

HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

STUDY SIX

Four Titles—Same Savior

Survey of the Four Gospels

Why are there four gospels? Why not just one? Why did the Lord lead four people from varied backgrounds to sit down and write of the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, so that we might have four wonderful perspectives of the Savior.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IMAGINE walking through an old mansion. As you move from room to room, you notice several elaborate portraits adorning the walls.

One portrait shows a young man with tanned skin and standing in a green field speckled with white sheep. Another image reveals a more modest man sitting beside a large golden harp. A different painting portrays an armored man carrying a large metal sword. Finally, you notice a depiction of a stately man seated on a throne wearing a crown on his head.

You may look at these portraits and say, “What an impressive family!” But to your surprise you learn that each of these four images depict the same person: Israel’s great King David. This hero of the faith’s personality can’t be reduced to one single role. Each of these portraits represent a key element of his identity.

Indeed, it is nearly impossible to capture the fullness of anyone’s personality in just one portrait because each person has his or her own temperament, interests, and roles. Yet there is no person more rich in personality than Jesus Christ Himself.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study will walk through the winding corridors of the four gospels to see four unique portraits of Jesus’ life. These portraits will reveal much about His identity, allowing His followers to deepen their relationship with Him and to come to a deeper understanding of themselves.



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MINISTRIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

One element of Jesus' personality evident throughout His entire life was compassion. He cares greatly for His people, and He desires to deepen His relationship with them through prayer.

Father, thank You for making the details of Jesus' life known in Your Word. Help me grow closer to Him through my study today. In His compassionate name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Although each evangelist wrote to highlight a unique aspect of Jesus' identity, all four recognized Him to be *Elohim*. In the Old Testament, this term was one of the most common titles used for God, and it highlights His abundant power. If Jesus were not *Elohim*, then He couldn't have performed wonderful miracles, lived a sinless life, and ultimately defeated sin and death.



Observation and Interpretation: Four Portraits of One Lord



Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method carefully studies individual passages of Scripture to determine their theological meaning and practical application.¹ This approach often is called *analytic* Bible study. Some studies, however, require a more *synthetic* approach. This study will look at each gospel as a whole unit to determine each account's central theme.

Synthetic Bible study can feel like an insurmountable task when it comes to longer books like the gospels. Thankfully, Pastor Chuck has provided helpful insights on the gospels at [insight.org/resources/bible](https://www.insight.org/resources/bible). Take some time to peruse each gospel's page, and check out each book's overview chart in the right-side column.



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The Mighty King The Gospel according to Matthew	
<p>Few would have expected Jesus to choose someone like Matthew. He worked for the Romans as a tax-collector, likely causing him to be despised by his fellow Jews and a social outcast. But after meeting Jesus, Matthew forsook his profession and spent the rest of his life as an eyewitness proclaiming the truth that Jesus is the Jews’ long-awaited King.</p>	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>Matthew opens his gospel with Jesus’ family tree. Around what two figures did Matthew organize Jesus’ genealogy? See <i>Matthew 1:1–2, 6</i>.</p>	<p>Why did Matthew take care to show Jesus’ place in the genealogical line of these figures? See <i>Genesis 12:1–3</i> and <i>2 Samuel 7:8–16</i>.</p>
<p>According to <i>4:17</i>, what was Jesus’ essential message?</p>	<p>Why did Matthew place so much emphasis on Jesus’ teaching about the kingdom of heaven?</p>
<p><i>Matthew 28:19–20</i> contains Jesus’ famous Great Commission. What did Jesus say to His disciples in <i>28:18</i> before commissioning them?</p>	<p>What is the connection between Jesus having “all authority” and His commission for the disciples to spread the good news?</p>



Matthew stays with the kingship of Christ. When you finish reading of the resurrection, you see that the King is triumphant. Matthew has exalted the kingship of Christ.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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The Lowly Servant The Gospel according to Mark	
Mark was a close friend of Peter. Based on what he learned from this close disciple of Jesus, Mark wrote his gospel to an audience in Rome—the center of the known world. Yet Mark didn't tell of the arrival of a king who would deliver Israel from its oppressors. Rather, he wrote of a servant who would suffer with and for His followers.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
What confession did Peter make about Jesus' identity in <i>Mark 8:29</i> ? How did Jesus respond in <i>8:30</i> ?	Mark's gospel contains the least amount of teaching material from Jesus. Why did Mark emphasize Jesus' <i>works</i> over His <i>words</i> ?
Immediately after Peter's confession, what did Jesus predict would happen in <i>8:31</i> ?	Why did Jesus tell Peter not to share what he knew about the Messiah? (See <i>1:41–45</i> .)
According to <i>10:42–45</i> , how was Jesus different from Gentile rulers?	What was Jesus' ultimate act of service for His followers?

Isn't it a pleasure to think of the Lord Jesus not simply as high and exalted but also as one who has come among us to serve? You remember that, as a child of God, you have Jesus, who serves. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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The Ideal Human The Gospel according to Luke	
<p>Luke was a Gentile who never met Jesus. Yet he grew hungry to learn as much as he could about his Lord. For that reason, he scoured the world for any written or oral account he could find about Jesus. Then, he compiled everything he learned to show his fellow Gentiles that Jesus Christ is the ideal human.</p>	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>According to Luke 3:38, who were Jesus' earliest ancestors?</p>	<p>Why is Luke's genealogy of Jesus different from Matthew's?</p>
<p>In 4:18–21, Jesus said that He would fulfill a prophecy from Isaiah. What would He do to fulfill this prophecy?</p>	<p>Why did Luke choose to pay special attention to Jesus' ministry to Gentiles, sinners, outcasts, and the poor?</p>
<p>According to 19:10, what was the purpose of Jesus' earthly ministry?</p>	<p>Why is it significant that Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man" (Hint: see Daniel 7:13–14)</p>

Luke wrote of Christ as the ideal human. Time and again we're given human-interest stories. And each one of these stories was of interest to Luke. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Application: Jesus' Identity and Your Identity

A survey of the four gospels should be more than a mental exercise. Seeing Jesus from different perspectives should touch the heart as well. As we reflect on the four portraits of the one true Savior, two applications emerge:

1. Like Jesus, we all fill various roles—all for God's Glory.
2. God wants to use each of our roles to cause others to believe.

What unique roles has God given you? These roles include jobs, relationships, skills, and responsibilities.

In what ways can you use your unique roles, gifts, and experiences to lead Christians into deeper faith in Jesus Christ and non-Christians into newfound faith in Him?

You may look at the portrait of Jesus Christ that each of the four gospels paints and see a contradiction. How can He be both servant and King, both God and human? Despite this supposed paradox, each of these four roles is essential to Jesus' identity. It would be impossible to capture all four of these roles in one account.

When you worship the Lord, picture Him as the four gospels portray Him, and let the wonder of who Jesus is draw you closer to Him as you praise Him from your heart.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Offer your own praise to God for His Son as you conclude your study today.

Father,

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "*How to Study the Bible for Yourself.*"

