



# **FIFTEEN THINGS EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE FOUR GOSPELS**

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1. The Gospels tell “the gospel,” the message of the person and work of Jesus Christ.
2. The Gospels are historical and reliable, rooted in eyewitness and personal accounts of real events.
3. The Gospels are not to be dissected or collated into one story, but read as a four-instrument symphony.
4. The Gospels have differences that emphasize nuances and truths of the same reality and message.
5. The Gospels are stories, or more technically, Greco-Roman biographies that are in narrative form.
6. The Gospels each tell one large story made up of an intentional collection of a lot of little stories.
7. The Gospels may be Greco-Roman Biographies, but they include and utilize many other genres.
8. The Gospels are essential to the Bible’s overall story, theological message, and ministerial intention.
9. The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as “the Messiah.”
  - a. Structure: “The Christian Pentateuch”
    - . Intro/prologue – genealogy and birth narrative (chs. 1-2)
    - . Book 1 – Discipleship (chs. 3-7)
    - . Book 2 – Apostleship (chs. 8-10)
    - . Book 3 – Hiding of the Revelation (chs. 11-13)
    - . Book 4 – Church Administration (chs. 14-18)
    - . Book 5 – Judgment (chs. 19-25)
    - . Epilogue – Passion and Resurrection (chs. 26-28)

b. Purpose:

- . Apologetic: To defend Jesus as the promised Messiah from the line of David, who fulfills all the promises and covenants made to Israel, and his people are the true people of God.
- . Confessional: To explain how Jesus is the risen Lord, who reveals the Father to his disciples and remains with them as God's abiding presence (Immanuel) even to the end of the age.

10. The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as "the Suffering Son of God."

a. Structure:

- . The preparation of the Son of God (1:1-13)
- . The authoritative ministry of the Son of God (chs 1-8)
- . The suffering of the Son of God as Servant of the Lord (chs. 9-16)

b. Purpose:

- . To confirm that Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God, the inaugurator of God's Kingdom and the fulfillment of Israel's promises.
- . To show that Jesus fulfills promises in a surprising way – not conquest but servanthood and suffering.
- . To call believers to follow in the suffering path of the Messiah and Lord.

11. The Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as "the Savior for all People."

a. Structure:

- . The prologue (1:1-4)
- . The Birth of Jesus (1:5-2:52)
- . The Preparation of Jesus (3:1-4:13)
- . The Galilean Ministry of Jesus (4:14-9:50)
- . The Mission of Jesus: Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
- . The Jerusalem Ministry of Jesus (19:28-21:38)
- . The Passion of Jesus (22:1-23:56)
- . The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus (24:1-53)

b. Purpose:

- . To confirm the gospel, demonstrating the authenticity of its claims in a Roman context.
- . To show how the gospel is the fulfillment of God's promised salvation and reversal of world's values.

12. The Gospel of John presents Jesus as "the Son Who Reveals the Father."

a. Structure:

- . Prologue (1:1-18)
- . The First Week: An Introduction to the Narrative Proper (1:19-51)
- . The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry (2:1-4:54)
- . The Confession of the Son of God (5:1-8:11)
- . The Controversy over the Son of God (8:12-10:42)
- . The Conclusion of Jesus' Public Ministry (11:1-12:50)
- . The Farewell Discourse (13:1-17:26)
- . The Crucifixion (18:1-19:42)
- . The Resurrection (20:1-31)
- . Epilogue (21:1-25)

b. Purpose: 20:30-31

- . To guide or strengthen the belief of the reader in the person of Jesus Christ.
- . To direct the reader to find life in Jesus.

13. The Gospels are manuals for the life of discipleship.

14. The Gospels should be applied with these goals in mind: love God and love neighbor.

15. The Gospels should be the stories our churches participate in and proclaim.