

Episode #645 – The Purpose of the Four Gospels

- I. The purpose for which a book was written is important in understanding it.
 - A. Example: The Wizard of Oz
 - B. Was The Wizard of Oz a political commentary, or just a children's story?
- II. Why were four gospels written to tell one story?
 - A. Four repetitions is unprecedented. Closest is Hezekiah's history three times.
 - B. Because the story is so important? But not individual stories.
 - C. Each book has a different purpose and perspective.
- III. Matthew.
 - A. Matthew 1:1. Book of... Son of David, Son of Abraham.
 - B. Christ presented as King of Israel, and the representative Israelite.
 - C. The audience: Israelites. The book of being "in Israel."
 - D. The Christmas story.
 1. The lineage of Joseph, the kingly line.
 2. The birth from Joseph's perspective.
 3. The wise men come to Him as a King.
- IV. Mark.
 - A. Mark 1:1. Presenting the gospel.
 - B. Christ presented as God's servant (slave.) Infrequently called "Lord."
 - C. The audience. Proselytes? Temple servants? Romans?
 - D. The Christmas story: not told. The birth of a slave is not important.
- V. Luke.
 - A. Luke 1:1-4. To write an orderly and accurate account of the gospel.
 - B. The audience. Theophilus. "God-lover." A Greek.
 - C. Christ presented as the "Son of Man."
 - D. The Christmas story.
 1. Gives detail of the virgin birth, where He was born, the stable.
 2. Tells of the shepherds coming to worship Him.
 3. The lineage (Luke 3) of Mary, the human (blood) line.
- VI. John's Gospel vs. the "synoptic" gospels: John is very different.
 - A. The argument of higher critics.
 1. The three gospels based on one original "Q" manuscript.
 2. John's gospel written much later, based on traditions.
 - B. The answer of the believer.
 1. John's gospel is different because his purpose is different from that of the other gospels: to present Christ as God. John 1:1.
 2. The Christmas story: takes Christ back before His birth to the beginning. God has no birth! He WAS in the beginning.
- VII. Conclusion: Each of the gospels has a unique perspective, and a different audience in mind. Matthew presents Christ as the perfect Israelite and the heir to the throne. Mark gives the gospel in a practical, no-nonsense way presenting Christ as a servant. Luke presents Christ as the Son of Man to the reasoning Greeks. John's gospel was not written to merely record the life of Christ, but rather was written as a treatise to prove the great premise of the book: that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.