



# Welcome To Basic Christian

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Testifying of God, Heaven and of good things through Jesus Christ  
both now and yet to come!

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## Studying the Four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John how they relate to and correspond with each other

Of first Importance when reading and studying the Four Gospels is to recognize that each Gospel is written to a Specific defined audience and group of people.

### Topics

**Matthew** is written to the Jewish audience.

**Mark** is written to the Roman, action - result oriented person.

**Luke** is written to the Greek, thinking, discerning and understanding person.

**John** is written to the "Born-Again" Christian \*Church member.

Why **Other** additional writings are not in the Bible.

Note: the Church is a short defined period of time encompassing a distinct group of people. The Church began on Sunday the Resurrection day (Easter) when Jesus began to breath His Spirit life into each of His disciples resulting in the "Born-Again" birth of the Christian Church. The Church was not possible prior to the cross and resurrection of Jesus due to the sin nature of us humans and it was only after the cross of Jesus that sin has been paid for and the resurrection made available to us a new sinless life in Jesus. Eventually and likely even soon, the Christian Church will end here on earth when Jesus takes His Church (Christians) up into Heaven in an event called the Rapture of the Church. The Gospel of John is written by John for the general audience of "Born-Again" Christians, those who have the breath of God in them, but after the Church is Raptured into heaven there will still be people here on earth both Jews and Gentiles who need to get to know and understand God through His Bible and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have more and different information than the book of John, information to address the circumstances in the lives of the people who are still left here on earth.

**The Gospels generally, but not always, include the same events but with different information from that event.**

For example if I participated in the event of going to someone's house for lunch and then later I related the event to a person I would relate the information from the lunch event that is relevant to the person that I am talking to. I might talk about the weather, the type and location of the event, about the landscape and about the occupations and hobbies of some of the other guests. Later I might be talking to another person about the same event but relating similar and also unique or different information, information intended for the different audience. I might relay the mood and theme of the lunch, the conversation and what we ate and how it was prepared and displayed. It was the same event but it is the different audience that determines how and what information is relayed.

The differences in the four Gospels is that God is reaching out to all mankind and in reaching out God is confirming that He has created people with different preferences, temperaments and personalities. God is providing the information to the action oriented person and likewise God is providing the information to the thinking and reasoning person. God is not willing that any person should perish and has therefore written four distinct Gospels about His life here on earth in order to reach all of mankind.

## The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel is to be presented to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. Matthew is by most accounts the first Gospel written, written by a Jew for the Jews and it is therefore placed first among the four Gospels.

**The Name Matthew is a Hebrew - Jewish name and means "Gift of God." This Gospel is a Gift from God to Mankind all mankind but with a special interest given to the Jewish audience.**

Matthew a Jewish tax collector and record keeper (Matthew 9:9) wrote his gospel account of Jesus in approximately the year 37 A.D. The gospel of Matthew is highly regarded as the first gospel work to be written and then widely distributed throughout the early Christian Church. The Bible's New Testament book of "James" written approximately 45 A.D. by James who was the first Church leader in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17, 21:18), is considered to be the first Church document written that is in the New Testament Bible but separate from the gospel narratives. James is a half brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3) and James' full brother Jude [Judah-Judas] (Jude 1:1) would later write the Bible's book of "Jude" in about 65 A.D. The book of "Jude" itself is considered to be a reply to the Apostle Peter's second letter "2<sup>nd</sup> Peter" that the Apostle Peter wrote and had distributed to the early Church also in about the year of 65 .A.D.

### What is uniquely Jewish about the Gospel of Matthew?

The first miracle that God performs in the gospel of Matthew is to cleanse a Leper, **Matthew 8:3**. This miracle is special and unique to the Jews in that the Old Testament Laws of Moses revealed that Leprosy is a symbol of uncleanness meaning sin. An unclean person is not allowed into the presence of God and all people are unclean due to our sin nature. This first Miracle in the Gospel of Matthew showed the Jews that Jesus came to make a person clean from sin and in doing so to reunite the cleansed man with the Holy God. The first miracle in the Gospel of Mark, **Mark 1:25,26** and Luke, **Luke 4:35** is to cast out a demon from a tormented person and the first miracle in the gospel of John, **John 2:9,11** is to turn the water into wine representing the "Born-Again" position of the Christian.

Different information given in the different Gospels to reach and relate to the different audiences that the Gospels are intended to reach.

The Gospel of Mathew gives even more attention into the fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies to confirm to the Jewish audience that Jesus is indeed the fulfillment of the Old Testament that the Prophets of old spoke so many times about.

The Gospel of Matthew pays special attention to the referencing of "Two" witnesses or persons to fulfill the Old Testament requirement that for an event to be confirmed and established it needs to be

witnessed by two eye witnesses. The gentile does not have the custom or commandment from God to need the two witness to substantiate the event so often in the other Gospels they only reference one of the two or one of the group.

The Gospel of Matthew in keeping with Jewish custom refrains from directly mentioning the "name" of God. Even in modern Jewish writing God is written as G-d out of reverence for God, the name is not completely written acknowledging that man does not completely know or understand God. The Gospel of Matthew therefore usually uses the title "the Kingdom of Heaven" while the other Gospels more likely refer to "the Kingdom of God" it is the same kingdom yet two different ways to respectfully address the same kingdom.

In the Gospel of **Matthew 5:1** Jesus went up to a Mountain to give the sermon on the mount to His people. This is important to the Jews because God (Jesus) speaks from the Mountain top. Moses went to the Top of Mt. Sinai to have God speak to him and likewise the Jewish audience went to the mountain top to hear God (Jesus) speak to them. This is signifying that Jesus is the same voice that spoke to Moses and gave the Ten Commandments so many years ago on Mt. Sinai. In the Gospel of **Luke 6:17** another similar message is given but this time it includes Gentiles and this time it is upon an open "plain" and not on a Mountain top because to the Gentile, Kingdoms are built and created on the vast wide open plains of opportunity and not the confines of a Mountain top.

Three of the Gospels reveal the parable of the "Sower" as given by Jesus at various times. **Matthew 13:4** records the returns of the parable as diminishing .. **and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold**. To the Jewish audience it would be important for them to know that Jesus was foretelling the coming Gentile nature of the original all Jewish Christian Church. The Gospel of **Mark 4:8** .. **and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred**. Mark records for the Roman - Action oriented person the exponential growth that the general Christian Church will enjoy throughout it's existence. The Gospel of **Luke 8:8** .. **and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold** .. Luke the detailed physician is revealing and confirming that all the fruit of the Church is 100% Christian whether the individual began of either the Jewish or from a Gentile origin. The **Gospel of John** in focusing in on a the "Born Again" person does not present the "Parable" material as much but instead focuses more on an actual Spiritual relationship with Jesus.

Again ALL of the Scriptures of the Bible are given for all mankind to come to a fuller understanding and knowledge in a relationship with God. These are just a few of the many examples of how the Gospel of Matthew is given by God with the primary focus being the Jewish audience but not excluding any audience.

## The Gospel of Mark

**Mark is a Roman name and means "hammer" a building tool of action and accomplishment.**

The Gospel of Mark bears the name of Mark a young man who was present during some of the events of the Gospels. It is thought to be Mark's parents house that Jesus and the disciples ate the Passover - Communion supper at and when they left for the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed by Judas, Mark followed and was among those that fled from the temple guards that arrested Jesus that eventful night in the garden of Gethsemane. Mark records the event in **Mark 14:51-52 And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.**

Apart from the verses just mentioned Mark did not write-author the Gospel of Mark that bears his name. The Gospel of Mark is actually the Teachings and Recollections of the Apostle Peter. Mark took notes during Peter's teachings and Mark assembled them into the book that now has his name. This is only note worthy in that the personality of the book of Mark is Peter's and not Mark's. Peter is the man of action it is Peter that stepped out into the stormy sea it was Peter that took action and drew the sword in the Garden of Gethsemane. Mark was not quite the man of action that Peter was, it was Mark that departed from that first Missionary trip with his uncle Barnabas and the Apostle Paul, but it is Mark that precisely and accurately recorded the words and teachings of Peter and assembled them into the Gospel document that we now have today.

Mark was originally a member of the Church in Jerusalem and departed with Paul and Barnabas to go with them to Antioch.

Acts 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul (Paul) returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry (bringing finances and supplies from the Church at Antioch to the Church in Jerusalem to prepare for the coming famine prophesied by Agabus), and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

The gospel of Mark is for the person of action the results and events oriented person. The common words and themes of Mark being, immediately, and straightaway, and it came to pass, all action and event words given to lead and direct people of action.

## The Gospel of Luke

**Luke is a Greek name and means "illuminate" to enlighten, to shed light on an item or subject.**

The Gospel of Luke was written by Luke a Physician a Doctor a man of attention and detail. The Gospel of Luke is for the thinker it is for the planner and for the person who considers all of the options and needs all of the information to make their decisions.

Luke diligently and faithfully researches and records the information of the events surrounding Jesus starting with the prophecies foretelling of the need for and of the coming birth of the Christ/Messiah Jesus all the way until the return of Jesus back into heaven 40 days after His glorious resurrection.

Luke became a travel companion on the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and it is from his time and journeys spent with the Apostle Paul that Luke records, researches and writes out the events that

are the Gospel of Luke and also the book of Acts. Luke most likely joined the Apostle Paul in the region of Troas while Paul and Timothy were on route to Philippi **Acts 16:11** as it is in that verse that the book of acts becomes a first person narration including the experiences of Luke.

Luke uses the actual records and firsthand individual eyewitness accounts in the writings of his gospel and in the compilation of the book of Acts. For instance in Jerusalem when the Apostle Paul was rescued by the Roman guards from an attacking mob and later sent to court over the matter, the Roman officer in charge who rescued the Apostle Paul wrote a letter of the events to send along with the Roman soldiers to the hearing regarding the Apostle Paul. Luke then records the actual letter into the book of Acts in **Acts 23:25-30**. Likewise while Luke is in Jerusalem he has access to most of the disciples including Mary herself and Luke records what is very likely an interview with Mary in regards to her account of the events of the virgin conception and virgin birth of Jesus **Luke 1:26-2:52** including Mary's "Song of Praise" called the "Magnificant" in **Luke 1:46-55**. Also in some form or manner Luke had access to the Jewish temple birth genealogy scrolls kept in the Jewish Temple that Luke would then make available in his genealogy of Mary & Jesus in **Luke 3:23-38**.

It is on the journeys and finally while in Jerusalem with the Apostle Paul that Luke has access to virtually every single disciple and Apostle of Jesus regarding the virgin birth, life, teaching, ministry, cross, resurrection and all of the events of Jesus' life that Luke would research and write out as his Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke would instantly become valued among the Church in Jerusalem and throughout the Christian Churches so much so that in the Bible's Second Corinthians **2 Corinthians 8:18** the Apostle Paul refers to Luke as "**the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the Churches;**

Luke writes in the Greek style of structure, balance, and order. It is explained what is going to happen then it happens.

Luke 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect (complete) understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke 4:18,19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me (Jesus), because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 7:21 and in that same hour He (Jesus) cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight.

## The Gospel of John

The name of John means Grace, God's grace for mankind.

The Gospel of John is written by John one of the first and earliest followers of Jesus. In fact the disciple John was actually originally a follower of John the Baptist and was in attendance while John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing along the Jordan river and it is at the testimony of John the Baptist who identified the witness of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus and proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ that John and another disciple (Andrew the brother of Peter) both began to follow Jesus **John 1:35-40**.

John is one of the earliest followers of Jesus, he was likely present with John the Baptist at the Baptizing of Jesus when the voice from Heaven was heard declaring Jesus to be the Son of God while the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven in the form of a dove and remained on Jesus. The next day John and Andrew both became followers of Jesus. A short time later Jesus invited John and John's brother James to both follow Jesus as Apostles along with the two brothers Andrew and Peter becoming four of the original 12 Apostles of Jesus. John was present at all or almost all of the events, teachings and miracles of Jesus up to and including the cross **John 19:25-27**, and resurrection of Jesus giving us another complete firsthand account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

The Gospel of John is uniquely written to the "Born-Again" Christian. In fact the Gospel of John is the only Gospel to mention the word "Born-Again" **John 3:7**.

The Gospel of John has a decidedly Spiritual nature compared to the other three Gospels. The Gospel of John repeatedly informs the reader regarding the knowledge and of an understanding in the giving of the Holy Spirit by God and for the required nature of a Spiritual relationship in having a relationship with God.

John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

The disciple John who was an eyewitness to the events regarding the crucifixion of Jesus records only the mention of Jesus carrying His own cross **John 19:17** and does not mention Simon of Cyrene who at one point carried the wooden cross for Jesus. John in reporting on only the activities of Jesus is enlightening us into the facet of the Spiritual and Emotional (soul) burden that Jesus and Jesus alone carried to His crucifixion. It is one thing to physically assist Jesus in carrying the wooden cross but it is an entirely different burden for Jesus to carry as He is the one to die on the cross. It is the Spiritual burden and many other Spiritual truths that John is conveying to us in his glorious Gospel of John written to the believing Christian audience. A Gospel written in order that an already believing Christian will indeed become an even more deeply rooted and grounded Christian into the Spiritual Truths and understandings of a Spiritual relationship with God in Christ Jesus.

Just as unique as what is in the Gospel of John is what is Not in the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John and the three Epistles of John completely leave out any indication or reference to the end time "Great Tribulation" time period. This is very significant that John did not include any "Great Tribulation" information into any of his writings to the Church. I think that it can likely be concluded that end time "Great Tribulation" information is not relevant for the Church as the Church is not going to be here on

earth during these coming events but has been Raptured into Heaven and therefore John did not write about it to the Church. Let's continue to look at this, the definitive End Time teaching in the Bible is the "Mt Olivet Discourse" **Matthew 24:3-25:46** given by Jesus and Mark tells us that Peter, James, Andrew and John each asked questions of Jesus yet John went on to omit all of the end time teachings from His Gospel, while Matthew, Mark and Luke included it and keeping in mind that the same John wrote the Book of Revelation the other definitive "End Time" discourse.

## Why other writings are not included

**Regarding other writings that are not included as Gospels or anywhere in the Bible.**

In regards to the four Gospels of the Bible there are other additional writings and other accounts about Jesus not included in the Bible. For instance there is a letter considered by some including some of the early Church Fathers to be written by Pontius Pilate to the Roman Government in Rome regarding his first hand account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus including interviews with the Roman soldiers who were placed guarding the tomb of Jesus and their experience during the Resurrection of Jesus from the sealed tomb while they were guarding it.

The reasons other writings are not included varies but mainly centers on a couple of reasons. First much of what is today in modern times considered extra biblical writings actually did not exist during the times of the Apostles and disciples but over the 2,000 years since have come into existence as easily recognizable forgeries. These are documents with a slant and with an agenda and not coming from credible Church sources therefore would never be intended to be included among the Bible.

Interestingly the Jewish observance has always regarded the first five books of the Old Testament the "Torah" to be special and in accordance with this belief the Bible's Book of Psalms originally used to be five individual books corresponding to one each of the five Torah books. Today the five Psalm books have been combined into the one long Book of Psalms. In keeping with the Jewish custom in the Synagogues and in some of the Jewish homes they displayed the Torah in a "Torah cabinet" a cabinet made of wood and containing five compartments. One compartment for each of the first five books (scrolls) of the Old Testament consisting of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Likewise very early the Christian Church, which was originally entirely Jewish, adapted the custom and had new identical Torah cabinets built with the same five compartments and placed the new cabinets right alongside in companionship with the existing Torah cabinets and inserted the first five books (scrolls) of the New Testament inside of the new cabinets. The New Testament books being the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the book of Acts. Intending that very early on the first Christians and the early Church separated out these documents and maintained them as our "Christian Torah" in prominence and recognition.

Really do the vast amount of difference in inspiration regarding the existing Bible documents and any other document ever written by man, never has there been any serious indication throughout Church history that any other writings should be added to the Bible's New Testament specifically regarding the Gospels. Instead of a desire to add additional books to the Bible the challenge to the Bible historically

has been in the form of people wanting to remove books from the Bible most notably the book of Revelation.

Other documents like the letter from Pontius Pilate although interesting also lack the accountability of authenticity and lack insight into the teachings and perspective of Jesus and therefore remain outside of the Bible. The Bible therefore remains exclusive in content to the Revealed nature and plan of God, as God has revealed Himself and His plan, through His Holy Prophets and Apostles, to all of mankind.

It really is evident that the four Gospels have been precisely crafted and molded by the Holy Spirit to deliver information as separate packets predominately to separate audiences yet relevant and meaningful to all of mankind.

God Bless You,  
David Anson Brown

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## Articles

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### **Polycarp - A Father of the Christian Church (70 A.D. - 155 A.D.)**

Polycarp is a celebrated figure in the history of Christianity. A direct pupil of the apostle John, Polycarp lived between 70 and 155 A.D., connecting him to both the biblical apostles and the age of the early church fathers. Several ancient sources document the contributions of Polycarp to Christianity, including his letters written to the church at Philippi, in which he encourages the members to remain strong in their faith and to flee from materialism. He also instructs the members in the proper handling of financial dishonesty that was creeping into the church. ... Polycarp - A Martyr for Truth: Polycarp's greatest contribution to Christianity may be his martyred death. His martyrdom stands as one of the most well documented events of antiquity. The emperors of Rome had unleashed bitter attacks against the Christians during this period, and members of the early church recorded many of the persecutions and deaths. [\[article link\]](#)

### **Irenaeus of Lyons - Early Church Father, Theologian & Historian (115 A.D. - 202 A.D)**

Relatively little is known of the life of Irenaeus. As a boy he had, as he delighted to point out, listened to the sermons of the great bishop and martyr, Polycarp (70 A.D. - 155 A.D.) of Smyrna, who was regarded as a disciple of the apostles themselves. ... Regarding the New Testament canon (standard), one finds in "Adversus Haereses" (by Irenaeus written in 180 A.D.) quotations from all the books of the New Testament with the exception of: Philemon, II Peter, III John, and Jude. ... According to the lists in [Hoh], Irenaeus, in Adversus Haereses, quotes 626 times from all 4 Gospels. Irenaeus was especially insistent that there are exactly 4 Gospels. [\[article link\]](#)

**Which Language Did Jesus Speak – Aramaic or Hebrew? - There is no ground for assuming that Jesus did not speak Hebrew; and when we are told (Acts 21:40) that [Apostle] Paul spoke Hebrew [to the crowd in Jerusalem], we should take this piece of information at face value"**

A Final Witness: In addition to the witnesses of the New Testament itself, archaeology, and linguistic scholarship, we also have that of the Church Fathers. Of them, Jean Carmignac says, "Eight early writers assert that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew: altogether there are over thirty formal assertions that this was so in the works of Papias, Hegesippus, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius and Jerome". The most important of these testimonies is that of Papias, a second century Church father: "Matthew recorded in the Hebrew language the words [of Jesus], and everyone interpreted them as he is able". Dr. Brad Young sums up the importance of considering the Jewish background of Jesus' life and teachings: "...without consideration of the Jewish parallels, the Gospels will forever be filtered through Western culture, and Jesus will be completely missed or greatly misunderstood...The



world...including church leaders and outstanding scholars, often has missed Jesus. The original Jewish environment of his life promises to reveal a new vision of Jesus and his message" (Jesus the Jewish Theologian, p. xxxvi). [\[article link\]](#)

**Which Old Testament text did Jesus prefer and quote from? - Jesus quoted from 24 different Old Testament books - The New Testament as a whole quotes from 34 books of the Old Testament Books - None of the apocryphal books were ever quoted in the New Testament - Not even once!**

Jesus quoted from 24 different Old Testament books. The New Testament as a whole quotes from 34 books of the Old Testament Books. These 5 books are never quoted in the New Testament: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. It is not significant that these books: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, were never quoted in the New Testament, because they were part of "collections" of Old Testament books. Since other books within the same collection were quoted, this shows them too to be inspired. The New Testament never quotes from the any of the apocryphal books written between 400 - 200 BC. What is significant here is that NONE of the books within the "apocryphal collection" are every quoted. So the Catholic argument that "the apocryphal books cannot be rejected as uninspired on the basis that they are never quoted from in the New Testament because Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon are also never quoted in the New Testament, and we all accept them as inspired." The rebuttal to this Catholic argument is that "Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther" were always included in the "history collection" of Jewish books and "Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon" were always included in the "poetry collection". By quoting one book from the collection, it verifies the entire collection. None of the apocryphal books were ever quoted in the New Testament. Not even once! This proves the Catholic and Orthodox apologists wrong when they try to defend the apocrypha in the Bible. [\[article link\]](#)

### **Expert doubts 'Gospel of Judas' revelation**

NEW YORK - An expert on ancient Egyptian texts is predicting that the Gospel of Judas- a manuscript from early Christian times that's nearing release amid widespread interest from scholars - will be a dud in terms of learning anything new about Judas. ... James M. Robinson, America's leading expert on such ancient religious texts from Egypt, predicts in a new book that the text won't offer any insights into the disciple who betrayed Jesus. His reason: While it's old, it's not old enough. "Does it go back to Judas? No," Robinson told The Associated Press on Thursday. [\[article link\]](#)

**\*John 13:27** tells us that Judas became demon possessed, actually possessed by Satan himself. Clearly Judas in betraying Jesus was following the plans of Satan and not the plans-teachings of Jesus. The remaining fact that Judas committed suicide practically within minutes of betraying Jesus leaves little doubt that no 'Gospel of Judas' was ever written.

**Smithsonian Puts Mysterious Crystal Skull on Display - Nonetheless, the giant crystal skull that mysteriously arrived at the Smithsonian 16 years ago is out of its locked cabinet in Walsh's office and will be on public view until Sept. 1 - Studying this skull led Walsh to extend her investigation into crystal skulls in other museums and to conclude that all are fakes, made in the 19th and 20th centuries - seems to have been made between 1950 and 1960 - Indeed, no crystal skulls have ever been found at an archaeological site**

WASHINGTON - Some mysteries are such fun you almost don't want to know the truth. That may help explain why people are fascinated with crystal skulls. Happy to share the spotlight with the latest Indiana Jones movie, the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History is putting its crystal skull on display starting Thursday. "People like to believe in something greater than themselves," Smithsonian anthropologist Jane MacLaren Walsh said, and crystal skulls are mysterious and beautiful. The skulls "are a fascinating example of artifacts that have made their way into museums with no scientific evidence to prove their rumored pre-Columbian origins," she added. ... Crystals carved into the shape of a human skull fed the 19th century's need for drama and mystery and its fascination with death. They were supposed to be the creation of ancient Mesoamericans — Aztecs, Mixtecs, Toltecs, perhaps Maya. ... The skulls were claimed to represent the art and religion of these peoples. Some even said the skulls had special, even supernatural, powers. Scientists say it ain't so. ... Of the many crystal skulls in museums and private collections around the world, the Smithsonian's is one of the largest, at 10 inches high and weighing 30 pounds. It was mailed to the museum anonymously, accompanied by a note claiming it was of Aztec origin. It's isn't, Walsh said. The skulls were carved from blocks of quartz - sometimes called rock crystal - and show the marks of modern carving tools. That means they were not made before the 19th century. The Smithsonian one, she said, seems to have been made between 1950 and 1960. Indeed, no crystal skulls have ever been found at an archaeological site. [\[article link\]](#)

Possibly the World's Oldest Christian Church Unearthed in Northern Jordan - dating from AD 33 to AD 70 - the Rihab area of Jordan has been "rich in unique archaeological sites" with some 30 churches uncovered there so far {A wonderful ancient Church discovery! The original and oldest Christian Church was in Jerusalem. The "Upper Room" where the disciples received the "Born Again" Spirit from Jesus (John 20:22) then Christianity spread out from Jerusalem.} (Jordan)-In what is being hailed as an "important milestone for Christians all around the world," an ancient cave was discovered recently, beneath St. Georgeous Church in Jordan. Archaeologist Abdul Qader Hussan, head of the Rihab Center for Archaeological Studies, said the find was "amazing," stating that they "uncovered what we believe to be the first church in the world, dating from AD 33 to AD 70." According to the report, the Rihab area of Jordan has been "rich in unique archaeological sites" with some 30 churches uncovered there so far. ... "We have evidence to believe this church sheltered the early Christians: the 70 disciples of Jesus Christ," explained Hussan, citing a mosaic inscription on the floor of St. Georgeous Church that reads: "the 70 beloved by God and Divine." [\[article link\]](#)

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## Church Creeds

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The Apostles' Creed - The Bible itself contains brief creed-like statements (1 Cor. 8:6; 15:3-4; 1 Tim. 3:16) - The early church leaders also wrote short creeds, perhaps as baptism ceremonies - These eventually were recited by congregations in their worship services

Writing in Greek somewhere around the year 200 A. D., Irenaeus (born 115 A.D. - died 202 A.D.) describes a creed that has some similarities to the Apostles' Creed, and may have been a precursor. He presented his creed not as something new, but as something the church had been using for a long time. He lived in what is now France, but had grown up in Asia Minor, where he had been taught by Polycarp, a student of the apostle John. An early Latin version of the Creed is in the writings of Tertullian, from North Africa, about the year 220. About a century later, Marcellus, from Asia Minor, shared a similar creed. In A.D. 390, after study in Rome, Egypt and Palestine, Rufinus had a similar creed in northern Italy. Augustine, bishop in North Africa in 400, had a nearly identical creed, and it was apparently standard in Gaul in 650, even before Charlemagne. The text accepted today is identical to what was written in 750 by Pirminius, who lived in what is now Switzerland. This history shows that churches in many different regions were involved in the development of the Apostles' Creed. As churches in one part of the empire communicated with others, their short list of doctrines became standardized. [\[article link\]](#)

Ecumenical Christian Creeds - The Apostles' Creed - The first creeds of the Christian Church are called ecumenical creeds because they were decided upon in church councils that represented the entire church at the time before the church permanently spilt into Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman) factions in AD 1054 - Later creeds reflect the diversity of the Christian tradition and tend to become more specialized expressions of particular doctrines for various groups

The Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. [\[article link\]](#)

Creeds & Statements of Faith: Nicene Creed - The Nicene Creed is the only creed accepted by all three major branches of Christendom: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant - It was adopted by a general Council of the entire Church (Ecumenical) in 325 A.D. and revised by a general council of the entire Church in 381 A.D. {The Christian Church has always been "Ecumenical" (whole-house) it is the modern Ecumenical movement that is trying to lead out of Christianity and into other religions.}

The Nicene Creed: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of

God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made. Who, for us all for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy universal and apostolic (Christian) Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen. [\[article link\]](#)

**THE NICENE CREED - MODERN WORDING - The Nicene Creed is the most widely accepted and used brief statements of the Christian Faith - Many groups that do not have a tradition of using it in their services nevertheless are committed to the doctrines it teaches - Someone may ask, "What about the Apostles' Creed?" Traditionally, in the West, the Apostles' Creed is used at Baptisms, and the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist (aka the Mass, the Liturgy, the Lord's Supper, or the Holy Communion) - The East uses only the Nicene Creed)**

THE NICENE CREED - MODERN WORDING: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN. [\[article link\]](#)

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