

The Evidence of the Gospels for the Teaching of Jesus

We have four gospels, and these four gospels are not direct copies of one another. But how can we understand the testimony of these gospels? What is a gospel and how does this help us to gain confidence in what we read? What happened to the teaching of Jesus in the first decades after his death and resurrection?

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I. A Short History of the Early Church

A. Acts – teaching

1. Acts 2:41-42
2. Acts 5:42
3. Acts 15:36
4. Acts 18:11

B. Paul – teaching the 'traditions'

1. Keeping the traditions: 1 Cor 11:2
2. Example 1: 1 Cor 11:23-25
3. Example 2: 'Not I, but the Lord' 1 Cor 7:10,12
4. Example 3: 'Jews demand a sign' 1 Cor 1:22

C. Writing down

1. This is the account of the eyewitness: John 21:24-25
2. Account just as the eyewitnesses delivered to us: Luke 1:1-4

D. Apostles' teaching about Jesus is authoritative

1. Gospel recognized as Scripture: 1 Tim 5:18 (Luke 10:7)

II. Gospels are a record of the teaching of the apostles

A. Foundational for the church: Eph 2:20

B. It was always the plan: John 14:22-26 (John 2:22)

III. How Does This Understanding of the Gospels Help Us?

A. Multiple teachers taught the same material

B. Different emphases because of the different purposes, situations, personalities

C. No need to accept a gradual communal genesis of the Gospel-material

D. Teaching goes back to those who were authorized with this task