

Week 11: Understanding the Gospels

1. What Are the Gospels?

- 1) The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- 2) The term “Gospel” (*euangelion* in Greek) means “good news”—the good news of Jesus Christ.

2. Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John

1) Synoptic Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke—these share similar structure and content.

2) John’s Gospel:

Offers a unique perspective, emphasizing theology and Jesus’ divine identity.

3. Characteristics of Each Gospel

Gospel	Traditional Author	Audience	Central Theme	Portrait of Jesus
Matthew	Matthew (tax collector)	Jews	Fulfillment of prophecy, Messiah	King of the Jews
Mark	Mark (disciple of Peter)	Romans	Action-oriented, Suffering Servant	Powerful Servant
Luke	Luke (physician)	Gentiles	Compassion, Inclusion	Perfect Son of Man
John	John (apostle)	All humanity	Divinity of Jesus	Son of God

4. Purpose of the Gospels

- 1) To testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31)
- 2) To lead readers to saving faith in Him
- 3) To serve as a foundation for early Christian preaching and discipleship

5. Guidelines for Interpreting the Gospels

- 1) Consider historical context (1st-century Jewish and Greco-Roman world)
- 2) Understand both the harmony and distinctions among the Gospels
- 3) Focus on the theological message behind Jesus’ teachings and actions