

Lesson 10: The Gospels

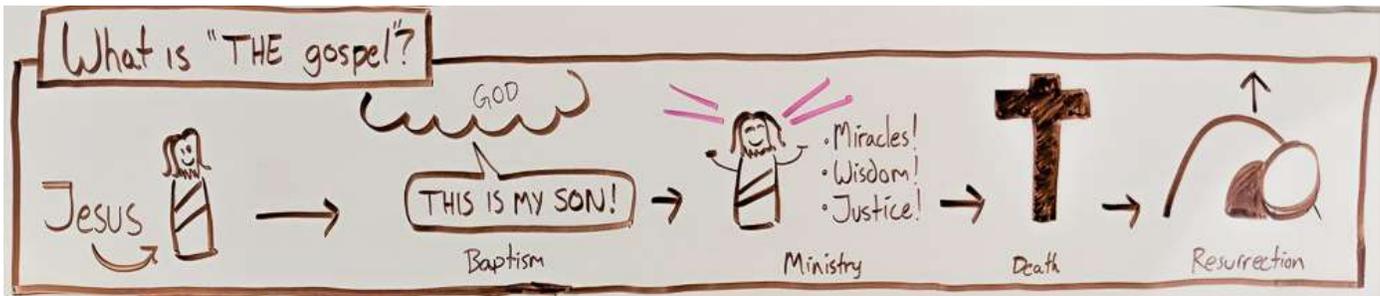
Please click twice to watch the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ne0-XemYIY>

The first four books of the New Testament are known as the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each book tells us about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

All 4 gospels focus on the story of Jesus

The Gospels are where we find all the famous Bible stories about Jesus. Because each Gospel is about the same main character, they all share several elements.

For example, each of the four gospels follows this general progression:



1. A statement of Jesus' divine status
(Mt 1:23; 3:13–17; Mk 1:1, 9–11; Lk 1:32–35; 3:21–22; Jn 1:1, 29–34)
2. Jesus' miracles and teachings
(Mt 4–25; Mk 1–13; Lk 4–19:27; Jn 2–17)
3. Jesus' betrayal, trial, and death
(Mt 26–27; Mk 14–15; Lk 19:28–23:56; Jn 18–19)
4. Jesus' resurrection and encouragement to his followers
(Mt 28:1–15; Mk 16:1–8; Lk 24:1–12; Jn 20:1–10)

Why do we need four gospels?

Many people have asked, "Do we really need *four* gospels in the Bible? That seems unnecessary. Shouldn't one do the trick?"

Maybe that would be the case if Jesus were a regular person who just did regular things. But he isn't, and he didn't.

John says that the world itself couldn't hold all the books that could be written about Jesus' ministry (Jn 21:25). If there's that much to say about Jesus, then we shouldn't be surprised that we have multiple accounts of him in our Bible. If the world couldn't hold his whole story, then surely a 16-chapter Gospel like Mark couldn't!

We have four gospels because during the early Church and four people found it necessary to tell the story of Jesus from four different perspectives. Each gospel was written for a different group of people, by a different author, who was trying to accomplish a different purpose.

The Gospel of Matthew

Traditionally penned by the apostle of the same name, Matthew is the first gospel of the four. This gospel was written for people familiar with the Old Testament, both the Law of Moses and the prophets. Matthew makes more references to the Old Testament than any other gospel.

Matthew takes great care to show how Jesus fulfills the prophecies made about him earlier in the Bible—especially focusing on Jesus’ role as the Messiah. (The promised king descended from David.)

Today, Matthew is the perfect book to bridge the gap between the Old Testament and the New. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mt 5:17).

St. Matthew is represented by a divine man because the Gospel highlights Jesus’ entry into this world, first by presenting His family lineage — “A family record of Jesus Christ, Son of David, son of Abraham” (Mt 1:1) — and His incarnation and birth: “Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about” (Mt 1:18).



The Gospel of Mark

This is the shortest gospel and the first one written. According to early Church tradition, this gospel was written by John Mark, the same guy who backed out of his missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37–39). Mark aided the apostle Peter later in life, and this gospel is an arranged collection of Peter’s memories of Jesus.

Mark was written for a wide audience. This gospel focuses on Jesus’ role as the suffering servant and son of God. While the other gospels contain long discourses and sermons of Jesus, Mark is

all about action. It's very action-oriented (the word "immediately" shows up frequently), and of the four gospels, Mark reads most like a story.

St. Mark, represented by the winged lion, references the Prophet Isaiah when he begins his gospel: "Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Isaiah the prophet it is written: 'I send my messenger before you to prepare your way: a herald's voice in the desert, crying, "Make ready the way of the Lord, clear Him a straight path.'" "The voice in the desert crying" reminds one of a lion's roar, and the prophetic spirit descending to earth reminds one of a "winged message." The lion also signified royalty, an appropriate symbol for the Son of God.



The Gospel of Luke

This is the longest of the four gospels—in fact, it's the longest book of the New Testament. Luke is the historical, journalistic Gospel: a thorough account of the episodes in Jesus' life arranged in chronological order. This gospel was written to establish believers in the teachings of Jesus (Lk 1:1–4).

Church tradition recognizes the first-century physician Luke as the author and editor of this book, which is how it gets its name. Luke may be one of the only non-Hebrew authors of the Bible based on a few clues we pick up in the New Testament. This gospel presents Jesus as the seeking savior of all nations (Lk 2:30–32). It was and continues to be a rich story of Jesus' life and ministry for both those who don't know much about Jesus and those who have a great deal of familiarity with the Old Testament.

The winged ox represents St. Luke. Oxen were used in temple sacrifices. For instance, when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, an ox and a fatling were sacrificed every six steps (2 Sm 6). St. Luke begins his Gospel with the announcement of the birth of St. John the Baptizer to his father, the priest Zechariah, who was offering sacrifice in the Temple (Lk 1). St. Luke also includes the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the fatted calf is slaughtered, not only to celebrate the younger son's return, but also to foreshadow the joy we must have in receiving reconciliation through our most merciful Savior Jesus who as Priest offered Himself in

sacrifice to forgive our sins. Therefore, the winged ox reminds us of the priestly character of our Lord and His sacrifice for our redemption.



The Gospel of John

John is the persuasive Gospel. It's written to show the miracles of Jesus, so that those who read his story will believe in him and have everlasting life (Jn 20:30–31).

John's account of Jesus' teachings and miracles emphasize the divine nature of Jesus Christ. To John, Jesus is the cosmic Son of God, come to destroy the works of the devil. The whole book is arranged to present Jesus this way.

The gospel of John has a very different feel from the other three. The way the gospel starts is a good example. Mark begins with Jesus' baptism. Luke begins with the happenings surrounding Jesus' birth. Matthew begins with Abraham, and traces the generations down to Jesus. But John takes us all the way back to the very first words of the Bible: "In the beginning" (Jn 1:1). John is telling the story of the divine being who became flesh, dwelt among us, and died so that we might have everlasting life.

St. John is represented by the rising eagle. The Gospel begins with the "lofty" prologue and "rises" to pierce most deeply the mysteries of God, the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the incarnation: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. He was present to God in the beginning. Through Him all things came into being, and apart from Him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:1-3). And "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father filled with enduring love" (Jn 1:14). The Gospel of St. John, unlike the other Gospels, engages the reader with the most profound teachings of our Lord, such as the long discourses Jesus has with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and the beautiful teachings on the Bread of Life and the Good Shepherd. Jesus, too, identified himself as "the way, the truth, and the life," and anyone who embraces him as such will rise to everlasting life with him.



	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
The evangelist	<p>“John Mark” Acts 12:12</p> <p>Companion of Peter in the mission in Asia minor and Rome.</p> <p>Feast Day April 25</p>	<p>“Levi son of Alphaeus” Mark 2:14</p> <p>A tax collector</p> <p>Feast Day September 21</p>	<p>A companion of St. Paul 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 1:24</p> <p>A physician Col 4:14</p> <p>He also wrote the “Acts of the Apostles”</p> <p>Feast Day October 18</p>	<p>“John the Apostle” son of Zebedee</p> <p>Disciple whom Jesus loved</p> <p>Identified with the author of revelation as well as 3 epistles which bears the name “John”</p> <p>Feast :Dec 27</p>

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Audience	Persecuted Jewish and Gentile Christians	Jewish Christians	Gentile Christians from the lower urban classes of the Roman World	Christians communities with issues against “Jews” and “Gnostics”

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Characteristics	<p>Shortest Gospel</p> <p>Gospel of deeds "Jesus performing miracles"</p> <p>Messianic secret</p> <p>Jesus true identity is kept hidden during his earthly life and revealed only by the cross</p>	<p>Seeks to show that the NT is the continuation of the OT.</p> <p>5 great teachings of Christ</p> <p>The only gospel to use the word Church (16:18)</p>	<p>Universality of salvation</p>	<p>Most theological of the gospels</p> <p>Full long discourses with less actions of Jesus and many things such as light, light, and glory which demand deeper level of reflections.</p>

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Identity of Jesus	<p>Jesus as the suffering servant</p> <p>Jesus is a man, by his suffering at the cross, his divinity is revealed</p>	<p>Jesus as the divine Messiah</p> <p>announced by the prophets, the bringer and the herald of salvation</p>	<p>Jesus as divine savior and healer</p> <p>He is the "savior of the world."</p>	<p>Jesus as the Eternal Word made flesh</p> <p>John 1:2 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."</p>