

Five Gospels

Paul's gospel virtually ignores what Jesus actually taught.

"Gospel" refers to the core message of salvation/eternal life as each author presents it. They're presented in the likely (and very important) chronological order of composition.

PAUL ~50-65 CE · MAINLY ROMANS AND GALATIANS	MARK ~65-70 CE · EARLIEST NARRATIVE GOSPEL	MATTHEW ~80-90 CE · EXPANDS MARK	LUKE/ACTS ~80-90 CE · EXPANDS MARK	JOHN ~90-100 CE · INDEPENDENT																																																																																																
CHRISTOLOGY ▶ Jesus is a divine pre-existent being "in the form of God" (Phil 2:5-7) ▶ Declared the Son of God by his resurrection (Rom 1:1-6) SALVATION/ETERNAL LIFE ▶ Have faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 5) ▶ Baptism – not for forgiveness, but to be united with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom 6:1-11) ▶ Stop sinning – the Holy Spirit enables those united with Christ to overcome sin's power (Rom 6 & 8) UNIQUE TO PAUL (SEE DETAILS BELOW) ▶ The Law is obsolete ▶ Sin is a cosmic power that controls everyone ▶ Atonement instead of forgiveness ▶ Righteousness through faith instead of obedience ▶ Election and predestination instead of free will	CHRISTOLOGY ▶ Declared the Son of God at his baptism after receiving the Holy Spirit. (1:9-11) ▶ No pre-existence ▶ No miraculous conception SALVATION/ETERNAL LIFE ▶ Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (1:4-5, and echoed in Matt 3:1-12 & Luke 3:1-3) ▶ Obey God's commandments in order to inherit eternal life (10:17-21, and echoed in Matt 19:16-21 & Luke 18:18-22) ▶ Many ordinary people are righteous, and Jesus explicitly said he was not calling them (2:13-17, and echoed in Matt 9:9-13 & Luke 5:27-32) ▶ Faith is important for prayer and healing, but it's not presented as a requirement for eternal life (consistent with Matthew and Luke). UNIQUE TO MARK ▶ No post-resurrection appearances (16:9-20 is not in the earliest mss.)	CHRISTOLOGY ▶ Declared the Son of God at his miraculous conception, which was announced to Joseph (1:18-25) KEY ADDITIONS TO MARK ▶ Post-resurrection appearances (28:16-20) UNIQUE TO MATTHEW ▶ Ministry directed to the Jews only (10:5-7, 15:24) ▶ Emphasis on the continuing importance of the Law (5:17-20) ▶ Righteousness is evident by: – Sincere (not ostentatious) obedience to the Law (5:17-20) – Active care for "the least of these" (25:31-46) ▶ Anachronistic references to the church (16:18, 18:15-17) ▶ Everlasting blood-guilt of the Jews (27:24-25) ▶ Many among the righteous dead were raised before Jesus himself was (27:51-53)	CHRISTOLOGY ▶ Same as Matthew, except the conception was announced to Mary (1:26-35) KEY ADDITIONS/CHANGES ▶ Implies Jesus was sent for Gentiles rather than Jews (Luke 4:16–30) ▶ Omits the "Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many" saying found in both Mark and Matthew ▶ Speeches in Acts don't say "Jesus died for your sins" – they say "You killed Jesus, but God raised him. Now repent." (Acts 2:14-40, 3:11-26, 4:5-12, 5:27-32) ▶ Many thousands of believers still zealous for the Law decades after the resurrection (Acts 21:17–20) UNIQUE TO LUKE ▶ Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Rich Man and Lazarus ▶ Jesus' ascension to heaven (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:1-12)	CHRISTOLOGY ▶ Has existed as God for all eternity (1:1-5), and became the human Son of God to take away the sins of humanity (1:14, 29) SALVATION/ETERNAL LIFE ▶ Believe in Jesus as the Son of God (3:14-18; 20:30-31) ▶ Be "born again" / "born of water and the Spirit" (3:1-8) UNIQUE TO JOHN ▶ Jesus talks explicitly, frequently, and at great length about his own divinity ▶ The seven "I am" statements ▶ Seven miracles as "signs" to inspire belief (most notably, raising Lazarus) ▶ Foot washing at the Last Supper instead of the bread and cup ▶ Jesus is calm, resolute, and fully in control before his arrest and on the cross ("It is finished" vs. Mark & Matthew's "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")																																																																																																
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▶ Sin is not merely disobedience – it's also a cosmic power. It's essentially an unholy spirit that possesses and controls everyone (Rom 6 & 7) ▶ Because of Adam, everyone is born utterly sinful with no hope of escape (Rom 5) ▶ Accordingly, there's no such thing as a righteous person (Rom 3)																																																																																																				
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▶ Obedience to the Law can't make anyone righteous (Gal 2 & 3, Rom 3 & 4) ▶ The Law was actually a trap for the Israelites (Rom 9:30-33), because its main purpose was to curse, enslave, and condemn them (Gal 3 & 4). ▶ Regardless, Christ's death made it obsolete (Rom 6 & 7)																																																																																																				
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▶ God's justice cannot simply forgive sins – he requires death (Rom 6:23). ▶ Note: Atonement entails restitution to eliminate a debt; forgiveness does not. ▶ Jesus' death was the atoning payment for the sins of humanity (Rom 3 & 5) ▶ Baptism "into Christ" and his death/resurrection appropriates that atonement and frees the person from sin's power (Rom 6) ▶ If God could simply forgive sins, then Jesus would have died for nothing																																																																																																				
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▶ Attained through faith only, not obedience to the Law (Gal 2:16, Rom 3:28, 4:5) ▶ Entire doctrine based on two proof texts: Gen 15:6 and Hab 2:4																																																																																																				
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▶ God chooses the eternal destiny of people based on his own preferences and plans (Rom 8:28-33; all of Rom 9) ▶ To ensure his own glory, he hardens the hearts of certain people (Rom 9:14-18) ▶ Only a remnant of the Israelites will actually be saved because he subsequently hardened most of them and caused them to stumble (Rom 9 & 11)																																																																																																				
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