



T Terms used in the study of
THE GOSPELS

Terms Used in the Study of the Gospels

Some of the definitions are taken or adapted from Donald T. Kauffman, *The Dictionary of Religious Terms*, Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1967.

Alexandrian Text – the text shared by a family of very early manuscripts thought by many scholars to have originated in Alexandria, Egypt, and very valuable for restoring the original text of the New Testament. Leading Alexandrian manuscripts include Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲭ).

Apocalyptic – strong emphasis on the end of the world, the conflict between good and evil and widespread disasters as signs of the end Apocrypha— writings accepted as scripture by Roman Catholics but not by Jews or Protestants: includes such books as Esdras, Maccabees, Baruch, and Tobit.

Apothegms – short instructive sayings, usually introduced by a narrative.

Aramaic – a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew that was the native language of Jesus and the language shared by most people in the eastern half of the ancient Roman Empire. The few Aramaic

Codex Sinaiticus
(now in British Library)



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words remaining in the text of the gospel accounts (e.g., *talitha kumi*, *ephphatha*, *rabboni*, and *eloi, eloi, lama sabakhthani*) demonstrate that this was a language that Jesus routinely spoke.

Byzantine Text – the text shared by the overwhelming majority of manuscripts thought by most scholars to be relatively late and inferior to the earlier manuscripts in the Alexandrian, Western, and Caesarean families. Its leading manuscripts are Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C). Also called the "Syrian Text," the "Antiochian Text," the "Koiné Text," the "Textus Receptus," and the "Majority Text."

Caesarean Text – the text shared by a family of early manuscripts thought by some scholars to have originated in Caesarea in Palestine and considered very valuable in restoring the original text of the New Testament. The leading Caesarean manuscript is Codex Koridethi (Θ).

Canon – the list of books recognized as accepted as Holy Scripture.

Canonicity – the question of whether a particular book belongs among those accepted as Holy Scripture.

Christology – the study of the nature and person of Christ.

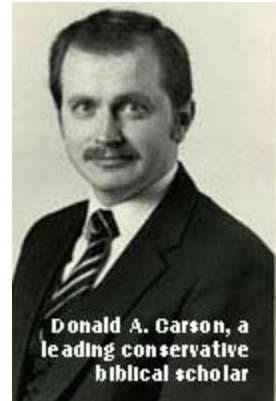
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Chronological Reconstruction – an attempt by modern scholars to create a sequence of events from earliest to latest.

Conflation – a textual variant which appears to be the result of a scribe's combining of two previous variants (e.g., "God and Christ Jesus" as a conflation of the variants "God" and "Christ Jesus"). Conflation is strong evidence of a relatively late reading.

Conservative – an approach to the gospel accounts which acknowledges the inspiration of the gospel writers and the miraculous nature of Christ's ministry, but still attempts to place the events recorded within their historical and cultural setting. The conservative approach differs from the fundamentalist approach in that it recognizes the creative role of the gospel writers in conjunction with their inspiration by the Holy Spirit. It differs from the liberal approach in that it affirms the historicity of the documents.

Contradiction – a conflict between two or more passages in which it is impossible for both statements to be true. Careful consideration of context, historical background,



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and author's point of view usually resolves apparent contradictions.

Criterion of Differentiation – a saying or event in the life of Christ is regarded as most likely to be genuine for which no clear parallel exists in contemporary history or religion.

Cultic – relating to the ritual or ceremonial aspects of worship. In Judaism, the cultic practices are those relating to the temple, its priesthood, and its sacrificial system.

Deism – the eighteenth-century philosophy that held that God created the world, but since then has had no contact with it. Deism denies the miraculous.

Dialectic – the method of constructing a philosophy or a concept by building "bridge" between two opposites. The opposites are called "thesis" and "antithesis" and the bridge is called "synthesis."

Discrepancy – a difference between two or more parallel passages. 'Discrepancy' is used by some as strictly synonymous with 'contradiction,' while others use it to describe seeming contradictions that can be resolved.

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Docetism – a second-century heresy that taught during His earthly life, the Christ was wholly divine; he only seemed (Greek: *dokeō*) to be human.

Dogmatic – stubbornly holding to a teaching more because of tradition or a sense of duty than because of understanding or rational explanations.

Ecclesiology – the study of the doctrine of the church.

Eclectic Text – a Greek text created by making judicious choices among the complete range of textual variants, based on applying the principles of both internal and external evidence, rather than a text which slavishly follows the readings of any single

family of manuscripts. Most modern scholars support following an eclectic approach to establishing the text of the New Testament. The most popular current eclectic text is that found in the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* and the latest edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*.