

## Glossary

Some of the most common terms used in gospel studies appear below, with definitions. A more complete glossary for our class is online at:

<https://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/cmurphy/courses/pmin210/glossary.htm>

<b>apocalyptic</b>	Greek for "revelation," a genre of prophetic wisdom literature common in social crises or circumstances of persecution, characterized by esoteric symbols and visions, dualistic ethics and cosmology, and rhetorical sense of urgency.
<b>apocrypha</b>	Greek for "hidden," books of Christian pious literature that are not in the Christian canon.
<b>apostle</b>	Greek for "one dispatched or sent off, an envoy"; within Christian circles this term came to mean one sent forth by God (or Jesus) for a mission.
<b>baptism</b>	A Christian ritual understood to cleanse a person from sin and initiate them into Christian life and community, possibly originating in Jewish purification rituals.
<b>beatitude</b>	A typical biblical form of speech that begins, "Blessed be..."; typical in covenant rituals and settings in Jewish literature.
<b>canon</b>	From the Greek word for measuring rod, this refers among other meanings to the rule by which something was judged, and particularly to the official list of books judged to be authoritative scriptures by a given community.
<b>Christ</b>	The Greek word for messiah or anointed/oiled one.
<b>Christology</b>	The branch of Christian theology that explores the person, nature, and function of Christ.
<b>covenant</b>	A covenant is an agreement between two parties. Covenants in antiquity were diplomatic and economic in nature, much as today, and the literary conventions of these ancient covenants were used to portray the relationship between God and Israel.
<b>creed</b>	From the Latin <i>credo</i> , "I believe," a confession of faith; in Christian tradition, any one of several prayers that affirms basic Christian beliefs.
<b>Dead Sea Scrolls</b>	A group of over 800 manuscripts found between 1947 and 1956 in various caves on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. The bulk of the manuscripts were discovered in eleven caves near a (probable) Essene settlement at Qumran, and include biblical, parabiblical, apocryphal and sectarian writings as well as some documentary texts (practice alphabets, deeds, contracts, letters)—but no parts of the New Testament.
<b>disciple</b>	Greek for "one who follows," a term used in scripture for students of a master.
<b>docetism</b>	From the Greek "to seem, to appear," the Christological heresy that Christ only appeared to have a human body; in reality, he was completely divine and not human.
<b>ecclesiology</b>	From the Greek for "the assembly of those called out, the church"; the study of the Christian church: its meaning, its relationship to Christ, and its forms and structures.
<b>epistle</b>	Greek for letter, an exhortation or written sermon intended for public reading.
<b>eschatology</b>	The branch of theology that is concerned with the ultimate or last things, such as the end of times, judgment, death, heaven, hell (from the Greek for furthest, uttermost, extreme, end, + <i>logos</i> = word[s]).
<b>eucharist</b>	From the Greek "to give thanks," a central Christian ritual recalling the Passover supper Jesus shared with his disciples the night before he died; also, the bread and wine understood by Catholics as consubstantial with Christ's body and blood offered for human salvation.
<b>evangelist</b>	Greek for "one who proclaims the good news" or gospel, understood in Christian tradition to apply particularly to the authors of the four canonical gospels.

<b>exegesis</b>	From Greek "to show the way," the interpretation of scriptural texts.
<b>exile</b>	The forced removal of the Judean elite to Babylon in the wake of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., and the period of approximately 50 years during which these people lived in servitude in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.
<b>exodus</b>	The exit or escape of Israel from Egyptian captivity, recounted in the book of the same name.
<b>Gentile</b>	A non-Jew; common Jewish term of reference in antiquity.
<b>Gnosticism</b>	From the Greek for knowledge, any one of a number of dualistic ideologies popular particularly in mid- to late-antiquity that espoused a path of spiritual ascent through the secret, complex structures of the cosmos and away from the evil material world.
<b>gospel</b>	Old English term for good news ( <i>godspel</i> ), a translation of the Greek term for the same; a literary genre represented in the New Testament by four books (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and in the New Testament apocrypha by sixteen other books. The canonical gospels tell the story of the public life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They were written between 65–100 C.E.
<b>incarnation</b>	The Christian belief that God became flesh (Latin <i>in</i> + <i>carne</i> ) in Jesus of Nazareth.
<b>infancy narrative</b>	The story of the birth of Jesus, recounted in very different ways by Matthew 1–2 and Luke 1–2. The infancy narrative is a standard feature of the ancient literary genre of biography. Biographies were reserved for important individuals, and in their infancy narratives certain elements and motifs are standard (race, country, ancestors, parents, phenomena at birth).
<b>Jew</b>	An adherent of the Jewish faith, particularly after the exile of Judeans to Babylon.
<b>Jewish Temple</b>	The central place of worship and prayer in the biblical period. Solomon built a huge edifice in Jerusalem in the mid-10th century B.C.E. with the income from heavy taxes imposed on the people. This first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587–586 B.C.E., rebuilt by during the restoration (see Ezra and Nehemiah), expanded by Herod the Great in 37–4 B.C.E., and destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. Much of biblical law treats the laws of worship and cultic sacrifices that took place in the Temple (thanksgiving, atonement, free-will offerings).
<b>Levite</b>	A member of the Israelite clan charged with responsibility for Israel's worship. The Levites traditionally owned no land, but took turns at Temple service and derived their income from the offerings of money and food brought there. The Levites' cultic functions included receiving and storing offerings, preparing the daily sacrifices, and singing and instrumental accompaniment.
<b>liturgy</b>	Greek for "a work of the people," originally a public service performed at an individual's expense; later worship services in general.
<b>logos</b>	Greek for "word," a term that came to be applied particularly to Jesus Christ as the divine Word made flesh (John 1:1-18).
<b>messiah</b>	Hebrew for "anointed one," a kingly, prophetic, or priestly figure envisioned during and after the Babylonian exile as savior of the Jewish people who would restore their political/religious autonomy.
<b>New Testament</b>	The Christian name for the Christian scriptures, that is, for the revelation about Jesus Christ. The term "testament" means something that testifies or witnesses to something; in this case the scriptures attest to God's relationship with the new Israel, those who believe in the Christ. The shape and number of books in the New Testament differ among the major Christian denominations.
<b>Old Testament</b>	The Christian name for the Jewish Bible, that is, for the revelation that predates Jesus Christ. The term "testament" means something that testifies or witnesses to something; in this case the scriptures attest to God's relationship with Israel. The shape and number of books in the Catholic Old Testament differ somewhat from the Jewish canon.
<b>orthodoxy</b>	From the Greek "straight opinion," the accepted or dominant teaching or position.
<b>parable</b>	A parable is a comparison drawn from nature or common experience in life designed to illustrate some moral or religious truth.

<b>parousia</b>	see second coming.
<b>passion narrative</b>	An account of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus; probably the earliest portion of the gospels to be written. Passion narratives are found in all the canonical gospels (Mark 14:1–16:8; Matt 26:1–28:20; Luke 22:1–24:53; John 13:1–20:31).
<b>Passover</b>	The event related in Exodus 12 whereby God delivers the Israelites from captivity in Egypt by passing over their houses and slaying the first-born sons of the Egyptians. Also, the annual ritual recalling this event, and particularly the supper of symbolic foods during which the story of Exodus is retold.
<b>Pentateuch</b>	Literally "five jars/scrolls," this is the Greek term for the first five books of the Jewish Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), known in Hebrew as the Torah or instruction.
<b>pericope</b>	From the Greek "cut all around," a discrete passage or story in a literary work.
<b>Pharisees</b>	A group of Jews who lived in the late Second Temple period and advocated a democratization of Jewish ritual law so that the common people could partake in the sanctification that priests enjoyed. The Pharisees believed not only in written Torah, but in their own interpretation of that instruction (oral Torah). Their oral Torah included the extension of laws for priestly separation to lay people, as well as a belief in resurrection from the dead.
<b>prophet</b>	A prophet is a religious functionary set aside or specially appointed by (a) god for a number of religious and political tasks.
<b>pseudonymity</b>	From the Greek for "false name," the authorial stance of assuming the identity of a more famous figure in whose tradition one wishes to write; a common and accepted practice in antiquity, though today considered plagiarism.
<b>Q</b>	Abbreviation for the German "Quelle," or source; a hypothetical source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that contained the material they share word-for-word that is not in one of their other sources, the Gospel of Mark; it consists mostly of sayings of Jesus.
<b>redaction</b>	The activity of collecting, arranging, editing and modifying sources to adapt their message to new circumstances and the redactor's theological perspective.
<b>redaction criticism</b>	The study of the theological perspective of a biblical text evident in its collection, arrangement, editing and modification of sources.
<b>restoration</b>	The period of return from Babylonian exile and reconstruction of Judean society (539–c.450 B.C.E.), reflected in the Bible in the work of the Chronicler (1–2 Chr; Ezra–Nehemiah).
<b>Sadducee</b>	A member of the priestly family descended from Zadok, one of two high priestly families under King David; the chief priestly family in the Jerusalem Temple from the time of Solomon to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and one of the chief ruling parties in Jerusalem from the time of the Hasmonean dynasty (146 B.C.E. – 70 C.E.). The ancient Jewish historian Josephus describes them as religious conservatives who rejected any teachings outside of the Torah, such as resurrection from the dead, life after death, and the existence of angels.
<b>Samaritans</b>	Demographically a group of people who lived in the former northern kingdom of Israel, centered around the ancient capital of Samaria, who after the Assyrian destruction and exile (721 B.C.E.) had remained and intermarried with the non-Israelite peoples transported to the region by Assyria. Religio-politically, a conservative Jewish group that maintained the ancient paleo-Hebrew script for their sacred writings (as opposed to the square script introduced by foreign powers during Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony), and, more importantly, who recognized only the Torah as legitimate scripture (as opposed to Judean Jews, who had expanded scripture to include the prophets and the writings). The Samaritans have maintained their own temple and cult of Jewish festivals on Mount Gerizim near Shechem from the late fourth century B.C.E. to the present day.
<b>second coming</b>	Also referred to by its Greek equivalent, <i>parousia</i> (being alongside, presence), the belief present in every strand of New Testament tradition that Christ will return in the future to establish fully the messianic reign.

<b>Septuagint</b>	From the Latin for seventy ( <i>septem</i> [7] + <i>ginta</i> [decimal suffix]), therefore abbreviated LXX, this is the name for the main ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible with some additional books, undertaken by Jews living in Egypt sometime after 250 B.C.E. This was the premier version used by early Greek-speaking Christians, and so became the basis of the Christian canon. The name "seventy" derives from a tradition that Ptolemy II (285–247 B.C.E.) commissioned 70 or 72 elders to prepare the translation, a task they accomplished in a miraculous 72 days.
<b>synagogue</b>	From the Greek "to bring or gather together" and thus "community," the organized Jewish communities of the Hellenistic world and their places of worship.
<b>synoptic gospels</b>	From the Greek "with one eye," the three gospels that tell the story of Jesus in largely the same way, sometimes with passages that are identical word-for-word. These three gospels are Matthew, Mark and Luke.
<b>synoptic problem</b>	The observation that, while the three synoptic gospels share much material word-for-word, they are also significantly different. The most accepted theories to account for this problem are 1) the primacy of Mark; and 2) the Two Source Hypothesis.
<b>Tanakh</b>	The Jewish name for their scriptures; an acronym in which each of the consonants represents one of the three major divisions of the Jewish Bible: "T" for Torah or instruction, law (including the biblical books from Genesis to Deuteronomy), "N" for Nevi'im or prophets (Joshua–Malachi), and "K" for Ketuvim or writings (Psalms–2 Chronicles).
<b>theodicy</b>	From the Greek "justice of God" or "justifying God," the problem of and attempt to explain the existence of evil and suffering alongside the assertion of a just and loving God.
<b>theology</b>	From the Greek "words about God," the science or study of God; or, as Anselm described it, "faith seeking understanding."
<b>Torah</b>	The Hebrew word for instruction, this term designates in its narrowest sense the first five books of the Jewish Bible (Genesis to Deuteronomy), and in its broadest sense authoritative teaching of whatever source. Rabbinic tradition distinguishes between God's revealed instruction disclosed preeminently in scripture (the written Torah) and the subsequent interpretive tradition of that revelation (oral Torah, some of which has been compiled in written sources like the Mishnah, the Gemara, the Talmud, etc.).
<b>Two-Source Hypothesis</b>	The theory that the authors of Matthew and Luke used two shared sources for their gospels, the Gospel of Mark and "Q" (sayings of Jesus), in addition to their own unique material. The theory is one way of accounting for the synoptic problem.
<b>zealot</b>	A Jew committed to rebellion and guerrilla warfare or terrorist activity against the Romans, c.63 B.C.E.–70 C.E.