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Commentary on the Four Gospel Books The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ G000 Introduction

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All New Testament verses quoted in this article are from the English Majority Text Version, and Old Testament verses are from the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

The four Gospels are the first four books listed in the table of contents of the New Testament. Their order is: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. All four books record the life of Christ, including His teachings and miracles, His death, and His resurrection. However, the four books have both similarities and differences in their content.

Typical Common Points:

- All four books record the ministry of preparing the way for the Lord Jesus by John the Baptist.
- All four books record the event of the Lord Jesus being baptized.
- All four books record the event of the Lord Jesus multiplying the loaves, enough to feed 5,000 people.
- All four books record the event of Peter denying the Lord.
- All four books record the event of the Lord Jesus being arrested and tried.

- All four books record the event of the Lord Jesus being crucified on the cross and dying.
- All four books record the event of the Lord Jesus rising from the dead.

Typical Differences:

- Only the book of Matthew records the event of Joseph and Mary taking the Lord Jesus to flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:12-23).
- Only the book of Mark records the event of the Lord Jesus healing the blind man at the village of Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26).
- Only the book of Luke records the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).
- Only the book of John records the event of the Lord Jesus calling Lazarus to live again (John 11:1-44).

Besides, each book also contains different details when recording the same event. But these are not contradictions; rather, they are complementary. It is similar to four photographs taken of the same person from four different angles: the first photo is taken from the front, the second from the right side, the third from the left side, and the fourth from the back. All four photos help us have a clear perception of the shape of the person photographed.

All four books were written in Greek, the common literary language at the time these books were written. We believe that each person used by the God to record the Scriptures was granted grace and inspired by God the Holy Spirit to write. They were free to use their own writing style and linguistic knowledge, even if they made spelling or grammatical mistakes. This way, readers contemporary to them could recognize that they were indeed the recorders, trustworthy witnesses.

The four Gospel books are arranged in the order: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but in reality, we do not know which book was written first and which was written later. Some biblical scholars believe that the book of Mark was written first, around the years 50 to 55. Then the books of Matthew and Luke were written around the years 60 to 65. Finally, the book of John was written around the years 60 to 67. However, it is also very possible that the book of Matthew was written first around the year 50, followed by Mark, Luke, and John.

Based on content and grammar, we believe all four Gospel books must have been written before the year 70, the year Jerusalem and the Temple of God

were destroyed by the Roman army. Because if they were written after 70, the authors would certainly have mentioned the fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ regarding the Temple of God. Specifically, John 5:2 uses the present tense verb "is" to speak about the Pool of Bethesda. By the year 70, that pool had already been destroyed. If the book of John was written after 70, John would have had to use the past tense when referring to the existence of the Pool of Bethesda. Additionally, Peter was killed around the year 68; if the book of John was written after 70, it must be recognized that Peter's death happened exactly according to the prophecy of the Lord Jesus recorded in John 21:18.

The time frame during which the four Gospel books were written may range from the year 50 to 67. Specifically, the book of Luke may have been written between the years 60 and 61, which was the time Luke was alongside Paul during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.

The book of John has content that differs from the three books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Because Matthew, Mark, and Luke have similar content, they are called the Synoptic Gospels.

The word "synoptic" comes from the Greek "syn," meaning "together," and "opsis," meaning "view" or "seeing." So, "synoptic" literally means "seeing together" or "a general overview." In the context of the Bible, the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are called that because they present many of the same stories, often in a similar order and with similar wording. They provide a shared, combined perspective on the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, allowing readers to "see together" the events from a common viewpoint. This contrasts with the Gospel of John, which has a different style and content.

Many biblical scholars believe that the books of Matthew and Luke copied most of the events recorded in the book of Mark. The reason given is that Mark was written first, and many details in Matthew and Luke coincide with those in Mark—sometimes even matching entire sentences. However, we do not think that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark. We believe that God the Holy Spirit inspired each writer individually. We believe that each person is a witness to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their books are independent testimonies, not copies of one another. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence showing that Mark was written before Matthew and Luke. The proposed writing dates are only guesses based on the grammar used in the books and some Church records from the late first century and early second century.

Based on the content and theme of each book, we can see that:

In the book of Matthew, the Lord Jesus is the prophesied king. Matthew was written for the people of Israel to affirm that the Lord Jesus is the Christ, the king of Israel and of the Heavenly Kingdom. Matthew may have been written in Antioch.

In the book of Mark, the Lord Jesus is the obedient servant of the God. Mark was written for the Romans to affirm that the Lord Jesus is the one who fulfills all the will of the God. Mark may have been written in Caesarea.

In the book of Luke, the Lord Jesus is the perfect man. Luke was written for the Greeks but also for other nations to affirm that the Lord Jesus is a perfect person to be the Savior of all peoples. Luke may have been written in Rome.

In the book of John, the Lord Jesus is God incarnate, becoming man. John was written for everyone to affirm that the Lord Jesus has both human nature and divine nature. He is both man and God. John may have been written in Ephesus.

The Book of Matthew

The book of Matthew was written by the Apostle Matthew. Matthew emphasizes that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah, that is, the Christ, promised in the Old Testament. He is the king of Israel. The prophecies in the Old Testament were fulfilled in Him. Matthew highlights the teachings of Christ. The content of Matthew is suitable for the Israelites, who were very familiar with the Mosaic Law and the prophetic books. In fact, Matthew quotes the Old Testament more than any other book in the New Testament.

Matthew emphasizes the following three points:

- **The Lord Jesus is the Son of the God.** He was born of the virgin Mary by the power of God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-20). The God called Him "*My beloved Son*" (Matthew 3:17).
- **The Lord Jesus is king.** He is a descendant of King David, entitled to sit on David's throne (Matthew 1:1). But He is also the King of the Heavenly Kingdom, also called the Kingdom of the God. The terms "Heavenly Kingdom" and "Kingdom of the God" are mentioned most frequently in the book of Matthew. The Lord Jesus repeatedly announced that the Heavenly Kingdom was near.
- **The Lord Jesus is the promised Savior in the Old Testament.** He is a descendant of Abraham, to whom the God promised that through his lineage all nations on earth would be blessed. The book of Matthew

quotes Old Testament prophecies about the birth, teaching, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus to prove that He is the Christ.

The book of Matthew is about the same length as the book of Luke and contains 28 chapters.

The key verse of Matthew is Matthew 1:21:

"And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Brief Overview of Matthew:

The name "Matthew" (G3156) means "gift or giving from the Self-Existing and Eternal One." Matthew, also called Levi, was a tax collector in the city of Capernaum. The Lord Jesus called him to be His apostle while he was sitting at the tax collector's table. Matthew responded to the Lord's call, left his tax collecting job, got up, and followed Him (Matthew 9:9).

Some sources suggest that Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew in both Aramaic and Greek. However, no Aramaic manuscript of Matthew has ever been found. The Greek text itself shows a style indicating it was originally written directly in Greek, not translated from another language into Greek.

The Bible does not say much about Matthew. Historical Church documents also provide little information about him. According to John Foxe's famous book "Book of Martyrs," Matthew preached the Gospel in Parthia (now Iran). He was killed by opponents of the Gospel in the year 60. The weapon used was a lance, a weapon that has both a pointed spearhead and a hammer blade.

The Book of Mark

The book of Mark was written by Mark, also called John Mark. According to Colossians 4:10, Mark was the cousin of Barnabas. According to Church history, Mark was a disciple of Peter and often heard Peter's teachings about the Lord Jesus. Mark also served as Peter's Greek interpreter. In the early days after the Church was established, Peter was the main preacher in the Church at Jerusalem, following the Lord's calling to "feed My sheep." It is very likely that Peter's teachings were remembered and recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke in their respective Gospels.

The book of Mark focuses on the works of the Lord Jesus and presents Him as the Son of the God, but He is also the suffering servant who serves the God. Mark records more of the actions of the Lord Jesus than His teachings.

The book of Mark does not record events in strict chronological order but is rather a compilation of accounts about the works that the Christ performed.

Mark is the shortest Gospel, containing only 16 chapters.

The key verse of Mark is Mark 10:45:

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Brief Overview of Mark

The name "John" (G2491) is a Hebrew name meaning: The Self-Existing and Eternal One who generously gives. The name "Mark" (G3138) is a Latin name meaning: a protector. At that time, an Israelite often had two names—one in Hebrew and one in Greek or Latin.

John Mark's name is first mentioned in Acts 12:12, when Peter was rescued from prison by an angel and went to the house of his mother, where the Church was gathered to pray for him. He is mentioned again as a companion of Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 12:25). Colossians 4:10 tells us that Mark was Barnabas's cousin. Many scholars believe he is the young man mentioned by himself in Mark 14:51-52—the one who only wore a linen cloth and followed the Lord Jesus when He was arrested. When the soldiers came to seize Jesus, this young man fled naked, leaving the cloth behind. It is believed that Mark was present during Jesus' arrest because his family possibly owned a vineyard near Gethsemane. That night, he was likely there to keep watch over the vineyard. When he heard the noise of soldiers arresting the Lord, he woke up, hastily put on the linen cloth, and followed to see what was happening.

According to Church historical records, Mark brought the Gospel to Africa and established the first Church in Alexandria, Egypt, around the year 49. He was also the first bishop of the Church in Alexandria.

The Book of Luke

The book of Luke was written by Luke, a Greek physician. Luke was also a companion of Paul on Paul's missionary journeys and the author of the book of Acts.

Luke records events in chronological order and includes many details for each event. The purpose of Luke is to help readers of any nation know that the Lord Jesus is the Savior of all people.

The book of Luke is about the same length as Matthew and contains 24 chapters.

The key verse of Luke is Luke 19:10:

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Brief Overview of Luke

The name "Luke" (G3065) is shortened from a Latin noun meaning: "giver of light." Luke was a Greek physician, educated, experienced in navigation, and knowledgeable about many regions within the Roman Empire at that time. He was also an excellent writer. The two books he wrote in the New Testament—the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts—are considered comparable to classical Greek literature in terms of style and vocabulary.

Like Paul, Luke never had the opportunity to meet the Lord Jesus during His time on earth. It is very likely that Luke came to believe in the Gospel through Paul's preaching. Afterwards, Luke became a very close friend of Paul, whom Paul called "the beloved physician" in Colossians 4:14. Luke was present during most of Paul's missionary journeys and was the one who recorded these journeys in the book of Acts. Therefore, we can understand that God also appointed Luke to be alongside Paul to care for Paul's health.

The fact that Luke, a non-Israelite, was used by the God to write the Gospel of Luke and the account of the Gospel's proclamation to the Gentiles seems to affirm a truth about the Gospel: that it is not only for Israel but for all peoples.

According to some Church historical records, Luke was possibly killed in the year 68, not long after Paul and Peter were killed during Emperor Nero's persecution of the Church.

The Book of John

The book of John was written by the Apostle John. Its content is completely different from the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. While the book of Mark begins with the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and Matthew and Luke begin with the birth of the Lord Jesus, John begins with "in the beginning." While Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus on the humanity of the Lord Jesus, John emphasizes His divinity. It is also through the book of John that we learn that "the Word" is the title of the Lord Jesus in His divine person before He became incarnate.

Only in the book of John do we find Jesus' declaration about His existence before Abraham: *"Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly I say to you, before*

Abraham was, I AM." (John 8:58). Also, only in John does Jesus repeatedly call Himself "I Am," which is the personal name of God, meaning: "I am self-existent and eternal."

The purpose of the Apostle John in writing the Gospel of John is:

*"But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of *God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."* (John 20:31).

The book of John is intended for every person of any nation to realize that the Lord Jesus is both fully human and fully God and the Savior of humanity.

The book of John contains 21 chapters.

The key verse of John is John 1:14:

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Brief Overview of John

John was one of the original twelve apostles of the Lord Jesus. He was the younger brother of the Apostle James and also the youngest apostle. He, along with James and Peter, was one of the three closest disciples to the Lord Jesus. The book of John refers to him five times as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," indicating his particularly close relationship with the Lord compared to the other apostles.

John was born in the first year (some sources suggest he was born in 6 BCE) and died around the year 100. His hometown was in Galilee, in the northern part of Israel, about 100 kilometers from Jerusalem. His family lived by fishing on the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. His family had significant connections with the priests and the high priest during the time of the Lord Jesus.

John was the only apostle who followed the Lord into the high priest's house on the night Jesus was arrested. He was also the only apostle present at the foot of the cross. Jesus entrusted Mary, His mother, to John, instructing him to care for her as his own mother. After the resurrection and ascension of the Lord, John took Mary to care for her. When persecution of the Church broke out in Jerusalem, John brought Mary to Ephesus and stayed there with her until her death. John likely wrote the Gospel of John in Ephesus around the years 60 to

67.

John was arrested and exiled to the island of Patmos around the year 95. There, the Lord Jesus gave him visions to write the book of Revelation. After his release in 96, John returned to Ephesus. The letters 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John were probably written shortly after John returned from Patmos to Ephesus.

According to Church historical records, John died of old age in the city of Ephesus around the year 100. He was the only apostle who did not die as a result of persecution for his faith.

In the series "Commentary on the Four Gospels: The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," we will study together the meaning of each Bible verse in the four Gospels by compiling the verses in each book that speak about the same event. We will begin with the existence of the Lord Jesus in the divine person of God, proceed through the events that happened to Him in chronological order, and conclude with His ascension.

We will end the introduction here.

May the Holy Spirit guide us into all the truths of God's Word (John 16:13). May the Word of God sanctify us (John 17:17). May the Faithful *God of Peace Himself sanctify our spirit, soul, and body entirely, without blame (1 Thessalonians 5:23), at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Beloved Savior. Amen!

Timothy Christian Huynh
Priscilla Christian Huynh
08/06/2022

Notes:

Please read this article: <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/johns-gospel-may-have-been-last-but-it-wasnt-late/>

About Using “*God”, "the God" and “holy spirit”

Wherever the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts of the Bible use a definite article with a noun to denote GOD, we translate it into English as *God or "the God" to refer to God the Father. We understand that "God," without a definite article, was used as a collective noun for all and any of the three Persons of the

Godhead. And “God,” with a definite article, was used to refer to God the Father.

In the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, the term "holy spirit" (πνευματι αγιω) without the definite article "the" (το) is used to denote the power of God, which is given by God the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit" (το πνευματι το αγιω) is God, and "holy spirit" (πνευματι αγιω) is the power that comes from God.