

## IX. **Gospels**

These synoptic gospels are the writings of three Apostles (disciples), Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who were chosen during the Messiah's ministry. Each narrative in the synoptic is distinct and written to address a specific audience. They are called "synoptic" because they collectively form a general summary of similar events and information relating to the life and ministry of the Messiah.

The synoptic gospels uniformly address the opposition and rebuke against the Messiah the Jewish Pharisees and Scribes expressed. Collectively, they affirm the miracles of the Messiah and capture nuances to reflect identical events with varying viewpoints.

### **Gospel of Matthew**

Matthew opens, declaring it is the "Book of the Generations of Jesus Christ." Tracing the lineage of the Messiah from David to Joseph (son of Jacob/Matthan) is the first priority of this writing.

The genealogy is important to the largely Jewish audience this gospel was intended to address. Jewish prophecy required the Messiah to be a descendant from the House of David. There are three sets of family lines, each with fourteen branches, totaling forty-two generations to link the Messiah to the house of King David. (Matthew 1:1\*6,7-21)

It is valuable to highlight that any connection to King David immediately embraces a connection also to King Solomon, the son of David, and Bathsheba who is the daughter of the Sheba, a Cushite-Ethiopian King.

To convince Jews to believe in the faith message presented in the gospel, it was also important to address its connection to the prophecy of the Torah.

This gospel also affirms compelling prophetic criteria including the sample listed below:

- The birthplace of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1 / Micah 5:2)
- Affirmation of God's Spirit (Matthew 3:16 / Isaiah 42:1)
- The Prophetic sufferings (Matthew 8:17 / Isaiah 53:1-5)



## **Gospel of Mark**

Mark's gospel opens with the declaration that it is “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ”. The declaration places emphasis on the teaching ministry of the Messiah. This gospel chose not to review the birth narrative and, instead of proving a connection to an earthly kingdom, chose to point its attention to the Kingdom of God.

Without details summarizing the Baptism in Jordan or the temptation in the wilderness, the writer moves directly to the focal point of the Messiah’s message. The ministry is launched in Galilee with the Messiah’s declaration: “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*” (Mark 1:15)

From that point forward, the bulk of the writing is an event diary of the miracles and teachings of the Messiah until the last two chapters that capture the final days of ministry before He surrenders His life to save humanity from sin.

In Mark's gospel, only the account of the ministry ends with the disciples preaching everywhere and executing the ministry they were instructed to continue. (Mark 16:20)

## **Gospel of Luke**

The gospel of Luke is written as an apologetic, meaning it is written as a defense on behalf of events and testimonies received from eyewitnesses and ministers of God’s word. (Mark 1:1-2) Luke was not a participant in the Messiah’s ministry and is not mentioned by the other synoptic writers. Luke is introduced during the time of the Apostles. He is listed as a physician in the closing salutations of Apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians Church. (Colossians 4:14)

He captures a genealogy for the Messiah that is distinct from the Gospel of Matthew.

In Mark, the genealogy traces the Messiah from Joesph (son of Heli) to Adam. (Luke 3:23-38) The distinction is not revealed without noting that Joesph’s father in this genealogy has a different name than the father referenced in Matthew. It is not a discrepancy. The reference to father is accurate; however, in Luke, the clarification is that Heli is the father by marriage to Joesph and not his birth father.

Heli is Mary’s birth father. The genealogy actually shows how Mary is a descendant of Jesse, the father of King David. (Luke 3:32-33) This is an important factor when it is understood that the virgin birth requires no bloodline from an earth father. If the Messiah is going to meet the criteria of being a descendant from the House of David, it is necessary that the connection is made to Mary as the virgin mother.

The Gospel of Luke, very similar to Matthew’s gospel, provides a long, detailed account of the life and ministry of the Messiah. Where they are similar, the accounts affirm each other; where they are distinct, the perspective viewpoints offer nuanced details.



## **Gospel of John**

The gospel of John is written with distinctive characteristics from the other gospels. The narrative focuses more on the eternal nature and purpose of the Messiah than his human nature. Where the other gospels rightly celebrate the Messiah's humanity and connection to human needs and issues, the gospel of John is not afraid to place emphasis on His divine nature.

The gospel opens with a unique perspective, an eternal declaration: "In the beginning was the word...". The gospel of John is the only gospel that looks past and beyond the human birth of the Messiah. There is no mention of a birth narrative in Bethlehem. The reader is forced to immediately focus on God becoming flesh to give humanity direct access to Him.

John's gospel and Genesis have a synchronous relationship to the Bible; they both offer a view of God's word at work in the beginning. Genesis records God speaking, "Let there be..." and there was light. (Genesis 1;3) Leading with the introduction of "In the beginning was the word...", affirms the presence of the spoken word responsible for creation.

In John's gospel, the scoffers, including the Pharisees and Scribes, are challenged in a manner not captured in the synoptic gospels. An unapologetic declaration of Jesus Christ as God is presented, challenging those with doubts or questions to contend directly with the Creator.

Comparative facts that contrast John's Gospel to the other three gospels are worthy of mention. Facts include the use of certain words found in all the gospels but over-used by John, including: *father*, as representing God, found 121 times in John and 76 times in all the others combined; *believe* found 99 times in John and 35 times in all the others combined; *light* found 23 times in John and 14 times in all the others combined; *life* found 36 times in John and 17 times in all the others combined; *witness* found in John 14 times and 4 times in all the others combined; *truth* found 25 times in John and only 7 times in all the others combined.

