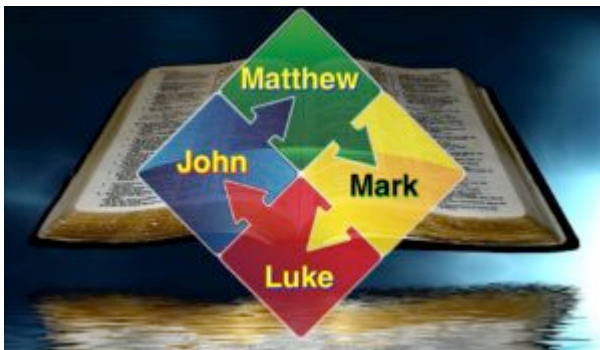


The Titles of the Gospels

History says Matthew, Mark, Luke and John **wrote the books** with those titles. People seem to have a highly variable standard in their assessment of what ancient writings are genuine, especially the Bible. What do we mean? Here is an example:



Did Matthew, Mark, Luke and John really write the Gospels, or were these names attributed later?

Most people accept Alexander the Great as a real historical figure. Yet, the two earliest biographies of Alexander the Great were written by Arrian and Plutarch more than 400 years after the Great One's death 323 BCE. Legends about him developed centuries after these two writers. Yet, Alexander's true, accurate history is viewed as being preserved for hundreds of years prior to these legends.

Let's clear up a misunderstanding about the titles of the Gospels by considering the manuscript evidence: True, there was no "uniformity of the titles." Yes, there were many variances. But, the one thing that **is 100%** consistent about the titles is that in the reservoir of several thousand manuscripts of the gospels, they all attribute writership to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John respectively. The exact wording of the titles in various early manuscripts were different, not the same, but they all list Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as the writers. None of the titles indicates anonymity..

In every single instance, the names included Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John respectively.

While there was not uniformity of the titles, there was 100% agreement on writership.

The popular agnostic Bible scholar Bart Ehrman claims that the titles of the Gospels were added by later scribes. But, as is well known, even experts can be wrong. Ehrman's theory about the titles contradicts the facts.

An interesting point to note here is that while there are four gospel accounts, there is in reality only one gospel that runs through the entire New Testament – the Gospel of, and about, Jesus Christ. As Mark opens his account:

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Mark 1:1 LSB; NASB)

The Gospel is the theme of the four accounts of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. Hence, the titles were drawn from this. Notice:

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.” (Matthew 4:23)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” (Luke 4:18)

While John never used the word “gospel,” his theme is the same, as he explicitly states:

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)

Scriptures quoted from New International Version (NIV) unless noted otherwise