

**BIB 251 The Gospels**  
**Lesson 4 The Four Gospels**

Intro. Why four gospels? This is a reasonable question with an obvious answer: to give a more detailed and complete account of the life of Christ from four different perspectives. The illustration Baxter quoted about quartet singers. By the use of all four blending and vocalizing the different voices a more full sound is produced.

Compare it to going to four different doctors to get their opinion. How reaffirming to have all four agree with the diagnosis, yet each contributing their individual experience and perspective.

1. The Synoptic problem (dealing especially with Matthew, Mark, and Luke)

	Differences	Agreements
Matthew	42%	58%
Mark	7%	93%
Luke	59%	41%
John	92%	8%

A. Examples of supposed differences:

1. Mk. 5 and Luke 8:26 Mt. 8:28 Maniac of Gadara 1 or 2 men
2. Mt 26:74 Mk 14:68-72 Lk 22:60-61 Cock crowing 1 or 2 times

Note: The arguments about the differences and omissions can be erased by simply accepting the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26

B. Chronology - These gospels are not written chronologically but rather to fulfill the purpose of the writer. If any of the accounts is likely to be more chronologically accurate it would be John because he divides his gospel according to the feast days which would be more conducive to chronology. Some suppose based on Luke's prologue that he is the most chronological. He definitely gives the major events in chronological order, but makes no attempt to do so with the individual details of the account. Luke 22:24 happens when Christ is washing their feet, but he records as after the supper.

Trans. So what are their individual perspectives?

2. The four perspectives - I think that each writer wrote about the aspect of Christ that most fascinated them.

A. Matthew

1. Perspective: To the Jew, Christ as King
2. Purpose: Show Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah

Note: Matthew was a tax collector for the Romans and fully aware of the Jewish subjection to Rome and looking and waiting for the deliverer who would establish the Messianic kingdom when they would no longer be taxed.

B. Mark

1. Perspective: To the Roman, Christ as Servant
2. Purpose: Show the lowliness and meekness

Note: Mark is John Mark who deserted Paul and Barnabas possibly because he didn't like the role of being their minister or servant. He had learned from the ultimate Example of humility.

Note: Roman's like American's would bow to nobody and serve nobody.

#### C. Luke

1. Perspective: To the Greeks, Christ as a Man
2. Purpose: to show that Jesus Christ was the god-man the greeks were looking for.

Note: Luke was a physician and would have naturally been fascinated by the birth, healings, and scientific aspects of humanity in Christ's life and ministry.

#### D. John

1. Perspective: To the saints, Christ as God
2. Purpose: To show that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and not just another man or great teacher. Starts with "In the beginning"

Note: Each of these perspectives is illustrated by Ezekiel's vision of the four faces of the cherubim. Ezekiel 1:10 As the faces reveal the moral nature of God so Christ reveals that nature. The gospels are not necessarily the fulfillment of the vision rather are they another illustration of God's holy nature. The four faces are the Lion, Ox, man, Eagle and obviously correspond well to the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the burden bearing Ox, the ultimate creation - man, the majestic eagle.

Note: The first recorded miracles are interesting. Matthew shows Him healing a leper which would amaze the Jew for Him to "touch". Luke shows him casting out demons which would amaze the Greek fascinated with the spirit world.

#### Conclusion

The four gospel writers each give a distinct perspective upon the life of Christ which must be understood to rightly interpret their teaching and also to unlock many deeper truths not understood without comparison. For example Matthew uses Jewish terminology which the Greek would be ignorant of while Mark and Luke take time to explain them. There is profit from getting four witness accounts opposed to one which helps fill in the gaps in our mind.