

## HOLY EVANGELISTS



The evangelists were those apostles of Christ or their assistants who evangelize people by writing Gospels. There are four Evangelists: namely St. Matthew. St. Mark. St. Luke and St. John. Sts. Matthew and John belonged to twelve Apostles, while Sts. Mark and Luke were among the seventy disciples.

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Jerusalem upon the request of the local Church, as a witness and testifier. His symbol is a winged man.

St. Mark wrote his Gospel upon the request of St. Peter. He is considered to be the first bishop of Egypt. St. Mark the Evangelist is symbolized by a winged lion.

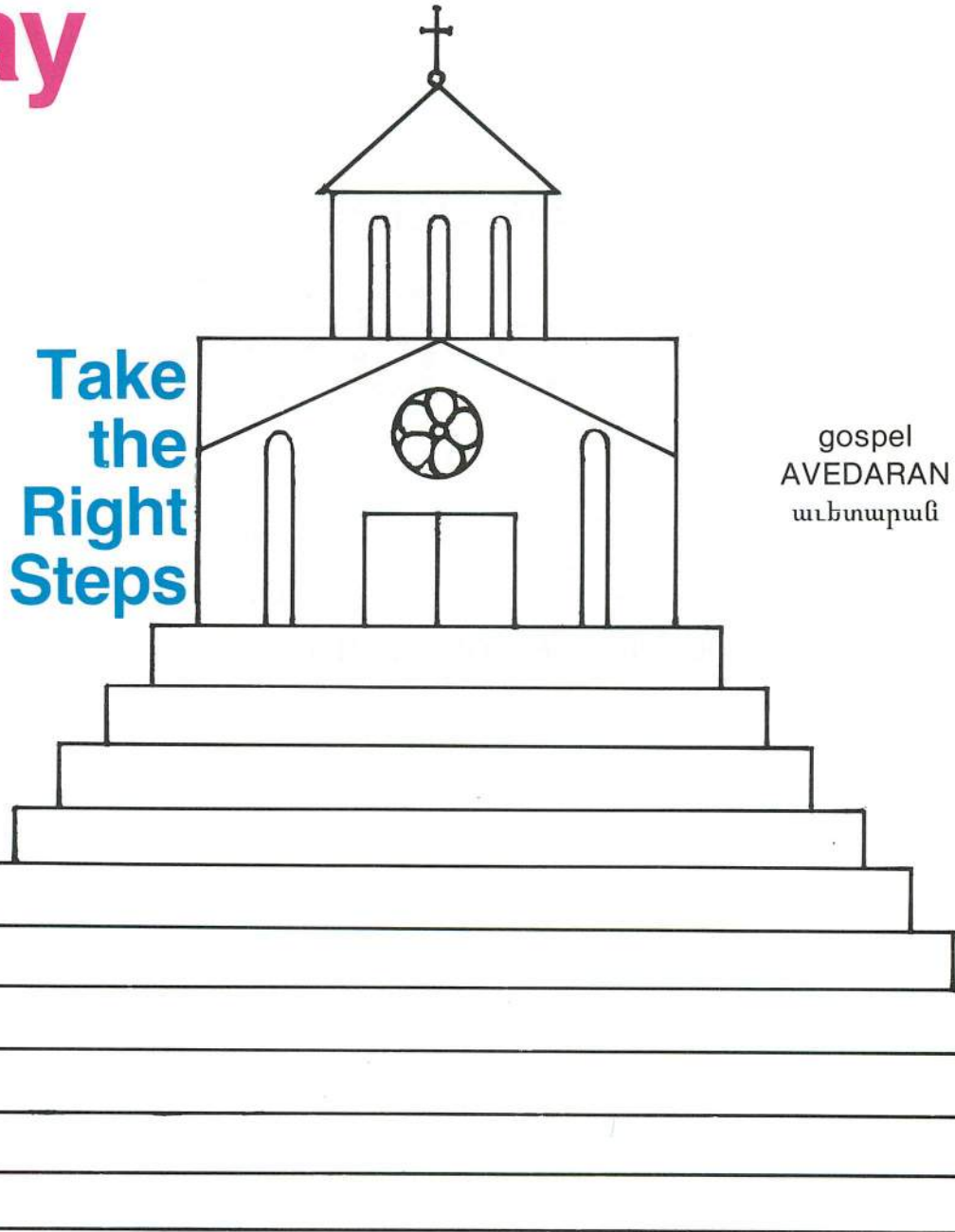
St. Luke was a Greek from the city of Antioch in Syria. He was a physician and a historian. He became the companion of St. Paul. After St. Paul's martyrdom, St. Luke ministered in Italy, France and Macedonia where he was martyred. Tradition says that he wrote his Gospel in Antioch upon Paul's request. Luke's symbol is winged bull.

St. John the Evangelist wrote his Gospel the last; it was written around 90 AD, upon the request of the Church in Asia. His Symbol is an eagle.

The first three Gospels contain similar stories of the earthly life of our Savior and because of it are called "Synoptic" Gospels, yet the Gospel of St. John differs from the first three. St. John simply tried to write about the events that the first three Evangelists forgot to mention.

Armenian Church reveres the four Gospels of the New Testaments as the most useful books in the Bible as they describe the earthly ministry of Christ our Lord.

# Gospels Lead the Way



*On the steps leading to the church above, make a list of all the things you remember from the time you came to Sunday School this morning. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you do? What did you feel or smell? Try to remember as many things as you can.*

When Christ was born there were no newspapers or magazines or radio broadcasts or television programs to spread the word of his coming. He was born and lived 33 years, then was crucified and resurrected, and only a handful of people knew about him. How do we know so much about Christ and what he did on earth? The answer is the Holy Gospels.

The Holy Gospels comprise the first four books of the New Testament. They spread the word about Christ; in fact, the word "gospel" means "good news." In Armenian, the word is *Avedaran*.

After the resurrection of Christ people who wanted to keep his memory

alive would gather together and recall stories he told and events that happened in his life on earth. But as years went by, some of those people began to die and it was decided to write down these stories and events.

The four men who wrote the Gospels were St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "Synoptic Gospels." They wrote about Christ's life as if it were a biography.

Just who were these men and how did they write the Gospels? Why don't we ask them . . . ?





Hello, students. Welcome to your new year of Sunday School. My name is St. Matthew. In Armenian, they call me *Soorp Mateos*. I hear that you want to know a little bit about me and why I wrote my gospel. Well, it's a long story that starts way back when I was a tax collector. I was always asking people for money; it wasn't a job that I liked very well. When I met Jesus, he made me feel so good that I became one of his disciples. My name was Levi, but he changed it to Matthew. I traveled with him wherever he went for three years and, after his crucifixion and resurrection, continued his work like the other apostles.

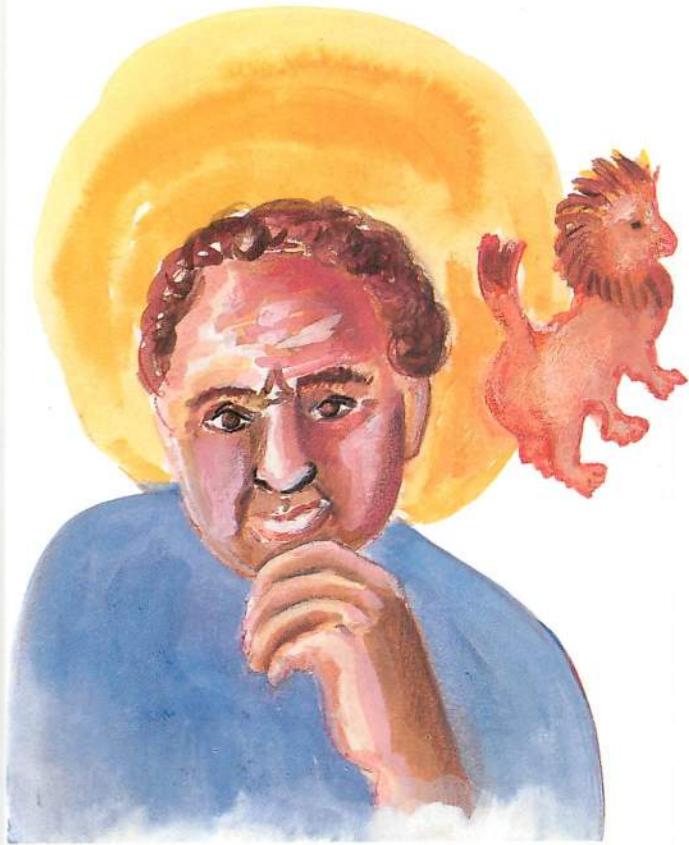
About thirty years later I decided to write down the story of the life of Christ, all of his miracles, the stories he told, and his teachings. Originally, I wrote my gospel in the Aramaic language. Both Jesus and I spoke this language. We had no paper as you have, so I wrote my gospel on papyrus.

It seems so strange to see my icon or picture in churches and in books. Sometimes alongside my picture the artist may paint the face of an angel or a cherub which is my symbol. I have become a somewhat famous saint, but I can never be as great as Jesus Christ.

Excuse me, may I interrupt?

My name is Saint Mark or as you Armenian Christians call me, *Soorp Margos*. I would like to tell you something about myself before this lesson gets too long. The only thing I regret in my life is that I never met Jesus. I did know Saint Peter, though. He was one of the twelve apostles and told me so much about Jesus' teachings that I felt as if I knew him. I tried to write everything down as I heard it from Saint Peter. I was a Jew, but I wrote in the Greek language. Most of the educated people during my lifetime could read and write Greek. This came in handy when I traveled with Saint Paul on his journeys to spread the word of Christianity.

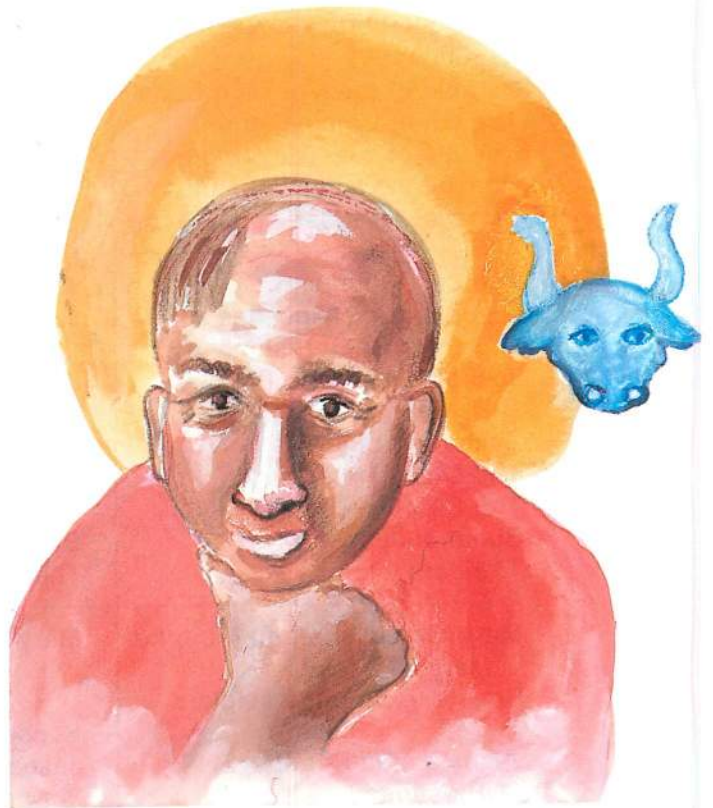
My gospel was written between 65 and 70 A.D. Some of the events in my gospel are not in Saint Matthew's or



but I felt the power of Jesus' teachings and his love. Just like Saint Mark, I did not know Jesus personally but my friend and traveling companion was Saint Paul. I was a physician and could read and write Greek. I wrote my gospel between 63 and 70 A.D. I hope that when you read my gospel you will feel as I felt when I heard the parables, the miracles, and the teachings of Christ. I wanted to write them down so they would last forever. I know that today the Holy Gospels are translated into hundreds of languages so that the word of God can reach people all over the world. Somehow, without magazines or newspapers or radio or television, Saint Matthew, Saint Mark and I have reached you. We wrote for you and hope that you will read us.

Saint Luke's gospel. When my picture appears in stained glass windows or in religious books, there is always a lion right next to me.

I guess it is finally my turn to speak. My name is Saint Luke and in Armenian I think you say *Soorp Ghoogas*. I am the third of the cynoptio gospel writers. When artists paint my picture, they put a bull or an ox beside me, which is my symbol. The main reason I wrote my gospel was to tell the world that Jesus Christ did not come to be a savior to the Jews alone, but that he came for everyone, Jew and Gentile. For you see, I, myself, am not a Jew,

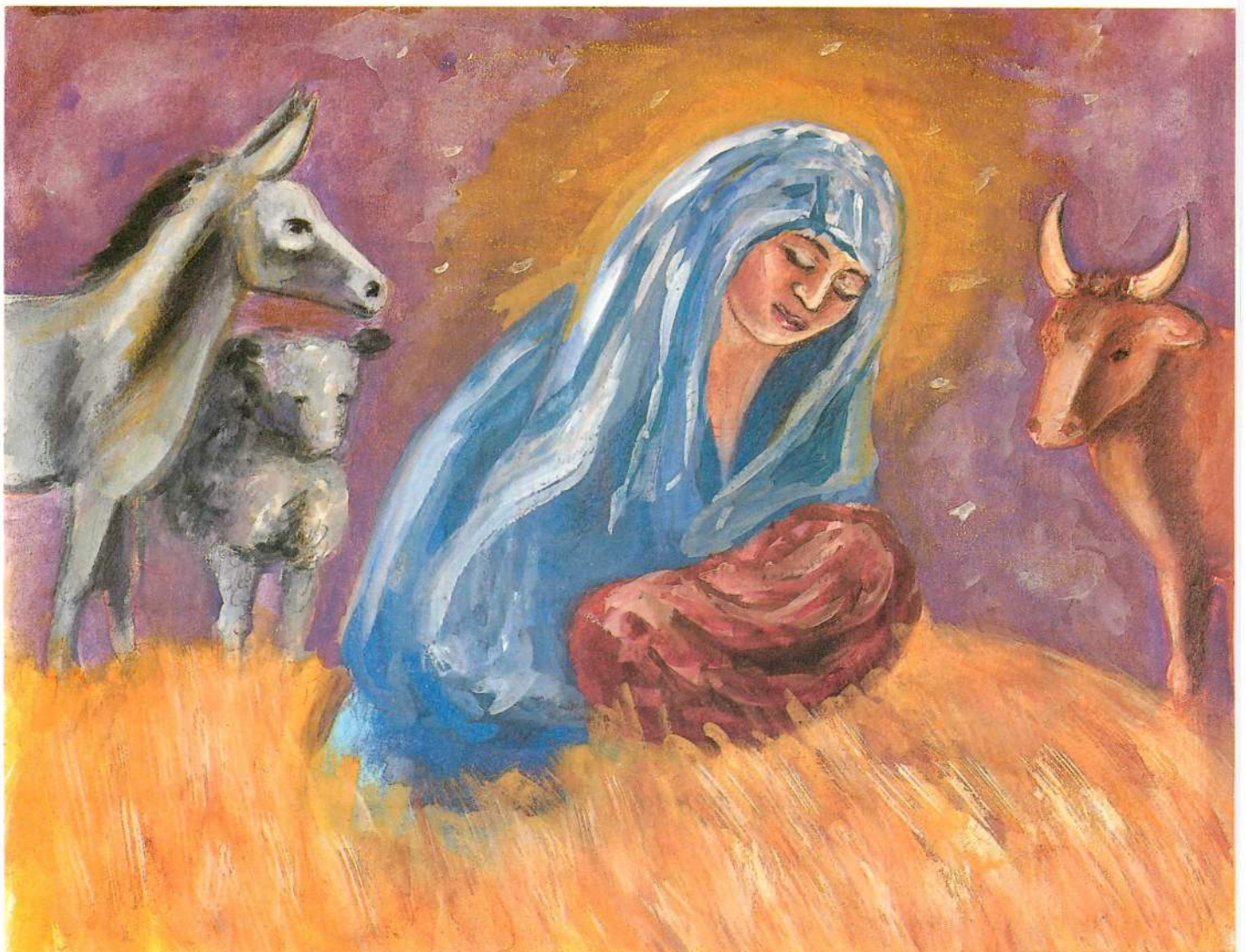


# GOSPEL PARALLELS

St. Matthew	St. Mark	St. Luke
Jesus' Ancestry Birth of Jesus Visit of Three Wise Men Flight into Egypt		Birth of Jesus  Jesus Presented to Temple  Jesus at 12 years old
John the Baptist Baptism of Jesus The Temptation Choosing Disciples	John the Baptist Baptism of Jesus The Temptation Choosing Disciples	John the Baptist Baptism of Jesus The Temptation Choosing Disciples
Sermon on the Mount		Sermon on the Plain
Jesus Feeds 5000 Jesus walks on water Transfiguration	Jesus Feeds 5000 Jesus walks on water Transfiguration	Jesus Feeds 5000 Jesus walks on water Transfiguration
The Lord's Prayer		Parable of the Good Samaritan The Lord's Prayer Parable of Prodigal Son Parable of Unjust Judge
Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) Parable of the Marriage Feast The Great Commandment Parable of the Ten Maidens Conspiracy against Jesus Betrayal by Judas	Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)  The Great Commandment  Conspiracy against Jesus Betrayal by Judas	Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)  The Great Commandment  Conspiracy against Jesus Betrayal by Judas
The Last Supper Jesus and the Apostles in Garden of Gethsemane Jesus delivered to Pontius Pilate The death of Judas The Crucifixion The Death on the Cross Burial of Jesus The empty tomb	The Last Supper Jesus and the Apostles in Garden of Gethsemane Jesus delivered to Pontius Pilate  The Crucifixion The Death on the Cross Burial of Jesus The empty tomb	The Last Supper Jesus and the Apostles in Garden of Gethsemane Jesus delivered to Pontius Pilate  The Crucifixion The Death on the Cross Burial of Jesus The empty tomb
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary see Jesus Priests try to bribe soldiers  Jesus appears to the 11 Apostles	Mary Magdalene sees Jesus  Supper at Emmaus Jesus appears to the 11 Apostles The Ascension	Supper at Emmaus Jesus appears to the 11 Apostles The Ascension

Using the chart on Gospel Parallels, complete the following:

1. Which Gospel writer does not tell about the birth of Jesus?
2. Which Gospel writer tells how Jesus was presented to the temple when he was eight days old?
3. Who is the first person that St. Mark writes about in his gospel?
4. *The Sermon on the Mount* and *The Sermon on the Plain* are the same event, but they are named differently. Which Gospel writers wrote about this event?
5. List three parables written only by St. Luke.
6. On the day known as Palm Sunday, where did Jesus go?
7. Which Gospel writer does not include the Lord's Prayer?
8. Name one parable written only by St. Matthew.
9. After the Last Supper where did Jesus and the apostles go?
10. After the resurrection who was the first person to see Jesus?



# Unit I: The Bible

## Session 1—Gospels Lead the Way

### Key Concepts

1. The Synoptic Gospels are gospels written by Sts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
2. They tell the true story of the birth, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. The three gospels have many parallels (and some differences) in tracing the life of Christ.

### Objectives

Students will

1. Identify the writers of the Synoptic Gospels.
2. Identify the symbols attributed to the Gospel writers.
3. Recognize parallels in the three Synoptic Gospels.

### Background for Teacher

The Synoptic Gospels are the first three gospels in the New Testament. They are a synopsis of the life of Christ. The dating of the writing of the Synoptic Gospels is as follows: St. Matthew, c. 70 A.D.; St. Mark, c. 65 A.D.; St. Luke, c. 70 A.D. The three Synoptic\* Gospels are very similar and often use the same words to describe events in the life of Christ. All three describe two periods in Christ's life; his early childhood and his adult ministry; that is, the last three years of his earthly life. Only St. Luke provides one event in his later childhood—the account of his discussions with the rabbis in the temple at twelve years of age.

\* *Synoptic* means "giving an account from the same point of view"; syn = together; opsis = eye.

### Materials Needed

- Bibles

### Procedure

1. Greet students; opening prayer. (5 min.)
2. In order to illustrate the significance of the Synoptic Gospels, the first exercise will offer the student an opportunity similar to the one provided to the gospel writers:

To observe and record after the fact.

In connection with "Take the Right Steps" on page 6 of the student text, ask students to list as accurately as possible all that they have observed since they walked into the room. Ask the students:

- What did you hear?
- What did you do?
- What did you see others doing?

- What did you feel or smell?

Stress the importance of detail. (10 min.)

3. Have students read about the Synoptic Gospel writers starting on page 7. Point out and discuss the illustrations as you go along. At all times keep in mind the main objectives of this session:

- The Synoptic Gospel writers.
- Their symbols.
- What they were trying to convey.

The Armenian vocabulary is *not optional*. (15 min.)

4. Have some students read aloud their observations from "Take the Right Steps." Have each student count the number of separate observations listed. Compare the different numbers of observations. Point out how different people in the same situations observe differently. Compare this to the Synoptic Gospel writers who lived in different times, places, etc. Indicate the difficulty in accurately portraying the life and teachings of Christ. Point out that they were not merely writing a story but the true account of God on earth.

The chart on "Gospel Parallels" on page 10 should immediately be tied in with and follow the discussion of the students' observations. Read the chart aloud and have students point out the similarities and differences orally. (15 min.)

5. Allow ten minutes for the students to complete the worksheet on page 11 in their text. Walk around the classroom and assist the students. There will be those who will find this exercise difficult to comprehend.

(Answers to worksheet on Gospel parallels:

1. St. Mark; 2. St. Luke; 3. St. John the Baptist; 4. St. Matthew and St. Luke; 5. The Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Judge; 6. Jerusalem; 7. St. Mark; 8. Ten Maidens (Mt. 25:1-13); 9. Garden of Gethsemane; 10. Mary Magdalene.) (10 min.)
6. *At Home*: Instruct the students to write a biography of someone they know who is a good Christian. They should draw a picture of that person or include a photograph.

This assignment should be done at home. Stress quality and neatness. The biographies and pictures should be posted in the classroom on the following Sunday. (This can be begun in class.) (15 min.)

