

The four canonical gospels in the new testament religion essay



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The gospel, otherwise mean the good news of some important event is limited to the four canonical gospels that appear in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. All four canonical gospels made up by certain elements: stories about Jesus' life, collections of Jesus' sayings, and teachings and account about Jesus' conflict with authorities, passion, death and resurrection. The canonical gospels have been group together in the New Testament separated from various letters and other texts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are called Synoptic Gospels because they gave similar accounts of the ministry of Jesus. While the Synoptic Gospels presents Jesus as healer who cast out spirits and told miracles about the coming kingdom of God, John represents Him as an incarnation of the eternal word who spoke mostly about himself, and did not refer to a second coming.

MATTHEW

Matthew a tax collector whose surname was Levi, is the gospel written by a Jew to Jews about a Jew. Matthew is the writer, his country men the readers, and Jesus Christ the subject. Matthew's design is to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long awaited Messiah. Through a carefully selected series of Old Testament quotations, Matthew established Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. His genealogy, (Matthew 1: 1-17), baptism (Matthew 3: 13-17), messages and miracles all point to the same conclusion: Christ is King. Even in His death, he could not be defeated, instead He was victorious by His resurrection, and the message again echoes forth: the King of the Jews lives (Matthew 28). Miller in his book entitled Questions of Faith, pointed out that: 'Matthew is the most Jewish of the four gospels, states further that it is a perfect link between the Old and the new Testament, the Old testament

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predicts the coming of a saviour and Matthew reports His arrival." [1] Matthew quotes the Jewish bible more than any of the other gospels, he quotes several prophecies and declaring Jesus the fulfillment of each one. The key point in Matthew's gospel is that Jesus is the Messiah God have promise to send to Israel, to save His people and rule them in peace. But the Jews misunderstood God's promise because they think of the Messiah only in political terms.

The most famous verse in Matthew is :(Matthew 7: v. 12), 'Do to others what you would have them do to you.'

MARK

Mark is the shortest of the four gospel stories about Jesus written to the Romans, the suffering of Jesus is Mark's special emphasis. There are only sixteen chapters in this short gospel. Mark portrays Jesus as a servant on the move, instantly responsive to the will of the Father, by teaching preaching and healing, (Mark 1: 21-45). Mark jumps right into the baptism that launched Jesus' career as a teacher and healer, he states that Jesus picked twelve disciples to follow him and learned from Him. (Mark 1: 9-20) With Mark we discovered mainly Jesus as the Son of Man, while Matthew presents us from the start with the glorified Lord celebrated in His community. King in his book titled The New Testament, states: 'the first chapter of Mark leaves us quite out of breath as it comes to it's end, he continued by saying if we have been trying to keep up with Jesus, as we watched Him travelling, teaching and hurling out demons then there comes a major test, the highly contagious disease of leprosy [2].' Because this was the purpose that Jesus

came to fulfilled therefore He could not be contaminated by any such diseases, He ministers to the needs of others even at the point of death. In (chapter 10: 45) of Mark which is the key verse in Mark's gospel he declares 'for the Son of Man came not served,

but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

LUKE

Luke the physician a gospel written to the Greek, carefully established the perfect humanity of the Son of man Jesus Christ. He emphasizes His birth and His early life before moving into His ministry. At the beginning of his gospel Luke writes that he sought to do the same as those who have taken the task to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning who were eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord (Luke 1: 1-2).

Swinburne in his book entitled *Who was God?* wrote: 'Luke was claiming to write a basically historical work, so he must have understood Mark's gospel from which he took some of his material, as a basically historical work.

States further that, this provides good reason to suppose that Matthew understood Mark in the same way, and so, in using material from Mark, Matthew was also seeking to write a basically historical work"[3]. Groves suggest that: 'all four gospels agreed in broad outline on the features of the career of Jesus, and also preface their accounts of Jesus' ministry with the prophetic figure of John the Baptist in the Judaeian wilderness.'"[4] Luke

expresses his purpose in writing to his unknown enquirer Theophilus as: 'to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may

know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1: 3-4). Most famous verse in Luke is (chapter 19: v. 10), ' for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost".

JOHN

Unlike any of the other three gospel writers, John is driven by a single goal: to prove that Jesus is the divine Son of God. Jesus' teachings and signs are carefully selected to help readers to come to a conclusion. When we read the other three gospels they all have similar chapters relating to show a complete picture of the life and work of Jesus. Matthew begins his gospel with Jesus' birth; Mark begins with Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist, while Luke takes us back to the birth of John the Baptist as the one who prepares the way for Jesus. John who is symbolized by an eagle, did not introduced Jesus in terms of time, place or by His human ancestor, but placed Him as the eternal Word existing from the beginning of creation John 1: 1). In verses 2-3), John makes it much clearer by saying that 'all things came into being through the Word, and nothing would exist without Him.

LIFE AND LIGHT

Next John announces two major themes, two words he uses twice as often as the other gospels. Here he states that life is found in the Word, (verse: 4), stretching it further to chapter 3: verse 16, where he states 'because God so loved the world, He gave His Son,

so we should not perish but have eternal life". His life is also the light of all people, (chapter 1: v. 4). The presence of the Word is Jesus the Light coming into a dark world.

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Burridge in his book states: 'John's extraordinary claim, which no dualist would dare contemplate, is that the divine Word, the true Light, has come into the world. He further states that for the Dualist, 'God exist in brilliant light in the world above, while we live in darkness of created matter. Therefore God can have nothing to do with the physical level".[5]First John separates the Word as the Light (chapter 1: v. 9), from John the Baptist whom many thought was the light, but was only a reflection and a witness of the light

(John1: 7-8). Next John pointed out that the true Bread, (chapter 6: 32-33,) the true vine (chapter 15: 1), and the true way chapter 14: has come to find us.

SIGNS TO REVEAL HIS GLORY

While John's gospel relates several of Jesus' miracles, he never called them miracles as the other three gospels did; instead, he called them signs which reveal His glory. His disciples believed in Him when He performed the first sign at the wedding at Cana (chapter 2: v.-11). Others believe in Him also because of His signs (chapters 7: 31, and 10: 41). There are seven signs that Jesus performed in the book of John, these are: changing water into wine(2:- 1-11), healing the nobleman's son (4: 46-54), healing the paralysed man(5: 1-15), feeding the five thousand (6: 1-14, walking on the water (6: 16-21), giving sight to the blind man (9: 1-7), and raising Lazarus from the dead, (11: 17-24). Steiner suggests that 'the changing of water into wine, which the Gospel describes as the first of the seven signs, is not only to be traced back to Christ, but grows out of a mystery that operated between the soul of Jesus and his mother".[6]Even though Jesus' time was not fully come for Him to <https://assignbuster.com/the-four-canonical-gospels-in-the-new-testament-religion-essay/>

began His ministry (chapter 2: v. 4), Mary knew that Jesus has the power invested in Him that could change the impossible into possible, which led her to