



Christian tradition has long connected the authors of the four canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) with the four "living creatures" that surround God's throne, as described in Rev 4:7, in the following pairs:



Matthew =
Human/Angel



Mark = Lion



Luke = Ox



John = Eagle

(These four small stained glass windows were designed by artist Pat Haegar of San Jose, CA.)

The symbols all have to do with how their particular Gospel starts out.

Matthew: One of the two Gospels that have the Genealogy of Jesus. Matthew is writing to fellow Jews so his Genealogy is to show how Jesus is connected to Abraham (the father of all faiths: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim) It also therefore shows the connection of Jesus with King David. The reason he does not go back father in the genealogy is that his task is to show that he has the Messianic roots and that the Jews would know the genealogy before Abraham. This is why he starts with Abraham and traces it up to Jesus. Luke is the other Gospel that includes a Genealogy but because he is writing to Greeks and Gentiles, his is a complete genealogy. His genealogy starts with Jesus (whom the Greeks and Gentiles would relate to) and traces it backward all the way to Adam & Eve.

Because the first thing Matthew writes about in his Gospel is the Genealogy, the symbol chosen for him is the human. Because it is sacred writings the human symbol has wings to denote the Spirit's hand in guiding the writing.

Mark: Starts out with the Prophet John the Baptist coming out of the desert. He comes out proclaiming as a voice crying out. The most vivid and attention grabbing sound of desert is the roar of the lion. It's sound announces the king of the desert world (kingdom) and demands our

attention. Something no one could ignore. That is why his symbol is the winged lion.

Luke: Starts out with the story of one of the chief priest's by the name of Zechariah. He and his wife, Elizabeth will become the parents of John the Baptist. It starts out telling us he is serving and performing the duties of the High Priest. That is to offer sacrifice for the community to God. The highest sacrifice was that of an ox. There for his symbol is the winged ox

John: Starts out with, in a sense, the most complete genealogy. For he starts with the creation of the world...."In the beginning was the word" So his gospel in affect starts out of heaven. During the time of his writing, an eagle (much like the Native American culture) represented a man of God. In our Catholic faith we stress that God always was, is and will be. God is one God experienced through the trinity of three persons. Therefore God the Father is the creative thought, Jesus the Son is the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit is the Action of God. There for his symbol is the eagle who already has wings.

Bible means books Testament means agreement Scripture means Sacred Writings

Timeline: 95 AD – Paul's epistles gathered (first written)
65- 100 AD – Oral Traditions written into 4 Gospels
100-105 AD – Epistles written by others put together
150 AD - Gospels gathered together
180 AD - All of New Testament gathered together

First three called Synoptic Gospels (seen with the same eye)

Mark written 70 AD and written to Gentiles Sources: self and eyewitnesses

Luke written 75 AD and written for Greeks (one person: Theophilus)

Sources: self, Mark, Q, and eyewitnesses

Part I with Part II being the Act of the Apostles

Matthew written 85 AD and written for Jews Sources: same as Luke

John written between 90 & 100 AD and written for early Christian

Church Source mostly self and eyewitnesses.