

# God's Amazing Book

Journey Through the New Testament

## WHY FOUR GOSPELS?

A Quick Look at Jesus, from Four Different Approaches

### THE FOUR GOSPELS (MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN)

#### 1 – Matthew (King)

1. Written by?

Matthew (Levi), tax-collector and one of Jesus' 12 disciples.

2. Written when?

40-42 AD

3. Written why?

To present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long-awaited Messiah.

5. Key Phrase:

*Jesus Christ is King*

#### Quick Facts

- Sermon on Mt (ch 5-7)
- Jesus Tempted (ch 4)
- to JEWISH people
- Lineage from Joseph

#### 2 – Mark (Servant)

1. Written by?

Mark (John Mark) wrote down what Peter *personally remembered* about the life of Christ.

2. Written when?

60-63 AD

3. Written why?

To present Jesus as God's Servant who was actively helping people.

5. Key Phrase:

*Jesus Christ is Servant*

#### Quick Facts

- More miracles in this book (even though shorter)
- "immediately" used 42x (showing action)
- to ROMANS
- PETER preached ONLY what he personally saw (that's why no birth or childhood)
- 5 SERMONS put in writing (try reading the whole book out loud.)
- Never intended to be a gospel.

#### 3 – Luke (Perfect Man)

1. Written by?

Dr. Luke, a personal assistant of the Apostle Paul.

2. Written when?

58-60 AD

3. Written why?

To present Jesus as the Perfect Man.

5. Key Phrase:

*Jesus Christ is the Perfect Man*

#### Quick Facts

- Luke interviewed people during 2 year imprisonment of Paul.
- Gospel was intended for a non-Jewish audience (unlike Matthew).
- Lineage from Mary
- Obviously interviewed Mary ("Mary pondered these things in her heart")
- demonstrates Jesus' interest in outcasts from Jewish society.
- Luke emphasized women's role in Jesus' ministry.
- work of Holy Spirit receives special attention in Luke.
- He intended it to be accurate.

#### 4 – John (Son of God)

1. Written by?

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ.

2. Written when?

96 AD

3. Written why?

To present Jesus as the Son of God (not merely human)

5. Key Phrase:

*Jesus Christ is the Son of God*

#### Quick Facts

- Jesus is ETERNAL (John 1:1-18)
- 92 % UNIQUE from the other three Gospels.
- God came in the flesh (1:14)

### Fast Facts on the Life of Christ

- born approx. 5 BC
- Ascended 30 AD
- Synoptic? Matt., Mark, Luke
- 3 ½ year ministry
- name "Jesus" means "the Lord Saves"
- Miracle in all 4 Gospels? Feeding of 5,000

The four Gospels comprise about 46 percent of the New Testament, and when the Book of Acts is added, the figure goes up to 60 percent. The early church placed the Gospels at the beginning of the new Testament canon, not because they were the first books to be written, but because they are the foundation upon which Acts and the Epistles are built. The Gospels are at once rooted in and the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and they provide the historical and theological backdrop for the rest of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

## THE MAKING OF THE GOSPELS<sup>2</sup>

### Stage 1

- The Holy Spirit descends upon the Jerusalem church on the day of Pentecost (30). The believers witness to Christ's life, death, and resurrection.
- The apostles realize the need for a written record of the ministry of Jesus to serve as a witness in their place wherever they cannot do so personally. The apostle Matthew is chosen to set down in a single commercial-length scroll the apostles' witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- The **"Gospel according to Matthew"** is published before the apostles separate under the persecution of Herod Agrippa I in **42**.

### Stage 2

- Paul evangelizes the Gentiles and encounters problems peculiar to the pagan environment of his converts. During his detention in Caesarea, Paul prompts Luke to provide a fuller elucidation of Jesus' ministry and of the place of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God.
- Luke produces a "Gentile edition" of the Gospel of Matthew in **58-60**. The publication of the **"Gospel according to Luke"** is withheld until apostolic approbation can guarantee its truthfulness and accuracy.

### Stage 3

- During his Roman detention in **60-62**, Paul asks Peter to check and authorize Luke's Gospel so that it can be published for use in the Gentile churches. Peter's response is given in a series of lectures before a distinguished Roman audience. These lectures are recorded by John Mark, Peter's secretary, and are issued privately in written form to members of the Roman church at their request.
- **Luke's text** is published in **62** as the authoritative "Gentile edition" of the Gospel.
- After the death of Peter in **66/67**, the **"Gospel according to Mark"** is published, Mark himself adding the last twelve verses to provide a fitting conclusion to Peter's reminiscences.

### Stage 4

- The **Gospel of John** is published in Ephesus in **96** as the indispensable supplement to the other Gospel accounts.

## Why Should We Trust the Gospels?

### Luke 1:1-4

#### I. The Authors Examined the Evidence 1:1

- A. There were many sources
- B. The events were sure

#### II. The Authors Interviewed Eyewitnesses 1:2

- A. The witnesses spoke of what they saw
- B. The witnesses spoke as servants of the Word

#### III. The Authors Wrote with Exactness 1:3-4

- A. They wrote striving for accuracy 1:3
- B. They wrote seeking our certainty 1:4

Source: Daniel Akin

<sup>1</sup>Wilkinson, B., & Boa, K. (1983). *Talk thru the Bible* (303). Nashville: T. Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> David Alan Black, *Why Four Gospels? The Historical Origins of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001), 17.