

SYMBOLS OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS



WINGED MAN

St. Matthew: because his Gospel traces the human lineage (family, ancestors) of Jesus.



WINGED LION

St. Mark: because he begins his Gospel by describing St. John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.



WINGED OX

St. Luke: because he describes the sacrifice of Christ, and in Old Testament times, oxen and sheep were used for sacrifices.



WINGED EAGLE

St. John: because his Gospel takes our thoughts toward heaven as on eagles' wings.

The Four Evangelists



Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

The New Testament

The center of the New Testament part of the Bible is the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John who are called the **four evangelists**, which means those who wrote the gospels. **“Gospel” in Greek is “evangelion”** which means the **“good news.”**

In the New Testament scripture there is also the book of the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke.

There are fourteen letters called the epistles (which means letters) written by the Apostle Paul and people who helped him (such as the Letter to the Hebrews). Three letters were written by the Apostle John; two by the Apostle Peter; and one each by the Apostles James and Jude.

There is also the Book of Revelation which was written by St. John as well.

For the Orthodox, the Scriptures (the Bible) is the written record of doctrine (the teachings of the Faith) **since God Himself inspired its writing by His Holy Spirit.** Men who were inspired by God wrote the words but the words are not their own thoughts, but the very self-revelation of God. That is why the Bible is called the **“Word of God.”**

All parts of the Bible are interpreted in the Orthodox Church in the light of Christ since **everything in the Bible leads up to Christ and speaks about Him.** (Luke 24:44)

This fact is symbolized in the Orthodox Church by the fact that only **the book of the four gospels is enthroned on the altars of our churches** and not the entire Bible. This is so because everything in the Bible is fulfilled in Christ.

Christ calls His Disciples ...

MATTHEW --

One day, our Lord Jesus Christ passed by a man. His name was Matthew. He was at work when Jesus passed him. His work was as a tax collector (a person who collects money from people to give to their country.) Many people did not like the men who did this kind of work, because sometimes the men cheated and took extra money for themselves.

But Jesus liked Matthew. He stopped to talk with him. He said, **“Come, follow Me.”** Matthew was surprised and happy that Jesus liked him. He got right up and left his work. He followed Jesus.

Later, when Jesus was eating, others with the same job as Matthew came to eat with Jesus. Some people who had done bad things came too. The Pharisees (very strict people who enforced Jewish traditions and laws) saw this. They thought it was wrong for Jesus to be with such sinful people. They asked Jesus’ disciples why He ate with sinful people.

When Jesus heard what the Pharisees had asked, He told them that it is sick people who need a doctor, not well people.

Jesus said that it is better to show mercy to someone than to only pretend to do what is right like the Pharisees who did things only “for show.”

Jesus explained that He is like a doctor. He came to help people whose souls are sick with sin. He shows them that they can be forgiven by God and their souls can be well again.