

# The Good News and the Gospels

Thomas Robinson, *How the Gospel Works 2*, September 22, 2019

## Luke 1:1-4 Translation TR

<sup>1</sup> Many have put their hand to the task of setting a narrative in order about the events that have come to fulfillment in our midst. <sup>2</sup> They were following the traditions we received from those who were eyewitnesses right from the start and who came to devote their lives to the message. <sup>3</sup> Since all of this was happening, I thought it was appropriate for me as well, since I've followed everything very carefully from the first, to write things in an orderly way for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you can recognize what is solid and unshakable about the message that you've been taught.

## John 20:26-31 Translation TR

<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, Jesus' disciples were again inside and Thomas with them. Jesus comes, although the doors have been locked. He stood in their midst and said, "*Peace to you!*"

<sup>27</sup> Then he says to Thomas, "*Put out your finger here and inspect my hands. Put out your hand and thrust it into my side. Don't become one without faith, rather one filled with faith.*"

<sup>28</sup> Thomas responded and said to him, "*My Lord and my God!*"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus says to him, "*Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!*"

<sup>30</sup> There are many other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these have been written that you may believe that the Anointed King (*Christos*), the Son of God, is Jesus, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

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## Mark 1:1

<sup>1</sup> Beginning of the Good News (*euangelion*) of Jesus, Anointed King (*Christos*), Son of God.

## Matthew 1:1

<sup>1</sup> Book of the origin (*genesis*) of Jesus, Anointed King (*Christos*), son of David, son of Abraham.

## John 21:24-26

<sup>24</sup> (The beloved disciple) is the disciple who's bearing witness about these things and who has written them down, and we know that his testimony is true. <sup>25</sup> But there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written down one by one, I don't think that the world itself would have room for the books that were written.

## Luke 24:17-23

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to [two disciples on the road to Emmaus], "What are these topics you're throwing back and forth with each other as you're walking along?"

They stopped, looking downcast. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "You must be the only traveler in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's happened in the city during these last days?"

<sup>19</sup> "What sort of things?" he asked.

They replied, "Why the things about Jesus the Nazarene! He was a man who was a powerful prophet both in action and message, and it was in the presence of God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> And about how our chief priests and rulers betrayed him into a Roman death sentence, and they crucified him.

<sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he himself was the one who was going to redeem Israel from its slavery.

But added to all this, it's now the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> Then some women from our group astonished us. After they were at his tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> and didn't find his body,

they came back telling that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he is alive! <sup>24</sup> Some of those with us went off to the tomb and found things just as the women said; but they didn't see him."

### Matthew 13:45

<sup>45</sup> "Once again, the kingdom of God's realm is like a person of business in search of beautiful pearls. <sup>46</sup> But when he found one very precious pearl, he sold everything that he had and bought it."

### Acts 10:36-40

<sup>36</sup> God sent the message to Israel, announcing good news of peace through Jesus the Anointed King, who is Lord of everything. <sup>37</sup> You know what happened in all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: <sup>38</sup> how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the accuser, because God was with him. <sup>39</sup> And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the region of the Judeans and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him on the third day and granted that he be manifest ....

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## Why do We have Gospels?

For some the "Gospels" are a puzzle or problem. The first "Gospel" sermon was Pentecost. The Gospel is "You're a sinner but God loves you. Receive Jesus as Lord & Savior. Pray." Everything is focused on a moment of decision: The "born-again" experience. The Gospels seem like preamble or back-story. Acts has conversion moments, but also long teaching. Pagans and Jews were brought into new life, not by a minimal formula, but by encountering Jesus in stories told by teachers – God shining in our hearts in the face of Jesus. Our Gospels reflect a process, the experience of the first generations of believers. During Jesus' ministry, and especially after his crucifixion they told about Jesus. To remember and understand for themselves and explain to others – teaching, celebration. They discovered people transformed by the vision of God and his Kingdom in these stories. The NT embodies this process: Jesus whole ministry happens, death (end), resurrection (reverse)! Telling the story (Acts), transformation and community (Letters). Telling the story again (Gospels). The Gospels are the voice of the whole community who had lives transformed by these accounts and told them a thousand times. What's not here: authors, authorities & documentation. No biographical curiosity: appearance, childhood. Four Gospels have two basic patterns Mark (with Matthew & Luke) and John. All recount situations in Jesus' ministry but focus on Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

## Books of Encounter with Jesus, God's Kingdom, and God

The Gospels all have elements of history, biography, colorful narration, & useful wisdom, but exact narration isn't what they're about. (Mt & Lk change events and wording in Mark.) The Gospels were written for all of us outside the experience of Jesus' first disciples. They help us at a distance to experience something of the fascination and delight Jesus brought to followers, but also the disorientation and challenge. The devastation of his crucifixion and explosion of his resurrection. His teaching is seen in the light of it all. They guide us to a complex, transforming encounter with Jesus for ourselves: Learners. God shines through Jesus' face in four Gospels – diverse, unranked. We each have to read, learn, see Jesus for ourselves together – both individual and community. Jesus is the event of God, experienced anew, interpreted, powerful, transforming in every culture. God uses these narratives in an unending disciple-making process. We participate with others.