

EQUIPPED



Vol. 1
No. 4

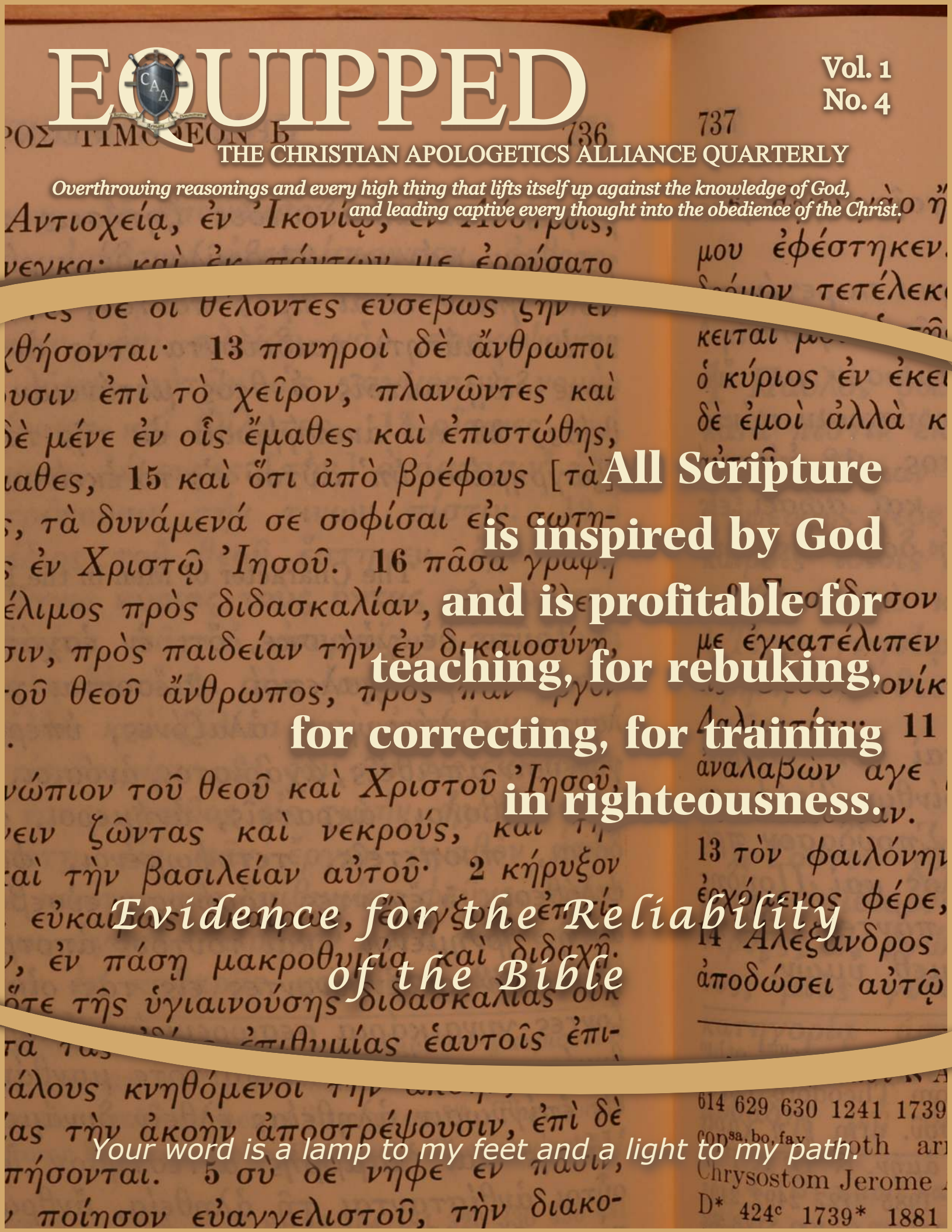
THE CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE QUARTERLY

Overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.

**All Scripture
is inspired by God
and is profitable for
teaching, for rebuking,
for correcting, for training
in righteousness.**

**Evidence for the Reliability
of the Bible**

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.



CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE

answering seekers, equipping Christians, & demonstrating the truth of the Christian worldview

ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΛΟΣΣΑΕΙΣ

700

Statement of Faith



We affirm that there is only one, Triune God,
existing eternally in three distinct persons:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We affirm that God is the all-powerful Creator.

We affirm that Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the only Son of God,
fully God and fully man, yet one person.

He became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary,
lived a perfect and sinless life,
was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

suffered death for the forgiveness of our sins, and was buried.

On the third day he bodily 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 look forward to the resurrection of the dead.

There is no other name by which we may be saved.¹

We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life,
who is to be worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son.

We believe the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and
we affirm that they are historically trustworthy and doctrinally authoritative.²

We affirm that there is one, holy, universal, and apostolic church.³

We affirm the Christian worldview encourages a holy and joyful renewal of each individual and the
whole universe. We therefore promote the biblical convictions:

*that the love of our neighbors and the alleviation of human suffering in all its forms is integral to
Christian discipleship,

*that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, and
that marriage is the only legitimate context for sexual activity,

*that all human beings have a right to life, including those not yet born,⁴

*that we are called to participate in the restoration of all things, and

*that the Christian Apologetics Alliance is ultimately meant to serve the church and our family in
Christ, as one part of God's mission to evangelize and disciple all people to maturity in Christ.⁵

Bedrock

[bed-rok]: any firm foundation or basis; the fundamental principles

Have you noticed lately an increase in instances when even friends that are usually quiet on controversial issues, now confidently yet carefully voice their well-measured thoughts on topics like same sex marriage or transgenderism? I know I have. There seems to be a growing and genuine interest in making sure everyone on all sides knows where each other stands. We all seem to be bracing ourselves for inevitable social impact, don't we?

The U.S. Supreme Court [has delivered their decision](#) (please read) on the constitutionality of same sex marriage bans. How should U.S. Christians who oppose same sex marriage handle ourselves in light of the Court's ruling? In fact, how should Christians handle ourselves in any situation when the world's values run up against the goodness of God?

Let's continually remind each other of these exhortations from **1 Peter 3:15**, which Peter wrote to Christians who were being opposed by the culture:

- 1. But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.** Don't fear the world or seek its approval. As Augustine proclaimed, and as Martin Luther King, Jr. echoed [from a Birmingham jail](#), "An unjust law is no law at all." Though we must be willing to accept the consequences, we are only truly obligated to our king (Matthew 6:33, Luke 17:21). Jesus' kingdom comes near when we love others with the same Golden Rule love he demonstrated in switching perspectives with us on the cross while we were still lost. Against such things there can be no true law.

30% of the U.S. are decidedly not Christians, but they are still U.S. citizens. For every star on the U.S. flag, we have aborted more than one million babies. No, the U.S. is not a Christian nation, nor do Christians need the backing of the state. Even if we have state backing, we are not to "Lord it over

people" (Matthew 20:25-26), which is what saying, "The U.S. is a Christian nation," sure sounds like, isn't it? It reminds me of the disciples debating who would be first in the kingdom, but we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. If the last will be first, shouldn't we stop worrying about owning the U.S. as ours, and store up treasure that will never pass away?

- 2. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** When we fearlessly bless our friends and neighbors in dialogue about [why we oppose same sex marriage](#), we need to be completely transparent about the slavery and false hope God rescued us out of, and the better Yes he satisfies us with in its place.
- 3. But do this with gentleness and respect.** Certainly, we must vote our conscience. However, when there is no vote or we lose the vote, we need to give to Caesar what is Caesar's ([Mark 12:17](#)), and be the church when the people oppose us ([Acts 4:32](#)). Rather than repay evil with evil, or insult with insult, we need to bless (1 Peter 3:9) in gentle and respectful dialogue and other positive behaviors, or remain silent (Matthew 26:63).

Let's hold each other to this:

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

- 1 Peter 3:15

Maryann Spikes, President of the Alliance

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www.christianapologeticsalliance.com

June 2015

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IN NECESSARIIS UNITAS, IN DUBIIS LIBERTAS, IN OMNIBUS CARITAS. In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity. The Christian Apologetics Alliance (CAA) is united in our Statement of Faith. The CAA does not, as an organization, have positions on many of the doctrinal or theological debates that take place within the church. Our primary concern is to promote the gracious, rational defense of the central claims of Christianity and the critique of opposing systems of thought. The CAA community is a diverse one of many denominations. Blog entries made by individual authors reflect the views of the author and not necessarily the view of other CAA authors, or the official position of the Christian Apologetics Alliance group at large.

Vestibule

[ves-tuh-byool]: a passage, hall, or antechamber between the outer door and the interior

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

—Acts 17:11

"Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem," "I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles."

"They added nothing to my message."

—Galatians 2:1, 2, 6 (NIV)

The first time I remember playing the telephone game I was about eight years old. Our summer school teacher lined up the students and explained the rules: "I'm going to whisper a message into the ear of the first student. They will then turn around and whisper the message into the ear of the student behind them ... When the last student has received the message I want them to speak the message out-loud. And no talking!" The festivities began, and soon students were snickering and mumbling to one another. In good fashion, the last student blurted out the message, after which the teacher spoke the original message (she had it written down). Surprise! There was little resemblance to the original message.

The purpose of this game, depending on the group with which you're playing, is the accurate transmission of an *oral* message.

An analogy skeptics use while claiming the Bible is unreliable is, well, the telephone game. It's a bad analogy. Why? The Biblical manuscripts are a written message, not an oral message. So? Here are the rules when playing the telephone game with pen and paper, over 2000 years:

RULE #1: There are many classrooms (provinces), and each has many people (scribes). Each classroom will be sent (messenger) a copy of the message (manuscript), and each person will copy (transcribe) the message,

RULE #2: Copies can be used for copying,

RULE #3: At any point during copying, anyone can look at any existing (extant) message regardless of the classroom in which it resides. (PS: Feel free to memorize the message if you like),

RULE #4: After the message has been copied, someone (another scribe) will check the work before the message is passed to the next person,

RULE #5: If a heretofore unknown copy of the message is found (archaeology), it becomes available for use under Rule #2.

We have tens of thousands of Biblical manuscripts, and new manuscripts are found all the time. Not only this, but we have letters, and commentaries, and liturgies, and writings dating back to the second century (100's AD). From these alone we can reconstruct nearly the entire text of the Bible. The message has been checked. It has been transmitted accurately.

The next time someone raises the telephone game objection, ask *them* to explain the rules. Then, send them:

Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

Glen Richmond
Editor, EQUIPPED

CHRISTIAN
APOLOGETICS
ALLIANCE



The Reliability of the Bible

—Dr. Timothy McGrew

Who Wrote the Gospels?
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(January 23, 2012)

External Evidence for the Truth of the Gospels
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(February 13, 2012)

Internal Evidence for the Truth of the Gospels
—Dr. Timothy McGrew

Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels (Matthew & Mark)
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(May 21, 2012)

Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels (Luke & John)
—Dr. Timothy McGrew

Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels (Part 1)
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(July 16, 2012)

Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels (Part 2)
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(August 20, 2012)

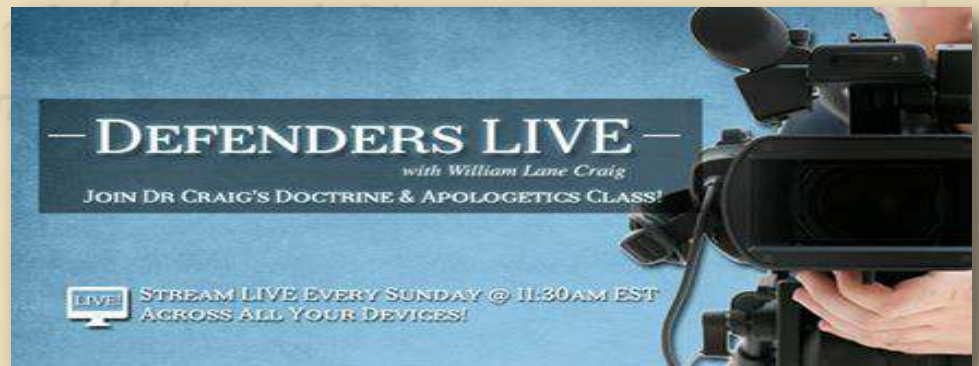
Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels (Part 1)
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(November 25, 2013)

The Gospels and Acts as History
—Dr. Timothy McGrew
(November 7, 2011)

Unbelievable? Conference Panel with Dr. Timothy McGrew
(2014)

Foundations of Christian Doctrine –Dr. William Lane Craig

**Reasonable
Faith
Defenders 3**
(Archived Events)



Defenders is Dr. William Lane Craig's Sunday school class on Christian doctrine and apologetics. Join leading Christian scholar Dr. Craig as he carefully and articulately teaches a comprehensive survey course from the Doctrine of God to the Doctrine of the Last Things, explaining Christian apologetic arguments along the way. [Watch live](#) on Sunday mornings at 11:30 EST or to enjoy archived classes at your convenience.

Go live with Philosopher Dr. William Lane Craig's Defenders Class as he explores Christian doctrine, history, and the systematic defense of the Christian worldview. Get a chance to ask Dr. Craig live questions by creating an account and clicking on the chat window when Defenders is live.

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 4)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(November 30, 2014)*

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 5)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(December 7, 2014)*

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 6)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(December 14, 2014)*

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 7)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(December 21, 2014)*

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 8)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(January 18, 2015)*

*Doctrine of Revelation
(Part 9)
Scriptural Inspiration
–Dr. Craig
(January 25, 2015)*



ORAL TRADITION

Eric Chabot • chab123.wordpress.com

Even though the Christian can always offer certain dates for the Gospels, it should be remembered that there was a gap of time between the ascension of Jesus and when the Gospel authors actually wrote their individual biographies about the life of Jesus. Therefore, there was an oral period where the words and deeds of Jesus were committed to memory by the disciples and transmitted orally. Oral Tradition is the transmission of a teaching or saying from person to person or from generation to generation by word of mouth rather than by the use of writing. The home, the synagogue, and the elementary school was where Jewish people learned how to memorize and recall information such as community prayers.

Given that many skeptics assume the New Testament is biased, they tend to ask for sources that are written about Jesus outside the New Testament. Furthermore, since the request for these sources must be written by non-Christians, this supposedly equates to pure objectivity and no propaganda. Sadly, the demand for this wish list shows the ignorance about the oral world of Jesus. The late Maurice Casey, a non Christian scholar who specialized in early Christianity summarized the importance of the oral world of Jesus:

"The major reasons why all our earliest sources for the Life and Teaching of Jesus are

*Christian is that Jesus was a first-century Jewish prophet who lived in a primarily oral Jewish culture, not a significant politician in the Graeco-Roman world. By contrast, for example, Julius Caesar was an important political and literary figure in the highly literate culture of the Romans. It is therefore natural that he should have written literary works which have survived, and that other surviving literary sources have written about him."*¹

Casey goes onto say:

*"Jesus of Nazareth left no literary works at all, and he had no reason to write any. He lived in a primarily oral culture, except for the sanctity and central importance of its sacred texts, which approximate to our Hebrew Bible. A variety of works now thought of as Apocrypha (e.g. Sirach) or Pseudepigrapha (e.g. 1 Enoch) were held equally sacred by some Jewish people, and could be equally well learnt and repeated by people who did not possess the then difficult skill of writing. Almost all our surviving primary sources about Jesus are Christian because most people who had any interest in writing about him were his followers, and the few relatively early comments by other writers such as Josephus and Tacitus are largely due to special circumstances, such as Jesus' brother Jacob (Jos.Ant .XX,200), or the great fire of Rome (Tac.Annals XI, 44)."*²

¹ Maurice Casey, *Jesus: Evidence and Argument or Mythicist Myths?* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014).

² Ibid.

ORAL TRADITION

As Craig Evans notes, according to the Shema, which all Torah observant Jews were expected to recite daily, parents were to teach their children the Torah (Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; 31:12-13; 2 Chr 17:7-9; Eccl 12:9).³

HOW WOULD JESUS HAVE MADE HIS TEACHING MEMORABLE?

While none of Jesus' adversaries called Jesus a rabbi, Jesus was seen as a rabbi and teacher in the Gospels (Matt. 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17; 10:17, 20; 12:14, 19, 32; Lk. 19:39; Jn. 1:38; 3:2). In the first century A.D. Rabbi ('ny great one") could refer to those religious figures who were in a high position, while later in the third century it became associated with those who had produced rabbinic literature.⁴ There are several terms that can be seen that are part of the rabbinic terminology of that day. As Paul Barnett notes, the disciples of Jesus had "come" to him, "followed after" him, "learned from" him, "taken his yoke upon" them" (Mt. 11:28-30; Mk 1).⁵

Jesus taught in poetic form, employing alliteration, paronomasia, assonance, parallelism, and rhyme. Since over 90 percent of Jesus' teaching was poetic, this would make it simple to memorize.⁶ Also, in some ways Jesus did fit the mold of a rabbi, this doesn't mean he fit the mold of an ordained rabbi

which was more of a formal office that took place a century or more later. The similarities and differences between Jesus as a rabbi and teacher and the rabbis who also taught in his culture are seen here:

1. Jesus taught but not in formal educational settings.
2. Jesus' delivery system was face to face and oral.
3. Jesus modeled how to live as much or more than he stated, "Do this" or "Don't do that."
4. Jesus' teachings were created orally and transmitted orally.
5. Jesus was a passionate guardian of Old Testament law.
6. Jesus explained and expanded on Old Testament law.
7. Jesus' actions could attain the status of commandments in the minds of his followers.
8. God's truth was incarnate in Jesus.
9. Jesus wrote nothing; it was sufficient for this oral text to remain oral.
10. The oral origins of the Gospels are evident within the Gospels.
11. It was not until approximately twenty years after Jesus' public ministry that the first written accounts of his words and deeds were inscribed in the Gospels.⁷

3 Craig Evans and W. H. Brackney, *Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus* (From Biblical Criticism to Biblical Faith (Mercer University Press, 2007), 41-54.

4 John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World World of Scripture* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2013), 105.

5 Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Logic of History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 1997), 138.

6 D. G. Reid, *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament: A One-Volume Compendium Of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2004), 460.

7 Walton and Sandy, 108.



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Interestingly enough, given Jesus had such a high view of the Torah and it was believed that God was incarnate in Jesus, we should heed the words of Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner:

"Since rabbinical documents repeatedly claim that, if you want to know the law, you should not only listen to what the rabbi says but also copy what he does, it follows that, in his person, the rabbi represents and embodies the Torah. God in the Torah revealed God's will and purpose for the world. So God had said what the human being should be. The rabbi was the human being in God's image. That, to be sure, is why (but merely by the way) what the rabbi said about the meaning of Scripture derived from revelation. Collections of the things he said about Scripture constituted compositions integral to the Torah. So in the rabbi, the word of God was made flesh. And out of the union of man and Torah, producing the rabbi as Torah incarnate, was born Judaism, the faith of Torah: the ever present revelation, the always open-canon. For fifteen hundred years, from the time of the first collections of scriptural exegeses to our own day, the enduring context for midrash remained the same: encounter with the living God."⁸

We also see an emphasis on the importance of remembering the words of Jesus:

"Listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you." (Luke 9:44)

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock." (Matthew 7:24)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." (Mark 13:31)

"It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (John 6:63)

"So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:67-68)

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works." (John 14:10)

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:26)

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7)

Even after the ascension of Jesus, the apostles gave their eyewitness testimony to the words of Jesus. It is also important to note the role of how the disciples were active participants in the life of Jesus. They saw the importance of bearing witness to the deeds and sayings of Jesus.

As Bauckham says:

"The sense (not a properly generic one) in which the witnesses of the Holocaust created a new literature of testimony, is much the same sense as that in which the witnesses of the history created the Gospels. Those witnesses understood the imperative to witness to a command of the risen Christ, but the parallel is sufficient to be suggestive. In both cases, the uniqueness required precisely witness as the only means by which the events could be adequately known. In both cases, the

⁸ Jacob Neusner, *Midrash in Context: Exegesis in Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 137.

ORAL TRADITION

exceptionality of the event means that only the testimony of participant witness can give us anything approaching access to the truth of the event."⁹

A COMMON OBJECTION TO ORAL TRADITION: HASN'T MEMORY BEEN SHOWN TO BE VERY UNRELIABLE?

If memory is so unreliable, then much of human existence couldn't be sustained on a daily basis. Memory, along with testimony are some of the things we take for granted in the common concerns of life without being able to give a reason for them. Also, high impact events that have strong emotional involvement can survive accuracy over a long period. As Gregory Boyd and Paul Eddy note, the "memoric skepticism" paradigm can be traced back to the collapse in human knowledge after World War I.¹⁰ This time period that gave rise to the this paradigm is seen in various forms such as individual (F.C. Bartlett); collective/social (Maurice Halbwachs); historiography (Carl Becker); sociology of knowledge (Karl Mannheim); and New Testament studies (Rudolph Bultmann).¹¹ Sociologist Barry Schwartz says: "These men appealed so greatly to the West because their views resonated with the cynicism of the post World War I worldview and ethos: 'the world is not what it seems.'¹²

One thing for sure: high impact events that have strong emotional involvement can survive accuracy over a long period. For example, my sister died in 1973. I was four years old at the time. I can still remember much of the details of the day it happened. Steven Waterhouse summarizes Bauckham's work and the importance of memory:

1. Unique, unusual, unexpected events (like healings, miracles, and exorcisms) are memorable.
2. Events that are personally important and relevant tend toward long term memory (like matters of the Messiah's arrival and eternal destiny in heaven or hell).
3. Events in which one is emotionally involved are memorable (Mark 9:6, 14:72, as in being a participant in a great cause with struggles and opposition).
4. Memories involving vivid imagery are remembered well (Mark 2:4, 4:37-38, 6:39-40, 7:33-34, 9:20, 10:32, 50, 11:14).
5. Memories often include irrelevant and odd details (there were "other boats," Mark 4:36).
6. Reliable memories rarely include precise dates as on July 15 but do include time of day and relationships to seasons and holidays (as in the Gospel of John).
7. The "gist" of a memory (even with details essential to the main point) is more likely to be retained than purely secondary details. (Bauckham's own conclusion is that this explains the variation in the Gospel accounts but unity on the core facts.)
8. Frequent retelling of a story shortly after an event tends to sharpen, not diminish memory. "Frequent recall is an important factor in both retaining memory and retaining it accurately."¹³

In conclusion, as Bauckham says:

"The eyewitnesses who remembered the events of the history of Jesus were remembering inherently very memorable events, unusual events that would have impressed themselves on the memory, events of key significance for those who remembered them, landmark or

⁹ Bauckham, 287.

¹⁰ Gregory Boyd and Paul Eddy, *The Jesus Legend: A Case For The Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Books, 2007), 278.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Barry Schwartz, "Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory" in *Memory, Tradition and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, ed. A Kirkand T. Thatcher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 45-46; cited in Gregory Boyd and Paul Eddy, *The Jesus Legend: A Case For The Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Books, 2007), 278.

¹³ Steven Waterhouse, *Jesus and History, How We Know His Life and Claims* (Amarillo, TX: Westcliff Press, 2009), 86-87.



ORAL TRADITION

life-changing events for them in many cases, and their memories would have been reinforced and stabilized by frequent rehearsal, beginning soon after the event. They did not need to remember – and the Gospels rarely record – merely peripheral aspects of the scene or the event, the aspects of recollective memory that are least reliable. Such details may often have been subject to performative variation in the eyewitnesses' telling of their stories, but the central features of the memory, those that constituted its meaning for those who witnessed and attested it, are likely to have been preserved reliably. We may conclude that the memories of eyewitnesses of the history of Jesus score highly by the criteria for likely reliability that have been established by the psychological study of recollective memory."¹⁴

The Top Three Reasons
the Bible is True
–J. Warner Wallace

The New Testament
Gospels
–J. Warner Wallace

HAPPY 5 YEARS TO THE POACHED EGG!!!

THE POACHED EGG continues to do great things to draw laymen and others to an interest in apologetics. Greg knows how to trigger the "share" instinct behind all the traffic TPE drives back to the sources of easily digestible quotes and articles he features. Greg's website is laid out pot-luck style with creative graphics, and delivers something for every sort of seeker who will land at his site. Greg has a great sense of humor, and is a great encourager, too, always offering positive feedback to bloggers who share their posts on the site. He is proof that apologetics, even as intensely as it is needed, is fun! It has been exciting watching TPE grow, and the whole field of apologetics right along with it as a direct result. We are confident God will use Greg and The Poached Egg to His glory to equip believers and draw doubters into the Kingdom.

Martin Luther King (1929-1968)



Martin Luther King Jr was one of America's most influential civil rights activists. His passionate, but non violent protests, helped to raise awareness of racial inequalities in America, leading to significant political change. Martin Luther King was also an eloquent orator

who captured the imagination and hearts of people, both black and white.

He was born in Atlanta on 15 January 1929. Both his father and grandfather were pastors in an African-American Baptist church. M. Luther King attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, (segregated schooling) and then went to study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and Boston University. During his time at University Martin Luther King became aware of the vast inequality and injustice faced by black Americans; in particular he was influenced by Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent protest. The philosophy of Gandhi tied in with the teachings of his Baptist faith. At the age of 24, King married Coretta Scott, a beautiful and talented young woman. After getting married, King became a priest at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

More about Martin Luther King at [Biography Online](#).

14 Bauckham, 346; cited in Waterhouse, *Jesus and History, How We Know His Life and Claims* (Amarillo, TX: Westcliff Press, 2009), 87.

The Reliability of the Bible

-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Did the Ancient Church Muzzle the Canon?
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Recent Discoveries of New Testament Manuscripts
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

New Testament Bible Reliability
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Is the Bible Reliable?
-Dr. Daniel Wallace
What is Truth Radio

Did the Early Scribes Corrupt the New Testament?
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Is the Bible Accurate?
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Was the Bible Changed?
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Dr. Daniel Wallace and Dr. Bart Ehrman Is the Original New Testament Lost?

The "Orthodox Corruption of Scripture"
-Dr. Daniel Wallace

Textual Criticism
-Dr. Daniel Wallace



FIVE EVIDENCES THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT IS NOT MYTHOLOGY

Joel Furches • examiner.com/christianity-in-baltimore/joel-furches

The practice of “Christian Apologetics” seeks to support the truthfulness of the Christian Worldview with logically and intellectually sound argumentation. As such, it tends to focus most heavily on the subject of origins (how did we get here, what does it mean to be human?), morality (what is “good,” why does evil exist, what is the solution to suffering and evil?), and church history beginning with Christ (evidence for the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the veracity and transmission of the New Testament, and the development of Christian doctrines).

Within this rich mixture of science, history, scholarship, and philosophy, the role and defense of what Christians call the “Old Testament” sometimes takes a dismal back seat to the more immediate concerns of the moment.

In defense of the Christian Apologist, the Old Testament is not a single, monolithic document. Rather, it is a collection of many documents with a rich and complex history, and the questions and concerns that hover around it are such a swarm of controversy, that it would realistically take a lifetime of scholarship in order to render a proper defense. However, there are some broad observations which are worth making regarding the first three quarters of the Christian Scriptures.

WHAT IS THE GENRE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament is a collection of writings about epochs of nations, chronicling the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms and the migrations of people groups. But it is also a book filled with fire, darkness, and miraculous bread raining from the sky; with apocalyptic visions, angels and spirits, and no shortage of divine communication. In fact, so dense is this supernatural content that one can scarcely go two chapters without encountering some kind of act which abides outside the context of the natural order.

So what is one to do with an ancient book which weaves a seemingly historical narrative so closely together with a spiritual one? To those who are unwilling to jump in bed with a theistic narrative, there really is only one possibility: The Bible must be ancient mythology.

Yes, the Bible must be a collection of Near-Eastern myths, like the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Enuma Elish – tall tales about the gods and mythic heroes of the Semitic People who would eventually become the Nation of Israel; a nationalistic narrative around which to rally when times got tough.

There are, however, five distinct difficulties with the idea that the Old Testament is categorically mythical. These are as follows:

FIVE EVIDENCES THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT IS NOT MYTHOLOGY

1. DETAILS

The Old Testament is full of colorful and evocative stories that make it a classic source of children's stories. But it is also a place that contains tedious passages such as this:

1 Chronicles 1:1-13 (ESV)

"Adam, Seth, Enosh; Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared; Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech; Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. 7 The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. Cush fathered Nimrod. He was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorim.

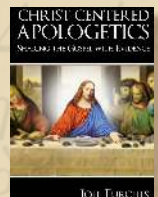
Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth."

...And this:

Exodus 40:17-32 (ESV)

"In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the

covering of the tent over it, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, and arranged the bread on it before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, and set up the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, and burned fragrant incense on it, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the Lord had commanded Moses. He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the Lord commanded Moses."





FIVE EVIDENCES THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT IS NOT MYTHOLOGY

...And this:

Numbers 1:18-27 (ESV)

"and on the first day of the second month, they assembled the whole congregation together, who registered themselves by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, head by head, as the Lord commanded Moses. So he listed them in the wilderness of Sinai.

The people of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: those listed of the tribe of Reuben were 46,500.

Of the people of Simeon, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, those of them who were listed, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: those listed of the tribe of Simeon were 59,300.

Of the people of Gad, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: those listed of the tribe of Gad were 45,650.

Of the people of Judah, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: those listed of the tribe of Judah were 74,600."

As it happens, the most tedious passages in the Old Testament are also the ones that serve as evidence that the purpose of this book is not some kind of epic mythological tale. One does not see Homer listing how many bags of grain Odysseus loaded into the back of his boat, or see a detailed genealogy of the monk Xuanzang in

the Journey to the West mythology. It is the historian, not the mythologist, who is concerned with genealogies, dimensions of buildings, or financial transactions, and such details are not mere incidentals to the text – they are the capstones that serve to introduce each section and frame every story. Practically every character named in scripture may be given at least a partial genealogy, and significant events are consistently dated in reference to the rulers and events of the time. It is as if the writers were concerned with the actual history about which they were writing. This kind of meticulous detail is conspicuously absent in any other mythology one might care to inspect, but practically mandatory in ancient (and current) histories.

2. CROSS REFERENCES AND CONSISTENCY

Even by the most conservative of estimates, the formation of the Old Testament took hundreds of years. Yet for all of this time, and for the multiplicity of authors, scribes, and editors involved, the narrative hangs together with amazing fluidity. These are not a series of disconnected stories loosely tied together by a common culture or mythic characters – they are, instead, a continuous tale about the rise and fall of a nation, and the tumultuous relationship which that nation maintained with its God. And in this tale, the progenitors give rise to new generations which are unerringly connected together across the books, the kings and kingdoms are tightly tied together, and the ideologies which connects each writer remains consistent. This is a level of consistency which is unprecedented in ancient mythology.

Not only this, but the books of the Bible continually reference one another. All of the books following the first five – the Pentateuch – repeatedly refer back to these writings as they build upon them. And as one gets into the historic books of Kings and the Chronicles, the reader will

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see the author wrapping up the narration of the reign of any particular king like this:

“Now the rest of the acts of [this king], from first to last, are they not written in [another book of the Old Testament]?”

This is especially true of the book of the Kings which frequently references the book of the Chronicles, both texts recording essentially the same time periods from different perspectives with remarkable harmony. Some of the books referenced have been lost to history, but most of the cross references are to other Biblical texts.

This is also seen in books such as Daniel, in which the author is seen referencing the prophecies of Jeremiah at one point.

Again, the idea of cross-referencing is a very sophisticated one associated with scholarship far beyond the imaginative tales captured in mythology.

3. ARCHEOLOGY

The classic scholarly approach to the Bible has been a “guilty until proven innocent” one. Consequently, it is something of an embarrassment to liberal scholars that every time they toe the dirt in the Middle East, they are unearthing something which can be matched up with the stories found in the Old Testament. One will commonly hear objections such as “We haven’t found Noah’s Ark”, or “There is no evidence of the Exodus”, however not finding something does not disprove it. Here are several examples of things which have been found:

-The Hittites

The “Hittites” were a significant enemy to the Israelites, and a large part of the Old Testament narrative. But for ages, scholars believed they were an elaborate fiction. A people group as large as the Bible seemed to say that they

were would surely leave some kind of trace that they existed, yet no such evidence had been found.

All of this changed in 1876 when the discovery of an inscription on some rocks in Turkey led to the unearthing of five temples, a citadel, and a number of massive sculptures. The gem of this dig, however, were the ten thousand clay tablets uncovered which recorded a history of the Hittite nation paralleling that seen in the Bible.

-Sodom and Gomorrah

It is difficult to cite a more supernatural story than the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the book of Genesis. God appears in physical form to Abraham, angels visit Lot, fire and brimstone are rained down from heaven upon the city, and Lot’s wife is transformed into a pillar of salt.

And yet for all of this miraculous shenanigans, there is actual archeological evidence that both Sodom and Gomorrah existed, and that they were destroyed in a way similar to the description given in the Bible. In the late 1960’s, digs uncovered two cities located approximately where Sodom and Gomorrah would have been, dating to the early Bronze Age - around the same time period Abraham would have lived - and covered with a thick layer of ash as well as bricks turned red with intense heat; all consistent with destruction from a massive fire.

-The Walls of Jericho

A favorite story of Sunday School teachers is the collapse of the wall of Jericho, but the story itself – marching around and then blowing trumpets – coupled with the mechanics of walls collapsing in on themselves, makes it seem like a tall tale at best. And yet archeological digs in the area, which are ongoing, have uncovered evidence of a fortified city with collapsed walls.



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-King David

The tales of King David take up most of 1 Samuel, and the shadow of David himself looms over the rest of the Old Testament as he dominates Messianic prophecy. Yet scholars have long contended that he was just a Hebrew myth like Midas or Hercules.

However in 1993, a large structure was unearthed in Northern Galilee, containing inscriptions in Aramaic which included the phrases “King of Israel” and “House of David.”

There are, of course, numerous other examples of archeology complimenting Biblical stories, however the point is made: how often outside of the Bible does archeology neatly align with mythology?

4. FULFILLED PROPHECY

Prophecy is something of the currency of scripture. Every few chapters, God, or someone speaking on behalf of God, is foretelling of some future event that will fulfill his greater plan. Most of these prophecies are fulfilled within the pages of scripture itself. So that, for instance, when God tells Abraham that he will have a son in his old age, later in the same book, Abraham has the son. More spectacular examples of fulfilled prophecy include things like Jeremiah predicting in his book that the Israelites will return from captivity in 70 years, and then the fulfillment in the much later books of Ezra and Nehemiah. But a critic could claim that such “prophecies” were fudged, broadly interpreted, or written back in by later scribes and editors; or, in some cases, that the books containing the prophecy were written after the fulfillment and then credited to an ancient author.

Two distinct prophecies which are very difficult to get around are those found in Isaiah 53, and in Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 8.

Isaiah 53 reads this way:

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,*

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*he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied,
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

Almost without exception, when this verse is presented out of context, people assume that it is a passage from the New Testament referring to Christ. The similarities to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and the Gospel message are so outstanding that it strains credibility when people attempt to assign it any other kind of meaning. Nor can one argue that this text was somehow altered to fit the New Testament story. Pre-New Testament copies of Isaiah exist in which this passage exists intact.

It is worth noting that there are a number of other Old Testament passages which are taken as clear prophecies of Christ, but none clearer and more unambiguous than this.

As for the Daniel passages, in the first passage mentioned, Daniel interprets a prophetic dream the Babylonian king had about a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, torso of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of clay. At the end of the dream, the statue is crushed by a great rock. In the second, he himself has a dream about four beasts rising out of the ocean: The first is a lion with wings, the second is a bear, raised up unequally on one side. The third is a leopard with four wings and four heads. Finally a great beast, unlike any other animal, rises from the sea with teeth

of iron and crushes everything in its path. After the fourth beast is revealed, "The Ancient of Days" slays the beast and offers "the son of man" dominion over the earth.

The two dreams have essentially the same interpretation - one which is actually given in the text and not left up to the reader's imagination. The four parts of the statue and the four beasts both signify four kingdoms. The first is Babylon, the kingdom in which Daniel is living when he deals with these visions. The next three will supersede one another, culminating in the coming of the Messiah.

It is in chapter 7, however, where the prophecies begin to get extremely specific. Daniel has another vision like the previous two. This one involves only two kingdoms, each of which are named. The first is a ram with two unequal horns, which, he is told, is the Medo-Persian Empire. The second is a goat with a single horn who charges the ram and tramples him. This, he is told, is the Greek empire. He is also told that the single horn represents the "first king" of Greece. In the vision the horn is broken, and four other horns arise in its place, which he is told, are four lesser kingdoms that do not have the power of the "first king."

What is being described here is a very accurate description of the rise, conquest, and fall of Alexander the Great. The vision correctly predicts that the kingdom that will overthrow the Medo-Persian Empire will be Greece, the swiftness with which it will conquer, and that it will be divided into four weaker kingdoms after the first leader falls.

These predictions have remained so accurate, they have led scholars to attempt to date the writing of Daniel sometime after the reign of Alexander. However, the evidence for the early writing of Daniel is so significant, that one must deal with the uncomfortable accuracy of its prophecy.



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Additionally, if one takes the four kingdoms in the first two visions to be Babylon, then Medo-Persia, then Greece, and then Rome, the fact that the “son of man” comes during the fourth empire has significant implications in reference to Christ.

It is worth mentioning that over the years, obsession within the Christian world over prophecy and apocalyptic scriptures has led to some wild speculations which have significantly muddied the waters. However, if one disregards all of the more confusing symbolism and focuses on the plain words spoken to Daniel in this text, the prophecy is eerily accurate to real world events – unlike anything found in pretenders such as Nostradamus.

5. THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD

Ancient mythology was either Pagan or Pantheist in nature. That is to say, it postulated a universe run by a multitude of gods, monsters, and mythic beings; or a universe which was identical with god. The Bible is unique among ancient mythology in that, from the very beginning, it shows a God who is separate and above the universe he creates, and remains above it. The sun is not his eye, the wind is not his breath, and the thunder is not his grumbling. The sea was not formed from his tears, nor the mountains from his bones. God created the universe, but he was not physically part of the universe.

In fact, most ancient mythologies served as a sort of pre-scientific explanation for how the universe was formed and functioned. As humans began to discover the natural explanations behind wind, waves, and clouds, mythological explanations began to disappear. The remarkable thing about the Bible - whether or not one chooses to believe it – is that very little of it seems to contradict modern scientific understanding because it largely isn't interested in explaining how the physical universe functions, unlike practically all other ancient mythologies.

The fact that the God of the Bible was transcendent above the material universe made him unique then, and continues to make him relevant today.

CONCLUSION

The Old Testament is a book which invites a great deal of scholarly investigation, and has for literally thousands of years. Its books have been passed down and commented on by Jewish and non-Jewish scholars since they were first penned, but history has yet to see them definitively discarded or debunked.

Whatever else they may be, they are not the commonplace mythologies of another age. They have all the look and feel of histories, and much of what they say has lined up with what we know of the past. This fact alone invites the modern reader to sit down and take a closer look at just exactly what these ancient books truly are, and what they might mean to the modern reader.

Mother Teresa (1910-1997)



Mother Teresa was a Roman Catholic nun, who devoted her life to serving the poor and destitute around the world. She spent many years in Calcutta, India where she founded the Missionaries of Charity, a religious congregation devoted to helping those in great need.

In 1979, Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and has become a symbol of charitable selfless work. She was beatified in 2003, the first step on the path to sainthood, within the Catholic church.

More about Mother Teresa at [Biography Online](#).

Debate

[dih-beyt]: discussion, contest, deliberation, consideration

*James White
and
John Dominic Crossan
Is the Bible True?*

*Daniel Wallace
and
Bart Ehrman
Is the Original New
Testament Lost?*

*James White
and
Robert Price
Is the Bible True?*

*David Instone Brewer
and
Kenneth Humphreys
Is the Bible Historically
Reliable?*

*James White
and
Adnan Rashid
Is the Bible Corrupted?*

*JP Holding
and
Richard Carrier
Is the New Testament
Reliable?*

*Craig Evans
and
Bart Ehrman
Does the New
Testament Misquote
Jesus?*

*Craig Evans
and
Bart Ehrman
Is the New Testament
Reliable?*

*Peter Williams
and
Bart Ehrman
The Textual Reliability
of the Bible*

*John Rankin
and
Dan Barker
Is the Bible Full of
Errors?*

*The Bible: Gospel,
Guide, or Garbage?
-NT Wright*

*The Reliability of the
New Testament
-Dr. James White*



A STRUGGLE OF WORDS: THE BIBLE AND THE APOLOGIST

Roger C. Maxson

Words are tricky things. Anyone who's had any experience with them at all can tell you that they can get you into trouble. We often know precisely what we mean to say, but when we try to say it, the words "come out wrong". Other times, our words are misunderstood. We may even say things that really don't need to be said at all. In our personal and professional lives, most of us have learned to avoid the miscommunications, unnecessary arguments, and damaged relationships that can result from our use, or misuse, of words. But what about when we communicate our Christian faith? How many of our apologetic debates are actually unnecessary, and perhaps unwinnable, arguments based on communication problems? The cause of Christ can only be benefited when we learn to choose our arguments, and our words, carefully.

Which arguments¹ are necessary when presenting and defending the Christian faith? To answer that question, we must first explore another. What are words?

Simply put, words are a way of communicating the thoughts in our minds to other minds.

As rational beings, we all have thoughts and ideas. Our preferred method of expressing our thoughts and ideas is through words. The

problem is, we don't always perfectly convey our thoughts in the words we give to others. And if we did, the person on the receiving end of our words may not perfectly decipher our meaning. Shallow ideas are often very easy to communicate and understand. Deep ideas, however, are tremendously difficult to both communicate and understand on the receiving end. For example, it is easier to communicate the need to go to the grocery store, than it is to describe what justice is. Thankfully, while not perfect, human language is effective enough to communicate the essence of our thoughts to one another.

As Christians, we believe that God Himself inspired the Scriptures. In the Scriptures, we believe that God says exactly what He means. Just as we communicate our thoughts to other people through words, God communicated His authoritative thoughts to us through the words of Scripture. He may have perfectly communicated His thoughts, but this does not mean that we will always perfectly understand them. The Scriptures do not deal with shallow things, but with deep things; things beyond our experience. Because of this, Christian apologists have long recognized the difficulty in:

1. Understanding precisely what the words of Scriptures mean.
2. Using our words to clearly communicate what the Scriptures mean to others.

¹ I mean, by argument, a back and forth of words between people who disagree.

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In attempting to understand what the words of Scripture mean, and how the ideas communicated in the Bible work together as a whole, Christians throughout history have built doctrinal systems. These systems represent us, as rational beings, making our best efforts to understand the ideas God has communicated to us. All Christians agree on the fundamental doctrines of our faith, but we have often disagreed amongst ourselves about how to understand the deep ideas expressed in various Scripture passages, and about how those ideas work together as a whole. In our respective churches, we have naturally and rightly communicated (taught) our accepted stance on secondary doctrines. As a result of communicating our understanding of Scripture and secondary doctrines to masses of people, many people have begun to equivocate these doctrinal systems with Christianity itself.

Once a person equates secondary doctrinal positions, or our interpretation of the words of Scripture, with the Christian narrative itself, a great danger arises. For when such a person comes to believe our doctrinal position is false, he may also believe Christianity is false. I have encountered person after person who has believed exactly this. These non-believers and former-believers have tragically rejected Christianity partially because of what is, at its root, a communication problem. When encountering such people, many well-meaning Christians, eager to defend the faith, will zealously spend great effort in an endless

struggle of words, unnecessary arguments about unnecessary doubts, usually resulting in little more than frustration.

All of this can be avoided. As we seek to understand Scripture, and communicate its truths to the world, following these simple guidelines will help to prevent many miscommunications, unnecessary arguments, and damaged faith relationships.

I. LET THE BIBLE BE WHAT IT IS.

We all like things we are comfortable with. If we aren't comfortable with something, we may want to re-imagine it to be what we want it to be. As modern people, many of us, understandably, tend to want to read the Bible as though it were a modern book. We imagine the Bible as something we can be comfortable with. When we actually read it, however, we discover that it simply doesn't fit into the box we have sometimes placed around it.

In reality, the Bible is not a modern book at all. It is a library of ancient books, with different genres of literature, written in different times and cultures. If we read the Bible expecting it to be a modern book, we are reading the Bible with unrealistic expectations. Consequently, we will almost certainly misunderstand it.

Many have come to doubt the existence of the Christian God because of unrealistic expectations placed on Scripture. Unrealistic expectations have led to perceived



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“contradictions”. When addressing doubts about the Infallibility of Scripture, there are times when we may point out that alleged contradictions are often easily demonstrated to not be logical contradictions at all. But instead accompanying a skeptic on a never ending rampage through the Bible in search of potential contradictions, we may be of greater help by simply pointing out that the Bible wasn’t written by a single, modern author. It is something more interesting. It is an ancient book, made of many books, written by many authors. As such, we should expect to find great and interesting diversity in the Bible. It’s ok to think of it this way. The Bible can be both ancient and authoritative. As soon as we replace unrealistic expectations with reality, a large number of alleged contradictions simply dissolve, and the skeptic loses his perceived objections to Christianity.

II. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE BIBLE IS PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

The Bible is a long and very complex book that deals with many great themes that are still of relevance today. Topics like the nature of the universe, human nature, love, interpersonal relationships, evil, suffering, history, law, the sovereignty of God, and more are discussed at length.

When attempting to understand what the Bible teaches about such complex topics, we must be comprehensive. God did not reveal everything about these topics in one passage, but progressively revealed more and more about them over time. The Bible begins its conversation in Genesis, but it certainly doesn’t end it there. If we want to understand what the Bible teaches about human sexuality, for example, it will not do to look at two statements in

Leviticus and call it a day. What does Genesis say about human sexuality? What about the Song of Solomon? What do we learn when we compare these texts to what the Apostle Paul wrote? We must take the Bible as a whole, comparing Scripture with Scripture, to build a comprehensive picture of the Bible’s teaching on any given topic.

Many have come to criticize Scriptural teaching on a topic, human sexuality for example, believing it to be outdated, simplistic, or immoral (and sometimes unwanted). These objections often stem from misunderstandings of how Scripture works. Rather than defending a single statement from the Old Testament on a topic, we should endeavor to communicate a more comprehensive picture of Bible teaching. Only then can the non-believer really know what it is she doesn’t believe in.

III. UNDERSTAND ALL SCRIPTURE IN THE LIGHT OF JESUS CHRIST

As has been mentioned, there is great diversity in Scripture. But there is also profound unity. There is a central theme that runs throughout the book. William Graham Scroggie called it, *“The Unfolding Drama of Redemption.”*² If Christianity is true, then Christ is central to all Scripture, and how He interpreted Scripture is of utmost importance. “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”³ “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”⁴ If we take Christ seriously, we must interpret all Scripture with Him in mind, and that changes things. We can make sense of Moses and the Prophets by looking at Jesus. It’s all about

² See his book by that title.

³ John 5:39

⁴ Luke 24:27

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Him. When our non-believing friends begin to raise objections about violence in Moses, we may point to Jesus, who said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."⁵ And, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."⁶ It is Jesus who came to earth, and who bled, died, and rose again for us. We must deal with Him.

It is this narrative of redemption, culminating in Jesus, that is non-negotiable in our faith. It is this Gospel narrative that we must present and explain to non-believers. And it is precisely this Gospel narrative that non-believers must contend with. The non-believer does not have to agree with our chosen understanding of eschatology, or our interpretation of Genesis 1 and its relation to science. Those are secondary to what they will choose to do with Immanuel. We should help our friends past their objections, not to win an argument, but to help them see Christ

When we use words to communicate our faith, we should make deliberate effort to never marry secondary doctrinal positions to the Gospel. We should be aware that many of our non-believing friends already have. The work laid out for us may be in helping them to back up and sort out between the two. The graceful use of words, careful navigation of arguments, knowledge of the Scriptures, and keeping secondary doctrine separate from the fundamentals, can take what seem to be deadly, fierce weapons against Christianity, and render them powerless, leaving even the confident skeptic to face God alone

without his weapons. There is courage in earnestly contending for the faith. But there is wisdom in gracefully avoiding unnecessary obstacles to faith, even if the obstacles are our use, or misuse, of words. Words are tricky things, after all.

*"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."*⁷

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Protestant Lutheran Pastor, theologian, and active in the German resistance to the policies of Hitler and Nazism. For his opposition to the Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer was ultimately arrested and executed at Flossian concentration camp, during the last month of the war. He remains an important symbol of opposition to Hitler, and his views on Christianity increasingly influential.

Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Germany, in 1906. His family was not religious, but had a strong musical and artistic heritage. From an early age, Bonhoeffer displayed great musical talent, and music was important throughout his life. His family was quite taken aback when, at the age of 14, he announced he wanted to train and become a priest.

More about Dietrich Bonhoeffer at [Biography Online](#).

⁵ Matthew 5:38-39

⁶ 1 Peter 2:23

⁷ Colossians 4:4-6 (NASB)



Partner Spotlight

INTERVIEW WITH MARY JO SHARP OF HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Chris Reese • CAA Director of Partnerships

- 1. First I'd like to say that the leadership of the CAA appreciates the good work Houston Baptist University is doing in the field of apologetics, and all the ways you and your colleague Holly Ordway have contributed to the group over the years. Your first students in HBU's apologetics program are beginning to graduate now if I'm not mistaken. What has that been like?**

To see our first graduate from HBU was exciting! It seems that we have just barely begun. Yet, the Lord has been so good and faithful to establish this much needed program. I am truly encouraged by the ministry ideas of the students enrolled. What an honor it has been to be entrusted to help begin and develop a program with such great potential impact!

- 2. What are the distinctives of HBU's program in apologetics? How is it different from other programs in apologetics?**

The main distinctive is that we have framed the program around Francis Schaeffer's ideology of cultural apologetics. Our main goal is to impact the culture with the truth of the Gospel through an interdisciplinary approach to apologetics. We have students whose fields vary from business to medicine to music. The program guides students towards utilizing apologetics effectively in their own field of interest.

- 3. Apologetics hasn't traditionally been a field where women have been represented. Do you feel that's changing now? If so, what do you attribute the change to?**

The representation of women in this field has been growing since days long ago with the involvement of women such

as Dorothy Sayers. However, women seem to have more numerously come onto the apologetics scene as of late. So the change I see is related to the increasing number of women involved in the field in the public realm. One major influencing factor is the secularization of our culture. It is now difficult to go even one day without seeing an article against Christianity or a lawsuit involving the practicing of Christian beliefs. The public schools and state universities our children will attend are wrought with confusion over the separation of church and state, veering toward a discriminatory position regarding Christians. It is becoming clearer that a person must understand her beliefs and aptly articulate, as well as defend, those beliefs. We must be true to the Biblical mandate in Proverbs to get wisdom, "though it cost all you have" (Proverbs 4:6-7). While women occupy their lives with good things, such as homemaking, careers, child-rearing, education, they have left themselves with little time for what is needed most, development of their spiritual lives. Their souls are starving for spiritual food in a culture that sours Christian fellowship and education at seemingly every turn. I believe the Holy Spirit has awakened women to the hunger of their souls highlighted against the malnourishment of the secularization of culture.

- 4. In your view, what are the major apologetics challenges Christians are facing today? Do you believe believers, in general, are responding well to them?**

I would frame these questions in a slightly different way. One of the major apologetic challenges for Christians is to engage the culture in a manner that enchants the imagination of the masses. We seem to be excellent in our presentation of the philosophical arguments, yet remain underdeveloped in engaging the broader public with those arguments. We lack a social movement. While there is a

INTERVIEW WITH MARY JO SHARP OF HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

broader acceptance of apologetics among believers, we still haven't seen a huge leap forth from a defensive position. Christians are ready for a new challenge in apologetics: to affect culture by shaping culture. So far, we have trained many people to defend their Christian worldview. However, the Christian worldview should also be utilized to be creative, not just reactive.

I am beginning to see more creative work in the field of apologetics and therefore I'm excited for how the Lord is using his people.

5. In addition to your work at HBU, you have your own apologetics speaking and writing ministry, Confident Christianity. What are some projects or engagements that you're excited about now?

Currently, I am writing a work entitled, "Living In Truth: Confident Conversation in a Conflicted Culture," for LifeWay Christian Resources. It is a six-week apologetics bible study focusing on having conversations about truth and authority in our culture. The study follows a similar format to my previous study, "Why Do You Believe That? A Faith Conversation." I am also currently writing again for "The Gospel Project" curriculum on Isaiah and Kings and have recently finished a contribution on women in apologetics for Sean McDowell's upcoming book, "A New Kind of Apologist."

6. Do you have any parting words of advice to aspiring apologists out there?

Yes. The best thing I have done for my apologetic ministry was to develop a spiritual routine for my day, to take seriously Paul's teaching of nourishing myself with spiritual food. If a person fails to invest in their daily development towards Christ-likeness, they will find themselves spiritually impoverished. There are so many ways to develop ministries through platform building and networking, but above all, I trust God to do what He will with my apologetics ministry. Trusting Him has been the game-changer in my years of ministry. There are times when I am physically

weak or mentally worn out. When I take a moment to analyze my weary situation, I almost always find I have neglected what is needed most: allowing God to instruct me, lead me, and comfort me. I take many steps towards renewal, but I'll offer one here: read for fun. During a very busy and difficult semester for me in ministry, Tolkien's The Lord of The Rings helped me to understand and handle my situation better. Perhaps it reminded me of the reality of the spiritual struggle of life on this earth, so that I did not despair. If you are not a fiction reader, find another hobby that brings you joy and reminds you of the goodness of God.

This is a tough existence, and apologetics ministry—like all ministry—is a battle. You need to take nourishment for your soul. You also need fellowship with like-minded individuals. Fellow lovers of God are a wellspring of life. We are meant to live in community. At times in ministry, I have felt terribly alone. In part, it is the situation of traveling and studying so much. However, some loneliness comes from not intentionally setting aside time for community fellowship. Find a community, no matter how small, who accepts you authentically. A loving fellowship is a lifeboat in a stormy world.

Finally, apologists should check their motives for engaging with an audience. As Christians, we should engage in public speaking or argumentation out of a desire to love and serve others. Public engagements should be a selfless act. The audience's needs should always be at the forefront of our minds, not our own desire to be accepted or intellectually respected and praised.

Mary Jo Sharp
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Sign Up For Confident Christianity's NEWSLETTER



THE REAL JESUS: NEW TESTAMENT VS. GNOSTIC WRITINGS

Brad Cooper • 2besure.blogspot.com

Twenty years ago when I was attending a liberal seminary, I first became acquainted with what are popularly called “Gnostic” writings. At the time, I found it rather puzzling that there were certain scholars that were attracted to these writings as somehow telling us something about Jesus. As a pastor, I could not then imagine that this rather odd scholarly preoccupation would ever affect the average person (as it actually has). But the academic in me was quite intrigued to understand these writings more fully in order to comprehend what it is that was sparking such interest. And so I began to read them for myself and to study what scholars were saying about them. The more I studied, the more I recognized that the stir was not about finding new and revealing information about Jesus but rather about a very old agenda to undermine the New Testament writings that have been held sacred by followers of Jesus for the last 2000 years.

In spite of the wild claims of certain popular authors and even some scholars, these “Gnostic” writings lack any credibility as a source of understanding who Jesus is, what he taught and what he did. In the following paragraphs, I want to briefly outline a series of 9 criteria that can be visualized as 9 concentric circles narrowing towards a bullseye. The New Testament writings will be seen to fit all 9 of these criteria including that which is by far the most important: the

“bullseye.” The “Gnostic” writings come nowhere near the target, and they most certainly do not hit the “bullseye.”

Note: The Gnostic writings are often referred to as Gnostic “gospels.” But this term is totally inappropriate in every way. They are most certainly not of the same genre as the New Testament gospels (from which the genre gets its name).

A VIEW OF THE TARGET

1. Culturally Coherent
2. Historical
3. Contemporary
4. Knowledge of Palestine
5. Reliable
6. Eyewitnesses
7. Truthful
8. Intimate Friends
9. BULLSEYE: Authorized Spokesmen (Apostles)



THE REAL JESUS: NEW TESTAMENT VS. Gnostic WRITINGS

1. CULTURALLY COHERENT

There are few things that are more obvious and certain than the fact that Jesus and his followers were all Jewish, that they worshiped the God revealed in the Old Testament and that they longed for the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises—with Jesus being the promised Messiah. Jesus's Jewishness is clearly confirmed by both biblical and extra-biblical sources (e.g., the fact that he is called the Christ or Messiah). On the other hand, the “Gnostic” writings are characteristically anti-Jewish, present the Jewish God as either stupid or evil, and are clearly rooted in pagan concepts.¹

But for the sake of argument, let's consider that there are two possibilities: either (1) Jesus was a reverent Jew who honored the God of the Old Testament and even claimed to be the Messiah promised in the Old Testament—that very Old Testament God come in the flesh (the New Testament view); or (2) he was a Jew who rejected his own Jewishness and despised the God of the Old Testament (as portrayed in the Gnostic writings). Let's further consider the possibility, then, that the Gnostic writings present the true picture of Jesus. If so, what reason could the New Testament writers (so thoroughly devoted to the God of the Old Testament) have for turning a teacher who despised the Old Testament into the Messiah promised in the Old Testament that he despised? What

could motivate devout Jews to worship as God and Lord a teacher who reviled their God and was so hated by the Jews that he was made to suffer the ultimate penalty of shame and the cursing of God?² The very idea is nonsensical and preposterous (*reductio ad absurdum*).

This is clearly an impossible scenario. It is only logical, then, that the New Testament writings' presentation of Jesus's Jewishness is certainly original and correct and therefore the Gnostic writings' presentation of Jesus as an anti-Jewish pagan Platonist philosopher is not the Jesus of history but rather a late attempt to use Jesus as a talking head to present pagan ideas.

2. HISTORICAL

The genre and intent of these writings needs also to be considered. In this case, it is clear from the genres used and the writers' stated intentions that the New Testament has the historical Jesus in view (e.g., Luke 1:1-4; John 19:35; 21:24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9; Hebrews 2:3; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3; etc.). On the other hand, any serious reading of the Gnostic writings will reveal that they make no serious intention of presenting the Jesus of history. The Gnostic writings are not written in the kinds of genres that give any indication of historicity. And you will find almost nothing in the way of historical detail: dates, places, people, events, geographical

¹ Marshall, *The Truth About Jesus and the "Gnostic Gospels,"* 13f, 62f.

² Hengel, Martin. *Crucifixion.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977, 84ff.



THE REAL JESUS: NEW TESTAMENT VS. Gnostic WRITINGS

descriptions, etc. But you will find much of this in the New Testament writings—especially the Gospels.

3. CONTEMPORARY

I am confident that there are solid reasons for believing that the three synoptic Gospels were all written between 40 and 55 A.D. And that the rest of the New Testament was written between 40 and 65 A.D.—except for the Johannine literature (the Gospel and Epistles of John and Revelation), which likely was written in the last part of the first Century (though there are arguments for the 60s). But there is no room for those arguments here. So we will be content at this point to utilize the views of even the most liberal scholars, who concede that the bulk of the New Testament was written before 85 A.D.—and that some of it was written by the early 50s. This puts the New Testament witness well within the lifetime of those who knew Jesus—making eyewitnesses available to interview and even write the New Testament documents, and bringing their publication under the scrutiny of eyewitnesses. They are contemporary accounts of Jesus.

The Gnostic writings, on the other hand, are all written over a hundred years after Christ's crucifixion (or even much later). So they were not written within the lifetime of eyewitnesses. [Note: Some scholars have tried to push the Gospel of Thomas into the first Century, but the evidence is all against this. And their efforts to do so are clearly motivated by a theological agenda and not by the facts. It is much more reasonable to place Thomas with similar Gnostic writings from the mid-second century—which is the earliest supportable date for any of the Gnostic writings].

4. KNOWLEDGE OF PALESTINE

The New Testament writings (in general, but especially the four gospels) show intimate familiarity with the geography, names and customs of the land in which Jesus lived and ministered. They are familiar with very small towns, specific geographical features, and the roads that would be taken to get from one place to another. The names of people fit the location. The customs correspond to the local culture and religious practices, etc. The Gnostic writings rarely even mention such details and when they do they often do not fit. In fact, they often fit rather more closely with the location where they were found: Egypt. You can find a brilliant [lecture](#) on this subject by Dr. Peter Williams.

5. RELIABLE

As we move closer to the bullseye, let's consider the reliability of the documents. Can they be trusted to give accurate information? There are many things that we could consider here, but for the sake of this brief article, let me mention just a few:

First, in the lecture linked above, Dr. Peter Williams notes that the Gospel writers know the names of people. He then makes the point that it is very hard to remember names.. He concludes from this that if the writers got the names right, they surely got the rest right.

Furthermore, whenever we can check the facts of the New Testament writings, we find that they are accurate. Perhaps, the most significant example is found in the writings of Luke (Luke/Acts). In the late 1800s, Sir William Ramsay became "...the foremost authority of his day on the topography, antiquities and history of Asia Minor in ancient time."³ When he began his archaeological work, he was thoroughly convinced that Luke's writings were written

³ Anderson, J.G.C. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1931-1940, 727d.

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in the second century (as he had been taught under the influence of the Tübingen school). But over the years, he found that time after time Luke's writings fit the first century and not the second and ultimately became convinced that Luke wrote during the first century and that he was a historian of first rank.^{4 5} Colin J. Hemer has brought Ramsay's work up to date, documenting "84 confirmed facts in the last 16 chapters of Acts" in his highly acclaimed *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*.

The Gnostic writings do not give us many facts to check; but when they do, they often make quite silly blunders.

6. EYEWITNESSES

The New Testament writings frequently claim to be written by eyewitnesses or based on interviews with eyewitnesses (see the NT references given under "2. Historical"). This is important. Eyewitness testimony is much more certain and more reliable than information that has been passed on as hearsay.

One of the most interesting evidences that they do in fact preserve eyewitness testimony is a class of evidence known as "*Undesigned Coincidences*." You can find some fascinating [lectures](#) on this subject by Dr. Tim McGrew.

The Gnostic writings, of course, could not have been written by eyewitnesses or on recent interviews of eyewitnesses, because they are written far too long after the time when Jesus walked the earth.

7. TRUTHFUL

Of course, if we are going to rely on someone's testimony about Jesus, one of the most important things we want to know is that they are truthful. The Gnostic writings frequently claim to be written by apostles or other associates of Jesus; but no one believes that they really are—not even those who are attracted to them. So at a very basic point they are not truthful.

The New Testament writings on the other hand were written by men who sacrificed much to spread their testimony: all of them experiencing great persecution and most of them suffering martyrdom. The evidence for this in the life of the apostle Paul is certainly the most substantial and compelling. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was powerful and wealthy, enjoying access and position with the most powerful rulers in Judaism, the Sanhedrin and the chief priests. In following Christ, he gave that up. The evidence is also substantial that he was disowned by his family and sacrificed the wealth that came from being a part of that family.⁶

Of course, some people claim that certain books in the New Testament are falsely attributed to apostles, also. But this would not negate the testimony of most of the New Testament. And having investigated this issue a great deal over the years, I am confident that all the New Testament documents are authentic. I have written an [article concerning the pastoral letters](#), which are among the most frequently attacked.

⁴ Ramsay, William. *St. Paul, The Traveler and the Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House reprint, 1897, 1962, 3-4, 7-8.

⁵ "Ramsay, William Mitchell (1851-1939)" by W.W. Gasque. McKim, Donald. *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007, 848-850.

⁶ Ramsay, 34-36.



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8. INTIMATE FRIENDS

The New Testament was written by men who were intimate friends of Jesus or had access to Jesus's close friends—to people who spent about three years with him traveling together, ministering together, and in every way sharing life together. These were men and women who knew Jesus well, who had full access to him and saw how he dealt with a wide range of situations. They constantly heard him teaching both publicly and privately. They saw him heal and perform miraculous signs. Then they watched him die. And yet three days later they saw him alive again. And for another six weeks, he continued to appear to them—teaching them, eating with them and assuring them.

This is not the case for the Gnostic writings. Again, they were written far too late for this. And no one really believes that they have any direct connection with Jesus' intimate friends. Again there are some radical scholars who hold out hope that there are fragments of such tradition preserved within these writings. But the evidence is just not there.

9. BULLSEYE: AUTHORIZED SPOKESMEN (APOSTLES)

Finally, the most essential of the 9 criteria is that the New Testament writings are written by apostles or under the authority of apostles. If you want to know who someone is and what they think about things, you want to get your information from people who are authorized to speak for them. In this case, Jesus chose people who would serve that very purpose: the apostles. He chose them. He taught them. He assured them that the Spirit would lead them to remember what was taught and would guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). And he confirmed their authority as his spokesmen through miraculous signs and wonders (2 Corinthians 12:12). Furthermore, the early church consistently honored the New Testament as the writings of the apostles. The same cannot be said for the Gnostic

writings. And again, even scholars who have an agenda to push the Gnostic writings are not so bold as to pretend that they were actually written by apostles.

So in summary, the Gnostic writings fail every test. They completely miss the target. The New Testament writings solidly pass every test and hit the bullseye. They present two very different views of Jesus. They cannot both be right. The New Testament is the clear winner in this contest. The Gnostic writings cannot be trusted to tell us anything about Jesus. The New Testament presents us with a trustworthy testimony about who Jesus is, what he taught and did, what he wants and what he will yet do. In fact, they are the very things that Jesus himself gave them to pass on to us.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833)



William Wilberforce was one of Britain's great social reformers. In particular, William Wilberforce is remembered for his active participation in getting Parliament to outlaw the slave trade. He died in 1833, just three days before Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which effectively banned slavery in the British Empire.

He was born in Hull, to a wealthy family. At a young age he moved to London where he lived with some nonconformist relatives. These puritan ideals appealed to the young William and he became closely attached to his London relatives. However, at the age of 12, his mother brought him back to Hull. His mother was keen to see William brought up in the traditional Anglican Church tradition and was not keen on her son having a nonconformist upbringing.

More about William Wilberforce at [Biography Online](#).

Satire

[sat-ahyuh-r]: irony, sarcasm, in exposing, or deriding vice...

Much Facebook skepticism on the reliability of the Bible reduces to "THE GOSPELS ARE NOT XEROX COPIES OF ONE ANOTHER!" No. They are not. And we would be suspicious if they were. We're also not going to reject the closest sources for later, legendary works. The following series of memos hilariously demonstrate the absurdity of rejecting the original message for the later ones which are obviously false.

Tyson James • fauxapologetics.wordpress.com

"Memo Differences"

Memo from Director General to Manager:

"Today at 11 o'clock there will be a total eclipse of the sun. This is when the sun disappears behind the moon for two minutes. As this is something that cannot be seen every day, time will be allowed for employees to view the eclipse in the car park. Staff should meet in the car park at ten to eleven, when I will deliver a short speech introducing the eclipse, and give some background information. Safety goggles will be made available at a small cost."

Memo from Manager to Department Head:

"Today at ten to eleven, all staff should meet in the car park. This will be followed by a total eclipse of the sun, which will disappear for two minutes. For a moderate cost, this will be made safe with goggles. The Director General will deliver a short speech beforehand to give us all some background information. This is not something that can be seen every day."

Memo from Department Head to Floor Manager:

"The Director General will today deliver a short speech to make the sun disappear for two minutes in the eclipse. This is something that can not be seen every day, so staff will meet in the car park at ten or eleven. This will be safe, if you pay a moderate cost."

Memo From Floor Manager to Supervisor:

"Ten or eleven staff are to go to the car park, where the Director General will eclipse the sun for two minutes. This doesn't happen every day. It will be safe, but it will cost you."

Memo from Supervisor to staff:

"Some staff will go to the car park today to see the Director General disappear. It is a pity this doesn't happen every day."

"Memo Differences" - For more clean fun, visit CyberSalt.



WHAT LETTERS DID PAUL REALLY WRITE?

Stephen J. Bedard • stephenjbedard.com

One of my roles is that of New Testament instructor at a local Bible college. I have the privilege of teaching New Testament introduction courses to a class that is mostly made up of recent high school graduates.

While I really enjoy doing this, I must confess that I find the section on the Pauline authorship of the epistles difficult to teach. It is difficult not in an academic sense, as I have some very convincing evidence for traditional authorship, but on an emotional level. My students are often surprised that this is even a question, as it should be obvious that Paul wrote the letters. Just open the Bible and read for yourself! I do teach on this topic because I would rather they encounter such theories with me around to respond rather than being surprised by reading some blog.

Although I believe in the traditional authorship, there are many New Testament scholars, including some Evangelicals, that disagree. The epistles are divided into the authentic and disputed epistles. The epistles generally agreed as coming from Paul are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon and 1 Thessalonians. The rest are taken as coming from either a follower of Paul or some other author who wanted to borrow the authority of Paul.

Even within the disputed letters there is a range of opinion. While many would take Colossians, Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians as not coming from Paul, even more would

reject the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus).

What I am going to do is look chiefly at the Pastoral Epistles, although what is said here will overlap greatly with the other disputed letters. Even though it is impossible to prove, I will offer a cumulative case that should point us toward taking the Pauline authorship seriously.

The questioning of the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is something that did not come up until the nineteenth century. Could it be that scholars did not have the tools to detect forgeries until then? The problem with that theory is that Christian theologians and Bible scholars had been doing this since the beginning. There is a reason why 3 Corinthians is not in our New Testament. A great example is that of Hebrews. While some initially thought that Hebrews was Pauline, even within the first few centuries it became clear that Paul was not the author. As much as modern New Testament scholars have a good grasp of Greek, the early church had Greek as their first language. If there were language differences that required a different author, they would have detected it.

The Pastoral Epistles were written later in Paul's life. Even though we can read all of the epistles in one sitting, they were written over a decade and a half. If we were to study letters (or emails) written by an author today, we would expect some differences between the earliest and the latest letters. People change

WHAT LETTERS DID PAUL REALLY WRITE?

and so do their styles and interests. With the Pastoral Epistles being written while Paul was awaiting execution, these difference should be even more prominent.

We do know that Paul used secretaries and scribes in the writing of his letters. Paul did not physically write his letters. It may be that some of the vocabulary differences may be explained by the use of different scribes.

One of the most important points in this discussion concerns the purposes of the letters. The purpose of 1 Timothy is very different from that of Romans and we should not expect them to sound alike. The Pastoral Epistles were written to young men that Paul had mentored and trained. We should expect that it would be very different from those letters written to churches. Paul had a relationship with these men and this would presumably affect his style. Even today, our letters to our friends sound much different from what we write to a larger group or church.

Did Paul write the Pastoral Epistles or the other disputed letters? No one can say for sure but the minor differences in vocabulary and style do not rule it out.

Let me conclude with a relatively recent example. What would happen if a person read J.R.R. Tolkien's *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* and used the techniques of critical scholars? They would immediately note differences in the tone of the books. The *Hobbit* sounds more like a children's story, while the *Lord of*

the *Rings* sounds more like an adult fantasy novel. They would also note other differences. Goblins become orcs. The Necromancer becomes Sauron. There is no hint that the Necromancer is as much of a threat as he is in *Lord of the Rings*. Nor does Bilbo's magic ring give a hint of the dangerous weapon it becomes in the *Lord of the Rings*. These differences are very real and Tolkien was in the process of rewriting the *Hobbit* to bring it more in line with the *Lord of the Rings*. My point is that if critics read Tolkien's works the way some read the epistles, they would likely conclude that the *Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* were written by two different authors.

Until there is convincing evidence to the contrary, the Pastoral Epistles along with the other disputed letters should be understood as written by the Apostle Paul.

—Dr. Edgar Andrews
"God
Breathed
Scripture"
2 Timothy 3:16

Part Two

Part Three



The Family Room

[fam-uh-lee room]: a center for family activities

OPENING THE WINDOW TO KNOWING THE BIBLE

Bonita Jewel • positiveparentingblog.wordpress.com

My oldest, Jessica, completed sixth grade last week, and I breathed a sigh of relief. It had been a challenging school year for my two older children, Jessica and Allen. Nearly every afternoon, they returned from school with homework, which they plowed through for the better part of the afternoon and often the evening. I heard a fair share of “This is hard,” and “I’ll never get it done,” but there was one subject my daughter did not complain about. Social Studies.

The curriculum used at my kids’ school is ACE, and Jessica’s sixth-grade Social Studies consisted of a comprehensive study of the Patriarchs, the Assyrian and New Babylonian Empires, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and then great Christian leaders from A.D. 100 to A.D. 430, and from A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1500. She studied early Christian leaders, including Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus, as well as more recent Christian leaders and missionaries. Every week during the school year, she would approach me with something she had just learned about the world in Bible times, or a new fact about biblical history she had never known before.

I was thrilled that she was learning so much about the Bible and early Christians and that she enjoyed reading about it. I was encouraged that, by the grace of God, the studies will serve to provide a solid foundation

for her faith in years to come. At the same time, I know that what she learned in a single year of study is not enough. Not remotely. It is a step in the right direction, but more steps are necessary. My husband and I bear the responsibility of helping our daughter and sons continue taking steps toward a better understanding of the Bible, Christianity, and basic tenets of the Christian faith.

As Christian parents, one primary foundational belief we can help our children understand is the ultimate veracity of the Bible. We believe it is the core of our belief system and the living, inspired Word of God. How do we translate that to our children? How do we share with them a strong biblical foundation that involves not only knowledge about the absolute truth of Bible, but also about its reliability?

Perhaps you are wondering where to start, or even whether you *should* start. Maybe you do not know at what age they can start grasping basic apologetics-type issues. Here are six tips in how to go about helping your child (or children) grasp that the Bible is not any book, but that it is God’s message to humanity. It is His story of mankind and to mankind, it is the window to grace and truth ... and it is reliable.

Join:
Apologetics for
Parents

OPENING THE WINDOW TO KNOWING THE BIBLE

OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH YOUR CHILDREN (AND KEEP IT OPEN)

Some children are like the donkey in Shrek. What they think is what they say; they have no mental filter. Other children tend to keep things inside, including questions. With the quieter children, it is often more difficult to know where to begin. Perhaps you take the time to hold family devotions or read the Bible every evening, but get very little feedback from your children. All the while, you are asking yourself, *What are they thinking?*

Set aside time once every week or two that you devote to your kids' questions. During that time, tell them that they can ask any questions they have about the Bible. Anything. If they have a hard time getting it out verbally, let them write it down and turn it in to you.

The catch is, you cannot simply answer from the top of your head. Show them the answers in the Bible, and if possible, in other places as well. Look in Christian books, websites, and videos. If your kids are like mine, they might take your word for it, but they are more likely to listen intently if it is someone new or entertaining who carries the message. (You will find a few ideas and resource links at the end of this article).

UTILIZE YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS IN TEACHING THEM BIBLICAL TRUTHS

This might not always be easy, especially if you have a child (like my six-year-old son) whose primary interest is vehicles – the bigger and louder, the better. But if you devote some

thought to it, you will be sure to find something that fits your child's interests and that you can use in helping them to understand the Bible.

For instance, both my boys are fascinated by different aspects of science. My younger son enjoys learning about storms and weather; in fact, his chosen future-vocation-for-the-week is to be a meteorologist. My older son likes to learn how things work, the physics side of science. When I have Bible studies with them, I try to weave in topics such as in the wonders of God's creation, the ideas of intelligent design, and the brilliant fine tuning of the universe.

READ THEM SNIPPETS OF BOOKS YOU READ ON APOLOGETICS OR CHRISTIANITY

Of course this might not go over well with your three-year-old, but if your child is six or seven (and older), they could benefit from hearing you share the things that you are learning, and the ways your faith is growing through what you read. Keep it short and simple, and try to stick to portions that have stories or that are in line with their interests. Who knows, what you read to them today might whet their appetite to rediscover those books in whole in years to come.

Some of the highly popular apologetics books are also available in kids' format, such as William Lane Craig's series "What is God Like?" and Lee Strobel's "Case for..." series for kids, and the student editions. [see [EQUIPPED Vol. 1, No. 1](#), page 52 for more suggestions].



OPENING THE WINDOW TO KNOWING THE BIBLE

HAVE FAMILY BIBLE QUIZ TIMES

Bible quizzes might not seem as educational as other activities might be, but kids love them, especially if they are competing against each other (or against you!). You can find plenty of questions online by searching for “Bible Quizzes for Kids.” Ensure that the questions are challenging enough to provide teachable moments in which you can pull out the Bible and read a passage or discuss a biblical event. At the same time, do not let the questions be so difficult that they cannot answer a single one. Kids like to do well in games (just like us adults).

You can use these times of fun and games to insert some overarching questions about the Bible and its veracity. For example, if the question was, “Who wrote the book of Ephesians?” it can lead to, “How do we know he wrote the book of Ephesians? What about the other books of the Bible? What about the books that are in the Bible and we are not sure of the author; how do we know we can *trust* those books?”

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

A friend of mine has a daughter who enjoys “leading” family devotions. She often volunteers to read the Bible story or devotional, and – when especially inspired – to expound on the passage with points or a summary of the story. My friend was concerned that her other children might not “get it” as well as if she led the message, but she did not want to quench her daughter’s eagerness. This mother found a happy medium in allowing her daughter to read (and lead) some parts of their Bible study time, while she takes care of the rest. My friend mentioned that this arrangement makes it easier for her to introduce new topics of study and have thought-provoking discussion with all four of her children.

In your case, following your child’s lead might mean sitting with him in the damp grass, stargazing, and finding that it

generates a discussion about creation or the awesomeness of God. It might mean saying “Yes” when your daughter asks to help you cook dinner (even if you would rather have a bit of alone time), because you know that when you work together it is the only time she opens up and begins talking about her feelings and her faith. Do not be afraid to follow your child’s lead; you might be pleasantly surprised with where it takes you.

INTRODUCE OTHER WORLDVIEWS

This is a tough one. It is not easy to know where to start in the area of letting your child know that not everyone is a believer and that some very smart and very talented people are fully convinced that God does not exist, or that the Bible is not reliable. How do you bring up the topic without hurting a child’s simple faith?

Do not be afraid to bring up this aspect of belief, but keep it geared to their age, understanding, and interest. When you do discuss other belief systems or the reasons some people do not believe in God or salvation, make sure that you end the discussion on a positive note and have answered any questions they have. If you feel that your child did not really understand a discussion or topic, lightly mention it a day or two down the line, asking him if he still had any questions or thoughts about it.

Last summer, my children watched a few of the “Creation Today” shows, a few of which addressed the question about how life began on earth. It brought up the theory of aliens spawning life on earth. My five-year-old son watched the videos along with my older two children, but I assumed he did not grasp much on that topic. Months later, when discussing the creation, he said, “Well, even if people thought aliens did plant trees on earth, who created the aliens?” He had remembered – and understood – that concept, and this introduction to an argument against creation had strengthened his belief in God.

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During such discussions, you can introduce “hot topics” such as tolerance, and the concept of “loving the sinner and hating the sin.” It is a challenge to find the right balance between the tolerance of varying worldviews, and the assignment of sharing one’s convictions and contending for the faith. At the same time, remember that one of the best ideals that you can inspire in your child through such dialogue is the greatest commission given to Christians: to share the Good News of salvation through faith in Christ to those who have not heard it.

PROOF THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUE

In a recent discussion with the kids about how we can know the Bible is true, my ten-year-old daughter was full of contributions about it. After all, she had been studying it all year long in Social Studies. “The Bible mentions leaders and events that can be traced historically,” she said, “and it also gives the names of generations of people and the decree of Caesar Augustus. If people were interested, they could trace it back through other historical books.” She also mentioned evidence such as clay pots unearthed that bore the words “City of David” and the Dead Sea scrolls.

My eight-year-old son’s thoughts were not so intricate. He simply said, “The Bible is proof that the Bible is true.”

Anyone who knows the compositions of logical arguments will recognize the circular logic of that statement. But at the same time, it does make perfect sense. The Bible has withstood 2,000 years of study, scrutiny, and attempts to refute its veracity, and it is still accepted as truth by millions of people worldwide. In 2014, a survey showed that **88% of American households own a Bible.**

“The Bible is proof that the Bible is true.” We all know the stories of Christians, authors, and apologists who set out to disprove the Bible and instead became convinced of its truth, such as C.S. Lewis, Lee Strobel, Josh McDowell, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Alister McGrath. My six-year-old

put it this way: “Some bad people decided to believe that God is real and the Bible is true.”

In the end, all of us who believe in the Bible as God’s Word, and in the amazing grace of God’s love through salvation in Christ fall into that category – “bad people who decided to believe that God is real and the Bible is true.” As we parents remain attentive for ways to root our children’s faith in a firm foundation and deepen their understanding of God and the Bible, we will be sure to find those windows of opportunity. There are steps we can take, and there are also things we can entrust to the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of our children, as we pray and commit their lives and future to the omniscient, omnipotent hands of a loving Father.

If you are on the lookout for helpful resources for your children – of all ages – here are a few places to start:

“**What’s in the Bible?**” This 13-part series contains not only an entertaining chronological telling of Bible history, but also conveys the overarching message of the Bible, which is rightly titled “God’s Rescue Plan.” One of the most helpful portions of the videos are the sections called “Tricky Bits,” in which children are introduced to difficult issues such as: Why are the punishments in the Old Testament so severe? Are they still true today? Why did God command the Israelites to overcome the nations in Canaan; did those people actually deserve to die?

Ratio Christi. Their mission is to strengthen the faith of college-age students throughout the world, yet they also have a blog with links to a vast collection of apologetics resources for kids of all ages.

For additional resources, read “*The Family Room*” in previous issues of **EQUIPPED**.



InterVarsity Press Hard Saying

InterVarsity Press • Hard Saying of the Day

John 20:1-8: What Happened at the Resurrection?

The story of the resurrection in John is quite exciting and seemingly straightforward. One woman shows up at the tomb, discovers it is open, informs the disciples, who investigate, and then meets first an angel and afterward Jesus. This straightforwardness is true enough so long as we look only at one Gospel. When we examine Matthew 28:1-8 or Mark 16:1-8 or Luke 24:1-10 we discover differing pictures. Can these pictures be put together? If they cannot, what does this mean for the truth of the accounts?

In responding to this issue, it would be helpful to look at the events in the four accounts.

When we examine these four accounts, we notice some similarities. First, all agree that the events happened around dawn, although they disagree about whether it was already light. Given that the events happened over a period of time, this difference is hardly significant. Second, all agree that Mary Magdalene was at least one of the ones discovering that the body had disappeared. The purposes of the individual narratives seems to determine how many other women are mentioned (with Luke, who has a special interest in women, noting the most women). Third, all agree that the women find an open, corpseless tomb. Matthew seems to imply that they also saw the opening of the tomb, although he may narrate the opening of the tomb as something that happened while the women were traveling and before they arrived at the tomb. None of the other Gospels mentions the guards, so how the tomb gets opened is less of a problem for them. Fourth, all agree that the

women saw one or more angels (only Luke has two). However, the angel in John's account appears to be functioning in a different narrative role than the ones in the other accounts. It is, perhaps, more accurate to say that John does not inform us if Mary saw anyone at the tomb before going to tell the disciples. What the angels say also differs, although in all cases the women are informed that Jesus is not there. In the various accounts they are told not to fear (and that they were afraid anyway), to report to the disciples and to meet Jesus in Galilee. Finally, all agree that the women left the tomb, and three of the four accounts note that they did inform the disciples. (Mark breaks off with verse 8, the longer ending probably not being part of the original text; it is debated whether an original ending of Mark has been lost or whether he intended to break off with the women in fear and the question of whether they would follow Jesus into Galilee hanging in the air.)

Furthermore, two of the accounts agree that the woman or women met Jesus, that they tried to hold on to him, and that he sent them on their way. However, John appears to put this meeting after Peter and the beloved disciple investigate, and Matthew puts it before the women report to the disciples.

What can we conclude from this data? First, it is possible to make this data into a coherent story. If we assume that the pre- or postdawn timing depends on whether one gives the time of the women starting their trip or their arrival at the tomb, if we assume that the earthquake and angelic descent happened before the women arrived at the tomb, if we merge what the angels say into one account, if we assume that the angels moved around,

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and if we assume that Mary Magdalene remained behind at the tomb while the others went and reported (and thus had a separate meeting with Jesus), one can make a single coherent account out of the various stories. Obviously, if there were two angels, one writer could report only one. Not every writer has to report all of the details another mentions. In other words, these are different stories but not necessarily conflicting stories. All could be true at the same time.

Second, while it is possible to make the data fit into a coherent story, we cannot be sure that we have the right coherent story. We have a jigsaw puzzle of information and cannot be sure that we have all of the pieces. Thus, since the Scripture has not given us a single unified story, we must be careful or else we will end up believing that our reconstruction is the truth. A reconstruction may be the truth or it may distort the truth. Perhaps if we had some other critical pieces of information we would make quite a different reconstruction.

Third, these stories are exactly what one would expect to discover after a significant event like the resurrection. The chancellor of this author's university died at the end of an address to the student body. Within an hour of the event a sociology professor had his thirty students each write down their own account of what had happened. Each was instructed to write as honest and detailed account as they could, given the limited time of the class period. When the accounts were later compared, there were numerous differences in detail, although all agreed that the chancellor had died at the end of his address. Presumably each Gospel writer had a series of stories about the resurrection to sort through. For example, we

know that Matthew knows and values Mark's account, but in the resurrection story he obviously has some independent information as well. The Evangelists selected and combined data to get the accounts that they give us. But even the beloved disciple in John is not an eyewitness of most of the events, so we are not surprised to find a lot of differences in their reporting what happened.

Finally, when we try to put the stories together, we miss the point of the authors. The church accepted into its canon four separate Gospels, viewing each as inspired by God. It did not put into the canon a harmony of these Gospels (although such existed). The fact is that each writer is trying to bring out his unique perspective and theological insights by the details he includes or leaves out (although, unless Matthew and Luke are differing from Mark, which we know that they knew, we often cannot be sure that the author actually knows a detail and so purposely leaves it out). Matthew wants to underline the miraculous and also explain a rumor that the body of Jesus was stolen. Luke stresses the fulfillment of the words of Jesus and yet the disbelief of the apostles. John, by focusing on a single character and her intimate discussion with Jesus, points out that in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus the promises of John 13--16 are fulfilled. Jesus cannot be held, for it is better for him to go to the one who is not only his Father but is now also our Father. It is when we look at the resurrection through such eyes, informed by the perspective of each Gospel writer, that we see not simply a miracle, nor even the fact of the resurrection, but the message the church has believed that God wanted to communicate in and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



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One of the supreme principles of modern thought is that there must be no great inexplicable "gaps" in Nature. This is the source of controversy in biology, where proponents of Intelligent Design claim that life reveals micro-machinery that naturalistic evolution cannot explain. Critics of ID reply that no, all such "gaps" can in principle be explained, and the more we understand the story of life, the more such gaps have and will continue to close. Likewise, those who affirm miracles say that events such as the Resurrection of Jesus, or the sudden healing of a loved one after prayer, cannot easily be displayed on naturalistic grounds. Skeptics again beg to differ: "Nothing to see here, move along, folks. We may not have all the details, but nothing has happened that cannot in principle be explained by deceit, inattention, cognitive dissonance, the Will to Believe, confused reporting, or perhaps a timely group hallucination or two. These are all events that happen commonly in the natural world, and as Hume explained, prosaic explanations are therefore infinitely more likely than a miracle." Which sounds like begging the question to believers.

The same debate has now raged for two centuries over the person of Jesus, and reports about his life. Here, it appears, lies a God-sized gap in Nature if ever there was one. A man who healed the blind! Who spoke with a voice of thunder, casting traders out of the temple as if the place belonged to him! Who fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes,

and raised the dead! Who claimed to be "one with the Father," and spoke as if all of Israel's history, indeed all world history, would somehow be consummated by his mission, which involved his own sacrifice and then ultimate conquest of that ultimate boogeyman, death!

All skeptical "historical Jesus" scholarship can be seen as a Herculean attempt to plug this gap in the universe. That includes the most famous and popular such attempts in our day, such as the work of scholars like Bart Ehrman and Paula Fredrikson, populists like Reza Aslan, the writings of the famous (or infamous) Jesus Seminar (and stars emerging from that constellation like John Crossan, Marcus Borg, Robert Funk, and John Spong), and the more radical writings of people like Richard Carrier and less-educated fellows on the "Jesus mythicist" fringe.

I believe Christians should look on their colossal effort to "plug the gap" as an act of kindness. Opponents of the Christian faith are doing wonderful work for truth: they sift ancient writings over hundreds of years (Thomas Jefferson was already part of the game), turning every stone along the Sea of Galilee, sifting every play, drama, epic and farce out of Athens, tunneling under the pyramids of Egypt, knocking on the doors of forest mystics along the Ganges, climbing the Tibetan plateau, in the world's greatest scholarly manhunt. Our skeptical friends (atheists, agnostics, Muslims, Hindus, New Agers, nominal Christians) have been

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searching high and low for centuries, to locate their "missing man:" someone, anyone, who faintly resembles Jesus of Nazareth.

Or, to put the matter another way, those who find the Jesus of the gospels both attractive and threatening would dearly like to find a genuine "Fifth Gospel." (A term that has been used for both the so-called "Gospel of Thomas" and for Fyodor Dostoevsky's masterpiece, *The Brothers Karamazov*).

To summarize what I think is the true state of affairs, the actual results of this massive manhunt, let me begin autobiographically. Then let's take a brief look at one of the most popular ancient comparisons to Jesus.

I have argued in three books that this search for a credible analogy to Jesus of Nazareth has utterly failed. (Or, from the Christian perspective, succeeded wildly, by showing just how huge the gap is between Jesus and all those the world would compare to him). I first set this argument down in a book called *Why the Jesus Seminar can't find Jesus, and Grandma Marshall Could*. After detailing twelve fatal errors committed by Jesus Seminar fellows, I described 50 characteristics that define the gospels, and make them unique. (Having to do with setting, style and literary qualities, character, moral teachings, pedagogy, social qualities, and theology). I then analyzed some works that are often compared to the gospels, including the "Gospel" of Thomas and Apollonius of Tyana, and found that when analyzed objectively, at best these supposed "closest parallels" only

resemble the real gospels on 6-9 out of 50 characteristics. (The closest parallel I have found so far is *The Analects of Confucius*, which is our best source for the life of Confucius – though it lacks many of internal qualities that demonstrate the general historicity of the gospels).

Later, for a Harvest House book called *The Truth About Jesus and the "Lost Gospels"* I analyzed all extant Gnostic "gospels." In doing that research, I found myself in for an even greater shock. It turned out that eminent scholars, having searched the ancient world high and low, offered up ancient "parallels" to the gospels that were as different from them in almost every meaningful way as a sea slug is from a falcon. "Great scholars" like Ehrman, Crossan, and Elaine Pagels had clearly fooled themselves, and their followers, to a monumental degree, seeing what just was not there, and missing what was. As C. S. Lewis memorably put it (so I quote roughly, from memory), "They claimed to see fern seed, and overlook an elephant standing fifty yards away in broad daylight."

Finally, in a chapter of *Faith Seeking Understanding* called "The Fingerprints of Jesus," I focused on five qualities that the gospels share: his aphorisms or sayings, how he treated the weak, the cultural transcendence of his teachings, his revolutionary attitude towards women, and the particular character of his miracles. I made the case that like fingerprints, "These traits help the gospels grip the mind of the reader and mark them as unique. They are not the



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sorts of things a disciple would add intentionally, or in some cases even could invent."

This "forensic" argument for Jesus and the gospels is distinct from, but I think complements, traditional and more purely historical arguments. (Such as those made by Craig Blomberg in his excellent *"The Historical Reliability of the Gospels"*). In the gospels, I argue, we meet a unique person, a person whose personality has imprinted itself powerfully on the minds of those who recorded the strange and wonderful events that took place in Palestine.

Skeptics OUGHT to easily find numerous real parallels to the gospels. Again and again they seem to have persuaded themselves that they have succeeded and found this unholy "holy grail." But all such parallels have turned out to be mirages, a room full of grails as fake as those in Indiana Jones. (But much more obvious!) Every such attempt collapses upon sober analysis, as Lewis again noticed decades before the Jesus Seminar was yet a twinkle in Robert Funk's eyes:

"I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends and myths all my life. I know what they are like. I know that not one of them is like this."

Space and time being limited, I cannot give a very full argument here. I will, therefore, focus briefly on one of the most popular alleged parallels: *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.

Apollonius is mentioned again and again by skeptics who hold him up as proudly as a fourth-grader with a five-pound trout. About 300 AD, the Roman governor Hierocles already compared the "god-like" Apollonius favorably to Jesus in his *Lover of Truth*. Like Jesus, Apollonius was said to have done miracles and to be "divine." Harvard Jesus scholar Paula Fredriksen likewise wrote that Apollonius "had numerous miracles attributed to him: spectacular healings,

exorcisms, even once raising someone from the dead," showing that Jesus' miracles were not "unprecedented or unique." Funk also advised us to compare stories about Jesus with "what was written about other teachers and charismatic figures of his time," placing Apollonius at the top of her list: "It is revealing to know that there are other stories of miraculous births, that other charismatic figures healed people of their afflictions and exorcised demons."

In my debates with Robert Price and Richard Carrier, both similarly pointed to Apollonius as a strong parallel to the life of Jesus. Carrier said, *"Now everything he says about the gospels is true of all kinds of faith literature in all religions . . . There are other examples that look more like the gospels, for example, the Book of Tobit. Or Plutarch's biography of Romulus. Or Philostratus' biography of Apollonius of Tyana. There are a lot of these examples of faith literature that look more like the gospels. And if you wanted me to sit down and research and find the most similar example, I could. But it's not necessary. There's plenty of examples like this that have all the characteristics of the gospels . . ."*

This "gap" in the universe has thus, in their eyes, been completely filled.

Until, that is, you take the time to actually read the *Life of Apollonius*, or any of these works. (The ones he gives here are quite ridiculous. Another, perhaps even more comical parallel Carrier gave elsewhere in the debate was *The Golden Ass* – the story of a man who accidentally bewitched himself and turned into a donkey until he ate some roses and turned back into a man). When one stops laughing, one has to shake one's head.

The sober historian will begin by reminding skeptics that not only did Apollonius live after Jesus, his "life" was written up some 150 years after the gospels. In fact, it was written

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by one Philostratus, for the Empress Julia Domna, an early 3rd Century patroness of the arts and opponent of Christianity. The story tells how a popular 1st Century philosopher journeyed (like Hercules) to exotic locales, from Africa to India. The author claimed to work from (among other sources) letters his subject wrote to kings and philosophers, and from the diary of his Boswell and most famous disciple, one Damis of Ninevah. (A city which, unfortunately, did not actually exist at the time of the diarist's alleged birth, however).

As I reminded Dr. Price, if you want parallels to Jesus to show that Jesus is really not so special, it is best to find some that are credibly independent of the gospels. If Apollonius were at all like Jesus, if his "miracles" were at all like the ones worked in the gospels, one very plausible hypothesis would be that Philostratus prettied him up to match his competitor. (A common tactic in religious entrepreneurship). Given that the book was sponsored by an opponent of Christianity, this hypothesis seems even more credible. And Philostratus may indeed have intended that at times.

But one need not stress this point too much, because if you read the two sets of writings, what cries out to the heavens, the "elephant" in the room, is that in fact, Apollonius is nothing at all like Jesus. Not even his miracles, ripped off as some likely were from the gospels, are much like those of Jesus.

I found that in fact, Apollonius of Tyana only shared six of 50 characteristics with the gospels fairly strongly, three weakly. Most of what they shared was not very important to historicity: that like Jesus, Apollonius was a teacher, and used a Q&A format to teach, and that the book tells stories.

Let me briefly detail eight points of difference that are historically relevant:

1. The gospels were written within the plausible life-times of Jesus' first followers. Apollonius was written some 150 years after most the events it allegedly records. Such a gap is of deep significance to historicity.
2. Jesus carries out a remarkable, and unique, dialogue with the Hebrew tradition. He is Jewish from head to foot, steeped in the traditions and faith of his people. But he also challenges that tradition to the core, citing and fulfilling a plethora of prophecies and types and images from the ancient Hebrew world. One cannot do justice to this unique quality of the gospels, to which I know of no parallels, in a few words.

Apollonius is not a dialogue with tradition, it is a monologue. In some ways a typical tourist, Apollonius floats dreamily across the world on a cushion of Greek arrogance. He is pleased to find his hosts in Babylon and India speak Greek. (This often happens in Greek novels, which center on lucky coincidences in far-away places). He visits all the sights, and takes the proper verbal snapshots, like backdrops to a James Bond flick. He is warmly welcomed by foreign priests, whom he instructs in superior (Greek, presumably) ritual.

Why does this matter to those who want to know whether the gospels are telling the truth about Jesus or not?

Apollonius is the kind of work a moderately clever writer could produce from his veranda, in pajamas and slippers. The gospels are not: they record an earth-shattering encounter with a unique historical person who challenged his beloved tradition to its core.



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3. The gospel writers relate many details about places correctly. Dozens of facts have been confirmed independently from Luke's description in Acts of the Apostles, for instance. By contrast, Philostratus sends us a series of post-cards from prominent cities on the edges of the ancient world. He describes how the citizens of Tarsus congregate by the river "like so many waterfowl," a tunnel under the Euphrates River, and a city in India hidden by what Star Trek fans might call a cloaking device. His account of geography and customs bare a relation to reality so long as his guru sticks to ground trampled by Macedonian army boots. But when he ranges past the conquests of Alexander the Great, Damis proves an "errant story teller:"

"His description of the country between the Hyphasis and the Ganges is utterly at variance with all known facts regarding it . . . Damis, in fact, tells nothing that is true about India except what has been told by writers before him." (JW MCrinkle, quoted in Phillimore, *Apollonius of Tyana*, preface)

Apollonius also describes special Indian fauna: griffins, phoenix, apes that cultivate pepper trees, sluggish, 30 cubit marsh dragons, and lively alpine dragons: "there is not a single ridge without one."

4. The Gospel narrative is mostly understated, "Just the facts, Ma'am" in a style that contrasts sharply with the words of Christ. Everyone else is a straight man, not because the disciples lack personality, but by contrast to the unforgettable central figure. "Master, master, we are perishing." "Are you the one, or should we look for someone else?" This distinguishes the gospels from *Job*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Candide*, or most ancient novels or plays, in which the animating genius appears not as a figure within the text, but the literary puppet-master who brings all characters to life. All the characters in

Job, for example, speak with the same gusto, even God. But in the gospels, the "spice" comes from the words of Jesus, not from Mark or even (usually) John.

This, too, reflects the fact that the gospel writers were talking about a real, memorable person, not merely telling pretty stories.

But Philostratus is telling stories. Apollonius contains much dialogue, in easy, colloquial tones, full of phrases like "But tell me," "By Zeus!" and the idiom of informal philosophical discourse: "So then . . ." "And what else could it be?" "We may rather consider this to be the case." The words of Apollonius do not much stand out from the text, in my opinion.

5. The gospels are full of realistic details, as even A. N. Wilson pointed out, when he was still a skeptic. It is often said that novelists can easily make up such details. But did they?

Philostratus wants us to know his subject was remarkable, and tries to show this through the reaction of onlookers. At one point, Apollonius took a vow of silence. But when he entered a town in conflict, he shamed it into making peace by a gesture and the look on his face. Another time, the sages discussed how boiled eggs keep a child from alcoholism. "They were astonished at the many-sided wisdom of the company." It is hard to believe anyone was so impressed by such folklore, even in the 1st Century.

One rare realistic touch comes when the sage talks to an Indian king through an interpreter. But this is spoiled by an earlier claim that he spoke all languages without studying. (As Eusebius already pointed out 1700 years ago).

KATA ΛΟΥΚΑΝ

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Besides crested dragons, spice-loving panthers (an addiction that proved their downfall), and 400 year-old elephants that shoot at enemies with their trunks, the hero's surprising fame in India, and his inane observations, which little justify that fame, allow the text to "work" for a modern audience only as a farce. Imagine the following dialogue between Steve Martin as Apollonius, and Bill Murray as a customs official, who at first takes Apollonius for a spirit:

Bill Murray: "Whence comes this visitation?"

Steve Martin: "I come of myself, if possible to make men of you, in spite of yourselves! All the earth is mine, and I have a right to go all over it and through it."

Murray: "I will torture you, if you don't answer my questions."

Martin (baring teeth): "I hope that you will do it with your own hands, so that you may catch it well, if you touch a true man."

Murray (batting eyes): "By the gods, who are you?"

Martin (with a magnanimous flourish): "Since you have asked me civilly this time and not so rudely as before, listen . . . I am Apollonius of Tyana . . . I shall be glad to meet your king."

Subdued, the official offers gold, which the sage refuses. Then he suggests a barbecue, but recalls with horror that Apollonius is a vegetarian. Finally he offers vegan hors d'ouvres -- unfortunately not organic:

Murray: "You should have leavened bread and huge dates as yellow as amber. And I can offer you all the vegetables that grow in the garden of the Tigris."

Martin: "Wild, natural vegetables are more tasty than the forced and artificial!"

The unintended comedy of Philostratus' work makes me rather glad that skeptics often appeal to it as a parallel to the gospels: I would have missed the fun of reading this unconsciously silly book otherwise. One wonders, though, how so many brilliant, highly-educated skeptics can seriously claim Apollonius as some sort of parallel to Jesus. They are none so blind.

6. Jesus noticed and cared about individuals. Where the disciples noticed a "Samaritan" "woman," Jesus saw a hurting individual with a history of failed relationships who hungered for God. He often noticed individuals – a lady who had endured much from doctors, a woman about to be stoned, a man of faith, Zaccheus the Short – where others saw members of a class – tax collector, blind beggar, guide.

Jesus possessed a quality rare in the healing profession, of looking a patient in the eye. With the sick, too, he saw not just a condition to attend, but a mother or brother or friend. If we possessed divine healing powers, would we think to ask a blind beggar who called on us, "What do you want?" Jesus did not dispense medicine to a procession of charity cases: he met and cared for human beings.

Richard Carrier claimed that "Apollonius of Tyana notices individuals," as Jesus does.

In fact, the disciples of Apollonius seem a nebulous lot. In his early days, the sage gathered seven, of whom nothing is said, apart from this parting shot when the philosopher set off for India: "I have taken council of the gods, and I have told you of my resolve . . . Since you are so soft, fare you well, and be true to your studies. I must go my way where Science and a higher Power guide me." But Apollonius' servants are forced to accompany him. Damius, whom he meets later in



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Ninevah, is probably no more than a rhetorical device. He serves two rhetorical purposes: to chronicle his master's adventures, and as foil to allow Philostratus to comment on sights along the way. When needed, extras appear, like the servants. They are just props.

When confronted by two men with rival claims to buried gold, Apollonius judges their claims from universal principles: "I cannot believe that the gods would deprive the one even of this land, unless he was a bad man, or that they would, on the other hand, bestow on the other even what was under the land, unless he was better than the man who sold it." With pompous disinterest in real people like that, no wonder Apollonius became a wandering sage.

So no, Apollonius does not really notice individuals – he's too busy preening and offering "wisdom."

As for that alleged wisdom:

7. Jesus' teachings were surprising, shocking, paradoxical, and challenging. They were always original and surprising in form or context. G. K. Chesterton explained:

"A man reading the gospel sayings would not find platitudes. If he had read even in the most respectful spirit the majority of ancient philosophers and of modern moralists, he would appreciate the unique importance of saying that he did not find platitudes. It is more than can be said of Plato. It is much more than can be said of Epictetus or Seneca or Marcus Aurelius or Apollonius of Tyana. And it is immeasurably more than can be said of most of the agnostic moralists and preachers of the ethical societies; with their songs of service and their religion of brotherhood."

The gospels startle a reader by "strange claims that might sound like the claim to be the brother of the sun and moon," "startling pieces of advice," "stunning rebukes," and "strangely beautiful stories." An objective reader:

"Would see some very gigantesque figures of speech about the impossibility of threading a needle with a camel or the possibility of throwing a mountain into the sea. He would see a number of very daring simplifications of the difficulties of life; like the advice to shine upon everybody indifferently as does the sunshine or not to worry about the future any more than the birds. He would find on the other hand some passages of almost impenetrable darkness, so far as he was concerned, such as the moral of the parable of the Unjust Servant. Some of these things might strike him as fables and some as truths; but none as truisms."

By contrast, Apollonius of Tyana is choked with platitudes: "Is there any form of consumption so wasting as (falling in love)?" "Blessed are you then in your treasure, if you rate your friends more highly than gold and silver." Apollonius says little that is unique, and is often simplistic, making raids into the inane.

But Philostratus is supposed to be one of the more clever writers of his time. Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John (according to our skeptics) are all anonymous writers, except maybe for Luke. Even on the traditional account, Jesus' disciples were a motley and mostly low-class crew.

So why do the sayings of Jesus shine so much brighter than those of the "great sage," as transcribed by a "leading writer?" (And why do his words stand out from everyone else in the gospels?) The simplest explanation is clearly the best: the words of Jesus truly do trace to

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one unique genius, and represent a genuine, early memory of the actual teachings of our Lord.

8. But what about miracles? Isn't Apollonius proof that the miracles of Jesus were nothing special?

Actually, I think such claims are proof, again, that some of our skeptical friends need to visit the eye doctor.

The uber skeptic, Morton Smith, argued that miracles appear in the gospels because, indeed, Jesus did such things:

"All major strands of the gospel material present Jesus as a miracle worker who attracted his followers by his miracles. All of them indicate that because of his miracles he was believed to be the Messiah and the son of a god. Anyone who wants to deny the truth of these reports must try to prove that within 40 to 60 years of Jesus' death all the preserved strands of Christian tradition had forgotten, or deliberately misrepresented, the most conspicuous characteristic of the public career of the founder of the movement." (Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?, 4)

Smith's own solution was to conflate "miracle" with "magic," which as I argue in *Jesus and the Religions of Man*, shows a failure in critical observation in itself. (Another way Smith dealt with Jesus was by inventing a saying of Mark to make Jesus look gay, probably as a gag). But this observation is accurate: Thomas Jefferson aside, one can't credibly take the miracles out of the gospels, anymore than one can de-bone a horse and still ride it.

Glenn Miller has shown in a detailed summary that for two and a half centuries before the time of Jesus, miracle workers were essentially absent from the Roman world. ("Copy-Cat Savior" at

ChristianThinktank.com). Skeptics like John Crossan often point to alleged parallels like Honi the Circle-Drawer and Hanina ben Dosa, who strictly speaking, did no miracles at all. One prayed for rain, and rain came in a timely manner. But even that was reported long after the fact, and after the writing of the gospels. The desperation on the part of those who would make Jesus less lonely, is palpable.

It is stunning that such seem to be the closest parallels skeptics can find, after an epic canvassing of ancient records. The search for an historical person who parallels Jesus on these points – the character and fact of his miracles – should convince us not that miracle workers were common, but exceedingly rare. No one seems to have found any records in the ancient world that parallel the realism, piety, practicality, and historicity of the miracle stories of Jesus.

So what about Apollonius' "miracles?"

Philostratus begins his work by reminding us that a philosopher can dabble in magic without tainting his credibility, as he says Plato, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Anaxagoras all did. For the most part, he prefers to describe Apollonius as philosopher rather than magician. Occasionally, though, his hero disappears or foretells the future. The Hindu gurus also practice levitation, for which a metaphysical explanation is given. The secret to virtue is not magic, but "science."

Often, when called on to cure people of an illness, Apollonius chose to rebuke them of sin, instead, and let them know they had what came to them, coming to them. Often this looks like blaming the victim.

Anthropologist Rene Girard even used Apollonius as a case study of scape-goating. When the people of Ephesus asked the good sage to save them from a



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plague, he did so by having them stone a beggar to death. Beaten to a bloody pulp, the beggar's eyes glowed red, thus revealing him to be a demon. Girard reacted to this "horrible miracle" by noting, "*Jesus is poles apart from Apollonius. Jesus doesn't instigate stonings; rather, he does all he can to prevent them.*" (Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, 54)

Philostratus also raised a girl from apparent, but possibly misdiagnosed death. Even those at the scene "could not decide" whether or not she had been alive.

So while Philostratus, writing long after the gospels and probably aware of them, claimed his sage did miracles, too, they were infrequent, and of a totally different character from those of Jesus. Parallels with Christ's miracles are therefore superficial, and this "proof text" is the exception that proves the rule. There simply are no serious parallels to Jesus in the ancient world, on this, as on many traits, or the sum total of those traits, even less.

For two thousand years, skeptics have tried to find some parallel to the life of Jesus, so as to render it less unique, and, if possible, dismiss it as "just another tall tale."

This attempt has utterly failed, revealing Jesus as unique indeed.

Apollonius of Tyana is a dreadful choice as a parallel Christ. It is about someone whose career mostly occurred after the life of Jesus, was written up hundreds of years later, perhaps purposely in order to compete with or undermine Christianity. Yet even so, read these two sets of ancient writings, and no comparison could be more incongruous. No one could be less like Jesus than the cocky, banal, self-satisfied, inane, and ridiculous Apollonius, who has nothing much to say that has not been said better on Saturday Night Live. Why is that? Philostratus is supposed

to the more cosmopolitan and clever writer. Something obviously much deeper and more remarkable is going on in the Gospels than mere literary cleverness.

It says something about the gospels that so many skeptics have spent so much time looking for parallels, yet the best they can come up with is something like *Apollonius of Tyana*. Divine fingerprints rest upon the gospels, of a visitation to which no remote parallel has yet been found.

By Dr. David Marshall. Portions are adapted from *Why the Jesus Seminar Can't Find Jesus, and Grandma Marshall Could* (Kuai Mu, 2005), and posts at *Christ the Tao blogspot*. See also his newest book, *How Jesus Passes the Outsider Test: The Inside Story* (2015).

William Booth (1829-1912)



William Booth founded the Salvation Army – a quasi military religious organization dedicated to offering humanitarian aid and tackling the material and spiritual poverty of the Victorian age. He converted to Methodism as a young adult and was a fervent believer in evangelical Christianity. The Salvation Army spread to become a global humanitarian charity seeking to provide material aid and spiritual salvation.

He was born in Sneinton, Nottingham, England in 1829. Although his family were relatively prosperous, his father later lost his money and was declared bankrupt. William grew up in a situation of poverty.

More about William Booth at [Biography Online](#).

Significance

[sig-nif-i-kuhns]: importance; consequence; meaningful

The Bible: So Misunderstood It's a Sin
—Kurt Eichenwald
(Newsweek)

Michael Kruger
Responds To:
The Bible: So Misunderstood It's a Sin (Part 1)

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Responds To:
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MATTHEW 24: DID JESUS GET IT WRONG?

Nick Peters • deeperwaters.ddns.net

In *Why I Am Not A Christian*, Bertrand Russell says:

"Having granted the excellence of these maxims, I come to certain points in which I do not believe that one can grant either the superlative wisdom or the superlative goodness of Christ as depicted in the Gospels; and here I may say that one is not concerned with the historical question. Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if He did we do not know anything about him, so that I am not concerned with the historical question, which is a very difficult one. I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospels, taking the Gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, he certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time. There are a great many texts that prove that. He says, for instance, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." Then he says, "There are some standing here which shall not taste death till the Son of Man comes into His kingdom"; and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching. When He said, "Take no thought for the morrow," and things of that sort, it was very largely because He thought that the second

coming was going to be very soon, and that all ordinary mundane affairs did not count. I have, as a matter of fact, known some Christians who did believe that the second coming was imminent. I knew a parson who frightened his congregation terribly by telling them that the second coming was very imminent indeed. The early Christians did really believe it, and they did abstain from such things as planting trees in their gardens, because they did accept from Christ the belief that the second coming was imminent. In that respect, clearly He was not so wise as some other people have been, and He was certainly not superlatively wise."

Even C.S. Lewis thought the passage where Jesus said this generation would not pass away until all these things had taken place was the most embarrassing verse in the Bible. Today, many an atheist chants this verse as if it was the death knell of Christianity. Jesus was even wrong about the time of His own return.

On the contrary, (in good Aquinas fashion) this verse is actually a great proof of the truthfulness of Christianity and the reliability of Jesus as a prophet.

Naturally, I cannot give an exhaustive look at what is going on, but let's take a brief look that will hopefully whet your appetites for more. To begin with, it's important to start where the apostles are. They are about to go into Jerusalem. They have no idea that Jesus is really going to die. He's told them, but they

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don't understand this regularly. They are sure Jesus is about to be named the King of Israel. He's the Messiah after all!

In the middle of visiting Jerusalem, they go to the temple and one of the apostles remarks about how impressive a sight it is. Jesus tells them that every stone will be torn down. We must realize that this is something monumental. It would be like hearing today that the White House had been destroyed. We would know something big had to happen. The temple represented God's covenant and relationship with His people. Upon hearing this, the apostles ask:

"Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

It's important to note what they did not ask. They did not ask about the end of the world. This world was created to be where God would dwell with His people. Matter is not evil. They also did not ask about the return of Christ. These people did not even have a concept of Jesus dying and leaving them. Why would they be asking about a return? What did they ask about? They asked about His coming. What did they mean? They meant His taking the throne of Israel and bringing about the age of the Messiah.

My argument from here on is that the statements Jesus makes fit better in a first century context than they do when reading in a modern one and they answer the question within the timeframe. I will contend that

when Jesus said "This generation" he meant it. That term is used regularly in Matthew and this is the final one. I am convinced Matthew is building us up to the final judgment that will come on the people who rejected Jesus and this happened in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

Many things in the list would not be contested. Yes. There were false Christs. Yes. There were earthquakes and famines. But what about this idea of the Gospel being preached to all nations? Did that happen? Paul thought it had. In the last part of Colossians 1:23 he argues:

"This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."

So what does it mean when the Gospel is preached to all nations? Does this get into Mormon territory with Jesus coming to the Indians in America and speaking to them there? No. It means that no more than the census saying that all the world should be taxed in Luke 2 means those same Indians were taxed. The nations and world can just as easily refer to the Roman Empire. We still use such terminology today. We can speak of World War 1 and 2 without meaning that every nation in the world was involved.

At this point in the message Jesus gives, He refers to Daniel. Yet if we read Daniel 7 where Daniel talks about the Son of Man, we find something interesting. The Son of Man is



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going to the Ancient of Days. He's not going down. He's going up. He's going up to receive His throne. This is one of the main mistakes we make. We assume by a coming that the apostles were asking about a coming to Earth, but they couldn't have been for they had no concept of Jesus leaving. The "second coming" then is not about the return of Christ at all. It's about Jesus being vindicated in taking His throne.

The warnings that follow fit well a first century context. Don't go back into the village to get clothing. Pray that it not be in the winter or on the Sabbath. Why at those times? Travel would obviously be much harder in the Winter and a Sabbath would only matter in Jerusalem where Sabbath gates would be closed making it harder to travel. If this was a worldwide event, what difference would it make? (And for that matter, to where would you flee?)

Ah. But Jesus says that will be a time of great distress unequalled from the time the world began and never to be equaled again. Surely this matches a great tribulation in the future and not what happened in 70 A.D.

First, what happened in 70 A.D. was pretty brutal. People would eat their valuables so they could keep them and leave, past the Romans. The Romans, however, started killing them and removing their valuables. Cannibalism was becoming a reality as food was that short. Forests were destroyed to crucify numerous Jews.

Second, this is Biblical hyperbole. When Hezekiah celebrates the Passover we read in 2 Chronicles 30:26 that:

"There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem."

Yet not too much later Josiah celebrates it and we read in 2 Chronicles 35:18 that:

"The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah, with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were there with the people of Jerusalem."

Did the Chronicler forget so quickly about Hezekiah? No. Not at all. This is just standard Jewish hyperbole and Jesus is doing the same thing to point to a dreadfully awful time.

Okay. Well what about some of those predictions that he's made? He's talked about the sun being dark and the moon turning to blood and the stars falling from the sky.

A great mistake we make in modern times is that we think the Bible should be read in a wooden literal sense. It shouldn't be. This is also Jewish symbolism. The language of the destruction of Babylon is spoken of in similar terms in Isaiah 13. In 2 Samuel 22, if we read it in a wooden literal sense, we'd think that at one point in David's life, God hitched up on old Gabriel and came out of a temple in Heaven shooting arrows at all of David's enemies. Strangely, this wondrous event never is recorded in the writings of Samuel. That is, unless it's not to be read in a literal sense but rather as David describing through powerful imagery God's judgment on his enemies though God did use natural means many times to do so, such as David and his men.

What about the sign of the Son of Man appearing in Heaven? I take this to mean rather the sign that the Son of Man has been vindicated in Heaven. The sign is ultimately the destruction of Jerusalem, but even if that was incorrect (as there are many interpretations of this passage as there are others like the book of Revelation) Josephus records many strange sightings that took place in Jerusalem leading up to the great war.

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What about seeing the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven? That was also what Jesus told Caiaphas he'd see. Note also that Jesus said that from then on, they would see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of Heaven.

Catch that. This wasn't going to be a one-time event. They would see it from now on. Note also Jesus would be sitting at the right hand and coming on clouds. Are we to think that Jesus is something like Goku from Dragonball sitting on a Nimbus Cloud riding down to Jerusalem? Will Caiaphas open up his window one day and see Jesus zipping by on a cloud?

No. This is judgment language. When the Bible talks about God coming to His people, many times it means that God will judge His people. The same is going on here. When Caiaphas is told that he will see Jesus coming, the message is "You think that you sit in judgment of me Caiaphas, but in reality, you will find that I sit in judgment on you."

When the Son of Man is said to be coming then, that means that He is going to be the judge of Jerusalem, and why is He doing that? Because Jerusalem abandoned the covenant when they allowed their Messiah to be crucified. The patience of God lasted for forty years, enough time for repentance, but it did not come. Destroying the Temple is a public way for it to be shown that the old covenant is gone and the new covenant is here.

Please note that this is no basis for anti-Semitism which has no basis in Christianity. The Jews that did the evil were judged. They were not guilty of a crime of being Jews, but guilty of a crime of rejecting Jesus. Jews today can just as much reject Jesus, but in the same way so can Gentiles reject Jesus today. The Jews today, however, can in no way be considered directly responsible for the death of Jesus.

(Save saying that our sins all got Him nailed on the cross, in which case there is no reason to single out the Jews).

What about sending forth His angels with a trumpet call? Angels can indeed refer to spiritual beings, but it can also refer to people like the apostles and to John the Baptist. It simply means a messenger. The trumpet call is not a literal call, but rather an announcement of kingship, like the kind of fanfare a visiting official from the Roman Empire would get. What is going on is that the messengers of Jesus are going out to the whole world to gather the ones that will hear the message. That gathering is still going on today.

Note also in all of this that you will not find descriptions that match the book of Revelation often. In fact, you will not find anywhere mentioned one figure known as the antichrist. (Interestingly, that term doesn't even show up in the book of Revelation). Many Christians would associate the return of Christ with the resurrection of the saints, and rightly so, yet nowhere in this passage do you find anywhere mentioned the resurrection of the dead. Why is that?

Because this is not about the return of Christ at all. This is about the sign that Jesus has been vindicated and He has started His rule as king of this Earth.

The view that I'm taking in this brief study is one that is referred to as Preterism. Many times you will hear it described as partial Preterism. This is a term that I reject. It is called that because it is believed that the full Preterists are those who believe that everything happened in 70 A.D. and by everything, I mean everything. They believe we are in the new Heavens and the new Earth and that the resurrection has already taken place. I in fact place these people outside the body of Christ because based on 1 Cor. 15, they would be making the resurrection of Jesus a



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spiritual resurrection instead of a physical one. I instead call them Neohymenaeans.

In my view, if that position is a full heresy, calling me a partial Preterist would be asking me to say I'm partially a heretic, just like it would be to describe someone as a partial Arian. No. I am quite simply a Preterist who looks forward to the coming resurrection of the dead and the return of Jesus Christ to this world.

I hold the view I do because I find it to be most in line with the ways I believe the Jews would have read their own Scripture and it is the most effective answer I know to the question of if Jesus was wrong about the time of His return. All the things did take place. Jesus was not talking about a future third temple. He was talking about a temple right there and if all those things never did take place, then they never will since He was talking about that temple and we would have to say that Jesus was wrong, which would have serious implications.

I invite the reader to go and read any books that they want to on the topic. Gary DeMar's book *Last Days Madness* is an excellent read on this topic. I have seen the work of my friend Dee Dee Warren who has a book coming out called *It's Not The End of the World*. It is the most thorough look that I have ever seen of Matthew 24 and will be an excellent explanation.

Ultimately, this comes down to a question of hermeneutics. While many of us in the West believe in a literal reading of Scripture, in a wooden sense, the ancients were not so much that way. The consequences of assuming the text should be clear to us and speak in a way we understand without seeking to understand the best scholarship in the field are grave. This kind of wooden approach was used to justify slavery in America. As Mark Noll says in *The Civil War As A Theological Crisis*:

"On the other front, nuanced biblical attacks on American slavery faced rough going precisely because they were nuanced. This position could not simply be read out of any one biblical text; it could not be lifted directly from the page. Rather, it needed patient reflection on the entirety of the Scriptures; it required expert knowledge of the historical circumstances of ancient Near Eastern and Roman slave systems as well as of the actually existing conditions in the slave states; and it demanded that sophisticated interpretative practice replace a commonsensically literal approach to the sacred text. In short, this was an argument of elites requiring that the populace defer to its intellectual betters. As such, it contradicted democratic and republican intellectual instincts. In the culture of the United States, as that culture had been constructed by three generations of evangelical Bible believers, the nuanced biblical argument was doomed."

Do not let this claim trouble you about Jesus being wrong. The truth is, as always, Jesus was right. Judgment did come and we can rightly interpret Scripture and accept His words entirely.

The Reliability of the Bible
—Christian Apologetics Alliance

Historians and Miracle Claims
—Dr. Michael Licona

The Historical Reliability of the Bible: An Introduction
—Sarah Geis

Addressing Claims of Contradictions in the Bible
—Sarah Geis

The Reliability of the Bible

-Dr. Michael Licona

*The A, B, C, D, and E
of Defending the
Gospels*
-Dr. Michael Licona

*How Did the Bible
Become Compiled into
One Volume?*
-Dr. Michael Licona

*The Basis for Our
Biblical Text
Manuscripts*
-Dr. Michael Licona

*Three Major Objections
to the Historical
Reliability of the
Gospels*
-Dr. Michael Licona

*What Makes a Bible
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-Dr. Michael Licona
(Come Reason Ministries)

*Why are there
Differences in the
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-Dr. Michael Licona

*Why are there
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*Contradictions in the
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*Can We Know Who
Wrote the Gospels?*
-Dr. Michael Licona
(One Minute Apologist)

*When Were the Gospels
Written?*
-Dr. Michael Licona
(One Minute Apologist)



THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

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INTRODUCTION

For 98% of the New Testament, we can know what was in the original based on what we have in manuscripts today.¹ “In terms of extant manuscripts,” Daniel B. Wallace wrote a couple of years ago, “the New Testament textual critic is confronted with an embarrassment of riches.”² This is not the case for some other ancient literature. For example, Stephen J. Harrison at the turn of the century noted that Catullus’ *The Carmina* “remains extensively corrupt despite the attentions of generations of scholars.”³ He noted that a sizeable portion of Catullus manuscripts had “descended from a late and corrupt copy which was already the despair of its earliest scribes.”⁴

But what are we to make of our approximately 2,600,000 pages of Greek New Testament manuscript material?⁵ The issue of the preservation of Scripture comes down to

several factors, including the quantity and content of Scripture manuscript copies. One measurement of these factors, the bibliographical test, aims at establishing the **transmission reliability** of a text based on the quantity and quality of the discovered manuscripts.

A key factor examined concerning the quality of a manuscript is its closeness in age to the original documents (a.k.a., “autographs”).⁶ The issues of **earliest manuscript date of origin** and **quantity of manuscripts discovered** have typically been points of contrast between the New Testament (collectively) and other works of literature that originated within 500 years or so before or after the New Testament. Ultimately, the bibliographical test is significant in helping demonstrate that we have reasonable justification for having confidence in the preservation of Scripture and its contents.

1 Daniel B. Wallace. *The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?* Bibliotheca Sacra, April-June, 1991, 157-8. This can be measured partly via comparing a majority text to modern critical texts and apparatus notes.

2 Daniel B. Wallace. “Has the New Testament Text Been Hopelessly Corrupted?” In *Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture*, eds. Steven B. Cowan and Terry L. Wilder (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H, 2013), 151. (This is chapter six in the book.)

3 Stephen J. Harrison. *The Need for a New Text of Catullus*, 1999-2000, 18. users.ox.ac.uk/~sjh/documents/mannheim.doc. Accessed May 23, 2015. Web. Catullus manuscript counting has not moved forward much since 1997; Catullus textual criticism research does not appear to have moved forward much since 2007. See, David Konstan. *Catullus: Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

4 *Ibid.*, 3.

5 Daniel B. Wallace. *New Testament Bible Reliability* by Daniel Wallace, PhD. Posted by ShulamiteFire Incendiumata Amoriolo. 2013. Accessed May 29, 2015.

6 Clay Jones. *The Bibliographical Test Updated*. 2013. Accessed April 22, 2015.

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Traditionally, many Christians have contended that if historians will accept that another ancient writing has been accurately transmitted even though we only have discovered a few manuscripts of it (and at that, ones written centuries after the originals), then historians should accept the Bible as being preserved, given the early and many New Testament manuscripts already discovered.⁷

FIVE FACTORS ON PRESERVATION CERTAINTY

Nevertheless, the issue of certainty of transmission actually falls under the eyes of the textual critic. A few general principles go a long way in helping us determine our certainty or justified confidence concerning what an original ancient document included.

First, the greater the **quantity of discovered manuscripts**, the greater our certainty. According to Daniel Wallace, researchers have discovered at least “128 papyri, 322 majuscules, 2926 minuscules, and 2462 lectionaries” of New Testament Books not including the over 18000 manuscripts that are in languages other than Greek.⁸

Second, the greater the **amount of content per manuscript**, the greater our certainty. Ultimately, scholars are endeavoring to determine the content of the original or earliest manuscripts.⁹ This is done in part through a comparison of manuscripts. We cannot examine whether or not a manuscript in a given passage is identical or similar to the same passage in a different manuscript unless we have that passage in both of the manuscripts.

Third, the greater the **geographical distribution of manuscripts**, the greater our certainty. Geographical distribution of ancient manuscripts helps our confidence by offering us multiple lines of manuscript transmission. Even if one line of transmission incurred a corruption of a particular passage in manuscript copies, another line of transmission may not have been affected.

Fourth, **the closer the age to the original document's age**, the greater our certainty. Over time, from generation to generation of copies, the quality of a manuscript is more likely to decrease. More errors are likely to have “crept into the text,” so to speak. By contrast, manuscript fragments close in time

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Daniel B. Wallace. *Latest Greek New Testament minuscules: Gregory-Aland 2916, 2925, and 2926*. CSTNM. August 2013. Accessed May 1, 2015.

⁹ F. F. Bruce. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5th ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), Ch. 2.



THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

to the original are generally less likely to have as many scribal errors per passage.

Fifth, discovered **commentary quotations** of passages from a work of literature also increase our certainty concerning the content of that work of literature. The quotations offer another glimpse at what the texts may have stated in manuscripts that were around when the commentators were alive. Consequently, textual critics can analyze those quotes and compare them to other manuscript copies to get a better handle on what the original text stated.

QUANTITY OF DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPTS CONCERNS

Nevertheless, some degree of caution in research and presentation of the bibliographical test is warranted in several areas. Assessing the proper quantities of manuscripts discovered for ancient writers can be particularly daunting. Several reasons contribute to the obstacles.

Database Confirmed Manuscripts of Selected Sources (LDAB, Schoenberg, etc., 2015)		
Tab. 1	History (Thucydides)	In Verrem (Cicero)
P. Amst. 1 9-10	P. Oxy. 1 or 16 [i.e., P. Oxy. 4]	Lowe, CLA 4 445 [later destroyed]
Egerton MS 2624	P. Oxy. 2	Lowe, CLA 1 115
Egerton MS 2625		(Holkham) Add MS 47678
AfP 34	P. Oxy. 3	P. land. 5 90 Ro
Wiener Studien 7	P. Oxy. 6	PSI 1 20
P. Ant. 1 25	P. Oxy. 9	P. Oxy. 8 etc
LDAB ID# 7629	P. Oxy. 10	ZPE 54
ZPE 109	P. Oxy. 11	Kings MS 22
ZPE 29	P. Oxy. 13	Burney MS 158
Ktema 27	P. Oxy. 15	Harley 2682 (Cologne Cicero)
G. F. Bodmer 27 + 45	P. Oxy. 17	Gallica Latin 7775 etc.
ZPE 153	P. Oxy. 34	Gallica Latin 7822
P. Yale 1 19	P. Oxy. 36	SCHOENBERG 739
PSI 16 [i.e., ZPE 49]		SCHOENBERG 2133
P. Hamb. 2 164	P. Oxy. 45	SCHOENBERG 66121
P. Harris 1 4 1	P. Oxy. 47	SCHOENBERG 81154
BKT 9	P. Oxy. 49	SCHOENBERG 126168
BKT 10 7	P. Oxy. 57 [i.e., PSI 11]	SCHOENBERG 141619
MS 11727		SCHOENBERG 143555 (Papal)
LDAB ID# 131625	P. Oxy. 61	SCHOENBERG 146497
Hermopolis manuscript	P. Oxy. 71	SCHOENBERG 152447

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

First of all, as time progresses, archaeologists and other researchers discover new manuscripts as well as finally get around to reading and publishing findings on manuscripts that have been stored for years. This means that the numbers are increasing and that, consequently, one's own numerical count eventually becomes outdated. The very databases that enable us to see so many more manuscripts documented reveal how far behind pre-database estimates really were.

Second, in some cases, a database may lack documentation for some of the manuscripts discovered. Manuscripts held in private hands or private collections might also be missed.

Third, manuscript fragments from one individual manuscript in some cases are housed in separate museums or collections. This can lead to an inflation of the quantity of manuscripts registered if one chooses to only count manuscripts by current museum holdings and collections. Thus, as it concerns the quantity of manuscripts, if possible, it is better to go by the publication data than merely by registered museum manuscript information.

Fourth, some works listed as manuscripts in catalogues, upon closer inspection, turn out to be printed copies and not handwritten manuscripts. Such copies should not be included in the bibliographical test.

Moreover, some considerations ought to be taken into account. It is apparent that in modern times, individuals still copied out manuscripts of the Old Testament.

Otherwise, we would not have manuscripts of the Old Testament dating from the 19th century.¹⁰ In the interest of all fairness, it is best to omit such manuscripts from our numbers, as well as other manuscripts that date so late. They might provide some degree of interest to textual critics, but their value as it concerns the bibliographical test is highly questionable.

DATE OF ORIGIN CONCERNS

Now, as Larry Hurtado mentioned, paleographer Pasquale Orsini has proposed some modest revision suggestions to the dating of some New Testament manuscripts. Moreover, Orsini has affirmed that the primary aim of the scholar should be to have as accurate dating as possible and then draw one's doctrinal or apologetic conclusions, rather than simply try to argue for the earliest plausible dating.¹¹ His point should not be ignored.

THE NEED TO UPDATE THE TEST

In 2014, scholar Brice C. Jones brought up two key points concerning how the Christian apologetics community has handled the issue of manuscript comparison. First, some Bible enthusiasts have made statements that risk conflating the issue of the preservation of Scripture with the issue of the inerrancy of Scripture. Second, the Christian apologetics community has in recent years been behind as it concerns the scholarly counts of manuscripts by several authors, including Homer and Herodotus.¹²

10 Josh McDowell and Clay Jones. *The Bibliographical Test*, 9. Accessed April 21, 2015.

11 Larry Hurtado. *The Dating of NT Manuscripts: An Important Recent Analysis*. March 8, 2013. Accessed April 21, 2015.

12 Brice C. Jones. *John MacArthur on Homer, Herodotus and the New Testament*. January 19, 2014. Accessed 2015.



**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

Tab. 2 Historical Bibliographical Test Numbers				
Ancient Writer or Source	Ancient Works of Literature	Quantity of manuscripts		Years Gap from original
Aristotle	<i>Poetics</i> (?)	49 ^S		~1400 ^S
Aristophanes	[unlisted]	10 ^S		~1200 ^S
Demosthenes	Speeches	8 ^S	340+ ^C	~800 ^S ~250 ^C
Euripides	[Play not listed]	10 ^S		~1300 ^S
Flavius Josephus ^J	<i>Jewish War</i>	12+ ^M		~200-300 ^M
Gaius Plinius Secundus (Pliny the Elder)	<i>Natural History</i>	7 ST	~200 ^C	~750 ST 400-500 ^C
Gaius Valerius Catullus (Catullus the poet)	<i>The Carmina</i>	3 ^{Rupert Lineage}		~1600 ^{Rupert Lineage}
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	643 ST	1,549 ^B	~500 ST ~400 ^C
		1757+ ^C	~1900 ^H	
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	8 ST	53 ^I 109+ ^C	~1300 ^{SC}
Julius Caesar	<i>Galic Wars</i>	10 ST	251 ^C	~1000 ST ~950 ^C
New Testament		~24000^S		40^C
Plato ^{II}	<i>The Republic</i> etc.	7 ^S	210 ^C	~1200 ^S ~1300 ^C
Pub. Cornelius Tacitus	<i>Annals of Tacitus</i>	20 ^S	33 ^C	~1000 ^S 700+ ^C
Sophocles the playwright	Plays	193 ^{CS}		~1400 ^S ~200 ^C
Suetonius ^{III}	<i>The Twelve Caesars</i>	8 ^S	Bottleneck! ^G	~700-800 ^G
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	8 ^{MST}	10+ ^C or ~96 ^C	1300 ST 150 ^C
Titus Livius Patavinus (Livy the historian ^{IV})	<i>History of Rome</i>	20 ^S	~100+ ^C	400 ^C
Titus Lucretius Carus (Lucretius the poet)	<i>On the Nature of Things</i>	2 ^S		1100 ^S
T=Focus on the Family's Truth Project video 6 S = Matt Slick/CARM, 2001? (and Rich Deem) B = Brice C. Jones, 2014 C = Clay Jones, 2013 G = Franziska Gasser [University of Zurich] M = McDowell and McDowell, <i>More Than a Carpenter</i> , 2009		H = Center for Hellenistic Studies (Harvard Uni.) ~ = approximately + = at least > = greater than Rupert Lineage. "Is The Bible Reliable?" http://www.newchristian.org.uk/ncbibleok.html . Accessed May 14, 2015.		
I. Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell. <i>More Than a Carpenter</i> (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale, 2009), 72.		II. The number of 210 manuscripts is derived from the Plato Microfilm Project.		
III. Curt Symansky, Franziska Gasser, and Edwin P. Menes. "Where is the Oldest Manuscript Copy of Suetonius?" 1996. https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/sci.classics/5fD_26bk5k0 . Accessed April 23, 2015. According to Classics professor Franziska Gasser, "Although over 200 manuscripts are extant, <i>De vita Caesarum</i> seems to have survived into the ninth century in a single manuscript."		IV. Clay Jones noted that about 60 direct copies in addition to the about 100 exist, copies which do not substantially enhance our knowledge of what Livy's text originally was.		

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

Indeed, with a thorough investigation into the claims put forth by Bible advocates and apologists, from CARM to God and Science to *The Truth Project*, one can find information not accounting for a substantial quantity of manuscripts.¹³ So the data put forth by the apologetics community in the 2000s is, as of the 2010s, out-of-date. Now, some well-known Christian theologians and apologists—from Os Guinness to R. C. Sproul to Ravi Zacharias—appeared on *The Truth Project*.¹⁴ So this includes apologetics efforts that were professionally done. While the points that those apologists raised in the series were legitimate, readers would be much helped by having access to more accurate data concerning the comparison of ancient manuscripts.

In table 2 are the CARM and *The Truth Project* numbers of manuscripts and their earliest date of origin listed or implied.¹⁵ *More Than a Carpenter*, written originally in 1977 but updated as late as 2009, also gave information concerning manuscript quantities. However, its data on

that was based partly on F. F. Bruce's scholarship done way back in 1964, when Bruce argued that "no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt" on the grounds that "the earliest manuscripts of their works... are over 1,300 years later than the originals."¹⁶ Now, in contrast, researchers have uncovered manuscripts from Herodotus within 400 years of the original.¹⁷

UPDATING THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST

Fortunately, a few in the apologetics and scholarly community have been striving to update the information. In addition to scholar Brice C. Jones, Christian apologist Dr. Clay Jones and the *Christian Research Journal*¹⁸ have tried to give updated data.¹⁹ Dr. Jones, for example, mentions that at least 27 copies of the *Death of Socrates* survive and that 70 manuscripts of Plato's *The Republic* have been discovered.²⁰ This revision is also aimed at updating the bibliographical test.

13 Rich Deem. *Is Our Copy of the Bible a Reliable Copy of the Original?* Accessed April 29, 2015. Also, compare this article's charts.

14 Focus on the Family. *The Truth Project*. 2004.

15 Matt Slick. *Manuscript evidence for superior New Testament reliability*. Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry. 2001? Accessed April 21, 2015. Their chart was adapted partly from a work by Norman Geisler in 1976.

16 Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell. *More Than a Carpenter* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale, 2009), 71 and 172.

17 See No. 12.

18 Clay Jones. *The Bibliographical Test Updated*. *Christian Research Journal*, vol. 35, no. 03, 2012. Accessed April 23, 2015.

19 Clay Jones. *The Bibliographical Test Updated*. October 1, 2013. Accessed April 21, 2015. See also, Clay Jones. "The Bibliographical Test Updated." *Christian Research Journal* 35:3, 32-37.

20 See No. 10, p. 7.



**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

Tab. 3		2015 Bibliographical Test Numbers	
Ancient Writer or Source	Database Records	Quantity of manuscripts	Years Gap from original
Aristotle ^I [excluding many commentaries]	29+ works ^W	>57 ^{L+} British Library+U. of Penn.	~1400 ^S ~400 ^L for <i>Topica</i>
Aristophanes of Byzantium	<i>De animalibus</i> etc.	10 ^S	~300-350 ^L
Bacchylides the poet ^{II}	various lyric poems	~70 ^W [plus citations]	~300-500 ^L [many mss. 500-600 ^L]
Demosthenes ^{III}	34 works ^L	340+ ^C	~150-200 ^L
Euclid ^{IV}	<i>Elements</i>	~86 ^{L+} Schoenberg+ Folkerts	~450 ^L
Euripides ^V	all 20+ plays; 69 works attributed	213+ ^L [out of many different works]	~200 ^L for <i>Hippolytus</i> ; for many, ~700-1000 ^L
Flavius Josephus ^{VI}	<i>Jewish War</i>	~56 ^R Roger Pearse	~200-300 ^{ML}
Gaius Plinius Secundus (Pliny the Elder)	<i>Natural History</i>	~200 ^C	400-500 ^C
Gaius Valerius Catullus ^{VII} (Catullus the poet)	<i>The Carmina</i>	120+ [only 5 of them are important mss.]	~200 ^L
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	~2,200 ^{Daniel B. Wallace}	~400 ^C
Herodotus ^{VIII}	<i>History</i>	109+ ^C	~300-400 ^L
Julius Caesar	<i>Galic Wars</i>	251 ^C	~950 ^C
Marcus Tullius Cicero ^{IX}	<i>In Verrem</i>	21+ ^{L+} Schoenberg	~100-180 ^L [~450 ^L for some mss.]
New Testament [<i>Gospel of John</i> : >2,402] [<i>Gospel of Matthew</i> : >2,283][<i>Acts</i> : >702]		5,830+^C Greek 18,500+^C Others	Some, less than 80 [Some tiny frag.]
Old Testament		~17,000 pre-19 th Cent.	Some under 600 ^{DSS}

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

Philo Judaeus ^X	<i>Leg. All. (Allegorical Interpretation)</i>	>1	~200 ^{LW} [P. Oxy. 1173]
Plato ^{XI}	<i>Tetralogies</i> (e.g., <i>The Republic</i>)	210+ ^C	~500 ^L
Pub. Cornelius Tacitus (Tacitus the historian)	<i>Annals of Tacitus</i>	33+ ^C	700+ ^C
Publius Ovidius Naso ^{XII} (Ovid the poet)	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	400+ ^W	~700 ^L
Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil the poet)	<i>Bucolica</i> (<i>Eclogues</i>)	40+ ^{L+Brit. Lib.+Gallica+BBOAC}	~50-150 ^L [tiny frag.]
	<i>Aeneid</i>	131+ ^{L+Brit. Lib.+Gallica+BBOAC} [maybe 190+ mss.]	Within 100 ^L [tiny frags.] [many mss. ~500 ^L]
Shepherd of Hermas^{XIII}		>36 ^{L+Ehrman & Holmes}	Less than 80^L [P. land. 1 4] [<i>Mandata</i> section]
Sophocles the playwright	Many dozen plays (e.g., <i>Niobe</i>)	193+ ^{SC}	~150-250 ^L for <i>Niobe</i> for many plays, ~400+ ^L
Theodosius II	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>	12+	~100 ^L
Thucydides ^{XIV}	<i>History</i>	39+ ^{L+British Library} [99+ fragments]	120-220 ^L
Titus Livius Patavinus ^{XV} (Livy the historian)	<i>History of Rome</i>	~100+ ^C	~300 ^L
Titus Lucretius Carus (Lucretius the poet)	<i>On the Nature of Things</i>	~30 ^{Leonard, Smith & Butterfield}	Less than 80^L
L or LDAB = Leuven Database of Ancient Books + = at least ~ = an estimated Frag. = fragment Mss. = manuscripts		C = research by Clay Jones Daniel B. Wallace (see 2 nd footnote of article) M = research by McDowell DSS = Dead Sea Scrolls / Qumran manuscripts W = Wikipedia or other modern encyclopedia G = Glenn Davis (ntcanon.org)	



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I. More commentaries on Aristotle may exist than actual Aristotle manuscripts. LDAB counts 40 manuscripts: 3 of *Topica*; 1 of *Protrepticus*; 1 of *Politica*; 14 undetermined; 1 of *Meteorologica*; 2 of *Historia Animalium*; 1 of *Ethica Nicomachea*; 1 of *De Nilo*; 1 of *De interpretatione*; 1 of *De caelo*; 6 of *Categoriae*; 4 of *Athenaion Politeia*; 2 of *Analytica Priora*; 2 of *Analytica Posteriora*. British Library also included 10 additional manuscripts: 2 of *Ethica Nicomachea* (MS 6790 and MS 14080); 2 of *Categoriae* (MS 10040 and Burney MS 100); 1 of *De anima* (Royal MS 16 CXXV); 1 of *Historia Animalium* (MS 10065); 1 of *Topica* (MS 4382); 1 of *Probelmata* (MS 23927); 1 of *Physica* (Harley MS 3487); 1 of *De Natura Animalium* (Harley MS 3022). Schoenberg Collection yields 3 more: *Physica* (LJS 493); various (LJS 223); *Metaphysics* (LJS 25). University of Pennsylvania yields more: various (Codex 776 and Codex 765); *Ethica Nicomachea* (Codex 760); *Metaphysics* (Codex 763).

II. Wikipedia. "Bacchylides."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacchylides#Bacchylides.27s_poetry_.E2.80.93_how_it_survived. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015. Web.

III. One 3rd century B.C.E. manuscript fragment of *Adversus Leptinem* has been discovered.

IV. See, Menso Folkerts. *Euclid in Medieval Europe*. 1989.

https://math.berkeley.edu/~wodzicki/160/Euclid_in_Middle_Ages.pdf. Accessed May 13, 2015. Folkerts noted about 33 manuscripts plus about 50 manuscript copies derived from one particular somewhat late manuscript. LDAB noted 6 manuscripts; Schoenberg noted about 30 manuscripts. Some manuscripts counted by more than one source or database.

V. The assessment for Euripides may vary depending on which of the about 20 works of literature attributed to him are counted. Many 2nd century C.E. manuscript fragments of Euripides appear. One tiny fragment of *Hippolytus* (LDAB ID# 1035) appears five centuries earlier, however (3rd century B.C.E.). With possible repeats included, Leuven Database listed over 210 entries. One manuscript attributed to Euripides (LDAB ID# 1042) is dated at 3rd or 2nd century B.C.E.

VI. Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell. *More Than a Carpenter*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale, 2009, p. 72. The Leuven Database is more specific concerning the early manuscript (i.e., **MPER N.S. 3 36**).

VII. Daniel Kiss. "Manuscripts of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius in the Library of the Aragonese Kings in Naples," pp. 4-5.

https://www.academia.edu/6815996/Manuscripts_of_Catullus_Tibullus_and_Propertius_in_the_library_of_the_Aragonese_kings_in_Naples. Accessed 23 May 2015. See also, Douglas Ferguson Scott Thomson. *Catullus Edited with a Textual and Interpretative Commentary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

VIII. Leuven Database includes a 1st century B.C.E. manuscript formally published from 2002-2005 C.E. from BASP 39 and BASP 42.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

- IX.** Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts. "Title: Orationes In Verrem." http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/schoenberg/search.html?fq=title_facet%3A%22Orationes+In+Verrem%22. Accessed May 1, 2015. LDAB listed 6 manuscript fragments. University of Pennsylvania Libraries listed 4 manuscripts. Others identified through additional searches.
- X.** LDAB search returned only the one earliest manuscript of *Allegorical Interpretation*. Royce notes that, when all manuscripts of Philo's various works are collected, "several scores of Greek manuscripts" written in "the tenth to the fourteenth centuries" appear (Royce, page 63).
- XI.** The number of 210 manuscripts is derived from the Plato Microfilm Project. The Leuven Database lists at least two 2nd century C.E. manuscript fragments of *The Republic* (P. Oxy. 47 and P. L. Bat. 25 3). One tiny manuscript fragment from the 2nd century B.C.E. might be from either Psalm 122 or Plato's *The Republic*. If from *The Republic*, then the 500 year estimate would need to be revised to ~ 250.
- XII.** See Tarrant, R. J. P. *Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoses*. Oxford, page vi. A fragment of Ovid's work *Ex Ponto* dates to about 450 years after the original.¹
- XIII.** Wikipedia. "Oxyrhynchus Papyri." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxyrhynchus_Papyri. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015. See also, Glenn Davis. "Shepherd of Hermas." http://www.ntcanon.org/Shepherd_of_Hermas.shtml. Accessed 30 Apr. 2015.
- XIV.** The LDAB lists about 96 entries for Thucydides, including at minimum 36 distinctly separate manuscripts. Manuscript **P. Oxy 17** has quotations from several ancient authors, according to the database. These authors include Thucydides, Aeschines, Aristoteles, Demosthenes, Herodotus, and Plato. Geneva Fondation Bodmer manuscripts discovered at one time included a snippet from Daniel 1, Theodotion, and Thucydides.
- XV.** Clay Jones noted about 60 direct copies in addition to the about 100 manuscripts; the copies do not substantially enhance our knowledge of Livy's original text. The LDAB lists one fragment (i.e., **PSI 12 1291**) of *Ab Urbe Condita* (i.e., "Epitome of the City" [a.k.a., "History of Rome"]) as being from the 3rd century C.E.



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SOURCES AND DESIGN FOR CHART INFORMATION

The pursuit of recent numbers required this revision to make use of many varied sources. The British Library, Leuven Database of Ancient Books, Gallica (National Library of France), and the University of Pennsylvania (including the Schoenberg Collection) are the main database sources for the chart data. Some information comes from outside of actual database entries. For example, as Jason BeDuhn and Geoffrey Harrison note for the Tebessa Codex, the writer quoted from all of Paul's epistles "except *Romans, Galatians, Philemon, and Second Timothy*," though at least one allusion to *Romans* is present.²¹ Some may also take interest in collection manuscripts such as the Nahuatl Bible from the Schøyen Collection.²²

In the interest of expanding the bibliographical test into something more meaningful, this revision incorporates writers generally not included in the comparisons but are worth including, such as Ovid, Cicero, Virgil, and Theodosius II. Questions arising as to the manuscript transmission lines for manuscripts of *The Twelve Caesars* presented doubts concerning whether the inclusion of Suetonius in the bibliographical test would actually be meaningful. Consequently, as Clay Jones also omitted it, Suetonius is not in the revised list. Philo is included with some reservation.

CUES FOR EXAMINING THE TABLES

Table endnotes are included at the finale of the tables and identified by superscript Roman numerals. Abbreviations are also noted in those endnotes.

In reading table 2, for example, "49^s" for Aristotle should be read, "49 manuscripts according to Matt Slick," the "~200^c" for Pliny the Elder should be read, "Approximately 200 manuscripts according to Clay Jones," and "~250^c" for Demosthenes should be read, "Approximately 250 years, according to Clay Jones."

In table 3 are the amounts that I would recommend we update to, but with a degree of reservation. A few other sources not traditionally considered are still useful in teaching some principles. For example, although we appear to currently have only a few manuscripts of *On the Nature of Things*, by Titus Lucretius Carus, we have one manuscript that reportedly dates within 80 years of the original.²³ Admittedly, some skepticism is applied to some manuscripts that are dated early, and it is possible that the dating assigned for that manuscript may change, but the key concept to learn here is that, regarding any ancient writer, we could be just one manuscript away from having a textual witness that originated within 80 years of the original.

As it currently stands, the within 80 year time frame appears to be a decent point of comparison. For **many**

21 Jason BeDuhn and Geoffrey Harrison. The Tebessa Codex: *A Manichaean Treatise on Biblical Exegesis and Church Order*. in *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources*, eds. Paul Allan Mirecki and Jason David BeDuhn (Brill), 36. Data for chart taken from whole book chapter.

22 The Schøyen Collection. *Nahuatl Bible with Aztec Labour Tribute*. Accessed May 23, 2015.

23 Leuven Database of Ancient Books, TM61438.

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ancient works of literature, we as of 2015 do **not** appear to have discovered manuscripts dating **within 80 years of the original**. The *Gospel of John*, *Gospel of Mark* (probably), Lucretius, and a few others stand as exceptions. Overall, as it concerns date of origin, we can reasonably say that anything within 80 years of the autograph is excellent, anything within 300 years is still good, and anything within 800 years is fairly decent.

CONCLUSIONS PART 1:

COMMENTARIES INCREASE OUR CONFIDENCE

The presence of commentaries on ancient books also increases our confidence in knowing what the originals stated, especially through quotations of passages. For example, James R. Royce has declared that even though “like the works of other writers of antiquity, the preservation of Philo’s works has been far from straightforward,” scholars have been able to identify the “wider structures” and “superior manuscripts” of those works.²⁴ Nevertheless, there are “more than a hundred Greek fragments, consisting usually of a few lines, that are ascribed to Philo in some source or another, but that cannot be placed within the extant works in Greek, Armenian, or Latin.”²⁵ Church fathers Eusebius, Origen, Clement of Alexandria also show a knowledge of some of Philo’s writings.²⁶

Even if we did not have the New Testament, we could get a good idea of New Testament content from the commentaries and quotes by the early church fathers.²⁷ Likewise, enough commentaries and lecture note manuscripts exist concerning Aristotle’s works that we could probably have a good idea of what Aristotle wrote for several of his books from the commentaries and lecture notes alone, though interpretations of those works vary.²⁸

CONCLUSIONS PART 2:

MANUSCRIPT INVESTIGATION TAKEAWAYS

One general observation worth noting from this investigation is that the earliest of manuscripts from ancient documents in this study, both New Testament and extra-Biblical, tended to consist of tiny fragments, most certainly smaller than an average sheet of a codex. This was especially the case for manuscript fragments less than 200 years from the original. Consequently, as it concerns New Testament textual criticism and preservation reliability, the early substantial manuscripts (e.g., Sinaiticus [ⲛ], Vaticanus [B], and P⁴⁶) remain important.

Investigation results found that we have discovered **at least one considerably early manuscript fragment** of *Bucolica* and *Aeneid* (Virgil), *Niobe* (Sophocles), *Jewish War* (Josephus), *Allegorical Interpretation* (Philo), *Hippolytus* (Euripides), *History* (Thucydides), *History of Rome* (Livy), *Codex Theodosianus* (Theodosius II), *In Verrem* (Cicero), *On*

24 James R. Royce. *The Works of Philo*. The Cambridge Companion to Philo, ed. Adam Kamesar (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 32. Accessed May 3, 2015.

25 Ibid., 59.

26 Ibid., 62.

27 See, Robert B. Waltz. *Appendix V: The Church Fathers and Patristic Citations*. The Encyclopedia of New Testament Textual Criticism, 1325-1365.

28 For more on this, see Andrea Falcon. *Commentators on Aristotle*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 2013.



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the *Nature of Things* (Lucretius), *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *New Testament*. Some Gnostic texts would also qualify.²⁹

As for **considerable quantity** of manuscripts, the *Old Testament*, *New Testament*, *Iliad* (Homer), *Natural History* (Pliny the Elder), *Gallic Wars* (Caesar), and *Metamorphoses* (Ovid the poet) all have a good showing. Outside of the New Testament, "of all classical literature," the Center for Hellenistic Studies noted, "the *Iliad*" has for itself "the largest quantity of manuscript evidence."³⁰

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

As for geographical distribution, confirmation of decent geographical distribution for *Aeneid* (Virgil), *Categoriae* (Aristotle), *History of Rome* (Livy), the *Psalms*, and the *New Testament* (except for the eight General Epistles) has been established. *In Verrem* (Cicero) may also have decent distribution.

For some ancient writers and works, the geographical distribution of manuscripts was too uncertain or difficult to access to be worthwhile for inclusion in this article. As for the following chart, uncertainty and the failure to find manuscripts from particular regions should **not** be considered a **denial** that manuscripts ever reached those regions.

What is the Bible? -Got Questions?	What are the Apocrypha / Deuterocanonical Books? -Got Questions?
Who Wrote the Bible? -Got Questions?	How and When was the Canon of the Bible put Together? -Got Questions?
What is the Story of the Old Testament? -Got Questions?	What is the Story of the New Testament? -Got Questions?
What are the Dead Sea Scrolls and Why are they Important? -Got Questions?	Got More Questions about the Bible? -Got Questions?

29 Though not noted in chart form, one important observation from this study involved just how few 1st century C.E. manuscripts of ancient post-Homer documents are extant, in comparison to 2nd, 4th, and 8th and later centuries C.E.

30 Center for Hellenistic Studies. *Chapter 3: The Ptolemaic Papyri of the Iliad: Evidence of Eccentricity or Multitextuality?* Accessed May 1, 2015.

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Tab. 4 Location of Manuscript or Quotation from Manuscript (CSNTM, LDAB, etc.) ^I						
Book ^{II}	British Isles ^{III}	Egypt	Gaul	Italy ^{IV}	North Africa	Palestine
Aenied^V (Virgil)	P. V. 23 & P. V. 32	P. V. 25 & Palaemon	Burney MS 273 & Z2? ^{VI}	P. V. 27, Codex Medicus, Burney MS 276, & CLA 4 498	?	P. V. 6, P. V. 12
Categoriae (Aristotle)	?	P. Harris 1 2 P. Oxy. 24, & TM116099	TM66522	Burney MS 100	?	?
History^{VII}	?	P. Oxy. 48	?	TM62448?	?	?
History^{VIII}	?	P. Oxy. 61 & ZPE 153	?	British Library MS 11727	?	?
History of Rome (Livy)	?	P. Oxy. 4 & P. Oxy. 11	CLA 1 109	CLA 1 57 & CLA 5 562	?	?



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Book	British Isles	Egypt	Gaul	Italy	North Africa	Palestine
Iliad ^{IX} (Homer)	?	TM60205, P. Bon. 2, P. Fay. 6, & P. Hamb. 2	?	Harley MS 5600, Kings MS 16, Stesichorus	?	?
In Verrem ^X (Cicero)	?	PSI 1 20	MS 47678	CLA 1 115, Kings MS 22	?	?
Meta. (Ovid)	?	?	(some evidence)	Antike und Mittelalter	?	?
Shepherd of Hermas	CLA 8 1187	P. Oxy. 3, BKT 9, & P. Oxy. 50	?	?	?	κ?
Psalms	TM66174, Vespasian Psalter	L3488, P. Oxy. 16	Princeton MS 86	Aevum 87	TM67115	CCR-3

**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

NT Book	British Isles	Egypt	Gaul	Italy	North Africa	Palestine	
Matthew^{XI}	Vulgate, Lindisfarne Gospel, TM66261, S. Ceaddae, Barberini Gospels, Codex Durm achensis, Codex Epternacensis, Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae		Vulgate, GE	Aevum 87, Harley Gospels, 1 st Clem ent	Tebessa ^{XII}	CCR-1	
Mark				W, CER, P. Beatty	Harley Gospels ^{XIII} & Codex Veronensis	?	CCR-1
Luke					Codex L, Harley Gospels, & Codex Veronensis	?	CCR-3
John	Vulgate, TM66261, St. Cuthbert Gospel, Lindisfarne Gospel	P. Beatty, CER, L3488, W, p ⁵²	MGM, GE	Harley Gospels & Codex Veronensis	?	CCR-2 CCR-8	
Acts^{XIV}	Vulgate, Codex Amiatinus	P.Oxy.74, CER, P.Bod.17	Vulgate	Aevum 87 Codex L	?	TM61736 CCR-2 ^{XV}	



**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

NT Book	British Isles	Egypt	Gaul	Italy	North Africa	Palestine
Romans^{XVI}		NA0220, p ¹⁰ , p ⁴⁶	L8175	Aevum 87 Augustinus ^{XVII}	L8697?	CCR-2 p ⁶¹
1st Cor.	Codex Amiatinus	p ⁴⁶	Vulgate	1st Clement	Tebessa L8697?	CCR-2
2nd Cor.		p ⁴⁶ & U09WM		?		
Galatians				Augustinus	L8697?	CCR-2
Ephesians	Pelagius	Origen, P ⁴⁶	Vulgate ^{XVIII}		Tebessa It., Latt., Tertullian	
Phil.	Codex Amiatinus	p ⁴⁶	Vulgate	?	Tebessa L8697?	CCR-2 p ⁶¹
Colossians					?	Tebessa

**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

NT Book	British Isles	Egypt	Gaul	Italy	North Africa	Palestine		
1st Thess.	Codex Amiatinus	P ⁴⁶ , U09WM	Vulgate	?	Tebessa	p ⁶¹		
2nd Thess.		U09WM		?		κ?		
1st Tim. XIX		Clement of Alexandria		?	Tebessa L8697?	κ?		
2nd Tim.		U09WM		?	?	CCR-2		
Titus				?	Tebessa	CCR-2 p ⁶¹		
Philemon				?	?			
Hebrews				p ⁴⁶ XX	?	1st Clement	L8697?	κ?
James		P. Bod. 17		?	?	?	κ?	
1st Peter		P. Bod.17 U09WM		?	Aevum 87	L8697?	κ?	
2nd Peter		P. Bod.17 TM61755		?	?	?	CCR-2	
1st John		P. Bod.17		?	?	?	L8697?	κ?



**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

NT Book	British Isles	Egypt	Gaul	Italy	North Africa	Palestine
2nd John	Codex Amiatinus	P. Bod.17	?	?	?	χ?
3rd John			?	?	?	χ?
Jude			?	?	?	χ?
Revelation		p⁹⁸	Z2	Kane MS 3	?	χ?

MGM = Missale Gallicum Mediolanense
CCR = Codex Climaci Rescriptus (Sy^{Pal})
Bod. = Bodmer
NA = Nestle-Aland numbering system
L or **LDAB** = Leuven Database of Ancient Books
CSNTM = Center for the Study of NT Mss.
W = Codex Washingtonianus
P. V. = Papyri Vergilianae
 Sinaiticus (χ) is either Palestine (LDAB) or
 Egypt and would include *Shepherd of
 Hermas* and the NT

? = uncertain or failed to find
S. Ceaddae = St. Chad Gospels (codex)
GE = Godescalc Evangelistary
U09WM = The White Monastery in Egypt
Codex L = Codex Laudianus
NT = New Testament
P = Gregory-Aland Papyrus number
TM = Trismegistos manuscript number
CER = Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus
 (with some OT poetic & proverbial literature)

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

<p>I. The Syriac Peshitta and Goodspeed Syriac fragments (TM128527), when combined, cover all of the New Testament from Matthew to 1st Peter for Syria.</p>	<p>II. The book order in this list is alphabetical for extra-Biblical works but follows standard anthology order for the Bible, with Bible books placed later. LDAB categorization for geography was confusing, since Syria and much of Asia Minor were considered as the same location, as per ancient Roman provincial divisions.</p>
<p>III. There is a question as to whether Codex Gatianum belongs in the British Isles (i.e., Wales) or Gaul. British Latin Vulgates date from the 600s and 700s C.E. A copy of British 8th century commentary on Psalms 39-151 is bilingual.</p>	<p>IV. Aevum 87 is also known as <i>Gothica Bononiensia</i>.</p>
<p>V. At least one manuscript of <i>Aeneid</i> written in Germany has been discovered (i.e., CLA199). Many Renaissance and later translations of <i>Aeneid</i> also exist.</p>	<p>VI. Manuscript Z2 is Codex Harleianus (i.e., Harley MS 1772 in British Museum Library). LDAB listed Virgil as also being on this, though perhaps only a tiny fragment or quote.</p>
<p>VII. This is <i>History</i> by Herodotus. At least one manuscript from Syria (i.e., Mesopotamia) has also been discovered.</p>	<p>VIII. This is <i>History</i> by Thucydides. At least one manuscript (Egerton MS 2625) comes from the East Mediterranean, perhaps Crete or Asia Minor.</p>
<p>IX. At least one <i>Iliad</i> manuscript (i.e., P. Dura 3) was from Mesopotamia. Over 2/3 of all currently discovered <i>Iliad</i> manuscripts are from Egypt. A few are from Asia Minor, Thrace, and Aethiopia. Attestation from Herodotus and Strabo suggest that <i>Iliad</i> manuscripts were in Asia Minor. See also, Cassandra J. Borges. <i>The Geography of the Iliad in Ancient Scholarship</i>. University of Michigan. 2011.</p>	<p>X. The Cologne Cicero manuscript of <i>In Verrem</i> was held in Germany in the colonial era and might have been written in Germany in the Medieval period.</p>



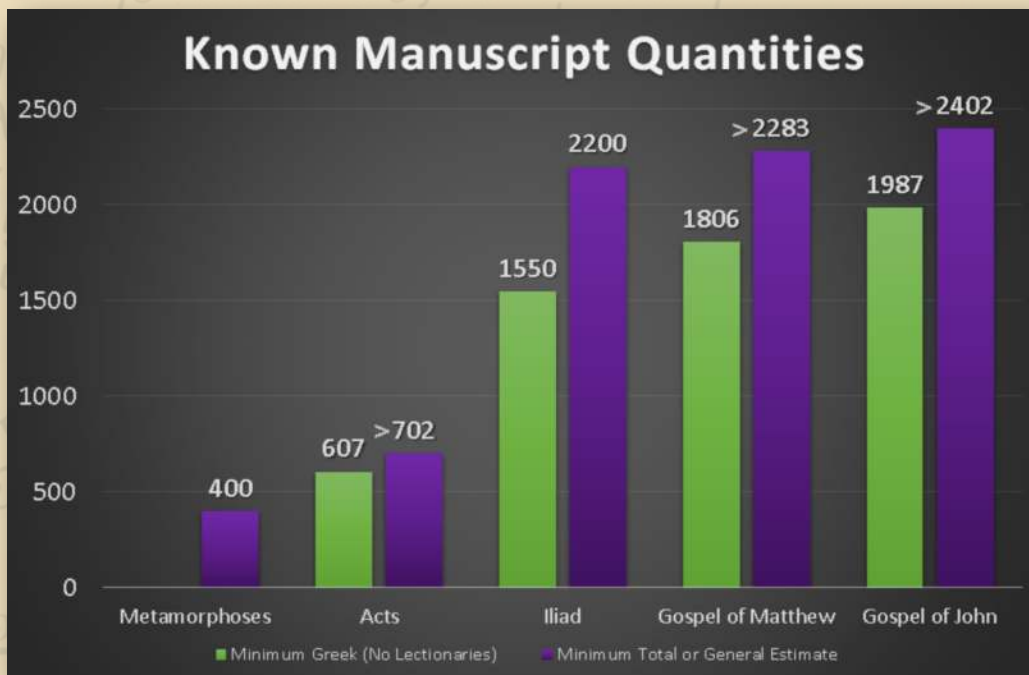
**THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST:
SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY**

<p>XI. The <i>Gospel of Matthew</i> is also well attested in manuscripts from Asia Minor or Syria. Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis also gives attestation to the Gospels and Acts. See also, Nancy Bishop. <i>The Barberini Gospels</i>. University of Iowa, 2004. Dissertation.</p>	<p>XII. Tebessa Codex (4th to 6th century C.E.) quotes 2nd Cor. 8:20-21, Eph. 5:8-11, Phil. 2:12-13, Col. 3:14-16, 1st Thess. 5:12-13a, 2nd Thess. 3:12-13, 1st Tim. 5:5-7, Titus 3:8, etc. An awareness of the <i>Book of Matthew</i> is present, though perhaps from memory or a composite work.</p>
<p>XIII. The Harley Gospels were present in North Italy and France in earlier years. See, British Library. "Harley MS 1775." http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_1775. Accessed 9 May 2015.</p>	<p>XIV. British Latin Vulgate copy is TM66343. Fragments of the <i>Book of Acts</i> have been found in many different regions of Egypt. The 16th century Nahuatl Bible manuscript from Mexico includes parts of the <i>Book of Acts</i>.</p>
<p>XV. Lion Vaganay, Christian-Bernard Amphoux, and Jenny Heimerdinger. <i>An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism</i>, p. 35. See also: Kurt Aland. <i>Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum. Locis parallelis evangeliorum apocryphorum et patrum adhibitis edidit</i>, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 1996, p. XXXVI.</p>	<p>XVI. <i>Romans</i> is attested through Ambrosiaster in southwestern Germany in manuscript TM67674. Codex Amiatinus, though sent to the Pope, nevertheless demonstrated that some version of the NT books were available in England in the 8th century C.E.</p>
<p>XVII. TM66103. Peter and John epistolary attestation from P. Bod. 17 involves passim quotes. Kane MS 3 (Book of Revelation) is dated to the 13th century. Princeton MS 86 is a late manuscript (1400s C.E.).</p>	<p>XVIII. Some data for the <i>Epistle of Ephesians</i> in this geographical distribution chart is from: Roy E. Ciampa. "Reference Charts for New Testament Textual Criticism." Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2003. http://www.viceregency.com/TextCritCharts.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2015.</p>
<p>XIX. For Church father quotations, see "1Timothy." http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/e-catena/1timothy1.html. Accessed 26 Apr. 2015.</p>	<p>XX. Data on P⁴⁶ came from: CSNTM. "Gregory-Aland P46." http://images.csntm.org/Manuscripts/GA_P46/P46%20%28CBL%20BP%20I%29.pdf</p>

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST: SCRIPTURE'S PRESERVATION RELIABILITY

FINAL THOUGHTS

Ultimately, these conclusions should give Christian educators some important points. As Clay Jones concluded, “Although there has been an increase in the number of non-NT ancient manuscripts, nothing has changed regarding the applicability of the bibliographical test.”³¹ The geographical distribution and early manuscript dates give us a great degree of certainty. Furthermore, as Jones also observed concerning manuscript quantities, if we stacked up all the manuscripts of the New Testament together on top of one another, they would be higher than the One World Trade Center that stands in New York City.³² With all of those factors taken into account, it should be of little wonder that we have certainty concerning 98% of the New Testament.

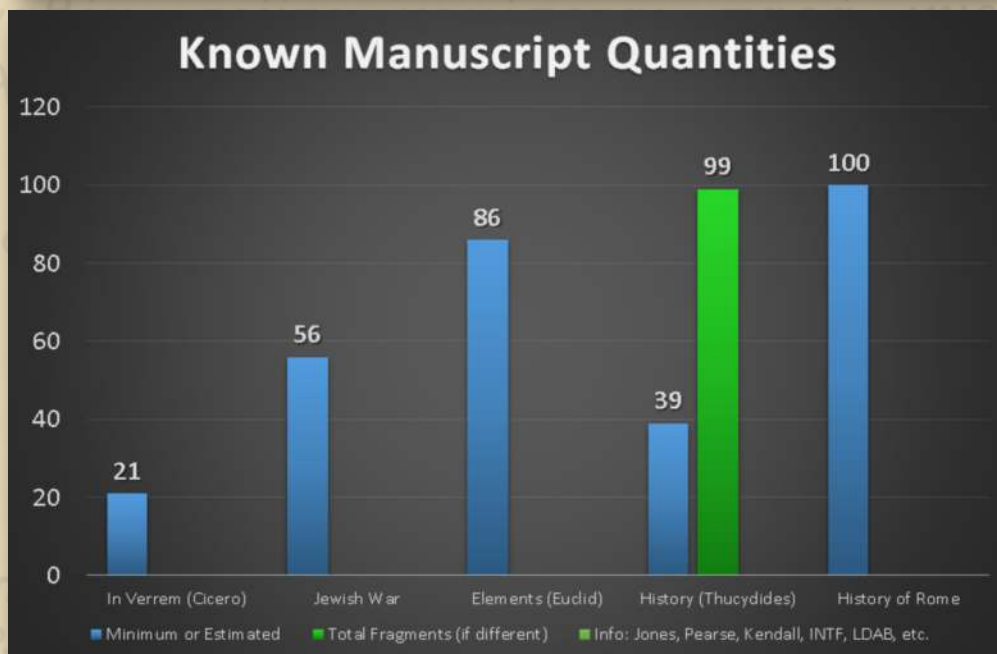
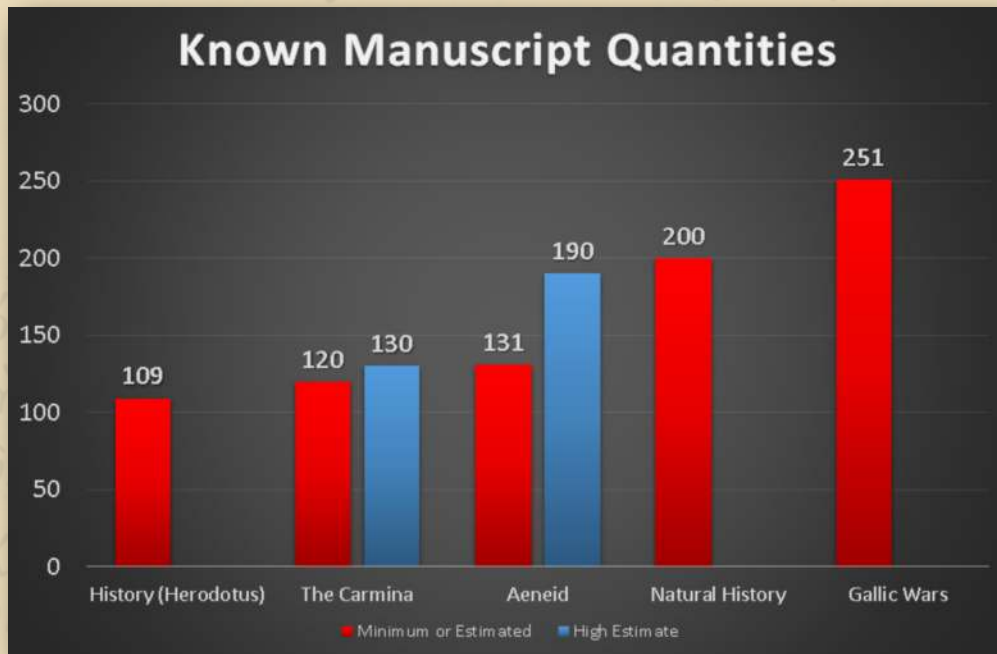


31 See No. 19.

32 See No. 10, p. 13.



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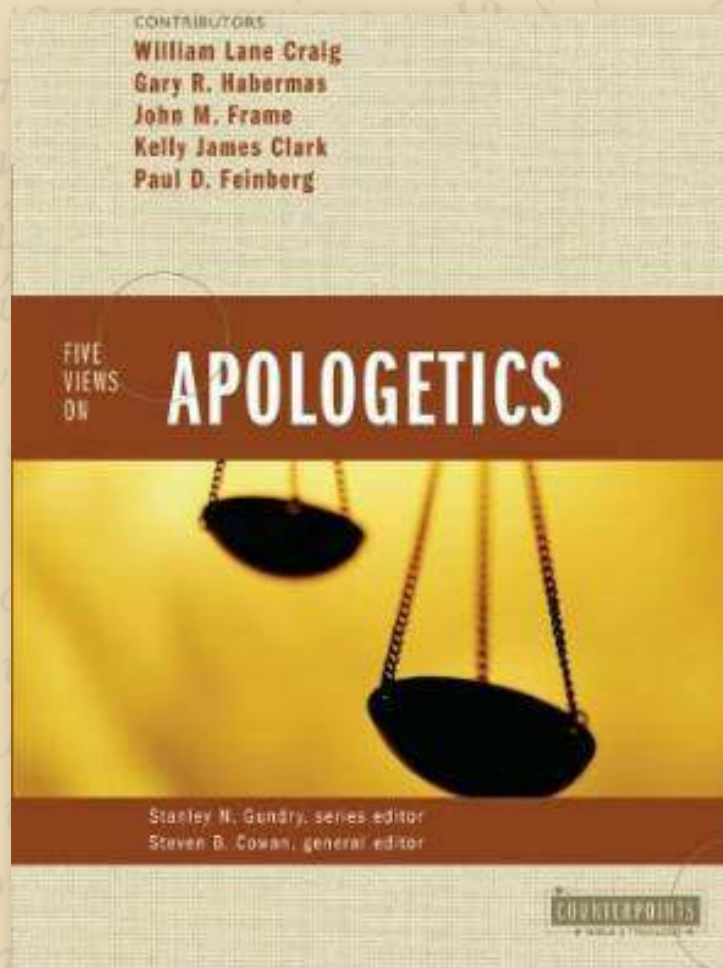


Five Views on Apologetics

by Steven B. Cowan (Editor)

The goal of apologetics is to persuasively answer honest objections that keep people from faith in Jesus Christ. But of several apologetic approaches, which is most effective? *Five Views on Apologetics* examines the “how-to” of apologetics, putting five prominent views under the microscope: Classical, Evidential, Presuppositional, Reformed Epistemology, and Cumulative Case. Offering a forum for presentation, critique, and defense, this book allows the contributors for the different viewpoints to interact. Like no other book, *Five Views on Apologetics* lets you compare and contrast different ways of “doing” apologetics. Your own informed conclusions can then guide you as you meet the questions of a needy world with the claims of the gospel. The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible and Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

Contributors: Stanley N. Gundry; Steven B. Cowan; William Lane Craig; Gary Habermas; Paul D. Feinberg; John Frame; Kelly James Clark.



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τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἐπιβάλλεται ἐν μέλη. 26 καὶ εἴτε πάσχει [ἐν] μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται ἐν μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη.

27 Ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἐπιβάλλεται ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.

28 καὶ οὓς ἀποστόλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, κυβερνήσεις, μὴ πάντες πνευματικοὶ; μὴ πάντες διδασκαλοὶ; μὴ πάντες προφῆται; μὴ πάντες ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες ἀρχιερεῖς;

29 καὶ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες προφῆται;

30 καὶ πάντες ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες ἀρχιερεῖς; μὴ πάντες ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ;

31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

32 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

33 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

34 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

35 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

36 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

37 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

38 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

39 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

40 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

41 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.

42 καὶ ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν, ὡς τὸ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγαπᾶν.



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CAA Ministry Leadership



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Brandon Van Deinse (**Branding Admin**) is a husband, papa, and lover of words. He currently serves as the Communications Director for a Christian school in West Philadelphia and loves to tell stories of God's grace in the lives of young people. Apart from family and faith, he enjoys weightlifting, drawing, and sushi.

τὸ αὐτὸ οὕτως ἐστε καὶ ἄλλη-
[ἐν] μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε
δοξάζεται ἐν μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη.
27 Ὑμεῖς οὖν ἐστε μέλη τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ἐκ
28 καὶ οὗς τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ σώματος
ἀποστόλους, ἐπειτα δυνάμεις
κυβερνήσεις, μὴ πάντες
δυνάμεις; μὴ πάντες γλωσ-
31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ ὡς ἐξ ἐμάς, ἵνα
καὶ ἔτι καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς γλώσσαις
ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἵνα ἴπται
ἀλαλάζον. μυστήρια πάντων
τὴν πίστιν ὧσπερ οὐθέν εἰμι.
εἰ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα
καυχήσωμαι ἀγάπην, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.



Lauren Kimball Wichowski (**Graphic Design**) is a wife, dog-owner, freelance animator, and adjunct professor from the Midwest. She enjoys drawing, reading, hiking, and having lively discussions about Soteriology with her husband, Tony Wichowski. She is also the sole-proprietor of [Solace Skies Productions](#).



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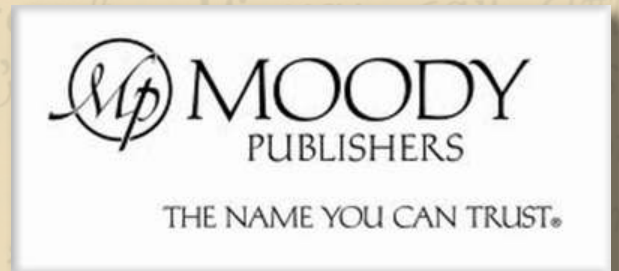
In all of our diversity, we share a love for God, and a passion for apologetics

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JOIN THE CAA AT OUR FACEBOOK GROUP! We hope your involvement with the CAA deepens your faith and equips you to "give a reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

Other social media: [FACEBOOK](#) • [TWITTER](#) • [GOOGLE+ COMMUNITY](#) • [GOOGLE+ PAGE](#)

CONTACT MEMBERSHIP TEAM.



CAA SPEAKING TEAM. Here you will find a list of our speaking team members, their location and ministry information, and a way to donate if they are missionaries that rely on donations. Note that we consider all proclaimers of the truth of the Gospel to be missionaries obedient to the Great Commission, whether or not they rely on donations.

CAA CATECHISM is a collaboration of the CAA to break the essentials of apologetics up into bite size pieces (400 words or less), catechism-style. **CONTACT CATECHISM TEAM.**

GET PRAYED FOR. Join the CAA Facebook group and post your prayer in a comment to the linked document. Pray for others and support them, as well.

CONNECT via [the map](#) and [CAA Chapters](#). CAA Chapters are communities for CAA members local to each other to meet regularly and collaborate together and with other local ministries.

C.A.S.E. The Christian Apologetics Search Engine by CAA member, [MARK DEVINY](#).

APOLOGETICS EVENTS CALENDAR by CAA partner, Ratio Christi.

ASK THE ALLIANCE a question and we will post it in our Facebook group for discussion, and summarize our best answers in a post on this blog.

MEDIA – CAA banner, logos, and wallpaper by alliance member, [LAUREN KIMBALL](#).

APOLOGETICS BLOGGERS ALLIANCE group has been created for those with blogs so we may support each other, share blog posts, promote one another, share ideas for blogging, SEO, promotion; and raise the awareness of the need for apologetics in the church, university, and the community; to pray for one another, and lift up Jesus Christ. **CONTACT.**

APOLOGETICS FOR PARENTS is a group of parents committed to teaching our kids apologetics (a "defense" or case for Christianity) and exchanging what works, what doesn't, and maybe starting a website to share the best of what works with the world. **FIND US ON TWITTER. CONTACT.**

DONATIONS: The Christian Apologetics Alliance has many expenses; primarily website hosting. We also plan to expand in the following ways:

1. Develop a training course for "Grassroots Apologists."
2. Promote the CAA at apologetics conferences.
3. Obtain 501(c)3 status.

General Contact Email: [CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ALLIANCE](#)

CREATE AN EVENT
WITH A
CAA SPEAKER

BLAKE GIUNTA
AND
MATT DILLIHUNTY
Does God Exist?
July 12, 2015

–DR. TIM MCGREW
Harvard Epworth UMC
Boston, MA
July 19, 2015

APOLOGETICS
EVENTS
CALENDAR

–Hope's Reason

APOLOGETICS
EVENTS
CALENDAR

–Ratio Christi



Publication Notes

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Psalms 121:1*

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Jennifer G. Richmond

Join the EQUIPPED team:
Get Started Here: [Christian Apologetics Alliance](http://ChristianApologeticsAlliance.com)

If you have any comments, or would like to write for EQUIPPED:
email: caanewsletter@christianapologeticsalliance.com

COVER SCRIPTURE: Right-side: 2 Timothy 3:16 (HCSB); Bottom: Psalm 109:105.

BACKGROUND IMAGES: Photographed from: *The Greek New Testament*: New York: American Bible Society, 1975.

Matthew 24; Luke 1; John 1; Acts 17; Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 15; Galatians 2; Ephesians 6; Colossians 3; 2 Timothy 3; Hebrews 4.

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EQUIPPED

Volume 1, Number 4

June 2015

τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ἑαυτῶν τὰ μέλη. 26 καὶ εἴτε πάσχει [ἐν] μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται ἐν μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη.

27 Ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. 28 καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. 29 μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφήται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; 30 μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν; 31 ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. °

Love

Καὶ ἔτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι. ° 13 Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον. 2 καὶ εἰ ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν, καὶ εἰ ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὅρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι. 3 κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου, καὶ εἰ ἔχω παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι¹, ἀγάπην οὐκ ἔχω, ὠφελοῦμαι.

13 καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνὰ καὶ τετραηλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος.

Jesus the Great High Priest

14 Ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. 15 οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. 16 προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὕρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

5 Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, 2 μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν, 3 καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει

καὶ πρὸς τὸν λαοῦ οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν.

καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἵπτα τοῦ θεοῦ, καθὼς περὶ καὶ

ἁμαρτιῶν.

5 Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι