

Lecture 4 New Testament Survey Pastor Munawar Khurshid

Canonical Gospels

One common question people ask is: Why are there four Gospels? Why not just one? Or why not more or fewer than four?

When some people hear the word "Gospel," they think it is one book that came down on the Lord Jesus Christ. This confusion may come from how people understand the prophets and their writings in the Old Testament.

Some people wrongly think that the man of God Moses received the whole law book, or that the whole book of Psalms came down on David. But this is not true.

The law was given to Moses by God, but it is not that all five books of the law came down on him at once. In the same way, David received different prophetic messages from God, but the entire book of Psalms did not come down on him.

Also, the Gospel did not come down on the Lord Jesus Christ. When we hear such ideas, we can understand that people have incomplete knowledge about the Holy Bible. Complete and true knowledge about the Bible can only come from the Bible itself, not from outside ideas.

Now the Gospels we have are not one, but four. And they were not given to one person. They were written by four different people.

The number four is very important. We can see this number in many areas.

The number four is important in creation and on earth:

- God made four seasons (Winter, Summer, Spring, and Autumn).
- There are four directions (East, West, North, and South).
- There are four basic elements (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire).

Four Rivers:

In the beginning, four rivers are mentioned (Genesis 2:10). They all come from one river that flows from the Garden of Eden. These rivers water the four corners of the earth.

The Curtain:

In the Tabernacle, the curtain between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place hung on four pillars (Exodus 26:31-32). This curtain was a symbol of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19-20). The great proof of this is that when Jesus gave His life, the curtain was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). Also, the acacia wood used there represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

The four Gospels are like four pillars that present the Lord Jesus Christ.

All four Gospels show us the earthly life and service of the Lord Jesus Christ in different ways. The writers helped us to understand Christ the way He wanted us to understand Him.

Just like two people cannot write exactly the same about one person, the Holy Spirit used these four writers according to their abilities to show the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Four Different Writers:

- **Matthew the Apostle** was a Jew who worked as a Roman officer.
- **Mark** was a student of Paul and Barnabas.
- **Luke** was from a non-Jewish nation. He was a doctor and a close friend of Paul.
- **John the Apostle** was a fisherman and was very close to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Four Different Audiences:

It is important to see that the Holy Spirit used these four writers to guide different groups of people so they could know the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **Matthew** wrote mainly for the Jews, but also for the whole world. His Gospel has more Old Testament references than the others. It clearly shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of all promises and the expected Messiah. That's why Matthew writes a lot about the King and the Kingdom.
2. **Mark** wrote for the Romans. The Romans did not care much about words but about actions. They were not philosophers like the Greeks, but they were practical people. That's why Mark focuses more on the actions of Jesus than His teachings.
3. **Luke** the doctor wrote for the Greeks. The Greeks were interested in education and culture. Luke was the most educated, so the Holy Spirit used him for this special work. His Gospel uses a rich vocabulary with words from the literary language of that time.
4. **John** wrote for the whole world. His Gospel talks about God's love for all people (John 3:16).

Now let us briefly look at the pictures that each writer gives of Jesus. Each writer gives a complete picture from his own view. It is like looking at a diamond from different angles. We should try to see the Lord Jesus Christ through the eyes of these four writers.

