

## the credits

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New International Version Study Bible

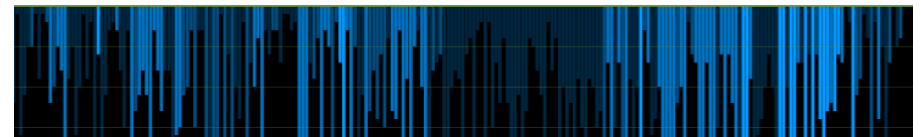
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zonderan Publishing House, 1995.

Thomas, Robert. The NIV Harmony of the Gospels.

New York: Harper Collin Publishers, 1998.

+the acknowledgements:

Brad Canning, Nancy Hechinger, Dan O'Sullivan, Clay Shirky



# gospel spectrum

<http://thirteensquares.com/gospelspectrum>

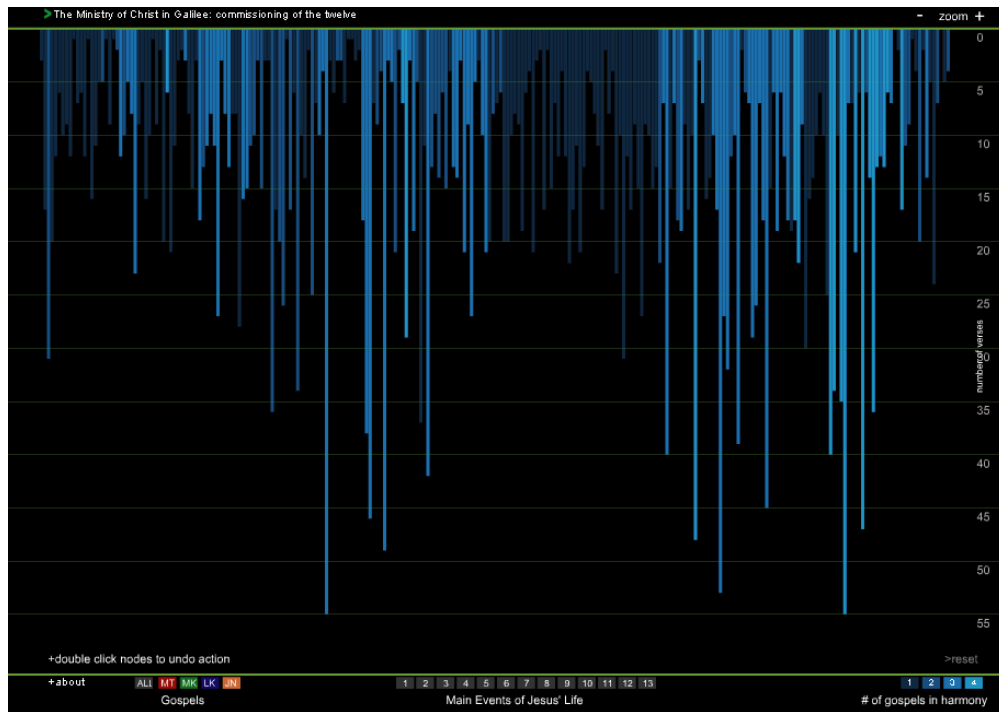


Figure 1. The Gospel Spectrum presents the spectrum of events described in the four books in the Bible collectively known as the "Gospels" in chronicle order.

## > INTRODUCTION

"God is in the details."

The Gospel Spectrum explores the convergence of technology and theology by examining how computational media can be applied to narratives using principles of data visualization and data-mining to deconstruct and then visually reconstruct the story of Jesus as presented in the Bible.

For those interested in technology, the Gospel Spectrum is an exploration of how information visualization can reveal new insights and connections between complex data sets and aid in the understanding of the overall content. For those interested in theology, this provides a fresh perspective on the spectrum of events in Jesus' lifetime by visualizing data collected from a study called Harmony of the Gospels.

**GOSPELS:** The first four books of the New Testament in the Bible, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, recount the story Jesus from four different perspectives.

**HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS:** A historical, in-depth study of the passages in the Gospels describing similar events in Jesus' life; generally organized in a chronological order.

## INFORMATION VISUALIZATION + HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS = GOSPEL SPECTRUM

## > METHODS

The Gospel Spectrum is a flash-powered application driven by data collected from a XML file with information gathered from the Harmony of the Gospels study. The bars on the graph vary in length, brightness, and color based on the data they represent. All bars are placed in a chronological order as they appear in the books and contain information such as scripture references, number of verses, number of gospels in harmony, and full text.

**Length:** Total number of verses describing an event.

**Brightness:** Total number of gospels describing an event. The brighter the bar, the more authors mention that particular event.

**Colors:** The color blue plays on the metaphor of Jesus as the "living water." The complementary colors representing each book, Matthew (red), Mark (green), Luke (purple), and John (orange), reiterate the idea that the stories of the Gospels complement each other.

## > RESULTS

By using the design elements such as color, translucency, and design to represent the statistics collected from the quantitative analysis of qualitative data, the Gospel Spectrum reveals the power of rich data analysis. It provides an easy alternative to identify interesting patterns and see the textual relationships among the four books in the Bible that recount the story of Jesus' life and supplements the more traditional, text-based, monochromatic resources for Biblical studies.

## > CONCLUSIONS

The Gospel Spectrum is a convergence of technology and theology because of its combination of the historical study of the Gospels, the ancient practice of using visuals for the communication and comprehension of faith in early Christianity, the principles of information visualization, graphic design, user experience, and the power new media technologies and software development.

As an information visualization tool, it stresses the importance of customized visualizations. Because the application is specific to the analysis of the narratives presented in the Gospels, it is effective in exposing the obscure and revealing textual relationships in the narrative of Jesus' life. All in all, the Gospel Spectrum is a method of making complex data sets more accessible and comparable by creating an interface for asking questions and opportunities for finding answers on multiple levels.

## > FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Further developments include content, visual and functional refinement of the current application. Review of the content will help refine ways to display more relevant information for users such as manipulating the length of the bars based on word count rather than verse count. Visual developments include adding color options to address issues of color blindness and user preferences. Functional additions include ways to optimize the display of text read from XML sources. Additionally, to encourage community and regular conversation among user groups regarding the content, future iterations of the Gospel Spectrum will explore the ideas of the application as a social software defined and refined by its users.

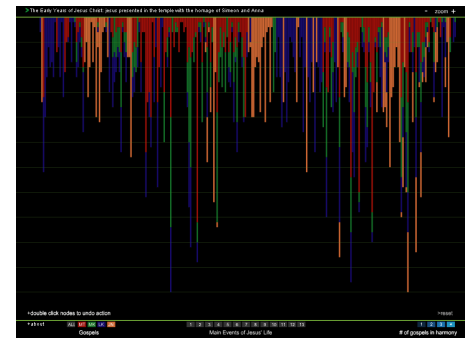


Figure 2. Gospel makeup reveals the ratio of verses for each event in the books of Matthew (red), Mark (green), Luke (purple) and John (orange).



Figure 5. Clicking on the button isolates and displays the gospel makeup of all events corresponding to the selection.

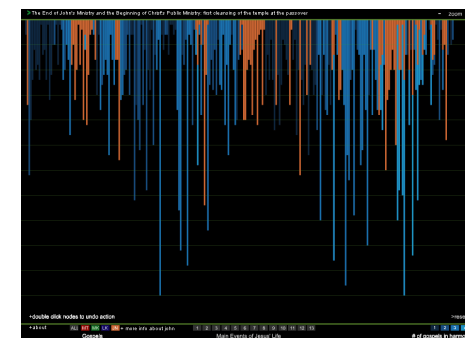


Figure 3. Gospel makeup indicates events addressed by each Gospel. As shown above, the Gospel of John talks about various events throughout the narrative.

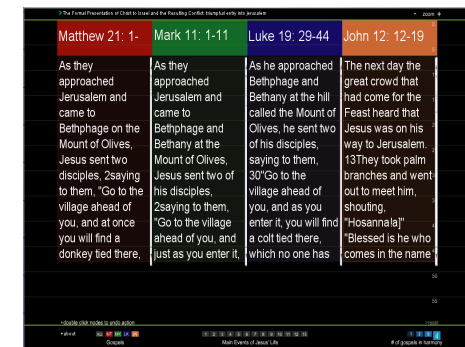


Figure 6. Clicking on the bar displays similar passages in a parallel column format for comparing and contrasting the text.