

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT THE FOUR GOSPELS COLLECTIVELY

We have just finished an overview of the Old Testament and the four hundred year inter-testament period. We about to begin our journey through the New Testament that obviously begins with the four Gospels. There is one idea that flows throughout the Gospels and the New Testament: **FULFILLMENT**.

Matthew, from the beginning, sets this keynote idea of fulfillment: *1:22 *2:15, 17, 23 *4:14 *8:17 *12:17 *13:35 *21:4 *26:56 *27:9, 35

Our Lord's first words recorded in Matthew 3:15 were: "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness". Again in Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that He had come to fulfill.

Mark records Jesus saying, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand" (1:15).

Luke recorded the words of Jesus: "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

Instead of giving the Lord's first declaration, **John** gives the reaction of those who received Him (John 1:41, 45), "We have found". John also emphasizes the same as the other Gospel writers; "That it might be fulfilled" - John 12:38, *13:18, *15:25, *17:12, *19:24, 28, 36.

The New Testament Is The Answer To The Old Testament

Jesus Christ is the FULFILLMENT of all the prophets saw, the psalmists sang, and hearts hoped for.

In reading and studying the Old Testament, one thing that probably makes a lasting impression on most is the prevalence of animal sacrifice. From Genesis 4 we see this in the forefront of Jewish life. Through the ups and downs of their faithfulness to God, and the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple, you get the feeling that something is missing. You are left with the feeling that there is something more to come. Indeed, **Malachi 3:1** tells us: "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come". But the Old Testament closes with that unfulfilled.

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPLETES AND FULFILLS THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The sacrifices of the Old point to our Lord, the One Sacrifice. The unfulfilled purpose of God with His people finds its fulfillment in their Messiah. The prophecies of the O.T. find their fulfillment in our Blessed Lord Jesus.
2. On the O.T. He is "coming" - In the Gospels He "has come".
3. In the Epistles He has come by the Holy Spirit. In Revelation He is coming again.
4. The fulfillments at His first coming prove O.T. prophecy to be Divine in origin, and equally guarantees that the unfulfilled remainder in both Old and New Testament prophecy shall surely come to pass.

THE FOUR GOSPELS

Why four? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have given us four unique presentations of the Lord Jesus, each having its own emphasis; all four going together to give us a complete picture of the God-Man, Jesus, our Lord.

There is a significant parallel between the four Gospels and the "four living creatures" of Ezekiel 1:10:

Matthew - The Messiah King (Lion)

Mark - Jehovah's Servant (Ox)

Luke - Son of Man (Man)

John - Son of God (Eagle)

As "sovereign", He comes to reign and rule. As "Servant", He comes to suffer and serve. As the "Son of Man", He comes to share and sympathize. As

the "Son of God", He comes to redeem. In the four Gospels we see Jesus in His: Sovereignty, Humility, Humanity, and Deity.

The Emphasis Of The Four Writers

Matthew: The Lion is the emblem of the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe of David. Matthew 1:17 takes us from Abraham, to David, to Jesus. Mark has no such genealogy while Luke goes right back to Adam, and John goes back to eternity. Matthew is the Gospel in which Jesus offers Himself to the Jews as their Messiah-King.

Mark: The ox is a symbol of lowly service. The Gospel of Mark is a "Gospel of Action". With no genealogy given, the emphasis is on the "activity" of Christ, the lowly servant. The characteristic word is "Straightway".

Luke: Luke tells of the humanity of Jesus; His parents, birth, and boyhood. He is called both King and Savior. We see His kingship, deity and His humanity.

John: John goes back to eternity (John 1:1-4). John presents Him as the son of God (1:18, 34). He is the "Word", the "Light", the "Life" and the "Son". He is God manifest in the flesh.

The Unique Differences of the Four Gospel Writers

Matthew writes with reference to the Hebrew mind as you will notice from his references to the O.T.

Mark, the traveling companion of Peter, writes primarily to the Roman mind, presenting Jesus very prominently as the miracle worker.

Luke, the traveling companion of Paul and a doctor, writes to the Greek mind with emphasis on the matchless manhood of the Lord.

John, the writer of the Divine nature of Jesus reveals Him to the whole world, without racial distinction, as the revelation of Divine "grace and truth" through the "Word that became flesh and dwelt among us".

Characteristic Endings of the Four Gospels

Matthew ends with the RESURRECTION.

Mark ends with the ASCENSION.

Luke ends with the PROMISE of the HOLY SPIRIT.

John ends with the promise of our Lord's SECOND COMING.

The Four Gospels are the work of the Holy spirit through the writers to give us a complete portrait of our Savior and Lord.

**FOR NEXT WEEK
READ THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
FOR CHAPTERS EACH DAY**