

And God Said What?



Session 4
What is a Gospel?

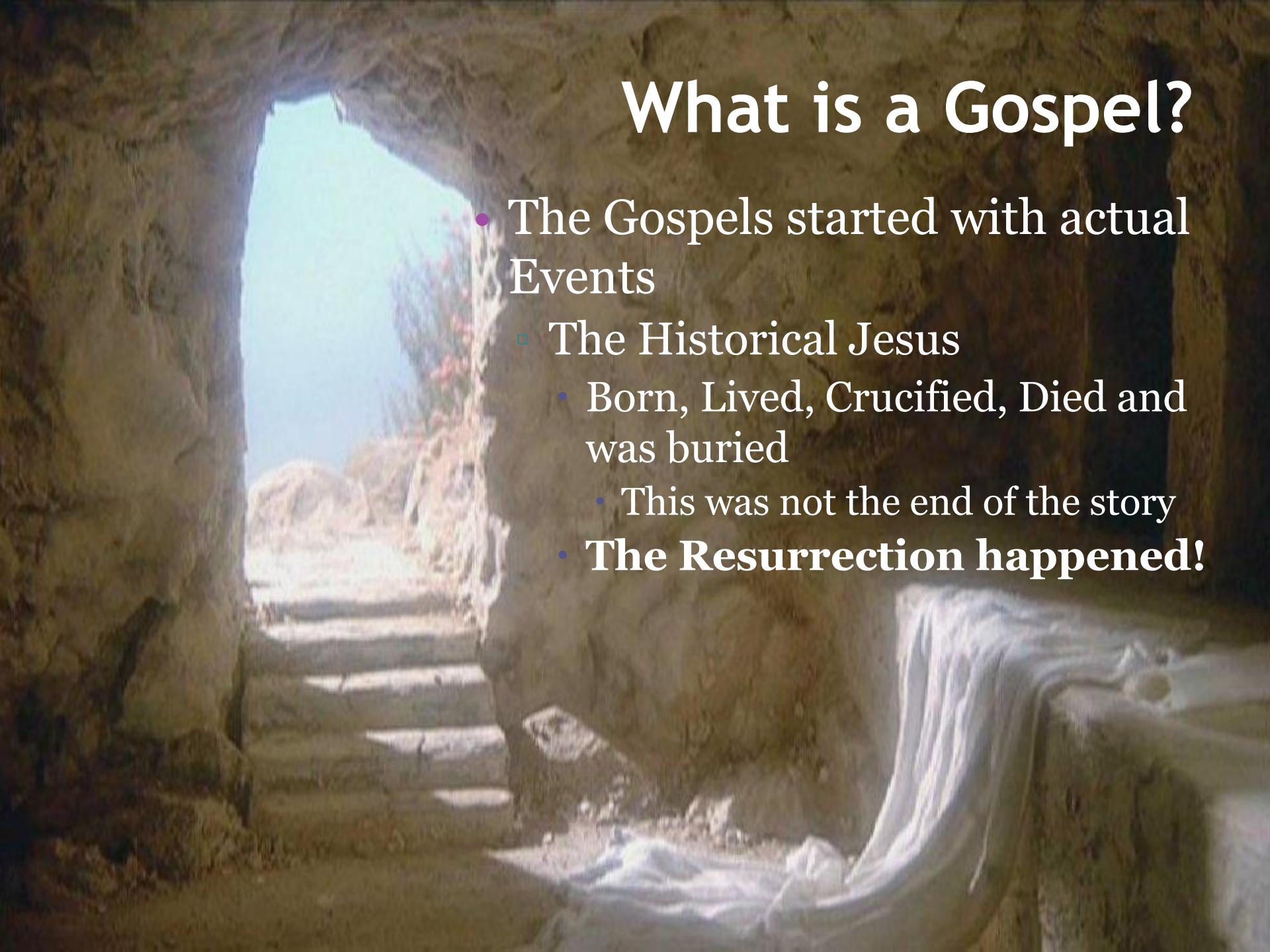
The Direction of Intention

My God, give me the grace
to perform this action with you
and through love for you.
In advance, I offer to you
all the good that I will do
and accept all the difficulty I may meet
therein.

Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.
St. Francis de Sales, Pray for us

What is a Gospel?

- Good News
- Was this a new Literary Form?
 - Refers to the content (**THE MESSAGE**) and not the written word itself!
- Some Basics
 - **4 Canonical Gospels**
 - Different Literary Forms
 - Matthew, Mark and Luke are different from John
 - Each resulted from a growing process
 - How the early Christian Community came to understand **The Message**

A photograph of a stone staircase leading up a grassy hill, with a large rock in the foreground.

What is a Gospel?

- The Gospels started with actual Events
 - The Historical Jesus
 - Born, Lived, Crucified, Died and was buried
 - This was not the end of the story
 - **The Resurrection happened!**

What is a Gospel?

- Oral Tradition
 - Read Acts: 3: 11-26 (Peter's Speech)
 - What does this tell us about the early Church's belief about Jesus?
 - What questions about Jesus does this raise in your mind?
 - **Evangelization**



What is a Gospel?

- Oral to Written Gospels
 - Hunger by new converts to know more about Jesus
 - Gradually the story moved backwards
 - Resurrection
 - Passion and Death
 - Last Supper
 - Jerusalem Ministry
 - Galilean Ministry
 - Baptism and Call of Disciples
 - Early Life and Birth
 - Purpose is not to record HISTORY but to help the convert to see the significance of Christ event in their life.



What is a Gospel?

- Handout: Timeline for the Gospels
- The Edited Gospels
 - Are Second Generation Accounts
 - None of the Gospels includes the Name of its Author
 - Names were attributed by Church Fathers 2nd Century onwards
 - Not to read Gospels as eyewitness accounts
 - But rather as early communities reflections on what they heard about Jesus



A Word About Revelation and Inspiration

“There is nothing incompatible about a belief in revelation and inspiration, and the knowledge that the Gospels grew from event to oral tradition, to written tradition, to edited material, to canonical Gospel.”

- ❖ **The Gospels are inspired and revealed because they:**
 1. Reveal TRUTH about God’s relationship with us.
 2. Reveal TRUTH about the Fulfillment of Revelation in Jesus Christ
 3. Inspired because they flowed from communities who were confirmed by the Holy Spirit
 4. Each stage of Gospel composition was inspired to reveal God to humanity.

What is a Gospel?

- Gospel According to Mark
 - Early 60's (Persecution under Nero, growing tension between Christians and Jewish establishment)
 - Written for: A persecuted community
 - Main Theme: Why did Jesus die?
 - Mark's Gospel is written through these two lenses
 - **The Gospel of Mark is the Good News of Jesus Christ as its editor understood what was in front of him from a community that was being persecuted and in the context of his particular historical situation.**

What is a Gospel?

- The Gospel according to Matthew
 - Written in Antioch, Syria – Early 80's
 - Written for: A Jewish community who has been expelled from Synagogues.
 - Main Theme: A community who is grappling with their new identity as Christians.
 - This community needs teachings and sayings to confirm their beliefs
 - Matthew's Gospel is more systematic than Mark's
 - Matthew's Gospel is more structured

What is a Gospel?

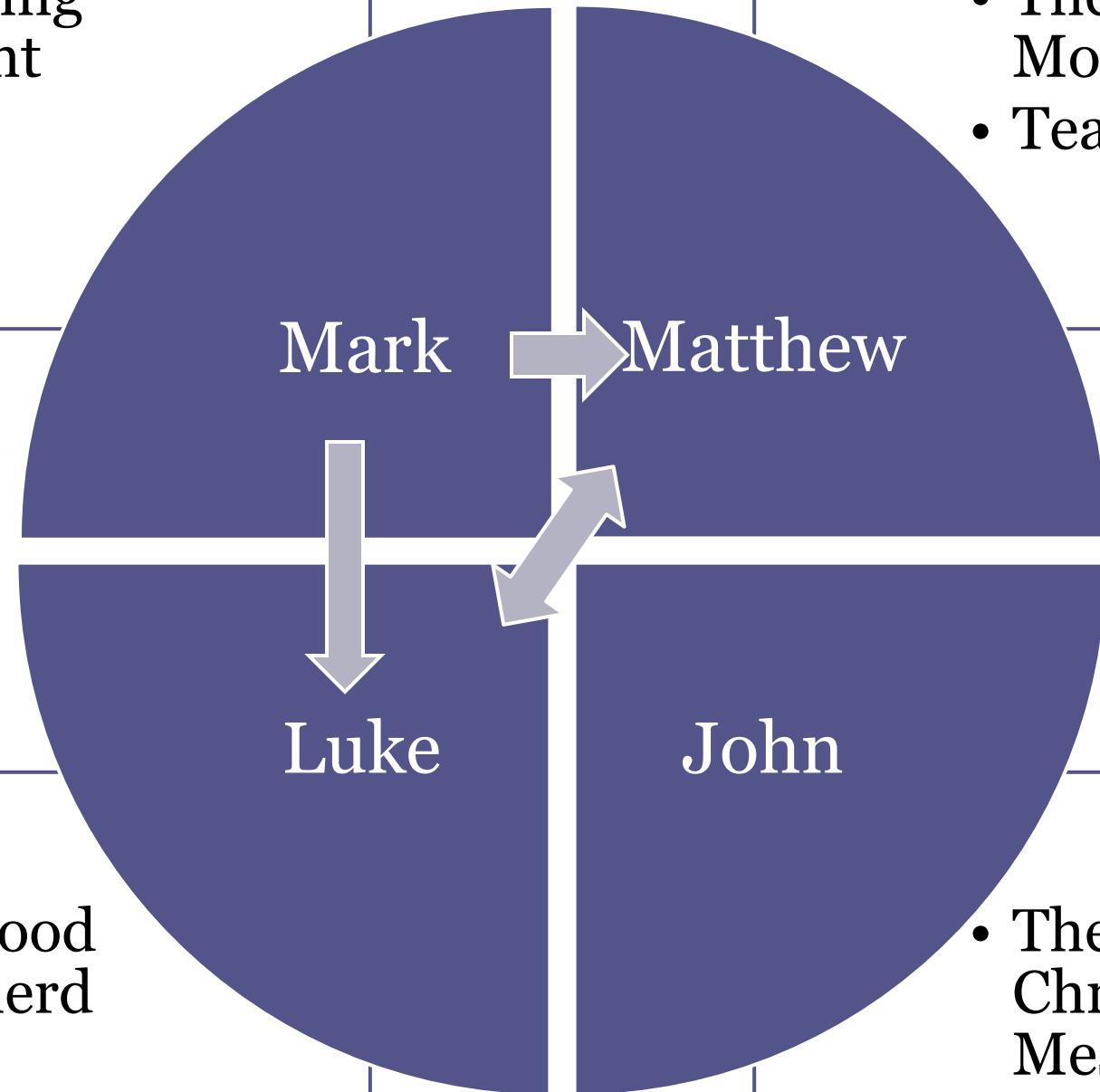
- The Gospel According to Luke
 - Luke 1: 1-4
 - Written in southern Greece around 80.
 - Written for a Gentile community
 - Main Theme: Life is a Journey and we come to know Jesus in different ways at different parts of the Journey.
 - The Love of God reaches out to all peoples.
 - (Parable of the Prodigal Son, The universal nature of the Kingdom of God)

What is a Gospel?

- A word about John's Gospel?
 - Not Synoptic like the others.
 - Written by a third generation Christian Community who has had time to reflect on the **Original MESSAGE**
 - Written Southern Greece late 90s or early 100's
 - Written to address several different issues
 - Jesus is the Divine Messiah
 - Bitter struggle between Jews and Christians
 - To convince Christians that their belief needs to be rooted in Jesus Christ alone.

- Suffering Servant

- The New Moses
- Teacher



- The Good Shepherd

- The Cosmic Christ and Messiah