

THE FOUR GOSPELS

Introduction

- 1) At the beginning of the collection of New Testament books, there are four separate accounts of the life of Jesus – ***the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John***
- 2) Someone may ask: “Why are there four gospels?”
 - a) Why not just one complete narrative? Shouldn’t the four gospels say the exact same thing?
- 3) What can we understand about why God has given us four gospels? This knowledge can be faith-building and motivate us to share with others the message of the gospel of Christ

I) Looking at the Four Gospels

- A) There are both similarities and differences
 - 1) ***Matthew-Mark-Luke*** are similar in content and order – often called the “Synoptic” gospels – means to “see together” (can use a harmony or synopsis in study)
 - 2) ***John*** is arranged differently for a particular purpose
- B) Each author is distinct from the others in how he wrote and to whom he was writing
 - 1) Four perspectives [multiple witnesses] of one united picture of Christ (cf. Deut. 19:15)

II) Looking at Each Gospel (“crucifixion stories with long introductions”)

- A) ***Matthew*** (an apostle – Matt. 9:9; 10:3)
 - 1) Magnificently written gospel; Matthew is a well-educated tax collector (record keeper)
 - 2) Emphasis on fulfilled prophecy (1:22-23; 2:15, 17; 3:3; 4:14-16); genealogy of Jesus
 - 3) Very structured; easy to outline; use of “ekklesia” (church); sermon on the mount
 - 4) Written for a Jewish audience (Hebrew)
- B) ***Mark*** (John-Mark – Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13 – associated with Peter)
 - 1) Shortest, and less structured; lots of miracles (18); only four parables
 - 2) Starts abruptly (1:1-4, 9); no genealogy, no birth story, etc.
 - 3) Written for a Gentile audience (Roman)
- C) ***Luke*** (Gentile; companion of Paul; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11)
 - 1) Luke is an educated and talented writer; longest gospel; historical context (3:1-2)
 - 2) First of two volume work (Acts 1:1); detailed preface (Lk. 1:1-4), orderly, researched account to provide certainty of truth
 - 3) Written to an individual (Theophilus), and for a Gentile audience (Greek)
 - 4) Unique parts: Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Rich Man and Lazarus, Zacchaeus
- D) ***John*** (an apostle – Matt. 4:21-22; 10:2)
 - 1) Unique and different from other gospels; written for a specific purpose (1:1-2; 20:30-31)
 - 2) Written to general audience (Jew and Gentile) to create faith in Jesus as deity and the Christ
 - 3) Seven miracles, no parables, many discourses; prologue – prehistory of Jesus as the Word

III) The Four Gospels – ***Inspired, Reliable, Trustworthy Witnesses to the Life of Christ***

- A) Written to different audiences with different methods and styles (*gospel is revealed for all*)
- B) Selective arrangements of material (*similar yet uniquely recorded historical documents*)
- C) Possible interrelationship along with investigation and research (Lk. 1:1-4)
- D) ***Inspired of God*** – all entirely true and accurate (Jn. 14:26 [Matt. 28:20]; 1 Tim. 5:18; Heb. 2:3)
 - 1) Part of New Testament doctrine and revelation, *not* Old Testament legislation
 - a) Matt. 4:17, 23; 5:21-22; Lk. 16:16; Jn. 3:3-5; Matt. 26:29; Matt. 18:17

Conclusion

Let us be very thankful that in the “fourfold” gospel we have the life of Christ described in such rich detail that speaks to all men about the Savior. From every angle we see Jesus and are drawn to Him to believe unto salvation. Will you believe and obey the gospel (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15-16)?