

Overview of the Gospels

Do you like to hear good news? I think it's safe to say that everyone does! The word *Gospel* means "good news," and the first division of the New Testament is called the Gospels. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised the Messiah would come to deliver God's people. When the Messiah finally came, it was very good news! It's only appropriate the first section of the New Testament is called the Gospels division because it tells us the Good News about Jesus!

The New Testament part of the Bible was written after Jesus came to Earth. This is where we learn about the life of Jesus, his disciples, the early church, and how believers should live. The New Testament starts with the Gospel division and has four books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospel writers all tell us their own accounts of Jesus, and each one also gives us individual looks at who Jesus was and is from a different perspective.

The first three gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have much in common. They are called the Synoptic Gospels because they cover many of the same events in the same order. They tell of Jesus traveling from town to town, telling parables, doing miracles, and teaching the people about God and the kingdom. Even though they are similar, each of these three Gospels still gives us new and unique perspectives of Jesus that are a little different from each other.

Matthew was written for the Jews. It presents Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah, and sovereign King, who was prophesied about in the Old Testament. Matthew even shows 128 Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled during the life of Jesus, showing both the Jews, and us, that Jesus is the Savior God promised to send.

Mark shows Jesus as the One who willingly became a suffering servant, sent to serve God's people and submit to God's plan, even to death.

Luke focuses on the humanity of Jesus, showing him as the Son of Man while still being fully God. Luke also shows Jesus as the Savior for all humankind.

John, the fourth and final book of the Gospels, shows Jesus as the I AM, the Son of God, or literally, God in a human body. We call that "incarnation" or in the flesh. This book doesn't follow the same structure as the other Gospels, and the book of John reveals greater insights into who Jesus is and how you can live a life of faith.

All four of the Gospels share the Good News that Jesus lived, died, was buried, and came alive again the third day so we could have our sins forgiven by believing in him and practicing to live like Jesus.