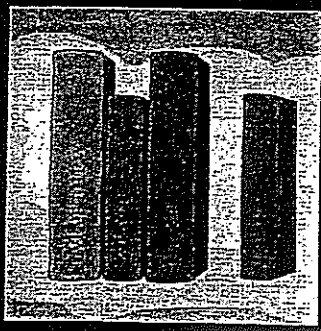


INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS



Familiarize yourself with the Gospels by using your Bible to answer the following questions:

1. Name the four Gospels in the order in which they appear in the Bible.

- A. _____ B. _____
C. _____ D. _____

help

2. Which Gospel has the greatest number of chapters? _____

3. Which Gospel has the fewest number of chapters? _____

4. Look at the beginning of each Gospel.

A. Which two begin with stories about Jesus' birth?

B. What is the opening sentence of the Gospel of Mark?

C. The beginning of the Gospel of John speaks of "the Word." Who is the Word?

5. The Gospel of Matthew makes many connections with the Old Testament. Look at Matthew, chapter 5, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. People reading this chapter who are familiar with the Old Testament would be reminded of which Old Testament character? (He also taught the Law that he received from God on a mountain; see Exodus, chapters 19–20.)

6. The Gospel of Mark is filled with action. How many stories of Jesus healing people are told in the first chapter alone?

7. The Gospel of Luke is often called the Gospel of compassion. Look at the parables found in Luke 10:29–37 and Luke 15:11–32. These parables are found only in the Gospel according to Luke. Briefly explain how each parable is an example of compassion.

8. The author of the Gospel according to John tells us why he wrote this Gospel in John 20:31. What does he say?



INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS

Gospel literally means "good news." We call the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Gospels because they tell us the Good News—that through Jesus Christ we are saved from sin and death!

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar to one another. They contain many of the same stories and sometimes even the same wording. Because of this, Scripture scholars think that Mark may have been written first. Later, the people who wrote Matthew and Luke probably used Mark as a starting point in creating their Gospels. They added other stories about Jesus to create their own unique Gospels.

The Gospel of John is quite different from the other three. It was probably the last Gospel to be written, and it presents a deeper understanding about Jesus Christ's true identity. It contains fewer miracles and fewer parables, and John more clearly presents Jesus as God's divine Son. In John, Jesus gives several long talks explaining who he is and the importance of having faith in him.

Having four Gospels, rather than just one, gives us a more complete understanding of Jesus. Here are some things to look for in each Gospel:

- **Matthew:** stories that connect Jesus to important people in the Old Testament
- **Mark:** stories in which Jesus tries to keep his identity secret
- **Luke:** stories in which Jesus emphasizes helping poor people
- **John:** stories in which Jesus describes himself by starting with "I am the . . ."

SOME STORIES UNIQUE TO EACH GOSPEL

The following stories are found only in Matthew:

- Visitors from the East (2:1-12)
- The Final Judgment (25:31-46)

The following story is found only in Mark:

- Jesus Heals a Blind Man (8:22-26)

The following stories are found only in Luke:

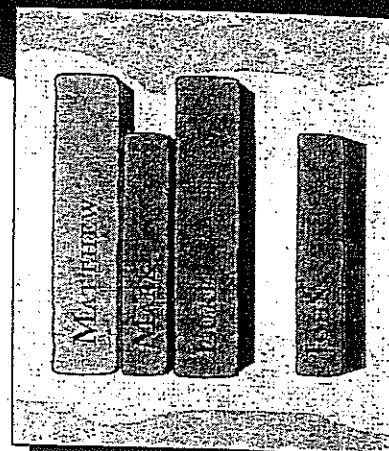
- The Shepherds and the Angels (2:8-20)
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)

The following stories are found only in John:

- The Wedding in Cana (2:1-12)
- Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet (13:1-20)

REFLECTION

1. What is your favorite story about Jesus? Why is it important to you?
2. Looking at the short descriptions given above, which Gospel might you be most interested in reading? Create a plan to start reading from that Gospel every day.



BREAKTHROUGH! ARTICLES

Read these articles to learn more about the four Gospels:

Introduction to the Gospel According to Matthew

Remember Moses?
Matthew 2:13-18

Feeding the Crowds
Matthew 15:32-39

Introduction to the Gospel According to Mark

Introduction to the Gospel According to Luke

All in the Family
Luke 3:23-38

The Our Father:
Another Version
Luke 11:1-4

Introduction to the Gospel According to John

The Eucharist Is Central!
John, chapter 6

The "I Am" Sayings
John 8:12