



What is It?

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the first three books of the four gospels – the “good news” about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They are also the first books of the New Testament.

Who, What, When, Where and WHY

Who – Matthew was written by Matthew, called Levi in scripture, the tax collector disciple for Christ. Mark was written by John Mark, an early follower of both Peter and Paul. Luke was written by Luke the physician, who also was an associate of Paul.

What – Matthew, Mark and Luke are frequently called the synoptic Gospels, from the Greek “synoptikos,” meaning “taken together” (also where we get the word “synopsis”). These three gospels tell of Jesus from a common frame of reference. Although each had their own specific motivations, through the Holy Spirit, they tell us of Jesus’ actions, words and the events that affected His life.

When – There is significant debate over the exact dates of authorship for all the gospels, but it is believed that Matthew and Mark composed their books before 70 AD and Luke wrote his gospel between 55 and 65 AD. Note that all three are presumed to have been written within the lifetimes of many of those who knew Jesus.

Where – All three books were written in and about events in the Eastern most portion of the Roman Empire – modern day Israel (and Palestine), Jordan and Syria on the Eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea.

Why – These three books, along with John, are the most important biographies ever written; it is clear the most important person in human history, and the events surrounding His life, needed to be told to the world and from generation to generation. This is the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Reading Advice

To read Matthew, Mark and Luke in one week you will need to read 11 to 12 chapters a day (68 combined chapters/6 days = 11.3 per day). We recommend 30 minutes a day, Monday through Saturday. If you include a Sunday reading, then you can reduce the chapters and/or minutes per day a little. Although this is a lot of reading, they will, of course, go fast because they are so familiar.