

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# MARK AND LUKE: TWO FACETS OF A DIAMOND

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Elder Bruce R. McConkie has made the following statement concerning the four Gospels: "It is apparent . . . that each inspired author had especial and intimate knowledge of certain circumstances not so well known to others, and that each felt impressed to emphasize different matters because of the particular people to whom he was addressing his personal gospel testimony."<sup>1</sup> In reality, each Gospel is like a facet of a diamond that brightens and highlights the picture of Jesus Christ that we receive. Just as a diamond would be terribly uninteresting without its facets, so also would the picture of Jesus be flat and one-dimensional without the composite picture of Him that is presented when the four Gospels are brought together. All bear witness of Jesus Christ and teach the plan of salvation but each with a slightly different cut, clarity, and color. In this light, it would have been a great loss to all generations of the Church had we not had both Mark and Luke—two facets of the gospel diamond.

### JESUS CHRIST

In His three years' ministry, Jesus walked and talked with numerous people in a wide range of situations. He gave many public sermons as well as considerable private instruction to His disciples. He met in highly charged situations with the religious leaders of His day. He spoke to prince and pauper, priest and peasant, saint and sinner. No one was so exalted that Jesus was intimidated by him, nor was anyone so insignificant that

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Jesus did not have time for him or her. Women and children had a special place in His heart and ministry, something that was not common in the Judaism of His day.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus taught about an immense range of subjects. He dealt with the nature and purposes of God, the plan of salvation, the nature of human destiny, the morality of the kingdom, and many other issues. Much of His teaching among the crowds was done in parables, not merely to put the message in an understandable form but also to hide the message from those who were not yet spiritually prepared to comprehend it (see Matthew 13:10–15; Mark 4:10–12; Luke 8:9–10). Later, in private, He also told His disciples in clear language what the parables meant (see Matthew 13:18; Mark 4:13; Luke 8:11). Thus He chose what He would say to whom and how He would say it, depending upon the hearer's ability to understand.<sup>3</sup>

John tells us that in the scriptures we have far from all that Jesus said or did (see John 21:25). Yet we have that which the Lord, through the Holy Ghost, guided the Gospel writers to preserve in preparation for the fulness of times in the latter days. No one Gospel portrait of the Lord is complete in itself, but as we encounter Christ and His teachings in all the Gospels, we will come to know Him better.

### **MARK AND LUKE: THE AUTHORS**

Neither Mark nor Luke was one of the original Twelve. Their precise relationship with Jesus is not known, although Mark may have been among the larger circle of Jesus' early followers. Tradition says that Mark was a missionary companion of Peter and that the Gospel of Mark represents in large measure Mark's account of Peter's recollections of the Lord and His ministry.<sup>4</sup> That seems probable. Luke is usually identified as the beloved physician and companion of Paul and was thus a bit more distant from the historical Jesus than was Mark. However, many consider him a very careful and deliberate historian who gathered all the information he could from "eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2)<sup>5</sup> as he wrote his two-part work, Luke and Acts, which he dedicated to Theophilus, a person otherwise unknown to us.

Mark is traditionally said to have written his Gospel in Rome during the time of Nero's persecution of the Church. Many of the slums of Rome had been burned, an act that is probably attributable to Nero, who wanted to make room for public buildings. Nero needed a scapegoat, however, and

the Christians, who were not popular anyway because of their rather “narrow” religious views, were a group that could be easily blamed. Thus the members of the Church among whom Mark worked and served were undergoing tremendous persecution and suffering greatly. Apparently Mark longed to bring a message of hope to these people in the midst of their sufferings, as well as to explain through Jesus’ own words and actions why people suffer in this world when they are doing what the Lord requires of them. Thus the persecution that Peter and Mark faced in the Roman Church determined to a large degree Mark’s focus on the suffering in Jesus’ life and the lives of His followers.<sup>6</sup>

Luke was in an entirely different situation. He probably lived where there was a large Gentile community,<sup>7</sup> where many wanted to know whether the gospel was for them or only for the Jews. Luke himself was a Gentile (see Colossians 4:10–14).<sup>8</sup> He was a companion of Paul,<sup>9</sup> the Apostle to the Gentiles. He knew well that the gospel was for persons of all races and for all persons—male and female, rich and poor, slave and free. Thus Jesus’ message about the universality of the gospel becomes the focal point of Luke’s portrait of the Lord.

Both Mark and Luke accurately portray Jesus’ words and deeds, but each sees different aspects of Jesus’ ministry. The Lord’s words are for all generations and all times, but no one Gospel could possibly contain all that Jesus said and did. Each contains a piece of the whole.

## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

“And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly” (Mark 8:23–26). This passage represents the central point in the Gospel according to Mark. As we come to an understanding of Jesus’ true role, we then come to clarity about our own role as His disciples.

This story is unique in the Gospels. At no other time did Jesus need two attempts to heal a person. This healing occurred shortly before Jesus asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I am?” and “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter, of course, gave his classic answer: Jesus is the Christ (Mark 8:27, 29). Jesus then told him that the Son of Man must suffer and die, and Peter immediately reacted by saying that could not happen (see Mark

8:31–32). One of Jesus' harshest replies was then immediately directed at Peter. "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark 8:33). Clearly, Peter—and perhaps we as observers—missed something. What was wrong with Peter's desire that Jesus not suffer? Everything—for Jesus came precisely *to* suffer and die!<sup>10</sup>

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. . . . For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:33–34, 45).

Anyone who stood in opposition to that goal did not understand the nature and purpose of Jesus' messiahship. Such a person was like the blind man who, after Jesus' partial healing of him, saw partially but unclearly. By contrast, only those who understood unequivocally that Jesus must die understood the nature of His messiahship as well as the possible consequences of their own discipleship. They would be comparable to the blind man who saw clearly after Jesus' second act of healing. Peter, however, understood only in part what the actual role of the Messiah would be and thus perceived Christ's mission only dimly. He did not yet understand that the Messiah must suffer and die. Only after Jesus' death and Resurrection would he and others finally see more clearly.

*Confrontation.* Peter knew and declared that Jesus was the Messiah, even though his conception of the Messiah was not predicated on the same understanding that Jesus possessed. What led Peter to this unequivocal testimony of Christ but only a partial understanding of His mission? Perhaps the answer lies in Jesus' ministry to that point. Mark shows us clearly that Jesus' ministry was characterized by conflict and confrontation from the beginning. The Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (see Mark 1:12). That cosmic confrontation then became an earthly conflict as Jesus confronted demons, disease, religious leaders, and ultimately even His own disciples who did not understand the nature of His ministry.<sup>11</sup>

Such confusion among His disciples, however, often resulted from Jesus' own actions. He could not turn away persons in need. Thus, immediately after coming out of the wilderness, He was confronted by a man with an

unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum. He drove out that spirit, amazing all that were present (see Mark 1:21–27). He then went to Peter's home, where He found Peter's mother-in-law ill, and He healed her (see Mark 1:29–31). Then people brought the sick and those possessed with devils from the surrounding countryside, and Jesus healed them of their infirmities and cast out the devils (see Mark 1:32–34). The next morning, however, the disciples looked for Jesus and could not find Him. Ultimately they located Him in an isolated spot where He had gone to pray. The disciples were impressed with Jesus' healing ability and indicated to Him that many were already waiting to receive such blessings at His hand. Jesus' response to their well-intentioned request is enlightening, for He said, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils" (Mark 1:38–39). Thus Jesus indicated that His healing ministry, with which all were so impressed, was really not His foremost purpose on earth. He had something more important to do, that is, proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God (see Mark 1:14; 2:2).<sup>12</sup>

Even so, Jesus continued to heal and to drive out demons (see Mark 1:24, 39; 2:10; 5:2–8; 6:56; 7:26–30; 9:23–24), leading to confrontations with religious authorities, who sought ways to get rid of Him. They watched like vultures to see if He would heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse Him of breaking the law (see Mark 2:24–28; 3:2–6). Later, He sent His disciples out to accomplish the same things He had, giving them authority to heal the sick and cast out demons (see Mark 3:14; 6:7, 13). Both the cosmic order and religious order were being shaken by Him. No wonder Peter believed Him to be the Messiah! Only the Messiah could do what Jesus did.

*Tell no man.* Jesus forbade the demons to proclaim who He was (see Mark 1:25, 34; 3:12), but that is understandable. He did not want demonic testimony to His messiahship. Yet the knowledge of the demons points to an interesting dichotomy. The minions of Satan recognized and knew who Jesus was, but the religious authorities did not. The scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees wanted only to rid themselves of Him. Mark was appalled at how utterly blind they were.

A more difficult question is why Jesus commanded those whom He healed not to tell what He had done for them (see Mark 1:43; 7:36). Shouldn't people have known that the Messiah had come with compassion and "healing in his wings"? (Malachi 4:2). Yet, when people ignored

His admonition, Jesus found Himself having to go into the wilderness to get away from the crowds who wanted Him to heal their sick (see Mark 1:38, 45). None of the people, including Jesus' disciples, completely understood who He was. They assumed that He was the Messiah, which was correct; but their conception of the Messiah was of one who worked miracles, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ultimately would cast the Romans out of Judea.<sup>13</sup> They were like the blind man who understood only in part. So also with Peter. Despite revelation from the Father (see Matthew 16:16–17), Peter based his intellectual understanding of Jesus as the Messiah on His miracle-working and confrontational ministry. That was not the character of Jesus' messiahship, and Jesus knew that Peter did not fully understand his own declaration, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Then He told Peter not to tell anyone (see Mark 8:30).

*Suffering.* Jesus told Peter plainly that His messiahship required that He suffer and die (see Mark 8:31).<sup>14</sup> But that was not Peter's understanding of messiahship. He liked the image of the miracle-working, powerful Messiah who was not afraid to confront anyone.<sup>15</sup> Thus he objected (see Mark 8:32), and Jesus forcefully chastised Peter for not allowing God to readjust his preconceived notions about what the Messiah would be like.<sup>16</sup> From this point in Mark's Gospel, Jesus moved inexorably toward the cross, pointing out several times that His destiny was to suffer and die for humanity (see Mark 9:12, 31; 10:33–34, 45; 12:7–8; 14:7–8, 22, 24, 27). Yet it was a Gentile centurion, as he watched Jesus breathe His last breath, who first comprehended that Jesus in the midst of His suffering was truly "the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

But if Jesus' role was to suffer, then it is highly probable that those who followed Him might have to share the same fate (see Mark 8:34–35; 10:39–40; 13:9, 12–13). Such was and is the case. Those of the early Church faced torture and death. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down.<sup>17</sup> Paul was beheaded.<sup>18</sup> Stephen was stoned (see Acts 7:59). James was beheaded (see Acts 12:2). Once empowered by the Holy Ghost, however, men who had run and hidden in locked rooms became giants for the faith, unafraid of death. What more powerful message could Mark have conveyed to the suffering Church in Rome than this? He told those frightened people that even the Son of God was destined to suffer because the world could not tolerate His presence, His goodness, and His message. So also the world could not tolerate those who followed Him, and His disciples would

have to suffer, as Jesus had warned them during His lifetime. Evil cannot tolerate good. It will do all it can to stamp it out. But good will be conquered only momentarily, for the righteous powers of heaven, which raise men from the very depths of the grave, can never be overcome.

That, therefore, was Mark's message to Rome as he viewed Jesus' life and ministry. So also is it his message to us of the latter-day Church who are comfortable and all too often conforming to the model of the world rather than receiving in our lives the imprint of heaven. If the world is comfortable with us and we are comfortable with it, we see the mission of the Messiah only as the partially healed blind man saw. Like the disciples at Pentecost, who did not see clearly until they received their "second" healing through the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, we must also receive the understanding that we will suffer as we faithfully follow the Lord—suffer because we do not agree with the values of the world. And like the disciples who went on to endure grievous persecution, we will be fortified by this clearer vision, knowing that our suffering is linked to His. Then we will more fully comprehend what it means to know that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Like Mark, Luke saw certain aspects of Jesus' ministry as being particularly applicable to his day and situation. Of great importance to him was that the gospel be relevant for persons such as himself who were not Israelites. Luke also had a concern for those who seemed to be on the fringes of society. Was the gospel for them, too, or was it a gospel for the privileged classes? He further felt, like Mark, that it was important to explain what it meant to be a disciple. In Luke, also, one sees an emphasis on the spiritual dimension of Jesus' life, a dimension that could and should be part of the lives of all who follow Christ. The principal Lucan concerns are initially expressed in the birth narratives in chapters 1 and 2. We can trace them through the Gospel and into Acts, for Luke and Acts are really one whole. Many of the Lucan emphases find their fulfillment in the apostolic ministry.

*Witness.* Luke expressed at the beginning of his Gospel that his narrative should be viewed as an authoritative witness of Jesus Christ because it had its roots in the accounts of eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (see Luke 1:2). Luke demonstrated that his account was accurate because it could be traced to original witnesses who met, walked, and talked with

the Lord or who were divinely informed about Him.<sup>19</sup> Thus Jesus' birth was heralded by appearances of Gabriel to the witnesses Zacharias (see Luke 1:11–20) and Mary (see Luke 1:26–38), while the baby in Elisabeth's womb leaped in witnessing recognition of the baby in Mary's womb (see Luke 1:41). Both Simeon (see Luke 2:25–35) and Anna (see Luke 2:36–38) received divine confirmation of Jesus' messiahship and bore testimony of Him.<sup>20</sup> Throughout Jesus' ministry in Galilee, people were always with Him, hearing every word He spoke and seeing every act He did (see Luke 5:1; 6:17; 7:1, 11; 8:1–4, 19, 40, 42). The same thing was true on the long trip to Jerusalem (see Luke 10:23–24; 11:29; 12:1; 14:25; 19:37).<sup>21</sup> Witnesses were constantly present. Finally, in choosing an Apostle to replace Judas, the remaining Apostles determined that he had to be an *eyewitness* of Jesus' entire ministry, so that he could bear authoritative *witness*, or testimony, of the historical ministry of Jesus<sup>22</sup> as well as to His Resurrection: "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22).

Eyewitnesses were the foundation upon which the testimony of the life, ministry, Atonement, and Resurrection of the Lord were to be proclaimed. One *witnessed* first by seeing, and then one *bore witness* by telling the message to all who would listen. The Gospel according to Luke reflects the eyewitness accounts of the companions of Jesus, and Acts reflects the witnessing proclamation of the disciples from Jerusalem to the center of the known world—Rome: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be *witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

*A universal gospel.* Luke was a Gentile. Thus, the question of whether the gospel was limited to Israel or was for all people was important to him personally. The gospel was for everyone—rich and poor, men and women, Jew and Gentile—although some persons might have more trouble hearing and responding to it than others.

From the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke, the reader is made aware of the Lord's concern for women. In the birth narratives, women are clearly the dominant figures. Elisabeth (see Luke 1:5–7, 24), Mary (see Luke 1:26–56), and Anna (see Luke 2:36–38) play prominent roles. Zacharias and Joseph are essentially silent; Simeon is the only male, apart from Jesus



Himself, who plays an active role—namely, affirming Jesus' identity and mission. It is Mary, not Joseph, who receives Simeon's witness (see Luke 2:34). Luke alone among the synoptic<sup>23</sup> writers included the account of the raising to life of the son of the widow of Nain (see Luke 7:12–13), the sinful woman's anointing of Jesus (see Luke 7:37–50), the identification of some of the women who followed Jesus (see Luke 8:1–3), the account of Mary and Martha<sup>24</sup> (see Luke 10:38–42), the woman with a spirit of infirmity (see Luke 13:11–17), the woman searching for the lost coin (see Luke 15:8), the woman and the unjust judge (see Luke 18:2–8), Jesus' words to the women on the way to His Crucifixion (see Luke 23:27–28), and the account that the women amazed the disciples with their story of being unable to find Jesus' body (see Luke 24:22–24). Clearly, Jesus violated so many Jewish sanctions against association with women that other writers, like Mark and Matthew, may have been hesitant to include all such accounts. But Luke understood that Jesus had opened the heavens to all persons, regardless of sex, and thus he included Jesus' association with persons who were considered inferior to devout Jewish males.

While Matthew focused on Joseph's response to Mary's pregnancy, Joseph's visionary experiences, and the coming of the Magi, Luke chose to stress another element. He knew that people with little or no status in society were the first to hear the message of the Messiah's birth. Thus we have from his hand the account of the shepherds to whom the heavens were opened (see Luke 2:8–20) and who received the glad tidings—men to whom no self-respecting Jewish religious leader would probably have spoken.<sup>25</sup>

Once again, only Luke among the synoptic writers recorded Jesus' announcement in Nazareth that He was appointed to preach good news to the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed (see Luke 4:18). Similarly, he gave us the accounts of the centurion who had the sick servant (see Luke 7:2–9), the response to John the Baptist's disciples which stressed the healing of the downtrodden and simple folk (see Luke 7:22), the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30–37), the parable of the wedding feast (see Luke 14:12–24), the accounts of the lost coin and the lost (prodigal) son (see Luke 15:8–32), the story of the rich man and Lazarus (see Luke 16:29–31), the account of the ten lepers—the only one who returned to thank Jesus being a Samaritan (see Luke 17:11–16), the tax collector's prayer in the temple (see Luke 18:13–14), the story of Jesus

eating with Zacchaeus the tax collector (see Luke 19:2–10), and Jesus' words of forgiveness to the thief on the cross (see Luke 23:41–43).

Luke knew that Jesus had thrown the door open wide to all, if they would but come to Him. None was to be excluded except those who excluded themselves.<sup>26</sup> Often, these were the rich.<sup>27</sup> Jesus warned against treasures on earth, for wealth had a way of corrupting even the best of intentions. Consequently, Luke recorded Jesus' warning against covetousness (see Luke 12:15) and against planning without considering God's purposes (see Luke 12:20–21). Similarly, Jesus charged the Pharisees with being lovers of money (see Luke 16:14–15) and pronounced the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (see Luke 16:19–31). Each of the Gospel writers recognized that Jesus intended the message of the kingdom of God for all persons, not merely for the Jews. Luke, however, emphasized that fact more clearly than the others, because it was central to his presence in the Church. He was a Gentile.

In his account, Luke shows that the gospel is not to be limited to Israel: "His mercy is on them that fear him" (Luke 1:50). It is for "those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79), and it is to bring peace on earth and "good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). More specifically it is for "all people" (Luke 2:10).<sup>28</sup> Simeon actually surprised Mary and Joseph, who already knew that Jesus was the Son of God, when he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29–32; emphasis added). Even Mary and Joseph did not comprehend the scope of Jesus' work or the full grace of God, and thus Luke recorded, "Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him" (Luke 2:33).

Luke recorded the whole of the Isaiah passage (see Isaiah 40:3–5) which John the Baptist quoted, including the words, "and *all flesh* shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6; emphasis added). In addition the genealogy in Luke is more universal, for it traces Jesus' lineage not merely to Abraham but to Adam and ultimately to God (see Luke 3:38).<sup>29</sup> Jesus created opposition in Nazareth not merely by claiming that salvation might be present in Him but by further implying that the saving gospel would go to the Gentiles because the unrighteous Jews would not receive it. He made this same point by reminding them of Elijah's being sent only to the woman of Sidon and of Elisha's cleansing only Naaman the Syrian (see Luke

4:16–30).<sup>30</sup> We also have solely in Luke the account of Jesus healing the centurion's slave (see Luke 7:1–10) and the note "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). The universality of the gospel and its special application to the Gentiles is further delineated by the entirety of Acts. There we see the gospel proceed forth to the ends of the earth.

*Israel and the gospel.* Where were the roots of the gospel? Luke knew that they were in Israel and the Old Testament, particularly in the words of the prophets. But knowing it was one thing; communicating it to persons who had no knowledge of the Old Testament was another. Explaining the relationship was a fairly simple matter for Matthew, because he was writing to a Jewish-Christian audience which was thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament. All he had to say was, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying . . ." (Matthew 1:22; see also 2:5, 15, 17, 23). His readers knew exactly what he meant.

But Gentiles, to whom Luke's account is addressed, would not have that scriptural background. Luke's concern was tying the house of Israel and the Church together and showing their congruence and continuity. He does that by drawing attention to a very clear element in Jesus' ministry. To Jesus, Jerusalem and the temple were sacred places. They were also the central places of Judaism. Even Gentiles would know that. They might not know about the Jewish scriptures, but they almost certainly knew about the Jews' sacred city and their sacred temple. Thus Luke augments his and the Lord's references to the scriptures by stressing the importance that the Father and Jesus placed on Jerusalem and the temple.<sup>31</sup> Luke's Gospel begins in Jerusalem in the temple with Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias (see Luke 1:5–20). Jesus is brought to Jerusalem and the temple at the time of Mary's purification (see Luke 2:22). Jesus taught in the temple at age twelve (see Luke 2:46–49). He cleansed the temple (see Luke 19:45–46). He taught in the temple during His last days (see Luke 19:47; 20:1; 21:37–38), and His disciples worshiped in the temple even after Pentecost (see Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46–47; 3:1–8; 5:20; 21:26).

Could even Gentile readers miss the implication that the Church is rooted in Israel? Could they doubt that Jesus was heralded by Jewish scriptures when it was so clear that the sacred places of Judaism were also sacred to Him and His disciples? Luke hoped that this emphasis on Jerusalem and

the temple would help the Gentile converts appreciate the importance of Israel and the Old Testament in preparing the way for Christ.

*Prayer and the Holy Spirit.* Luke also provided deep insights into Jesus' spiritual life. We see Jesus constantly at prayer in those moments when major events were about to occur.<sup>32</sup> In those instances where Luke parallels Mark's account, Luke alone added the observation in several instances that Jesus prayed. At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Ghost descended while Jesus was *praying* (see Luke 3:21–22). Jesus went to the wilderness to pray (see Luke 5:16). The night before He called the Twelve, He withdrew into the hills and prayed the whole night through (see Luke 6:12–13). Before He asked the disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?" He prayed (Luke 9:18). He went up the Mount of Transfiguration to pray, and while He was praying He was transfigured (see Luke 9:28–29). It was the result of Jesus' prayer that led the disciples to ask Him to teach them to pray (see Luke 11:1). He told Peter that He had prayed for him so that Satan might not have Peter (see Luke 22:31–32). And, of course, prayer was central to the experience in Gethsemane. Jesus commanded the disciples to pray, and He prayed in His agony (see Luke 22:40–46). It is in Luke alone that we find Jesus' parables about prayer—the parables of borrowing bread at midnight (see Luke 11:5–8) and of the widow and the unjust judge (see Luke 18:1–8). Thus prayer was the very lifeline between the Father and the Son. If Christ needed to pray, how much more do we need prayer!

In addition to teaching the power of prayer, Luke also highlighted the role of the Holy Ghost in the life of Jesus. Throughout the birth narrative in Luke, we see the constant work of the Holy Ghost. John was filled with the Holy Ghost, even in his mother's womb (see Luke 1:15). The Holy Ghost would "come upon" Mary (Luke 1:35). Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost when Mary came to her (see Luke 1:41). Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied of Christ (see Luke 1:67). Simeon was guided and spoke by the Holy Ghost as he likewise testified of the arrival of the Lord's salvation (see Luke 2:25–27, 30).

As with the use of prayer in Jesus' life, Luke makes it clearer than does Mark that it was the Holy Ghost who descended on Jesus at baptism (see Luke 3:22). By the power of the Spirit, Jesus was led into the wilderness for forty days, and in the power of the Spirit He returned to Galilee (see Luke 4:1, 4). Only in Luke is the passage from Isaiah 61:1 quoted: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to

the poor" (Luke 4:18). The Holy Ghost would teach and comfort Him in times of need and give additional power to His divine ministry (see Luke 12:12; see also JST, John 3:34). The Prophet Joseph Smith confirmed this unique contribution of Luke when he taught that Jesus had greater power than any man because He was the Son of God and had "the fullness of the Spirit."<sup>33</sup> Jesus rejoiced in the power of the Holy Ghost (see Luke 10:21). Luke also records that Christ taught that it was the Holy Ghost who would teach in time of need (see Luke 4:14) and that the Father will give the Holy Ghost to those who seek Him (see Luke 11:13).<sup>34</sup>

Thus the Gospel of Luke not only testifies of the role of the Holy Ghost in helping the Savior fulfill His mission but also points to the role of the Holy Ghost in leading and strengthening the Church. This significant theme begun in his Gospel received even greater emphasis by Luke in the book of Acts, where we read of the great new mission fields of the Church being blessed by the coming of the Holy Ghost (see Acts 2:4; 8:17; 10:44; 19:6).<sup>35</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Through the eyes of Mark and Luke, we see the man Jesus, but we see aspects of His life and ministry that would have been lost to us without both of these Gospels. From Mark we learn that the disciples did not always understand the significance of Jesus and His work. They were initially attracted by the miracles and compassion of Jesus, but only after His Atonement and Resurrection did they fully understand that Jesus' messiahship involved suffering and that His disciples might well be called to walk in His footsteps, as many did. It was a poignant and timely message which the disciples in Rome, in their days of persecution, needed to hear. Mark reminds us that the Christian will never be completely at ease in the world today either. Like the blind man, only when people receive the healing clarity of vision will they understand that Jesus' suffering messiahship is inextricably bound to their own suffering discipleship.

From Luke's account, we learn that the gospel is for every person, be they Jew, Gentile, slave, free, man, woman, shepherd, or king. Nobody is left out. Israel continues to be special in its relationship to God, but the Church reaches beyond Israel to the Gentiles and others who had for a time been outside the pale of God's chosen, or elect, people. We also learn that the gospel is built upon the eyewitness reports of people who saw all that Jesus did and heard all that He said. Thus they could become true

witnesses for Him—people who could tell what they have experienced and know. And finally, Luke teaches us through Jesus' example about the essential nature of prayer and the critical role of the Holy Ghost.

What beauty would have been lost had either Mark or Luke been left out of the canon! They, in conjunction with Matthew and John, enable us to have a more complete picture of our Lord and His mission than would have been available had their Gospels been omitted. A diamond truly sparkles when all its facets can be seen, and thus it is with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Gospels.

#### NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 1:69.
2. For a general treatment of the place of women in Jesus' day, see Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 359–76. More specifically, women were essentially to be invisible in public (M. Ab. i.5) and exempt from study of the Torah (Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 373). According to R. Eliezer (c. AD 90), women were not to be given a knowledge of the Torah, stating, "If any man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law it is as though he taught her lechery" (M. Sot. iii.4). Jeremias makes the summary statement, "We have therefore the impression that Judaism in Jesus' time also had a very low opinion of women, which is usual in the Orient where she is chiefly valued for her fecundity, kept as far as possible shut away from the outer world, submissive to the power of her father or her husband, and where she is inferior to men from a religious point of view" (375). Citations of the Mishnah are from Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).
3. Latter-day Saints should understand this discussion well. Four accounts of Joseph Smith's first vision exist, but they differ in their content, mainly because Joseph related different aspects of the vision to different people dependent upon their ability to understand.
4. Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, 2d ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 1–2. Taylor here recounts the tradition received from Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (c. AD 140) that Mark recorded what he had learned from Peter, although not completely in order.
5. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX)* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 14–18; E. Earle Ellis, ed., *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966), 4–9. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:69–70.
6. G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 13–14.

7. As Fitzmyer points out in *Gospel According to Luke*, 53–57, the exact place of composition cannot be determined.
8. In Colossians 4:10–11 Paul lists Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus called Justus as sending greetings to the Colossians. He then says, “These are the only men *of the circumcision* among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me” (RSV). Next, he lists those *not of the circumcision* who also send greetings; that is, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas. Clearly, Luke must be a Gentile, if in fact this Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke.
9. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 47–51.
10. Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith Jr., *Anatomy of the New Testament: A Guide to Its Structure and Meaning*, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 99.
11. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 88.
12. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 91–92.
13. Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, 123; see also Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 101.
14. Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark*, 124–25; see also Edward J. Mally, “The Gospel According to Mark,” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 2 vols. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 2:22.
15. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 98.
16. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:391.
17. F. V. Filson, “Peter,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:755. Eusebius quotes Origen on this point (Euseb. Hist. 3.1.2).
18. Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 362. The tradition is recorded in Tertullian, *Scorpiace* 15 (Ante-Nicene Fathers).
19. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:69–70. It should be noted here that Luke could not have interviewed all persons who were eyewitnesses. He had to depend for some of his information on persons who conveyed accurately the earlier traditions, that is, “the ministers of the word.”
20. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 155.
21. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 167.
22. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 175.
23. The word *synoptic* basically means to see from a similar viewpoint. As one reads Matthew, Mark, and Luke the portrait of Jesus has many similarities, hence the name “synoptic.”
24. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 167.
25. Carroll Stuhlmueller, “The Gospel According to Luke,” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 2 vols. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 2:117.

26. G. W. H. Lampe, "Luke," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 820.
27. Stuhlmüller, "The Gospel According to Luke," 2:117.
28. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:97; Ellis, *Gospel of Luke*, 19.
29. Stuhlmüller, "The Gospel According to Luke," 2:117.
30. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 163.
31. Caird, *Saint Luke*, 134. John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), lxxiii.
32. Caird, *Saint Luke*, 36.
33. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 188.
34. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 228–30.
35. Fitzmyer, *Gospel According to Luke*, 231. To Latter-day Saints, Fitzmyer's comment on the relation between the Holy Ghost and the Twelve is of interest. Fitzmyer is Catholic. "Moreover, it becomes plain in Acts that the Spirit is given only when the Twelve are present or a member or delegate of the Twelve is on community. The reconstitution of the Twelve (1:15–26) is the necessary preparation for the outpouring of the Spirit (2:1–4). This also explains why, though Philip (not one of the Twelve, but one of the Seven appointed to serve tables [6:2–6]) evangelizes Samaria and baptizes there (8:5–13), Peter and John have to be sent before the people in Samaria receive the Spirit (8:17). Similarly, it is only when Paul, indirectly a delegate of the Twelve (see 11:22, 25–26; 13:2–4), arrives in Ephesus that 'some disciples' (i.e. neophyte Christians) are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and receive the Spirit through the laying on of Paul's hands (19:1–6)."