

# **I Know Absolutely Nothing About The Bible**

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## **BIG Names in the Bible**

### **Part 2: From Jesus to Paul**

#### **GOSPELS**

The bible has four stories of the life of Jesus. These stories are called the Gospels. Three of the stories are attempts to tell a somewhat chronological story of Jesus life; Matthew, Mark and Luke. They are called the Synoptic Gospels because their stories closely parallel each other and they share sources.

The fourth gospel is different. John emphasizes Jesus as the “Logos” or Word that was in the beginning and lives now. John emphasizes Jesus new commandment to love one’s neighbor rather than the emphasis on our call to love the Lord.

#### **AUTHORSHIP**

Many biblical scholars today acknowledge that these stories may not have been written by the person they are attributed to (with the exception of Luke). In fact the original texts probably did not have a title with a name on them. The names were put on the gospels sometime around A.D. 150 by church leaders. Also, they were written at different times and to different audiences which shapes how the author tells the story of Jesus.

We do not have the original texts. What we have are copies of copies of the original texts. As such the copies do not always agree with each other. Some copies have additions and expansions that others don’t. Later, an editor may have attempted to correct the differences adding even more to the confusion.

#### **Mark:**

1. Mark’s gospel is pretty universally agreed to be the first to have been written. Currently the best guess for a date is somewhere around A.D. 65-67.
2. Mark wrote to Jewish “Christians”. Mark assumes his audience knows the O.T. and its traditions.
3. Mark is used extensively as a source by both Matthew and Luke in their gospels.
4. Mark is the shortest of the gospels. With the assumption that the shortest, least grandiose, story is the earliest, Mark’s gospel is thought to be the first written.
  - a. Mark does not have a birth story.
  - b. Mark does not have a post-resurrection story.

- i. The oldest versions of Mark's gospel do not have Jesus appearing to his disciples following his resurrection. They simply have the angels telling the women telling them that Jesus has risen and the women running from the tomb in terror.

### **Luke:**

1. Luke is most likely the "Beloved Physician" (Col. 4:14) who travels with Paul on some of his missionary journeys.
2. Luke's gospel was most likely written around A.D. 80, after the fall of Jerusalem.
3. Written to a person named Theophilus, a Greek Christian as well as to the early Greeko/Roman believers. He writes to confirm to the early Christian church the truth that they already knew about Jesus.
4. It is the first book that Luke wrote telling the story of Jesus life. The second book is Acts which tells the story of the growth of the church into all of the world.
5. Luke uses a lot of material that comes from Mark but also from another story of Jesus that we do not have called "Q". (More on "Q" below.)
6. Luke also uses his own sources (what has been called "L"). In fact Luke uses "L" more than Mark or "Q". Luke's own sources may have come from his experience traveling with Paul and hearing stories of the life and teachings of Jesus.

### **Matthew:**

1. We do not know the author of this gospel but it has been attributed to Matthew (Levi) the tax collector.
2. Matthew was written to Jewish Christians who knew about the O.T., its traditions and had a connection to the temple. As such it is thought to have been written somewhere between A.D. 80 and A.D. 115.
3. Matthew also uses Mark as a source as well as "Q". Also, like Luke, Matthew uses material unique to himself ("M").
4. Matthew's emphasis is on a church that has a Jewish background. For example; In Matthew's gospel the Laws of the covenant get reinterpreted by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount (You have heard is said of old...but I say to you...).

### **John:**

1. Traditionally attributed to John, the son of Zebedee. Ultimately no one knows who authored the book.
2. John was written to Greek Christians around A.D. 80-100.
3. It is not like the other three Gospels in that it is not so much a story about the life of Jesus as it is a description in artistic form of who Jesus is (compare John's first chapter with that of the first chapters of the other gospels).

## **“Q”:**

1. We do not have anything from this source other than what we find in Matthew and Luke.
2. Here is how scholars believe there must have been a “Q” source.
  - a. Matthew and Luke use Mark, at times almost word for word.
  - b. Matthew and Luke have stories that are all their own, that are not found in any of the other gospels. These are the “L” and “M” sources that are believed to have originated from their own experience.
  - c. Then there is material that Matthew and Luke have but is not seen in Mark. This material is what scholars believe to be from an unknown source “Q” that must have been available to early Christians but has been lost in history.
3. “Q” may not have been a written source, though most believe it was. It was probably more like a collection of sayings of Jesus rather than a historical account of Jesus life.
4. “Q” is believed to not have a story of Jesus suffering and death.
5. Most of Q’s sayings show up in places like Jesus Sermon on the Mount.
6. It was probably written around A.D. 50 so it is at least twenty years closer to Jesus than the Gospels that we have in our bible. As such it may better reflect Jesus actual words than what is written in later gospels.

## **The Acts of the Apostles**

1. This is the second book written by Luke.
2. In Acts Luke describes the events that took place from the time of Jesus ascension through the spreading of the gospel message throughout the Jewish and then gentile regions.
3. The story begins with the disciples huddled in Jerusalem not knowing where to go or what to do. Because of Pentecost the disciples are encouraged to go out and begin evangelizing.
4. Peter, the rock upon which I will build my church, begins preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea.
5. Paul, a Jewish zealot who began persecuting the early believers but who was converted to the faith and is sent out to evangelize the gentiles (non-Jews).
6. Paul was not a witness to Jesus life or death.
7. Peter and Paul clash over whether the message of Jesus is meant only for the Jews or if it is also for the gentiles.
8. The Jerusalem council, headed by James – Jesus brother(?), agrees that the Holy Spirit is working among the gentiles and agrees to support Paul’s efforts.

## **The Letters**

1. Peter and Paul, as well as other disciples, wrote letters. These letters make up much of the New Testament. Not all books attributed to the authors were written by them but may have been written by someone else and attributed to them.