

Dear Bible Explorers

This week we push into the First Century time period. Everything on the international and local scenes has changed. Hellenism, spread initially by Alexander the Great, has washed over the land and not only changed the common language spoken but also the customs and way of life. Spending a little time looking at the “Intertestamental History” is outside the scope of this week’s video, but it would be well worth your time! (I will add a link to a short video by David DeSilva).

This week we talk about the gospels: what are they and how do they function? You can find the video [here](#) or with this link <https://bit.ly/3WANYhV>

And a very short bonus content video [here](#).

### **Optional Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you hear in the video that was new or that stirred up questions for you?
2. Do you have a favorite gospel that you gravitate toward? Why?
3. How does recognizing that each gospel has a unique way of depicting Jesus’ biography influence how we read the gospels (if at all)?
4. Cyndi stated that the geography influences how Jesus communicated with people a fact not always obvious to the reader. How much (if at all) do you think that should change the way we read the stories of Jesus?

### **Optional Reading:**

Read Mark and John (both can be read from beginning to end in one hour).

- Each gospel writer has a different perspective. Many scholars think Matthew, Mark, and Luke shared similar stories and experiences. Their gospels sound similar and often use the exact same words/phrases. John is completely different.
- Try to get a sense of the style of these gospels. How do they differ?
- What do you think it means to follow Jesus? Describe the types of people who followed him.

### **Additional Resources:**

1. Watch a short video on **Why Christians Should Read the Apocrapha**
2. Listen to a two part podcast interview on my book Encountering Jesus in the Real World of the Gospels. Part 1 is [HERE](#) and Part 2 is [HERE](#)
  - If you are in Philadelphia, I have extra copies of my book that I am happy to sell to you.