



### What is the “Bible”?

τὰ βιβλία

from *biblia* (Latin)

from earlier *tà biblía* (Koine Greek)

meaning “the books” or “library” or “book”

A collection of sacred texts or scriptures that Jews and Christians consider to be a product of divine inspiration and a record of the relationship between God and humans

### Some things to keep in mind

- The Bible is **not religion!** Religion is man's attempt to get closer to God. The Bible is God's perspective.
- The Bible purports to be a **message from God** to us. Don't expect it to be like "**just any old book**".
- The **Bible** is full of **supernatural matters** like angels, fallen angels, spirits, and miracles. The lame walk, the deaf hear, and the blind see.

**Science is limited** because it can only study **observable** and **measurable natural things**. **God** of the Bible **isn't** similarly **limited**.

- "In the beginning, God..." **God** of the Bible **claims to be the Creator** of all things.
- "What is **impossible with man** is **possible with God**."
- "A matter must be established by the testimony of *at least* **two or three witnesses**."
- **God is outside time**. He **alone** can declare "...**the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times **things that are not yet done**." (Isaiah 46:10)

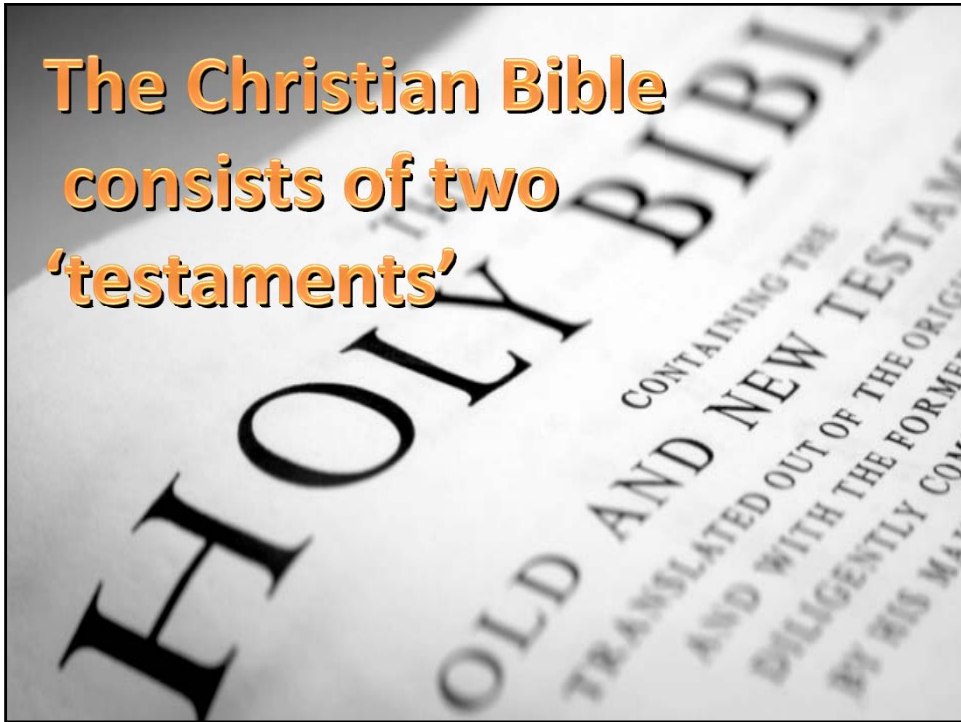
We call this attribute "**prophecy**".

2

WHAT THE  
**BIBLE**  
IS ABOUT

**THE GOSPELS**  
WEIRD BIBLE STUFF II

**The Christian Bible  
consists of two  
'testaments'**



# testament

/ˈtɛstəmənt/  
noun



1. (law) a will setting out the disposition of personal property.
2. a. a covenant instituted between God and man,  
b. a copy of the Bible or either the Old or the New Testament.

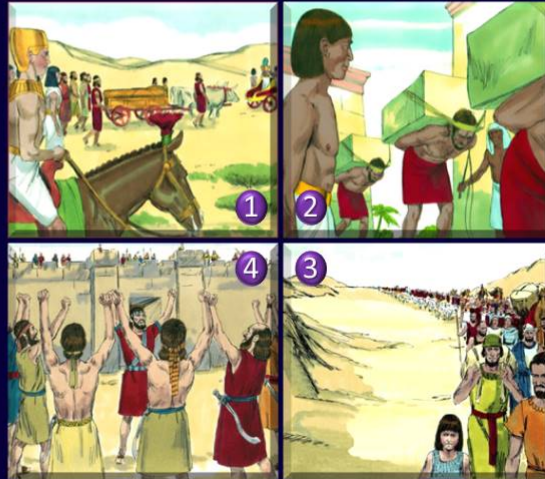
Origin: from Late Latin *vetus testamentum* and *novum testamentum*, loan-translations of Greek *palaia diatheke* and *kaine diatheke*. The Greek **διαθήκη** (*diathēkē* /dē-ä-thā'-kā/ Strong's G1242), means a compact, a covenant, a testament or a will.

Our "library" is a collection of 66 books



## The **Old Testament** is the story of a **Nation**

- 1 The Hebrews went to Egypt as a Family.
- 2 They were later enslaved.
- 3 Moses led them out as a Nation...
- 4 ... that conquered Canaan.



The **New Testament** is the story of a **Man**  
 ...told by people (**eyewitnesses**) who knew Him.



### A central Bible tenet

The **New Testament** is in the Old Testament **concealed**,  
the **Old Testament** is in the New Testament **revealed**.

### The Old Testament

- The 39 books of the Old Testament cover the same material as the Jewish Bible - the Tenakh - just organised a little differently.
- It covers everything from God's creation of the universe, following the Israelites as they coalesce into tribes and a nation under a covenant with God. It records their historical ups and downs as they rebel against God and then repent, repeatedly.
- The Old Testament then covers prophets called to give God's messages to various peoples, few of which were heeded. It stops short of the birth of Jesus, but the Old Covenant keeps running up to Jesus' death, when Christians believe a New Covenant was forged.

## The Old Testament consists of 39 books

- Old Testament books fall into five categories:

### LAW

GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS
NUMBERS
DEUTERONOMY

### WISDOM

JOB
PSALMS
PROVERBS
ECCLESIASTES
SONG OF SOLOMON

### MAJOR PROPHETS

ISAIAH
JEREMIAH
LAMENTATIONS
EZEKIEL
DANIEL

### HISTORY

JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH
1 SAMUEL
2 SAMUEL
1 KINGS
2 KINGS
1 CHRONICLES
2 CHRONICLES
EZRA
NEHEMIAH
ESTHER

### MINOR PROPHETS

HOSEA
JOEL
AMOS
OBADIAH
JONAH
MICAH
NAHUM
HABAKKUK
ZEPHANIAH
HAGGAI
ZECHARIAH
MALACHI

## Early Evidence of the Old Testament

Version	Examples	Language	Date Composed	Oldest Copy
Silver Scrolls	Found at Ketef Hinnom near Jerusalem in 1979	Paleo-Hebrew	650-587 BC	Amulets with Priestly Blessing-Num 6:22-27
Dead Sea Scrolls	Qumran Tanakh	Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek	c. 150 BC-AD70	c. 150 BC – AD 70 (fragments)*
Septuagint	Early papyri	Greek	c. 270 BC	2nd century BC (frags) 4th century AD (comp)
Peshitta	The name Peshitta in Aramaic means "Straight"	Syriac	c. AD125	Oldest dated manuscript is AD 464.
Masoretic	Aleppo Codex, Leningrad Codex	Hebrew	c. AD90	10th century AD (comp)
Samaritan Pentateuch	Abisha Scroll, by Aaron's GGS 13 years after Deut.	Samaritan Hebrew	200-100 BC XXX BC claimed	Oldest extant MSS, c. 11th century AD
Targum	Earliest date from Ezra's time to be read to unlearned	Aramaic	XXX BC claimed; Popular after AD70	5th century AD
Coptic	Crosby-Schøyen Codex, British Library MS.	Coptic (4 dialects)	Sahidic, 2 cent AD Bohairic, 3 cent AD	3rd or 4th century AD

## Dead Sea Scrolls

- Dead Sea scrolls were recovered at Qumran in 1946 from caves that had been closed in 68 AD<sup>1</sup>.
- They included the complete scroll of Isaiah as well as scrolls and/or fragments of every Old Testament book other than Esther.



1. Eisenman argues for a final possible deposit date of 132 AD.

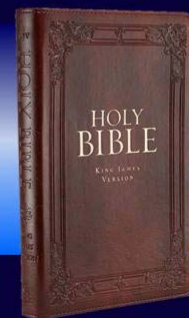
## Old Testament = Tanakh

The Christian Old Testament is **equivalent** to the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh. It has the same basic contents but is organised differently and has a different emphasis.

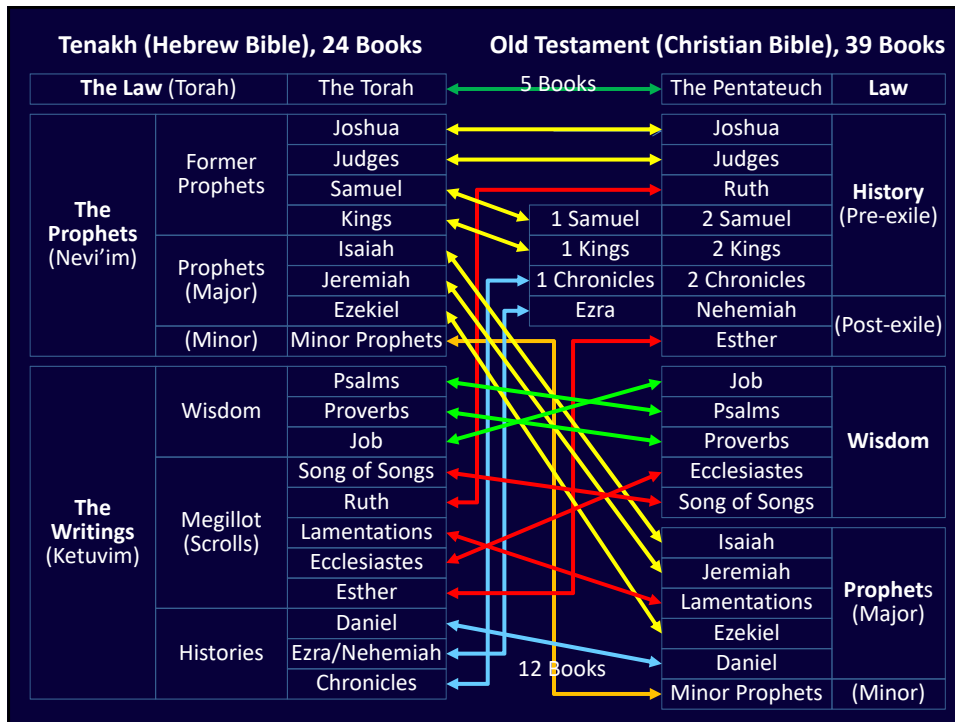
Tanakh



Old Testament







## The New Testament consists of 27 books

- The 27 books of the New Testament are a record of historical events in the life of Jesus Christ - His life, death, resurrection, ascension - and the birth and spread of Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD by His disciples.
- The New Testament covers a New Covenant between God and humans in which the dispensation of grace is revealed through Jesus Christ.
- Christians believe that the New Testament add to the Old Testament to complete the revelation of God.
- Therefore, Jesus came to complete the revelation of God. In so doing, His life and death fulfilled hundreds of Old Testament prophecies.

## The New Testament

- New Testament books fall into seven categories:

### GOSPELS

MATTHEW
MARK
LUKE
JOHN

### (GOSPEL) HISTORY

ACTS
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### PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES

ROMANS
1 CORINTHIANS
2 CORINTHIANS
GALATIANS
EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
1THESSALONIANS
2THESSALONIANS

### PAUL'S LETTERS TO PASTORS

1 TIMOTHY
2 TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON

### UNNAMED\* LETTER

HEBREWS

### GENERAL LETTERS

JAMES
1 PETER
2 PETER
1 JOHN
2 JOHN
3 JOHN
JUDE

### PROPHECY

REVELATION

NOTE: \* Probably written by Paul.

## Early Evidence of the Gospels

Papyri	Contents	Date of Original	MSS Date	Approx. Time Span
7Q5 Dead Sea Scroll MSS	Mark 6:52-53	Before AD 68 "could be as early as A.D. 50"	-do-	0
Ⲣ <sup>1</sup> Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 2	Matthew 1:1-9, 12, 14-20, 23	"not much later" than Ⲣ <sup>4</sup>	250	Approx. 110 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>4</sup> Paris Papyrus	1:58-59, 1:62-2:1, 2:6-7, 3:8-4:2, 4:29-32, 34-35, 5:3-8, 5:30-6:16	"not much later" than AD 66	175	Approx. 110 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>52</sup> John Rylands Frag.	John 18:31-33, 37-38	circa AD 96	circa AD 125	29 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>64</sup> Magdalen Papyrus	Matthew 26:7-8, 10, 14-15, 22-23 and 31.	Before AD 66	circa AD 200	Approx. 130 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>66</sup> Bodmer Papyrus	John 1:1-6:11, 35-14:26; fragment of 14:29-21:9	70's	circa AD 200	Approx. 130 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>67</sup>	Matt. 3:9,15; 5:20-22, 25-28	70's	circa AD 200	Approx. 130 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>77</sup> Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 2683	Matthew 23:30-39	Before AD 66	circa AD 200	Approx. 130 yrs
Ⲣ <sup>90</sup> Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 3523	John 18:36-19:7	circa AD 96	c. 125-140	29 yrs.

## The mysterious case of 7Q5

- Artefact 5 found in Qumran Cave 7.
- Dated between 50 BC and AD 50.
- Argued by Thiede (1982) to be a fragment of Mark 6:52-53.
- Hotly contested by many scholars.



- If 7Q5 is of Mark 6:52-53:
  1. It would predate most other gospel fragments by decades.
  2. Destroy late 2-3<sup>rd</sup> century dating.
  3. Challenge arguments that gospel accounts are mythical.

ου γαρ  
 συνηκαν **ε**πι τοις αρτοις,  
 αλλ ην **α**υτων η καρδια πεπρω-  
 μενη. **και** διαπερασαντες [επι την γην]  
 ηλθον εις γεννησαρετ και  
 προσωρμισ**θη**σαν. και εξελ-  
 θοντων αυτων εκ του πλοιου ευθυς  
 επιγοντες αυτον.

for they did not  
 understand **c**oncerning the loaves  
 but was **the**ir heart harden-  
**ed**. **A**nd **c**rossing over [unto the land]  
 they came unto Gennesa**r**et and  
 drew to the **sh**ore. And com-  
 ing forth out of the boat immediately  
 they recognized him.



**7Q5**

Mark 6:52-53

## An interesting collection

The **Chester Beatty Papyri** are eleven Christian **Codex** manuscripts in Greek. Seven cover Old Testament books, three New Testament (**Ⲕ<sup>45</sup>**, **Ⲕ<sup>46</sup>** and **Ⲕ<sup>47</sup>**), and one part of the book of Enoch. Most are dated to the 3rd century. They are housed at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland, and other sites.

Papyri	Contents	Date of Original	MSS Date	Time Span	Location
Ⲕ <sup>45</sup> Chester Beatty Papyrus	<b>Mat.</b> 20:24-32, 21:13-19; 25:41-26:39*; <b>Mark</b> 4:36-40, 5:15-26, 5:38-6:3, 16-25, 36-50, 7:3-15, 7:25-8:1, 10-26, 8:34-9:9, 18-31, 11:27-12:1, 5-8, 13-19, 24-28; <b>Luke</b> 6:31-41, 6:45-7:7, 9:26-41, 9:45-10:1, 6-22, 10:26-11:1, 6-25, 28-46, 11:50-12:12, 18-37, 12:42-13:1, 6-24; 13:29-14:10, 17-33; <b>John</b> 4:51, 54, 5:21, 24, 10:7-25, 10:30-11:10, 18-36, 42-57; <b>Acts</b> 4:27-36, 5:10-21, 30-39, 6:7-7:2, 10-21, 32-41, 7:52-8:1, 14-25, 8:34-9:6, 16-27, 9:35-10:2, 10-23, 31-41, 11:2-14, 11:24-12:5, 13-22, 13:6-16, 25-36, 13:46-14:3, 15-23, 15:2-7, 19-27, 15:38-16:4, 15-22, 32-40; 17:9-17	Before AD 68	Circa AD 250	Approx. 180 yrs	Dublin, Ireland *Austria
Ⲕ <sup>46</sup> Chester Beatty Papyrus	<b>Rom.</b> 5:17-6:3, 5-14; 8:15-25, 27-35; 10:1-11, 22, 24-33, 35; 16:1-23, 25-27; <b>Heb.; 1 &amp; 2 Cor.; Eph.; Gal.; Phil.; Col.; 1 Thess.</b> 1:1, 9-10; 2:1-3; 5:5-9, 23-28	50's-70's	circa AD 200	Approx. 150 yrs	Ann Arbor, Michigan
Ⲕ <sup>47</sup> Chester Beatty Papyrus	<b>Rev.</b> 9:10-11:3, 11:5-16:15, 16:17-17:2	Circa AD 90	Circa AD 250	Approx. 160 yrs	Dublin, Ireland

## A portion of Ⲕ<sup>45</sup> Chester Beatty Papyrus

A Codex of the Gospels and the book of Acts dated around AD 250.



Luke 11:50–12:12; 13:6-24

### How much early evidence?



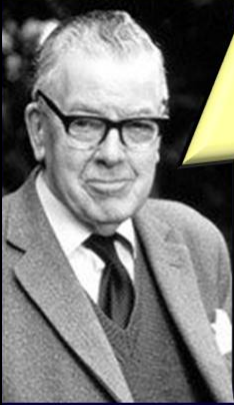
early Greek New Testament manuscripts in existence.

### Plus...



early manuscripts in Aramaic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Byzantine , etc.

The discovery of Papyrus 45, 46, and 66 provides proof that the Byzantine text preserves a reading that dates from early witness.



Frederick Fyvie Bruce  
M.A., B.A. (CANTAB.)

“It may seem that the text of the New Testament is still largely clouded with uncertainty. Such would be an utterly false impression. Any trouble with the New Testament text rises not from scarcity of evidence but from the overwhelming wealth of evidence. No point of Christian faith or practice is affected by, these textual questions. Every fresh discovery helps to confirm the general reliability of our New Testament text.”

F.F. Bruce, “The Chester Beatty Papyri,”  
*The Harvester* 11 (1934): 163-164.





The first 4 (or 5) NT books are called the Gospel



# gos'pel

noun | gos•pel | \gä-spəl\

1. *capitalised*: **good news**; the message concerning Christ, the Kingdom of God, and salvation
2. *capitalised*: one of the four New Testament books telling of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
3. a lection from one of the four gospels used in a religious way
4. any system of religious doctrine; sometimes, any system of political doctrine or social philosophy; as, this political gospel.
5. anything promoted or accepted as infallible truth or as a guiding principle of doctrine

Middle English, from Old English *gōd-spel* meaning "good news" or "glad tidings", which is a calque (word-for-word translation) of the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion (eu- "good", -angelion "message") or in Aramaic (ܐܘܢܘܢ ewang'eliyawn).

## Okay, but what IS the Gospel?

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

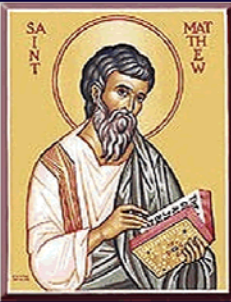
1 Corinthians 15:1-4



**3** Died  
according to the scriptures

**Buried**  
on the  
**Rose** 3<sup>rd</sup> day  
according to the scriptures

A Jewish tax collector from Capernaum. One of Jesus' initial 12 Apostles. Literate in Greek and Aramaic and took shorthand.

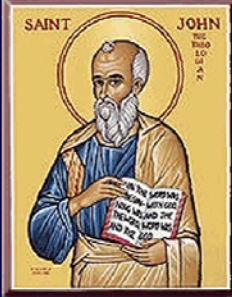


**Meet the Authors**



A rich young Jew from Jerusalem, accompanied Paul and his uncle Barnabas on Ministry; Peter considered him as son; later amanuensis and disciple of Peter.

Gentile physician (possibly Greek or Macedonian) Paul met on Second Mission Journey in Troas and followed Paul thereafter. Author of books of Luke and Acts.



Young Galilean fisherman born in Bethsaida. With brother James, one of Jesus' initial 12 Apostles. The beloved disciple. The youngest Apostle.

### God's Design of the Gospels

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Presents Jesus as	<b>Messiah</b>	<b>Servant of God</b>	<b>Saviour of Man</b>	<b>Son of God</b>
Genealogy	Abraham (Legal line)	-	Adam (Blood line)	Eternal (Pre-existent)
What Jesus	<b>Said</b>	<b>Did</b>	<b>Felt</b>	<b>Was</b>
Written to the	Jew	Greek/Roman Latin tones	Roman/Greek	Church
First Miracle	Leper (sin) cleansed	Demon expelled	Demon expelled	Water to Wine
Ends with	Resurrection	Ascension	Promise of Spirit (Acts)	Promise of Return (Revelation)
Camp Side Ensign Face	East Judah <b>Lion</b>	West Ephraim <b>Ox</b>	South Reuben <b>Man</b>	North Dan <b>Eagle</b>

### Design structure of the Gospels

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Presents as	<b>Messiah</b>	<b>Servant</b>	<b>Son of Man</b>	<b>Son of God</b>
Style	Groupings	Snapshots	Narrative	Supernatural review
Key word	Fulfilled (38X)	Immediately (42X)	It came to pass (40X)	Verily, verily (24X)
Jesus	151X	93X	88X	247X
Tone	Prophetic	Practical	Historical	Spiritual
Aspects	Human	Human	Human	Divine
Ministry covered	Galilean	Galilean	Galilean	Judean

“The gospel is  
**neither a discussion  
 nor a debate.**

“It is an **announcement!**”

Dr. Paul S. Rees



- **Matthew, Mark and Luke** are Synoptic Gospels.
- “Synoptic” means “summary”. It comes from a Greek word meaning “seeing the whole together.”
- The three gospels include much of the same content, often in a similar sequence and in similar wording.
- All three belong to the genre of biography, covering:
  - Jesus’ teachings
  - His origins, ministry and miracles
  - His passion and resurrection
- John, a theological gospel, has comparatively distinct content.

## Why Four Gospels?

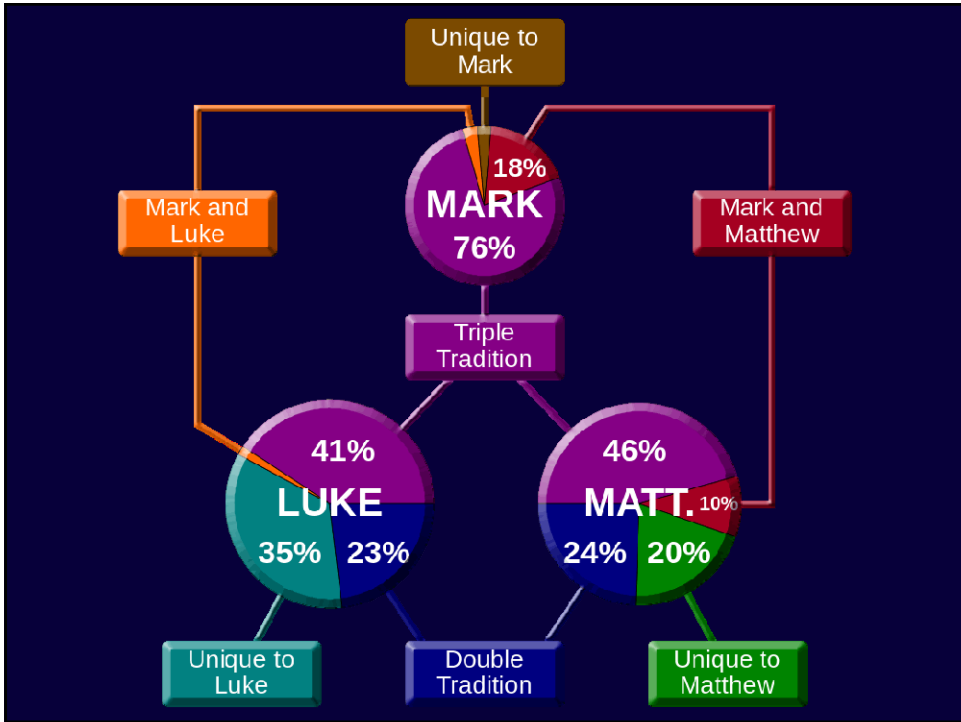
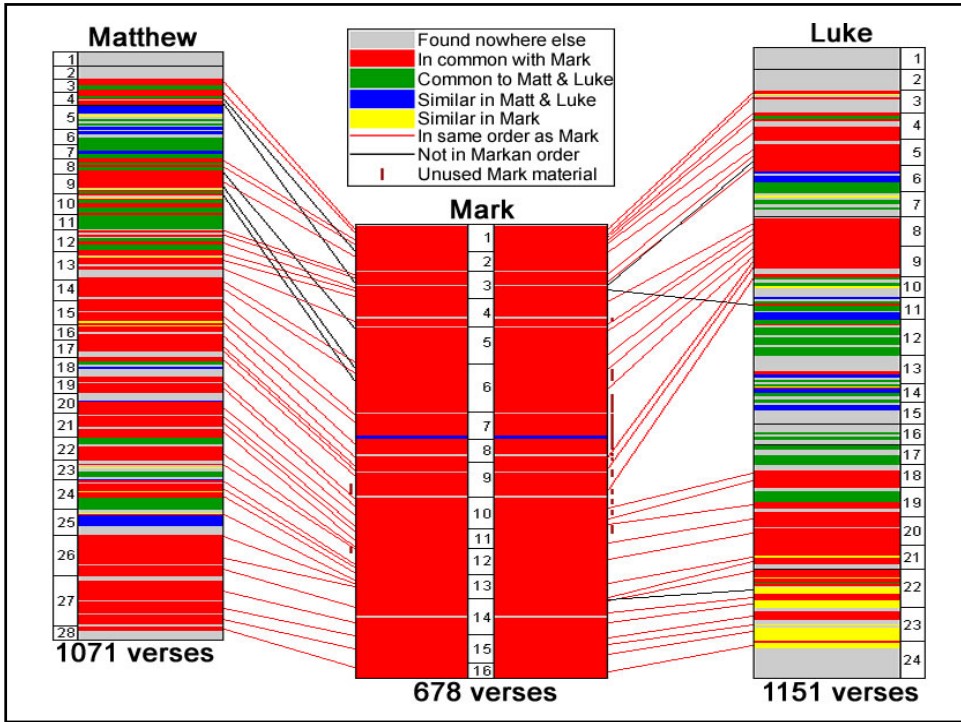
### Writer's Perspective

- Developing interest:
  1. What He did (Mark)
  2. What He said (Matthew, Luke)
  3. What He was (John)
- Differing insights:
  1. King of the Jews (Matthew)
  2. Suffering servant; Saviour of the world (Mark)
  3. Son of man (Luke)
  4. Son of God (John)

## Why Four Gospels?

### Reader's Perspective

- Written for believers:
  - Matthew (Jews; younger new Christians, converts)
  - John (older; mature Christians)
- Written for non-believers:
  - Mark covered practical aspects
  - Luke provided history



## Harmony of the Gospels





- A “harmony” attempts to collate the four accounts chronologically into a single account.

Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Crucifixion of Jesus	Matthew 27:34–61	Mark 15:23–47	Luke 23:33–54	John 19:18–38
Crown of thorns	Matthew 27:29	Mark 15:17		John 19:2–5
Carrying the cross	Matthew 27:27–33	Mark 15:20–22	Luke 23:26–32	John 19:16–17
Blood curse	Matthew 27:24–25			

- Harmonisation has some serious problems:
  - Some events are given in a different sequence.
  - The authors may have seen an event differently.
  - Some similar events occurred at different times.
  - Crushing seemingly similar verses into a single form deemphasizes the text and can miss the message.



## Living Creatures Reflect the Character of Christ

No.	Appearance	Tribe	Characteristics	References
 יהודה	Lion	Judah	King or defender	Rev. 5:5
 אפרים	Calf (Ox)	Ephraim	Sacrifice	Lev. 4
 ראובן	Face of a man	Reuben	Substitute or humanity	Phil. 2:5-8 Gen. 4:1
 דן	Flying eagle	Dan	Sustained	Ex. 19:4

Four faces referenced in Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1, 10; Gospels; Numbers 2

 יהודה	 אפרים	 ראובן	 דן
<b>Messiah the King</b>	<b>Suffering Servant</b>	<b>Son of Man</b>	<b>Son of God</b>
Presents Jesus as the righteous King of the Jews, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The emphasis is on His <b>righteousness</b> .	Presents Jesus as the <b>suffering servant</b> and the workman of the law. Emphasis is on His miracles, strength, and His <b>actions</b> .	Presents Jesus as the Great Physician and friend of sinners. Emphasis is on His <b>humanity</b> , wisdom and mercy.	Presents Jesus as the Word of God, the "Living Bread that came down from heaven". Emphasis is on His <b>divinity</b> .

### The Four Gospels

1. **Matthew** **(The Messiah, written to the Jew)**  
The Promised One is here; see His Credentials.
2. **Mark** **(Servant, written to the Roman)**  
This is how He worked; see His Power.
3. **Luke** **(Son of Man, written to Greek)**  
This what He was like; see His Nature.
4. **John** **(Son of God, written to Christian)**  
This is who He really was; see His Godship.