

Tell Me Again ... Why Are There 4 Gospels by Linda Nash

At first, everyone thought Jesus' return was imminent so nothing was written down. Finally, different followers of Jesus' disciples began to record the stories and teachings that had been passed on orally.

Mark was written first, in about 70 AD, for the Gentiles in Rome to remind them that following Jesus means serving others. It is the shortest of the gospels and the most historical. Matthew and Luke are similar to Mark (all three are called the "synoptic" gospels which is to say that they parallel each other – I Mark, Matthew and Luke, much of the writing is in common.)

Luke was written in about 80 AD for the Greek converts who were poor and gave them hope with the message that God's love is for everyone. Luke identified Jesus with the poor, outcasts and criminals.

Matthew was written in 85 AD for the Jewish converts, so it contains many references to Hebrew Scriptures, which would be familiar to them. Matthew focuses on Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture as the Messiah.

John was written in about 90 AD and emphasizes Jesus' divine nature and human nature in one person and how belief in Jesus leads to eternal life. The teachings are consistent through all the Gospels, but the "voice" is slightly different.