

Differences Among the Gospels and the “Gospels” Within the New Testament



From Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 1:10—"do away with factions among you and be united in mind and purpose"—we can tell that many sects were in play at the time. Broadly, Israel was divided into **Judaism** and **early Christianity**; within early Christianity itself there were groups that followed **Jesus' teaching**, groups that followed **Paul's thought**, and still others who argued either **for** or **against** adopting **Jewish law**, each claiming its own orthodoxy.

"Among the Jews there were three philosophical schools. The first were the **Pharisees**; the second, the **Sadducees**; and the third, called the **Essenes**, led lives of asceticism for the sake of holiness. They were Jews by birth and were bound together by a love stronger than that of any other sect." 1)

"When he said this, a dispute broke out between the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees**, and the assembly was divided. (The **Sadducees** say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the **Pharisees** acknowledge them all.)" (Acts 23:8)

Beyond the Synoptics and John, the New Testament **mentions many 'gospels.'** The author of **Matthew** employs a "**Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven,**" meeting God

(Yahweh) who dwells in heaven in the afterlife; **Mark** frames his account by the **"Gospel of Jesus Christ,"** and, on the basis of the **"Gospel of the Kingdom of God,"** proclaims Jesus' teaching that points to a **kingdom on earth**. "Matthew expanded Mark in a distinctly **Jewish** direction, while **Luke** rewrote Mark for a more **cosmopolitan** audience—Jews newly attracted to Jesus' message and Gentile converts." 2)

Paul at first used the **"gospel of Christ,"** then later adopted as his baseline the **"gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ"** (deifying Jesus) and the **"gospel of God"** (identifying Yahweh with "God"), **coining** additional gospels for varying circumstances. **James** and **Peter** seem to have followed what we might call a **"Gospel of the Way."**

In the New Testament, the person who assigns to **Jesus** a role like that of **Yahweh** is **Paul**. In the canonical Gospels the term **"Lord Jesus"** appears only in **Luke 24:3** ("they did not find the body of **the Lord Jesus**"), and then solely in a passage dealing with the **resurrection**—a hint that this portion may have been added later. By contrast, **Acts** and **Paul's letters** are filled with **"the Lord Jesus"** or **"the Lord Jesus Christ,"** and Jesus becomes one who, **like Yahweh, appears directly** to Paul or Peter to speak to them [Acts 10:9–23; 11:7–10 (Peter's vision)]. 3)



베드로의 환상 (도메니코 페티, 1619)

Paul could coexist with the early Jerusalem movement so long as he used the **“gospel of Christ,”** but when he introduced **“the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ”** and **“the gospel of God,”** even **James** and **Peter** opposed him and attacked him sharply.

In truth, what passes today as “Christianity” might better be called **Pauline-ity** than **Jesu-anity**. With money, education, connections, and imagination, Paul outstripped Jesus in missionary reach and pushed doctrines he had created or adopted into wide use.

Types of "Gospel" within the New Testament

Gospel label (EN)	Source (KJV)	Rendering in Korean Rev./NIV (examples)
gospel of Jesus Christ	Mark 1:1 ("gospel of Jesus Christ")	예수 그리스도의 복음
Gospel of Christ	Rom 1:9 ("gospel of his Son"), 1:16; 15:19; 15:29; 1 Cor 9:12, 9:18; 2 Cor 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Gal 1:7; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 3:2	그의 아들의 복음 / 복음 / 그리스도의 복음 / 그리스도의 충만한 복(祝福) 등
Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ	2 Thess 1:8 ("gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ")	우리 주 예수의 복음
gospel of God	Rom 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thess 2:2, 2:8, 2:9; 1 Tim 1:11 ("glorious gospel of the blessed God"); 1 Pet 4:17	하나님의 복음 / 하나님의 영광의 복음
gospel of the kingdom of God (earthly kingdom)	Mark 1:14	하나님의 복음(= good news of God)
gospel of the Kingdom (heaven/afterlife)	Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14	천국(당) 복음
gospel of the grace of God	Acts 20:24	하나님의 은혜의 복음
gospel of peace	Rom 10:15; Eph 6:15	좋은 소식 / 평안의 복음

Gospel label (EN)	Source (KJV)	Rendering in Korean Rev./NIV (examples)
gospel of the uncircumcision	Gal 2:7	무할례자에게 복음(이방인의 복음)
gospel of your salvation	Eph 1:13	구원의 복음

Contradictions within the New Testament

"Mark 2:26 says David entered the house of God **in the days of Abiathar the high priest** and ate the consecrated bread, which only priests may eat. But the Old Testament passage being cited (1 Samuel 21) makes clear that the high priest at that time was **Ahimelech**, Abiathar's **father**. In short, this is one of the clearest verses showing that Scripture is not literally **inerrant**—that it contains mistakes." 4)

The editor who inserted the resurrection story into **Mark** seems, wisely, to have signaled the later **fabrication** with the repeated refrain "**they did not believe**" (16:11, 16:13, 16:14), hinting that the section was not his own composition. He also implicitly marks his work as **post-Luke** by naming **Mary Magdalene** as one "from whom he had cast out seven demons" (Mark 16:9)—a detail found **only in Luke 8:2**.



The same hand appears to have added the odd promises in **16:17–18**—“these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes; if they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover”—as if to let perceptive readers see that this was **not** rightfully his, but **done under pressure**.

The rhetorical climax is **16:19**: “He was taken up into heaven and sat at the **right hand** of God.” For that to be a truthful record, someone would have had to **ascend** to heaven, verify it, and return to report. One can sense the editor’s deep intellectual conflict.

Other **later additions** include John 8:1–11, the story of the woman taken in adultery; some have argued it was inserted to **discredit Mary Magdalene** by insinuation. But since the woman cannot be identified as Mary, that intent fails. And even if she

were—whether, as some clergy insinuate, she had been a courtesan—it would not matter. Jesus' free association with tax collectors and Pharisees, his embrace of Samaritans, and his entrusting of **movement leadership to Mary** show his extraordinary revolutionary character.



Religion ought to develop in a **centrifugal love**, not centripetal exclusion. Unlike the Old Testament, the Jesus of the New Testament **ate with tax collectors, Gentiles, and "sinners,"** approached the Roman **centurion**, taught **Gentiles**, paid **tribute** to the Roman emperor, and appears to have entrusted **Mary Magdalene** with leadership of the community.

But Jesus' attempt to discern the flaws of the Old Testament and preach a gospel **beyond** it was undone when **Paul** bound his new gospel to the **Old Testament** and emphasized **resurrection** and the **afterlife**. In the end, **Jesus lost on points to Paul**. Hence humanity endured a **medieval darkness**, and the development of **natural science** and human progress was hindered.

Thomas Paine's Admonition

"What is called revelation, or revealed religion, has been the source of the most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race. Religion has been made into the most disgraceful belief remote from anything sacred; and since man has existed, it has most destroyed human morality, peace, and happiness. If it were possible that a thousand devils, each with his own principles, were permitted to range at large and publicly preach them, it would be far better than our allowing impostors and monsters like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, or other biblical prophets to come to us with feigned messages from God and win our trust.

The massacres indiscriminately of men, women, and children—the entire populations of nations—found throughout the Bible; the bloody executions that fill Europe with blood and ruins; the deadly tortures and religious wars—all this stems from the profane thing called revelation and from the dreadful belief that God speaks directly to man. Thus have the **lies of the Old Testament** and the **lies of the New** each done their part ... The Old Testament teaches grumbling, cruelty, and murder; the New Testament bids us believe that an omnipotent being lusted after a betrothed woman, and calls the credulity to believe such lechery 'faith.'" 5)

References

1. *History of Great War 1*, pp. 200–201 (2.119–120).
2. John Shelby Spong, *Made Jesus, Real Jesus* (Korean trans.), Korea Institute for Christian Studies, 2009, p. 282.
3. Acts 9:5–6; 22:8–10; 23:11; 26:14–18.
4. Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (Korean trans. *The History of Biblical Distortion*), trans. Min Kyung-sik, Sunglim Publishing, 2006, p. 34.

5. *Thomas Paine Collection*, Forgotten Books, 2007, pp. 443–444 (edited with author's notes).