13:1–52)
  - **Part 4:** Rejection by Israel (13:53–18:25)
    - **Discourse:** Sermon on the Church (18:1–35)
  - **Part 5:** Journey to and Ministry in Jerusalem (19:1–25:46)
    - **Discourse:** Eschatological Sermon (24:1–25:46)
- **Climax: Passion, Death, and Resurrection (26:1–28:20)**
  - Body of the gospel divided into five parts on analogy to the 5 books of Moses
  - Each section ends with a **lengthy discourse or sermon**
  - The gospel is framed with an **Infancy Narrative** and with **the Passion/Resurrection Narratives**, which together answer the Christological questions **who Jesus was** and **what he did**



Cappella Tornabuoni, "St. Luke the Evangelist," 1486-90

# Gospel according to Luke

“Although Matthew is divided into more chapters than Luke, Luke’s account of the ministry of Jesus Christ is the longest of the four canonical Gospels in actual length . . . Although Luke clearly drew upon Mark and has much in common with Matthew, Luke’s Gospel also contains a large amount of unique material. Furthermore, its style and sensitivities—particularly toward women, Gentiles, and the poor and oppressed generally—set it apart from the other synoptic Gospels.” (Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*, 108)

# Lucan Authorship

- **Indirect evidence from the text**

- Author was not an eyewitness but depended on others for his information (1:2-3)
  - “Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word
- Judging from quality of the Greek, **the author had a thorough, Hellenistic education**
- **Sympathy with and attention to Gentiles and outsiders** suggests that the author was not a Palestinian, or even a Diaspora, Jew
  - **Probably a Greek** or a cultural Greek of Syrian or other background

- **External evidence**

- Author is the same as that of the book of Acts
- Postapostolic (patristic) evidence identifies the author as “**Luke . . . the physician**”
- In the letters of Paul (Philemon 1:24, 2 Tim 4:11, and Col 4:14) Luke is listed among Paul’s “**fellow workers**”

# Luke's Audience and Date

- **Dedicated to “Theophilus”**
  - the name means “friend of God” but is not generally attested as a Greek name until the Byzantine later (much later)
  - Indicative of the status of Luke's patron as a member or serious investigator?
  - **A type representing all “friends of God?”**
- **Presumably Gentile**
  - Avoids technical Jewish terms and titles, includes Gentiles more readily
- **Probably already Christian**
  - “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of **those things which are most surely believed among us** . . . It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, **wherein thou hast been instructed.**” (Luke 1:1-4)
- Written after Mark and probably somewhat after Matthew (mid-70's?)

# Lucan Christology: *The Primary Jesus!*

- The Person of Jesus
  - Like Matthew, Luke begins with **an Infancy Narrative** to emphasize Jesus' divine conception and miraculous birth (highly developed and literary birth story)
  - Emphasis on **Jesus as the Son of God** (e.g. Luke genealogy of Jesus)
- The Work of Jesus
  - **A compassionate, healing Savior, “the Primary Jesus!”**
    - “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to *preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19)
    - *His concern and mercy for others are prominent even during the central acts of his suffering and death*
    - *The terms “save,” “salvation,” “Savior appear more in Luke than other gospels*
  - **Suffered in Gethsamene** (more details on this than any other gospel), **died on Calvary, and rose triumphantly from the tomb**
    - *Emphasis on the bodily resurrection*



*El Greco, "Apostle St John the Evangelist," 1610–14*

# Gospel according to John

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“Having events and teachings not contained elsewhere, the gospel of John makes a unique and important contribution to our understanding of the person and work of Jesus, who is portrayed in consistently divine terms . . . Pregnant with theological insights, it is perhaps the most deeply thoughtful Gospel account. Filled with dialogues and scenes that draw in the reader, this Gospel is also the most symbolic and is able to teach at many levels, root the believer more firmly in his or her faith, and touch even those who do not yet accept Christ.” (Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament*, 126)

# Appeal of the Fourth Gospel

- **Unique material not found in the Synoptics**
  - Events and teachings not recorded elsewhere (e.g. raising of Lazarus)
  - Discourses (such as chs. 14–17) specific to believers
- **Theological insights**
  - Jesus is **a majestic and divine figure**—John’s testimony and account of him is indeed the study of godhood
    - Cf. “. . . that **Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God**” (Title Page, Book of Mormon)
    - Also, “. . . **I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth**, and have been slain for the sins of the world.” (3 Nephi 11:14)
  - *This is the Jesus whom we love and worship!*
- **Moving dialogues and scenes**
  - Christ and Nicodemus, Samaritan woman at the well, Mary and John at the foot of the cross
- **Symbolism**
  - Christ as the Light of the World, Fountain of Living Waters, Bread of Life, True Vine
  - John 19:34–35: Blood and Water from the spearpoint’s thrust



# Some Contrasts Between the Synoptics and John

## Synoptics

- Jesus' ministry chiefly in Galilee
- Emphasis on the Kingdom of God
- Jesus son of David, Son of Man
- Jesus' sayings usually short
- Little commentary by evangelists
- Only one Passover mentioned, temple cleansing at the end of ministry
- Jesus' human side acknowledged

## John

- More coverage of Christ's **Judean ministry**
- Emphasis on the person of Jesus
  - **Jesus the Son of God, the Incarnate Word**
- More long discourses
- Frequent commentary and expansion by John
- Three Passovers mentioned, temple cleansing at the beginning of the ministry
- **Johannine Jesus knows all beforehand, is in full-control**

# Johannine Authorship

- **Direct evidence from the text**

- “The disciple whom Jesus loved,” mentioned by this title twice in the passion narrative (13:23, 19:26) and twice afterwards (21:7, 21:20)
- Perhaps “the other disciple” mentioned at other times

- **Indirect evidence from the text**

- The author of the Fourth Gospel was a Jew from the Holy Land (knowledge of Jewish terms and customs, Palestinian geography)
- *The author was an eyewitness of the events described*

- **Postapostolic (patristic) evidence suggests the apostle John**

- “But, last of all, **John**, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, *composed a spiritual Gospel.*” (Clement *ap.* Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.14.7)
- The author of the Fourth Gospel was **John, the Lord’s disciple**; the Gospel was published at Ephesus, and John remained at Ephesus until the time of Trajan (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 2.22.5, 3.3.4)

- **Latter-day revelation seems to confirm the identification**

- 1 Nephi 14:18-27; Ether 4:16; D&C 7; D&C 77:1-15; D&C 88:141

# Audience

- Christians who desire a greater understanding of who Christ is
  - “[John wrote] to members of the Church who already had basic information about the Lord. His primary purpose was to *emphasize the divine nature of Jesus as the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh.*” (Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Gospels,” 683)
  - “This is a Gospel designed to root the believer deeper in his faith . . . (Brown, *AB* 29, lxxviii)
- Asides and explanations, however, sometimes suggest that some readers might not know all the details and background
  - A minority of scholars note that the deeply theological, almost philosophical presentations of John might have appealed to educated pagan readers
- Stated purpose
  - “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*” (John 20:30–31)
  - *No reason not to suggest a universal audience—believers and non-believers, contemporary and future*
    - John no doubt wrote to his immediate contemporaries but, knowing his revelatory career, may well have had us in mind (cf. Book of Mormon authors . . .)

# Johannine Christology: *A More Divine Jesus*

- Person of Jesus

- **Divine Word** (preexistence christology)

- As stirringly described in the gospel's opening hymn (John 1:1-18), the premortal Jesus was the divine "Word" (*logos*)
- Directly and frequently describes himself as God's son
- Frequently associated with the OT Jehovah, especially through "I Am" statements

- **Incarnate Word**

- The Word "becomes flesh"
- *The Johannine Jesus knows all things, speaks truth in a divine way, cannot be killed but voluntarily lays down his life*

- Work of Jesus

- **Bear witness of the Truth**

- "... To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37)

- Save all given to him by the Father, losing none

- **Lay down his life for his friends**

- **Give life, both physical and spiritual (eternal)**

- "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

# Structure of John

- **Prologue** (the *Logos* Hymn; 1:1–18)
- **The Book of Signs** (1:19–12:50)
  - Initial Days of the Divine Revelation (1:19–2:11)
  - First to Second Cana Miracle (2:1–4:54, overlaps with initial days)
  - Jewish Feasts and Their Replacements by Christ (5:1–10:42)
  - Raising of Lazarus and its aftermath (11:1–12:50)
- **The Book of Glory** (Passion and Resurrection Narratives; 13:1–20:31)
- **Epilogue** (21:1–25)