

THE FOUR GOSPELS

The life and teachings of Jesus Christ from four perspectives.

Gospel

From *euangelion* (Greek), which means good news.

This refers to Jesus' message, the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Why four Gospels?

- Different original audiences and different purposes.
- Four perspectives for a fuller picture.
- Repetition for emphasis.

MATTHEW

Author: tax collector called to become an apostle.

Original audience: Jewish readers.

Emphasis: on the fact that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.

Interesting fact: Matthew alone uses the term *kingdom of heaven* (equivalent to Kingdom of God).

LUKE

Author: the beloved physician and companion of Paul.

Original audience: Theophilus and gentile readers.

Emphasis: on Jesus' humanity and His kindness to the weak, suffering and outcasts.

Interesting fact: Luke alone tells of Jesus' experience at the temple at age 12.

Some things covered in all four Gospels:

- Ministry of John the Baptist.
- Feeding of the 5,000.
- Betrayal by Judas.
- Denial by Peter.
- Trial and crucifixion of Christ.
- Resurrection of Christ.
- Promise of His second coming.

MARK

Author: served with Paul, Barnabas and Peter.

Emphasis: on Jesus' mighty and miraculous works that prove He is the Messiah.

Interesting fact: "Only four paragraphs . . . are unique to Mark" (*Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible*, p. 499).

JOHN

Author: fisherman called to become an apostle.

Original audience: gentile Christians at the end of the first century.

Emphasis: on the last days and hours of Christ's life so "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31).

Interesting fact: John alone gives Jesus' great "I am" statements and describes Jesus' washing of the apostles' feet on Passover.