

Introducing the Gospels/Gospel of Matthew

The Way the Early Church Taught the Gospels	
Ezekiel Had a Vision (The Chariot of Fire)	Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle... ¹² Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went (Ez 1:10, 12)
John Had a Vision (The Throne in Heaven)	In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,' who was, and is, and is to come." (Rev 4:6-8)
The Early Church 4 Symbols (In Caves and Catacombs)	(1) A Lion holding a scroll. (2) An Ox holding a scroll. (3) A Man holding a scroll. (4) An Eagle holding a scroll
How They Saw the Symbols	The early church understood the 4 Gospels of the NT as the fulfillment of both visions. Though they differed on which Gospel belonged to which symbol, the early church agreed there were only 4 Gospels.
The Best Designation	(1) Lion – Matthew – Jesus is King (2) Ox – Mark – Jesus is the Son of Man who is a Servant. (3) Man – Luke – Jesus is the Perfect Man, son of Adam. (4) Eagle – John – Jesus is the Word, the Great I Am, that Ascends to Heaven

The Way We Teach the Gospels	
Synoptic	The word Synoptic means "to be read with the same lens."
The Synoptic Gospels	3 Gospels in the NT are the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. That's why you see a lot of the same material in these Gospels that's "fuller" in Matthew/Luke than it is in Mark. Reason being Mark was written first and Matthew and Luke used Mark's Gospel as a source. In places, they expand on what Mark does not include then return to the same general point in the story of Jesus.
John	John's Gospel reads much differently than the other 3. That's why it isn't a Synoptic Gospel. It isn't read with the same lens. John includes material not included with the Synoptics and is out to prove that Jesus is the Incarnate Word and the Great I Am.
What We Have Missed	By explaining the Gospels in the current fashion – which is accurate information – we miss the ability to do like the early church did. They were able to teach the Gospels with 4 Words: Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle. They had to because they could have been killed at any moment for being a Christian.
Our Approach	So, our approach to the Gospels will follow the approach the early church used. Such a method will help you to think about each Gospel in light of the others.

The Author of the Lion Gospel: Matthew					
About the Author	Matthew was an original disciple of Jesus who was a former tax collector <u>and</u> a Levite by birth. Both are important.				
As a Tax Collector	Matthew would have had to keep meticulous records as a tax collector. His record keeping nature is clearly demonstrated in His Gospel in his word for word inclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount beginning in Matthew 5 (Blessed are the poor in spirit, etc.).				
As a Levite	Matthew was also a Levite (Matthew Levi: "Gift of God" / "Belonging to the Levites). When we think "King" we think of ruler and that is true. But when a Levite thought of King, they thought of the reign of the Messiah within the Jewish context.				
Matthew's Format for a King/Messiah	Fulfillment of Abraham's Promise	Immanuel, God with Us	Greater than Moses	Reign on David's Throne, Rule the Kingdom	Priestly Sacrifice for Atonement

#1: Jesus is the Fulfillment of Abraham's Promise

1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers... 5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. (Matthew 1:1-2, 5)

God's Promise and Instructions to Abraham	Go to the land I will show you and I will make your name great (Gen 12)... I will descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. So, your offspring shall be (Gen 15). Notice now the genealogy of Jesus doesn't just include the Jewish patriarchs. It also includes Rahab and Ruth, both Gentiles.
End of Matthew's Gospel	Abraham went to the land... Now in Christ we go out from the land to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28)

#2: Jesus is Immanuel, God with Us

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us") (Matthew 1:22-23)

Isaiah's Prophecy	Immanuel was the name of one of Isaiah's sons that he took with him when Ahaz was terrified of an invasion (Is 7). He did that to let Ahaz know God was with him. He also predicted that another Immanuel would come. And that one is greater because he will be with us always.
Last Words of Matthew's Gospel	Low I'm with you (Immanuel) always, even until the end of the age.

#3: Jesus is Greater than Moses

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them... 21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. (Matthew 5:1-2, 21-22)

Moses	(1) Left Egypt / Went Back to Egypt to Deliver His People (2) Received Law on Mt Sinai
Jesus	(1) Leaves Israel to go to Egypt / Leaves Egypt for Israel to Deliver His People (2) Doesn't Receive, But Gives New Law in the Sermon on the Mount

#4: Jesus will Reign on David's Throne and Rule David's Kingdom

17 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah. (Matthew 1:17)

The Kingdom of David	David's throne was predicted to be an everlasting throne; with the sword never departing from his lineage
The Kingdom of Heaven	Jesus' throne is an everlasting throne. His kingdom and his dominion are not of this world. They are of heaven. 23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt (Matthew 18:23-25).

#5: Jesus is the Priestly Sacrifice that Atones for Sin

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." (Matthew 26:1-2)

Levite Priests	Matthew's tribe were the "priests" of Israel. The Book of Leviticus tells us of their way of life. They made sacrifices for God's people
The Priesthood of Jesus	Now, Houston, we could have a problem because Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, not Levi. What's the answer? One mysterious individual: Melchizedek, the High Priest of Salem (before it was Jerusalem). Whereas Levites were national priests to Israel, Melchizedek was a high priest for the world: to Jew and Gentile. Melchizedek was the Son of the Most High. Jesus is too and he "will save people from their sin" (Matthew 1:21)

