



The Fourfold Gospel: A Theological Reading of the New Testament Portraits of Jesus

By Francis Watson

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This groundbreaking approach to the study of the fourfold gospel offers a challenging alternative to prevailing assumptions about the creation of the gospels and their portraits of Jesus. How and why does it matter that we have these four gospels? Why were they placed alongside one another as four parallel yet diverse retellings of the same story?

Francis Watson, widely regarded as one of the foremost New Testament scholars of our time, explains that the four gospels were chosen to give a portrait of Jesus. He explores the significance of the fourfold gospel's plural form for those who constructed it and for later Christian communities, showing that in its plurality it bears definitive witness to what God has done in Jesus Christ. Watson focuses on reading the gospels as a group rather than in isolation and explains that the fourfold gospel is greater than, and other than, the sum of its individual parts. Interweaving historical, exegetical, and theological perspectives, this book is accessibly written for students and pastors but is also of interest to professors and scholars.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

This groundbreaking approach to the study of the fourfold gospel offers a challenging alternative to prevailing assumptions about the creation of the gospels and their portraits of Jesus. How and why does it matter that we have these four gospels? Why were they placed alongside one another as four parallel yet diverse retellings of the same story?

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From the Back Cover

"*The Fourfold Gospel* displays all the virtues that readers have come to expect from one of the finest biblical interpreters of our day: depth and breadth of learning, exegetical prowess, clarity of argument, and sure theological judgment, all in the service of the truth of the gospel."

--**John Webster**, Professor of Divinity, St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews

"What does it mean, theologically speaking, that we have four canonical gospels? Drawing on sources as diverse as Ezekiel's vision and Eusebius's canons, Francis Watson's reflection on this question is as astonishingly fresh as it is deeply grounded in the church's traditions. Not for specialists only, *The Fourfold Gospel* is rich and richly rewarding."

--**Beverly Roberts Gaventa**, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Baylor University

"The contributions of Francis Watson are always innovative and incisive, and this book, which will win a large readership, is no exception. With his unrivaled ability to combine expert historical knowledge with interpretive acuity, he is like the ideal scribe in Matthew, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

--**Dale C. Allison Jr.**, Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary

"The old cliché about John's gospel is that it is like a sea in which a child may paddle or an elephant swim. The same could be said of this marvelous book, which makes an excellent introductory book for students while also brimming with both astute historical detective work and elegant and thoughtful (and sometimes moving) exegesis that is illuminating for the expert."

--**Simon Gathercole**, Reader in New Testament, University of Cambridge; Fellow and Director of Studies in Theology, Fitzwilliam College

About the Author

Francis Watson (PhD, University of Oxford) is Research Chair in Biblical Interpretation at Durham

University in Durham, England. He previously taught at the University of Aberdeen and at King's College London. Among his numerous works are the critically acclaimed *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*; *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective*; and *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*.

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