

# F. David Farnell, PhD

Professor of New Testament  
The Master's Theological Seminary

“REDEFINING THE  
DEFINITION OF INERRANCY:  
THE DANGER FROM WITHIN”

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INERRANCY SHOCKWAVES  
ON THE HORIZON

# WHAT UNBELIEF DOES . . .

- (1) Historical-Critical Ideologies (source, form, redaction, etc.)
- (2) Searching for “Historical” Jesus instead of Jesus of Gospels (Lessings “gap” between Jesus as he was in history and how Jesus is portrayed through “eyes of faith”)
- (3) Post-modernistic historiography—no certainty//significant doubt about “historical” accounts of canonical gospels
- (4) Pseudepigraphy of writings // false ascriptions

# New York University Class in New Testament Introduction

## **Introduction to the New Testament**

RELST 302; HBRJD 22; CLASS 302  
New York University  
Fall 2016

"If there is one thing that Christians know about their religion, it is that it is not Judaism. If there is one thing that Jews know about their religion, it is that it is not Christianity. If there is one thing that both groups know about this double not, it is that Christians believe in the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ (the Greek word for Messiah) and that Jews don't, that Jews keep kosher and Christians don't. If only things were this simple." —Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*

### **Course Description:**

The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the field of New Testament. Students will learn about the construction of New Testament texts, early Jesus followers, and the origins of Christianity through a survey of New Testament writings and other Jewish/Christian/Jesus-centered documents. No prior knowledge is required.

Note: In this class, we will approach the New Testament from an academic perspective. Rather than read New Testament texts for devotional purposes, we will engage them with modern scholarly insight. In addition to implementing a variety of theories and methods throughout the course, we will situate texts within their own historical, political, and theological contexts. Some questions we will ask include: What kind of literature are we reading? For what communities were these texts written? When and why were they written? What are the texts doing and how are they functioning? How might the use of a particular theory or methodology impact/shape/influence what we see in the text? And, finally, what does any of this have to do with religion today?

As you can see, this class will be fueled by questions—Do not be afraid to ask your own!

### **Our objectives are:**

1. To gain familiarity with the textual complexities of New Testament and ancient Jewish/Christian texts;
2. To become familiar with the social and historical contexts of New Testament and ancient Jewish/Christian texts in order to explore what they might have meant to those who lived at the time in which they were written;
3. To think ethically about the ways in which the New Testament might have been significant to its community of origin;
4. To think ethically about the ways in which the New Testament continues to influence contemporary culture;
5. To become familiar with the methods and vocabulary scholars use to discuss the Bible and New Testament writings;
6. To learn to read texts closely, attending to multi-vocality and multiplicity of meaning;
7. To develop a vocabulary to talk about the relationship between ancient Judaism and Christian origins.

# New York University Class in New Testament Introduction

Emanuel, New Testament Syllabus 2

*Memorizing Facts and Thinking Critically:* There is a difference between factual based learning and critical thinking. While some of our work in this course requires you to retain information concerning names, dates, and places (i.e., factual knowledge), you will also be required to apply such knowledge to your own readings of the texts (i.e., think critically). For example, a major theme we will be discussing throughout this course is survival under empire. You will not only need to understand the *concept* of empire and imperial influence, but also *apply* this concept to your readings. In other words, you will be required to question how biblical texts might be responding to and/or surviving empire based on your understanding of imperial rule.

*Critical Reading and Writing Skills:* Along with the goals associated with learning the course content, this course is also designed to develop your critical reading and writing skills. Some exercises we will be doing to help improve your critical reading skills include: Questioning an author's assumptions; questioning a text's intended audience/reader; analyzing a text's rhetorical functions; analyzing the relationship between texts and contexts, etc. Similarly, some of your homework assignments and work in the classroom are intended to strengthen your ability to write with focus and clarity.

#### **Required Texts:**

- 1) *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (JANT), ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Note the useful glossary and timeline in the back of the book. **This is also the most important text for the class. You are required to bring it to every class session. For New Testament readings, use of Online Bibles or Bible applications on your smart phone are not acceptable.**

- 2) Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (6th edition; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- 3) *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament*, ed. Paula Gooder (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).
- 4) Mark Allan Powell, *Jesus as a Figure in History: How Modern Historians View the Man from Galilee* (2nd edition; Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).

#### **Online Resources:**

**Oremus Bible Browser** offers an NRSV translation of the Bible. When working with Hebrew Bible references and intertexts, you may use this as a primary resource. As biblical texts were likely read orally in the ancient world, you may also download the NRSV Hebrew Bible and New Testament audiobooks on iTunes to help with your reading load.

**Bible Odyssey** is a website that offers beginning information on the Bible and biblical texts, places, and characters. If you ever need a quick review, further information, or are feeling confused when reading your assigned material, I suggest going here:  
<http://bibleodyssey.org/en.aspx>

# New York University Class in New Testament Introduction

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## Emanuel, New Testament Syllabus 6

September 7	Introduction to the course; Syllabus review
September 12	Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 1 and 2 (skim pp. 33-40)
September 14	<i>Searching for Meaning</i> : xv-12; 80-87; 107-119 *Reading from Open Yale Courses: <a href="http://oyc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/tanakh-synopsis.pdf">http://oyc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/tanakh-synopsis.pdf</a>
<b>Ancient Israel, Jewish History, and Jewish Cultural Memory in the Greco-Roman World</b>	
September 19	*Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Bretler, "Historical and Geographical Background to the Bible," JSB 2048-2062. Martin Goodman, "Jewish History, 331 BCE-135 CE," JANT 507-513. Leonard Greenspoon, "The Septuagint," JANT 562-565.
September 21	2 Maccabees 6:18-7:42 Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Judaism and Jewishness," JANT 513-515. Jonathan Klawans, "The Law," JANT 515-518. Lee I. Levine, "The Synagogue," JANT 519-521. Joshua D. Garroway, "Ioudaios," JANT 524-526. *Marc Zvi Bretler, "The Canonization of the [Hebrew] Bible," JSB 2072-2077.
September 26	Jeremiah 3:17; Isaiah 60; Daniel 7-12 Daniel R. Schwartz, "Jewish Movements of the New Testament Period," JANT 526-530. David B. Levenson, "Messianic Movements," JANT 530-535 Martha Himmelfarb, "Afterlife and Resurrection," JANT 549-551.
<b>The New Testament in Jewish-Greco-Roman Context: Putting it All Together</b>	
September 28	Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 3 and 4 Maxine Grossman, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," JANT 569-572. Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Josephus," JANT 575-577.
October 3	Review
October 5	Exam 1
October 10	Fall Recess; No Class
<b>The New Testament as Genre</b>	
October 12	Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 5 and 6

# New York University Class in New Testament Introduction

Emanuel, New Testament Syllabus 7

## Jesus, The Jesus Movement, and the Jesus Following Paul

October 17	Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 20 and 21
October 19	1 Corinthians Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , 368-383
October 24	Galatians Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , 383-400
October 26	Romans Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapter 23
October 31	*Pamela Eisenbaum, "Jewish Perspectives: A Jewish Apostle to the Gentiles," in <i>Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods</i> , ed. Joseph A. Marchal (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012)

## Jesus, Gospel Literature, and Gospel Communities

November 2	The Gospel of Mark Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapter 7
November 7	Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapter 8
November 9	Matthew 1-3; Luke 1-3 Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapter 9
November 14	Luke 1:1-5; Acts 1:1-4 Luke 4; Acts 28:25-29 Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 10 and 19
November 16	The Gospel of John Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapter 11 Daniel Boyarin, "Logos, a Jewish Word: John's Prologue as Midrash," JANT 546-549.
November 21	Professor away at academic conference; No Class
November 23	Thanksgiving Recess; No Class
November 28	*The Gospel of Mary Ehrman, <i>The New Testament</i> , Chapters 12 and 13

## The Quest for the Historical Jesus

# WHAT EVANGELICAL CRITICAL SCHOLARS WHO PROFESS BELIEF DO?

- (1) Historical-Critical Ideologies (source, form, redaction, etc.)
- (2) Searching for “Historical” Jesus instead of Jesus of Gospels (Lessings “gap” between Jesus as he was in history and how Jesus is portrayed through “eyes of faith”)
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- (4) Pseudepigraphy of writings // false ascriptions

# Or, "What's the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?"



## *STATUS QUAESTIONIS* OF THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY

*A Tale of Two Cities* Perhaps Sums the present state of  
inerrancy:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

# THE WARNING FROM SCRIPTURE TO TEACHERS

- James 3:1, 11-12

Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

For we all stumble in many *ways* . . . .

<sup>11</sup> Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*?

<sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.

# INFLUENCE OF TEACHING/DISCIPLINESHIP

Matt. 23:15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

Matt. 10:25 “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household!”

PIG WITH LIPSTICK, i.e.,  
Evangelical Use of  
Historical-Critical  
Ideologies



**LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST MUST  
CONSISTENTLY REIGN OVER  
SCHOLARSHIP!**

PROVERB:

*" THOSE WHO DO NOT LEARN  
THE LESSONS OF HISTORY  
ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT  
PAST FAILURES"*

Has this happened Before?

# VITAL ISSUES IN THE INERRANCY DEBATE (2016)

THE INERRANCY OF GOD'S WORD has been attacked throughout church history. Today's assaults are unique since neo-evangelicals now surrender to post-modernistic ideas of history and historical-critical ideologies that assault this vital doctrine. They seek to redefine the orthodox meaning of inerrancy. Since the signing of the Chicago Statements, troubling signs have once again appeared in recent years among many who either did not fight the battles for the inerrancy of Scripture as did the *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* or who do not remember the troubling times that caused their development. The nature and definition of "inerrancy" are now being changed to include ideas of fallibility. *History is forgotten*. The need arises for sounding the alarm for *Vital Issues in Inerrancy*. Evangelical schools and churches that broke away earlier to defend inerrancy surrender now to academic prestige and scholarly bids instead of faithfulness to God's inerrant Word. The contributors pray that the Lord will raise up a new generation with the spiritual fervency of the *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* to uphold the inerrancy of God's Word: Isaiah 40:8 — "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

"From within the Washington beltway somewhere there arise the seminarians that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty! What is the case politically is even more the case theologically. As this book illustrates, the resounding standards established at the close of the twentieth century by the ICBI, Missouri Synod Lutherans, and Southern Baptists are now subject to reinterpretation by those who seem to prefer a priesthood of scholars over a priesthood of believers. David Farnell and his fellow editors have responded in these pages, holding high the standard of the full reliability of God's word. This is a crucial volume for a day of flagging confidence in the Bible."

—PAIGE PATTERSON  
*President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

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**WS**

FARNELL

Vital Issues in the Inerrancy Debate

# Vital Issues *in the* Inerrancy Debate

General Editor

F. DAVID FARNELL

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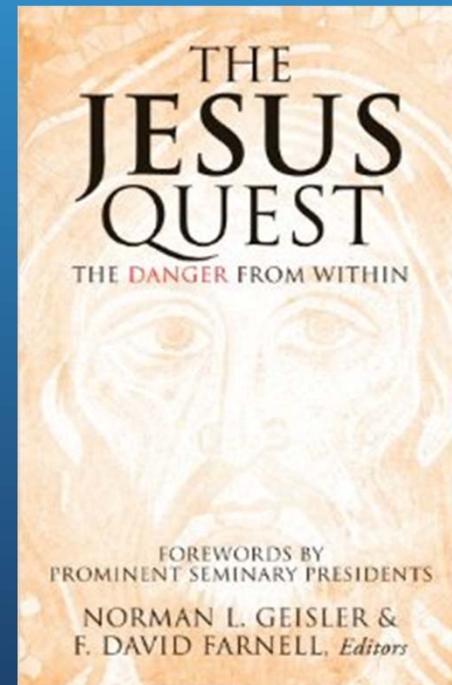
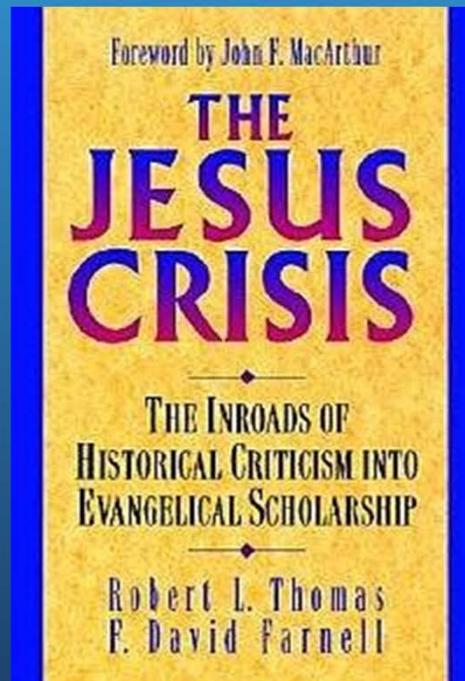
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Foreword by

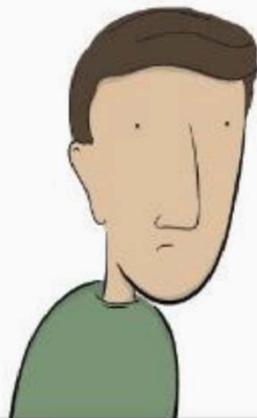
PAIGE PATTERSON

The Jesus CRISIS &  
The Jesus QUEST:  
THE DANGER FROM WITHIN



# FUNNY?

I believe in *Jesus* but I don't take the Bible too seriously. I don't think it's really "the word of God"... it's an antiquated human book. And since it was written and copied by normal, flawed people like you and me, it's unreliable. I think it's mostly, like, fables. Made-up stories meant to inspire or instill morals or wisdom or whatever.



# NOT FUNNY?



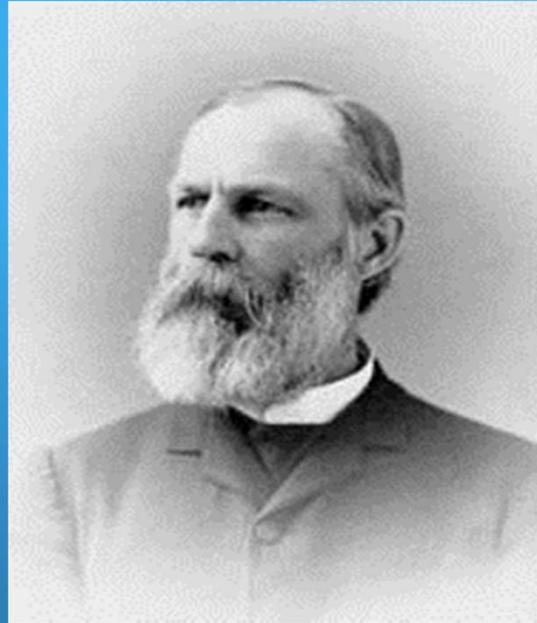
# REALLY TRUE OF EVANGELICALS! REALLY SAD, BUT NOT FUNNY!



KEY: DO NOT “**TOY**” WITH SCRIPTURE

“THE WEIGHT OF ANY  
THEOLOGIANS UNDERLYING  
HERMENEUTICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS  
IS MONUMENTAL”

“CROWFORD HOWELL TOY AND THE WEIGHT OF HERMENEUTICS” -Paul R. House, *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3/1 (Spring 1999): 28-39.



“TOY DID NOT REALIZE THE  
SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS OWN  
HERMENEUTICAL SYSTEM.”

(“Toy and Weight of Hermeneutics,” p.29)

# C.H. TOY

- ❖ He divided spiritual truth from historical matters— Faith vs. Fact dichotomy. (House, p.30)
- ❖ “The gems of truth are indeed divine, but the casket in which they are given us is of human workmanship.” (Toy, “Claims of Biblical Interpretation,” p.42)
- ❖ He argued that the spiritual truths of Scripture are not eliminated by scientific discovery. (House, p.32)

# C.H. TOY

- ❖ He made the plain sense of Scripture secondary to the historical principle of science. (House, p.33)
- ❖ He said that the Bible's "real assertions" did not extend to the description of events, either mundane or miraculous.
- ❖ He argued that historical "inaccuracies" must not cause readers to miss a book's theological importance. (House, p.33)

**NOTE:** One cannot separate the historical from the spiritual truths of Scripture—If the historical is not true, neither is the spiritual.

# C.H. TOY

## THE IMPACT OF TOY'S VIEWS (House, pp.35)

- 1) "He held strongly to a presupposed division between historical and theological reality." (p.35)
- 2) "He was as dependent on 19<sup>th</sup> century scientific methodology as on the era's historical [critical] methodology." (p.35)
- 3) "He thought Darwinian theories of human origins to be factual, so he disagreed with what he considered to be Genesis' claims for a six-day creation." (p.35)

# C.H. TOY

THOSE WHO DO NOT REMEMBER THE LESSONS OF HISTORY  
WILL REPEAT THE ERRORS OF THE PAST.

LESSON:

“We must all recognize the weight of our  
own hermeneutics,” (House, 37).

IF A SEMINARY OR BIBLE SCHOOL WANTS TO FAITHFULLY  
HONOR ITS HERITAGE, IT NEEDS TO EXAMINE HIS/HER  
SYSTEM OF INTERPRETATION THAT ITS FACULTY ESPOUSES!

# The Big Picture:

- a) Most of these following evangelical critical scholars profess inerrancy. **(GREAT!)**
- b) Most of these following evangelical critical scholars associate themselves in some way with views that were NEVER a part of orthodox inerrancy in the history of the church. **(BAD!)**
- c) Thus, the orthodox view of inerrancy is now being changed. A perverted definition is now being promoted/substituted. **(EGREGIOUS!)**

# VITAL ISSUES IN THE INERRANCY DEBATE (2016)

[WWW.DEFENDINGINERRANCY.COM](http://WWW.DEFENDINGINERRANCY.COM)

# QUIZ

Please read the following portion of Scripture, and then answer the questions:

1. T or F. (Read Matthew 27:45-54). An actual Resurrection of the Saints occurred at Jesus' crucifixion, as indicated by Matthew.
2. T or F. (Read Matthew 2:1-12). An actual visit of the Magi occurred when Jesus was born as a child.
3. T or F. (Read Matthew 2:13-18). King Herod actually killed babies in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.
4. T or F. (Read Ephesians 1:1). Paul wrote Ephesians.
5. T or F. (Read Colossians 1:1). Paul wrote Colossians.
6. T or F. (Read 1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1). Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles.

# QUIZ

7. T or F. Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale.
8. T or F. Jonah was a real person.
9. T or F. (Read Isaiah 1:1) The one prophet Isaiah wrote the book that bears his name.
10. T or F. (Read Gen. 1:1) God created the earth by speaking it into existence.
11. T or F. (Read Gen 1:1-31) God created the world in six literal 24 hour days according to Genesis.
12. T or F. What the Gospels record of Jesus actually happened in the way it was recorded.

# QUIZ

13. T or F. The Gospel accounts have information that probably happened, but still might have happened.
  
14. T or F. The Gospels are actual historical accounts of Jesus' life.
  
15. T or F. Adam and Eve were actual historical people.

# SCORING QUIZ

Give yourself ONE (1) point for each question answered FALSE.

**SCORE 15 TOTAL** = you are a budding critical evangelical scholar who obviously has been trained in British and Continental Europe Schools, or influenced by someone who was trained there.

**SCORE less than 15** = CONGRATULATIONS! You are on your way to prestige, fame and fortune as a budding evangelical critical scholar!

**SCORE 0 (zero)** = you are being kept safe by God's power from the spirit of deceit and error that ravages American seminaries TODAY!

# Jesus' Warning: Luke 18:8; Mt 24:24

Luke 18:8

"...However, when the Son of Man comes,  
will He find the faith on the earth?"

Matthew 24:24

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and  
will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead,  
if possible, even the elect."

## Paul's Warning: 2 Timothy 4:2-4

2 "Preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to *myths*."

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



~~Marines are...~~

God is looking for a few faithful men.

2 Timothy 2:2

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

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16 All Scripture is inspired by God  
(*literally: "is God-breathed"*) and  
profitable for teaching, for reproof, for  
correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be  
adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Tim. 3:16-17

# MANY OF TODAY'S HISTORICAL-CRITICAL EVANGELICALS

- Dan Wallace, DTS (21<sup>st</sup> Century):
- “This emphasis on knowledge over relationship can produce in us bibliolatry. For me, as a New Testament professor, **the text is my task--but I made it my God. The text became my idol.** Let me state this bluntly: **The Bible is not a member of the Trinity.** One lady in my church facetiously told me, “I believe in the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Bible.” Sadly, too many cessationists operate as though that were so.
- One of the **great legacies Karl Barth left behind was his strong Christocentric focus.** It is a shame that too many of us have reacted so strongly to Barth, for in our zeal to show his deficiencies in his doctrine of the Bible, we have become bibliolaters in the process. Barth and Calvin share a warmth, a piety, a devotion, an awe in the presence of God that is lacking in too many theological tomes generated from our circles.”
- **RESPONSE: IF THE BIBLE IS NOT INSPIRED & INERRANT, THEN HOW CAN WE REALLY HAVE ANY REALISTIC HOPE IN ANY TRUSTWORTHY OR RELIABLE CHRISTOLOGICAL FOCUS?**

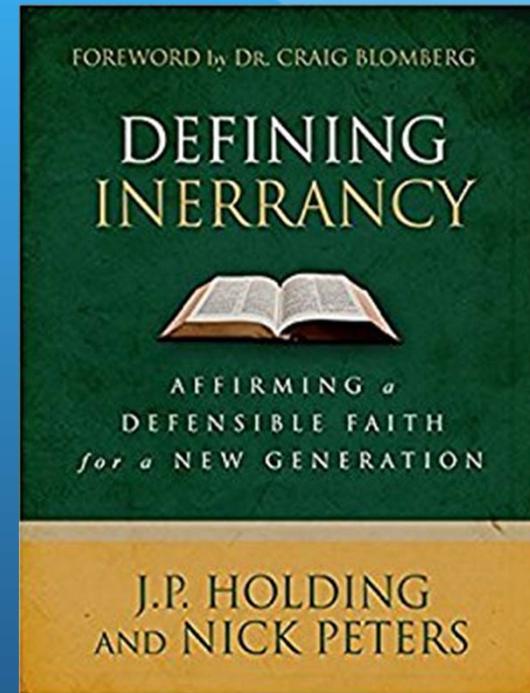
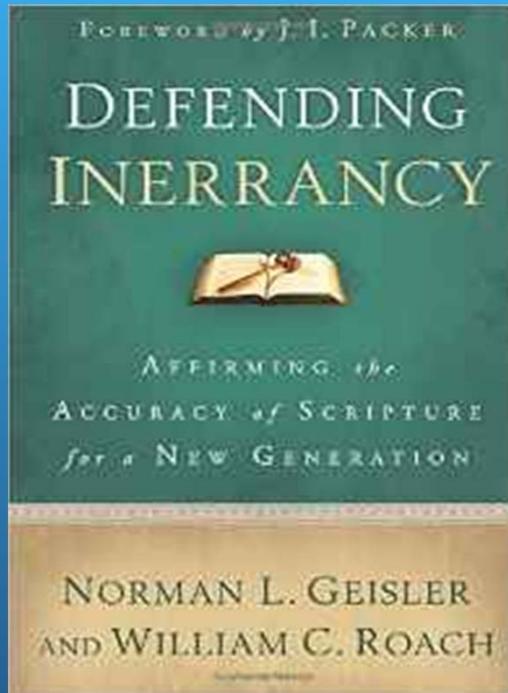
From Dan Wallace, “Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit? The Uneasy Conscience of a Non-Charismatic Evangelical,” *Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit* (p. 8).

# Today's Historical-Critical Evangelicals

- As I researched for *The Jesus Quest: The Danger from Within . . .*
- Something I noticed that shows the state of inerrancy among evangelicals who follow Historical Critical Method.
- *Spinoza asserts Bibliolatry; Wallace asserts Bibliolatry.*
- See what you think about how close these statements are.
- Baruch Spinoza (17<sup>th</sup> Century):
- “Still, it will be said, though the law of God is written in the heart, The Bible is none the less the Word of God, and it is no more lawful to say of Scripture than of God’s word that it is mutilated and corrupted. I fear that such objectors are too anxious to be pious, and that they are in danger of turning religion in to superstition, and worshipping paper and ink in place of God’s Word.”

*Spinoza, A Theological-Political Treatise, Chapter XII (Elwes Translation, p. 166)*

# Wallace endorsed ebook *challenging* ICBI inerrancy standards



Please note: Book's cover is Nick Peter's, is Licon's Son that is a direct imitation of Geisler's Book, *Defending Inerrancy* (2012). Please also note "Foreword by Dr. Craig Blomberg"

★ “*Defining Inerrancy*, however, is a gloves-off defense and affirmation of a version of inerrancy that many are not acquainted with. That is, many except those who are Old and New Testament scholars” — underlining added

Wallace notes, “In sum, *Defining Inerrancy* is a book far more important than its size would indicate. It defines not only inerrancy but a yawning divide within evangelicalism. My hope is that traditionalists will not dismiss it out of hand (as they have so many treatments coming from contextualizing inerrantists), but will indeed wrestle seriously with its contents. Sadly, I’m not holding my breath.”

<https://danielbwallace.com/2014/06/01/review-of-defining-inerrancy/> June 1, 2014



# Wallace adds . . . “brittle fundamentalism”

“This view—making inerrancy as important as the resurrection of Christ—is part of a mindset that does not differentiate among doctrines. I call it the *domino view of doctrine*. When one falls down, they all fall down. I have taught for years that it is one of the main reasons why some conservatives become “liberal.” I put “liberal” in quotes because often such people are not really liberal; they are still fundamentalists, just on the left side of the theological aisle. They still see things in black and white, but now are skeptical about the supernatural and anything that smacks of biblical authority. Darrell Bock speaks of such a mentality as “brittle fundamentalism.” And he sees it as shattering when it comes in contact with the sophisticated polemics of the left” —

<https://danielbwallace.com/2014/06/01/review-of-defining-inerrancy/> [underlining added]



# Brief Response . . .

(1) How do you know with any degree of confidence that the Resurrection even truly occurred if the documents are not the inerrant Word that have been God-breathed?

(2) If the same documents that witness to Jesus Christ's resurrection have errors, inaccuracies in them, or invented stories that are not historically true, then grave doubt is cast on the validity of His resurrection, i.e., if the NT erred or invented other stories, why would the account of the Resurrection have any validity/certainty? OR, CHRISTOLOGY?

SLIPPERY SLOPE

Please read—Dan Wallace "An Apologia for a Broad View of Ipsissima Vox" -ETS-ATLANTA 1999

"Our theology is too often rooted in Greek philosophy, rationalism, the Enlightenment, and Scottish Common Sense Realism"

SOUNDS VERY SIMILAR TO:

Rogers's/McKim's similar complaint regarding inerrancy in their *Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (1979)

that decried "Princeton Seminary was founded in 1812 as the first American institution to train Presbyterian clergy. Systematic theology was taught according to the post-Reformation scholastic method of Francis Turretin. The theory of hermeneutics (biblical interpretation) was taken from the philosophy of Scottish realism. For over 100 years, the Princeton theologians uniformly predicate the authority of Scripture on its supposed form of inerrant words" (p. 309)

Please read, Wallace—"The Gospel According to Bart"  
<https://bible.org/article/gospel-according-bart>

- "what I tell my students every year is that it is imperative that they pursue truth rather than protect their presuppositions. And they need to have a doctrinal taxonomy that distinguishes core beliefs from peripheral beliefs. When they place more peripheral doctrines such as inerrancy and verbal inspiration at the core, then when belief in these doctrines starts to erode, it creates a domino effect: One falls down, they all fall down. It strikes me that something like this may be what happened to Bart Ehrman. His testimony in *Misquoting Jesus* discussed inerrancy as the prime mover in his studies. But when a glib comment from one of his conservative professors at Princeton was scribbled on a term paper, to the effect that perhaps the Bible is not inerrant, Ehrman's faith began to crumble. One domino crashed into another until eventually he became 'a fairly happy agnostic.' I may be wrong about Ehrman's own spiritual journey, but I have known too many students who have gone in that direction. The irony is that those who frontload their critical investigation of the text of the Bible with bibliological presuppositions often speak of a 'slippery slope' on which all theological convictions are tied to inerrancy. Their view is that if inerrancy goes, everything else begins to erode. I would say rather that if inerrancy is elevated to the status of a prime doctrine, that's when one gets on a slippery slope. But if a student views doctrines as concentric circles, with the cardinal doctrines occupying the center, then if the more peripheral doctrines are challenged, this does not have a significant impact on the core. In other words, the evangelical community will continue to produce liberal scholars until we learn to nuance our faith commitments a bit more, until we learn to see Christ as the center of our lives and scripture as that which points to him. If our starting point is embracing propositional truths about the nature of scripture rather than personally embracing Jesus Christ as our Lord and King, we'll be on that slippery slope, and we'll take a lot of folks down with us."
- Underlining added

## J. P. Moreland— Biola University/Talbot Seminary

- 2007 Moreland said, “I am more convinced of inerrancy than at any time in my Christian life, but the charge of bibliolatry, or at least a near, if not a kissing cousin, is one I fear is hard to rebut.”

### *American Evangelical “Over-commitment” to the Bible*

*He rejects idea* “the Bible is the *sole* source of knowledge of God, morality, and a host of related important items.”

He sees need for integration of other ideas into Christian understanding than solely the Word of God.

Christians must not withdraw from the broader world of ideas.

He also sees “over-commitment” to the Bible as harming the church “in the rejection of guidance, revelation, and so forth from God through impressions, dreams, visions, prophetic words, words of knowledge and wisdom.”

Recently named, “The 50 Most Influential Living Philosophers” by the Best Schools Website

<http://www.thebestschools.org/features/most-influential-living-philosophers/>

J. P. Moreland, Biola University, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, ranked #30

“The Best Schools” website run by

James Barham

(1) is the General Editor of TheBestSchools, lives in Chicago, Illinois. Originally from Dallas, Texas, he was educated at the University of Texas at Austin (B.A. in classics), at Harvard University (M.A. in history of science), and at the University of Notre Dame (Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science).

(2) He is an atheist--<http://www.thebestschools.org/about/>

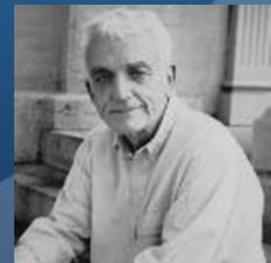
<http://www.uncommondescent.com/education/james-barham-at-best-schools-fesses-up-hes-an-atheist-but-he-thinks-reality-is-real/>



## The late Brennan Manning-- *The Signature of Jesus* (Multnomah Press)

“I am deeply distressed by what I can only call in our Christian culture the ‘idolatry of Scripture.’ For many Christians, the Bible is not a pointer to God but God himself—bibliolatry. God cannot be confined within the covers a leather-bound book. I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of its pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and what God wants.” -Brennan Manning, *Signature of Jesus*, pp. 174

- <http://brennanmanning.com/>



# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# RESPONSE TO BIBLIOLATRY!

One must not commit  
“**SCHOLAROLATRY**” or  
“**PREACHEROLATRY**”

DO THESE EDUCATED “ELITE” KNOW BETTER THAN GOD’S WORD?

1 Corinthians 1:20-25

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

# Was Jesus a Bibliolater?

**REPLY:** Jesus must have been a BIBLIOLATER then under Manning's logic . . .

Jesus held to the PRIMACY OF GOD'S WORD OVER THAT OF MEN:

- Matthew 15: "And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? . . . 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"
- Matt. 10:35—"the Scripture cannot be broken"
- Matt. 5:18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

## Psalm 138:2

“...For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.”

## HEBREWS 4:12

Was Paul a “bibliolater” when he said in Hebrews,

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Psalm 119:161 and Hebrews 4:11

Was the Psalmist a “bibliolater”  
when he said,

NASB (1995): “But my heart stands  
in awe of Your words.”

NIV: “but my heart trembles at  
your word.”

# Wallace - Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics

Wallace uses "BCE" and "CE" for dates instead of "BC" and "AD" in his Grammar.

**AD** = *anno domini*  
(in the year of our Lord)

**BC** = "Before Christ"

**BCE** = "Before the Common Era"

**CE** = "Common Era"

Why?

<https://bible.org/article/ad-or-ce>

An “imperfect analogy”—use of Jesus’s name in dating is like use of confederate flag to evangelize African-Americans--  
<https://bible.org/article/ad-or-ce>

- “As an imperfect analogy, consider this: There are some good Christian southerners who are proud of the Confederate flag. In the deep south, many of them prominently fly that flag over their homes. To them, the Confederate flag symbolizes a fierce independence, a highly defined cultural ethos, a regional pride. But to others who are not from the south, it symbolizes racism, slavery, prejudice, hate. Indeed, the Confederate flag symbolizes this to many, if not most, African-American southerners. I have yet to see any black man hoist a Confederate flag on his front lawn! The sad thing is that there are many good Christian southerners who have no racial prejudice—and yet they fly the flag. The question I have for them is this: If you are trying to reach your black neighbors for Christ, don’t you think putting up the flag is an unnecessary roadblock? How can they possibly see this flag as representing anything but racial prejudice?”
- Now, admittedly, that’s a very imperfect analogy.”

# Wallace - Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics

*"Why, then, should any evangelical use CE and BCE? There are at least three reasons for this.*

***First**, this nomenclature distinguishes our western tradition from biblical authority. None of the apostles ever used BC and AD. The terminology, as we have noted, was not invented for hundreds of years, and it took nearly a millennium after that before its usage became popular. As important as the concept of BC and AD are to believers, the terminology is not on the same level. All of the apostles conceived of time from the incarnation of the anthropic person (or, more properly, from his death and resurrection), but they registered time in the same way that everyone else in their society did: from the reign of the current emperor. When evangelicals insist that others should use BC and AD, because to do otherwise is not Christian, they are inadvertently elevating tradition to the level of biblical authority." [underlining added]*

# Wallace - Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics

*"Second, in our pluralistic society, more and more people don't even know what BC and AD mean! And it's only going to get worse. Should an evangelical today be faulted for utilizing societal conventions which aid in communication? That is partially what is at issue in this debate."*

*"Third, the reasons I use CE and BCE are simply that I tend to write to a broad readership. Many of them are already offended at the Christian message. There is no need to put more stumbling blocks in their path. Rather, I want folks to wrestle with the real arguments and the real substance of what I'm talking about. If using CE and BCE will open the doors for even one unbeliever in the real discussion, while using AD and BC would so prejudice him from the start that he cannot see the arguments, then I will use CE and BCE. After all, if anything in our message should be a stumbling block it should be Jesus Christ himself, not the symbols of our implicit belief in him." [underlining added]*

# Wallace - Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics



*"Using 'BC' and 'AD' is directly related to our convictions of Jesus Christ as the most significant figure in all of human history. The message is clear; the symbol itself points to him as the stumbling block. In these respects, BC/AD is unlike the symbol of the Confederate flag. At the same time, there is an attractiveness, a winsomeness, about wooing someone to Christ without having to parade our convictions before them.*

*In short, I have no problem with those who use BC and AD, but in my writings that are intended for a broader audience, I prefer to use the less offensive BCE and CE. People will get offended enough by the content of what I have to say (if they don't, I'm not doing my job!), but I see no need in offending them with the symbols." [underlining added]*

# In reply...

Jesus was the “Rock of Offense:”

**Rom. 9:33** “just as it is written, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.’”

**1 Pet. 2:8** “and, ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;' for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.”

# In reply...

- ❖ Did the “offense” of Jesus’ name make the disciples NOT mention Him? Or “soften” their message?
- ❖ Hypothetical: If the disciples had AD/BC dating available to them, would they have removed it?
- ❖ Galatians 4:4—But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law—They saw Jesus as bringing in the “FULLNESS OF TIME”
- ❖ Acts 2:36 “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.”
- ❖ Phil. 2:10 “so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”

# In reply...

**John 15:18** "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you."

**John 15:23-25** "He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. 25 But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'"

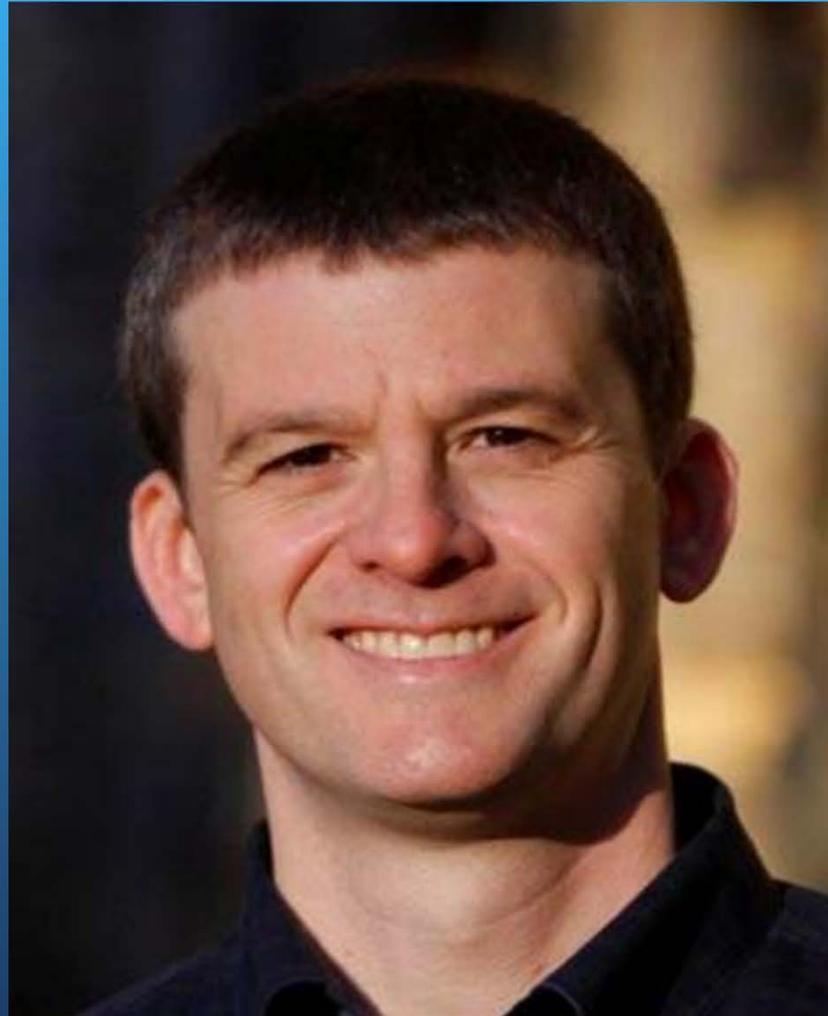
**Mark 8:38** "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Matthew 27:45-56

# Resurrection of the Saints at Jesus' Death

## A TEST CASE

Michael Licona, Associate Professor Theology,  
Houston Baptist College (SBC)



# “Chicago’s Muddy Waters”

Licona has likened the ICBI Statements on Inerrancy and Hermeneutics as “Chicago’s Muddy Waters.”

*“The truth of Christianity is grounded in the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection rather than the inerrancy of the Bible. If Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity would still be true even if it were the case that some things in the Bible are not. In fact, because Jesus rose, Christianity was true in the period before any of the New Testament literature was written. So, how could an error in the Gospels nullify the truth of Christianity? This is not to say the Bible contains errors. It is to say that, since the truth of the Christian gospel does not hang on every word in the Bible being correct, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy is, at the very most, a secondary doctrine.”* [underlining added]

# Questions for Michael Licona:

If the inerrancy of the Word of God cannot be trusted, and is “at most” a secondary doctrine, then HOW CAN YOU TRUST THE ASSERTIONS REGARDING JESUS’ RESURRECTION?

If errors exist in the Bible, then COULD THERE NOT BE ERRORS IN ITS TESTIMONY OF THE RESURRECTION?

# Michael Licona

Michael Licona, in his book *The Resurrection of Jesus. A New Historiographical Approach*, used *bios* as a means of de-historicizing parts of the Gospel (i.e., Matthew 27:51-53 with the resurrection of the saints after Jesus' crucifixion is non-literal genre or apocalyptic rather than an actual historical event).

# Michael Licona

Michael Licona deprecates ICBI: "*CSBI and the doctrine of biblical inerrancy are not the same. CSBI is neither Scripture nor is it the product of a Church council. It is not authoritative.*"

<http://www.risenjesus.com/chicagos-muddy-waters>

**REPLY:** One cannot be so dismissive of ICBI 1978 and 1982 that was issued by hundreds of evangelical scholars representing dozens of evangelical schools who came together to state the ORTHODOX POSITION ON INERRANCY HELD BY THE CHURCH SINCE ANCIENT TIMES.

# Michael Licona

*"It is only a few who, in practice, regard CSBI as the only proper definition of biblical inerrancy and have appointed themselves to police the evangelical community for transgressors of CSBI."*

**REPLY:** Those who are holding to ICBI REMEMBER THE DANGER HISTORICALLY OF HOW EVANGELICALS WERE ABANDONING INERRANCY IN THE 1950s through 1970s!

# Michael Licona's Syllogism

Greco-Roman bioi have a mixture of history and legend/myth.

The Gospels are Greco-Roman bioi.

Therefore, the Gospels have a mixture of history and legend/myth.

# Michael Licona

Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A New Historiographical Approach*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010).

Licona labels it a "strange little text" (*Resurrection*, 548) and terms it "special effects" that have no historical basis (*Resurrection*, 552).

His apparent concern also rests with only Matthew as mentioning the event. He concludes that "Jewish eschatological texts and thought in mind" as "most plausible" in explaining it (*Resurrection*, 552).

[underlining added]

# Michael Licona

He concludes that "*It seems best to regard this difficult text in Matthew a poetic device added to communicate that the Son of God had died and that impending judgment awaited Israel*" (p. 553).

Licona argued "*Bioi* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and inventing speeches... and they often included legend.

Because *bios* was a flexible genre, it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins."

[underlining added]

# Michael Licona contends:

Licona suggested that the appearance of angels at Jesus' tomb after the resurrection is also legendary.

He wrote: "It can forthrightly be admitted that the data surrounding what happened to Jesus is fragmentary and could possibly be mixed with legend, as Wedderburn notes.

*We may also be reading poetic language or legend at certain points, such as Matthew's report of the raising of some dead saints at Jesus death (Mt 27:51-54) and the angel(s) at the tomb (Mk 15:5-7; Mt 28:2-7; Lk 24:4-7; Jn 20:11-13)."*

(Ibid., 185-186, [underlining added] from *The Resurrection of Jesus*).

# Robert Gundry vs. Licona on Matthew 27:51-54

Gundry takes this section as an actual, historical event  
“Matthew probably means that the saints stayed in their tombs  
for several days [v. 53] even though their bodies had been raised  
to life. Then they came out and ‘entered into the holy city and  
appeared to many.’” (Gundry, *Matthew*, p. 576 [1994]).

Gundry concludes, “the resurrection and testimony of the saints  
provides miraculous demonstration of the divine sonship”  
(Gundry, p. 577).

THIS IS A CLUE: what drives Licona’s assumption is his *a priori*  
arbitrary, assumption of Greco-Roman *bioi* myth/history  
concept. BIOI did it, GOSPELS do it.

Saints resurrection PROVES Jesus resurrection!!!! Licona  
defeats his own support for Jesus’s resurrection!

# Michael Licona:

What is more, Licona offers no clear hermeneutical way to determine from the text of Scripture what is legend and what is not. Calling a short unembellished Gospel account with witnesses “weird,” as Licona does (527), is certainly not a very clear test, especially when the passage is directly associated with the resurrection of Christ (as Matthew 27 is).

Many New Testament scholars think the bodily resurrection of Christ is weird too. Rudolf Bultmann, the Dean of NT scholars, called it “incredible,” “senseless,” and even “impossible” to the modern mind (*Kerygma and Myth*, 2-4).

# Michael Licona contends:

Licona claims to believe in the general reliability of the Gospel records, "even if some embellishments are present."

He adds, "A possible candidate for embellishment is John 18:4-6" (306, emphasis added) where, when Jesus claimed "I am he" (cf. John 8:58), His pursuers "drew back and fell on the ground."

Again, there is no indication in this or other New Testament texts that this account is not historical. It is but another example of Licona's unbiblical "dehistoricizing" of the New Testament which ICBI explicitly condemned by name.

# Michael Licona contends:

*“Biblical inerrancy is not an essential doctrine for the Christian faith.”*

*“Biblical inerrancy is not a fundamental doctrine.”*

Michael Licona



<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/>

# Or, "What's the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?"



## Michael Licona contends:

*" We must think of historical reliability in light of the literary conventions belonging to the historical genre of the era in which it was written. Accordingly, ancient historical literature should not be judged by modern conventions that demand an almost forensic accuracy, since the conventions adopted by the former did not require it. This does not mean the author could not have included a small number of legendary stories."*



<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/>

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*“We can verify numerous elements reported by an ancient author to be true in their essence though not necessarily in every detail.”*

*“We have reason to believe the author intended to write an accurate account of what occurred notwithstanding his use of **compositional devices** appropriate for the historical/biographical genre and the occasional appearance of errors and legend.”*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting added]

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*"The majority of New Testament scholars now hold that the Gospels belong to the genre of **Greco-Roman biography**. They are not ancient novels. Biography was meant to provide us with a historical portrait of the main character. **This observation is limited in its value, since biographers varied in their commitment to reporting accurately and some tended to paint literary portraits that were more positive of their main character than the person actually was in life – sometimes far more positive – and they sometimes included fiction.** Notwithstanding, biography was a historical genre that was both respected and abused by various authors."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/>  
[yellow highlighting added]

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*"We have no good reasons to believe more than a very small percentage of stories reported by an ancient author are false.*

*When approaching the Gospels purely as historians and not making any theological assumptions, we cannot rule out that some of the stories in the Gospels contain legend or embellishments. But if we also bracket theological and philosophical assumptions that rule out miracles a priori, there are no reasons to think that some of the stories in the Gospels never occurred."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting added]

## Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*“The gospels paint literary portraits of Jesus that are ‘true enough.’”*

Michael Licona

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting added]

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*"Are the Gospels historically reliable accounts of Jesus? Yes."*

*"Does being historically reliable require that everything reported by the Gospel authors occurred precisely as described? No."*

*"Does it mean the authors could not have included a small number of legendary stories, embellishments, or errors? No."*

*"It means that a large majority of what is being reported is true to the extent that readers get an accurate gist of what occurred. The Gospels paint literary portraits of Jesus that are 'true enough.'"*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting added]

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*“When it comes to the spiritual truths in the New Testament, these cannot be confirmed using the tools available to historians, any more than those same tools can confirm the existence of black holes. Thus, we cannot say those items are historically reliable or historically unreliable. Nevertheless, that does not prohibit historians from deciding on the historical elements in a narrative. For example, although historians are incapable of confirming that Jesus’s death atones for sin, they are able to confirm that Jesus died by crucifixion.”*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting or underlining added]

# Michael Licona contends on the Gospels:

*"The empty tomb narratives fulfill the criterion on embarrassment and appear to be **generally reliable**."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/michael-licona-interview/> [yellow highlighting added]

## Bart Ehrman states...

*"I would like to point out an interesting phenomenon, which I think is probably an empirical fact, that the **only people who think the Gospels are absolutely accurate in every detail are Christian fundamentalists who are committed for theological reasons to thinking that the Bible cannot have any mistakes of any kind whatsoever because the authors were inspired to write exactly what happened in every detail.** Mike is clearly not in that fundamentalist camp."*

Note: I AGREE WITH BART EHRMAN'S EVALUATION OF LICONA!!!!!!

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/> [highlighting added]

# Bart Ehrman continues...

*“As Mike has laid out his view, it has become clear that he thinks the Gospels are basically reliable in the main things they say, but that they are not reliable in their details. The authors of the Gospels, as Mike has repeatedly stated, felt completely free to use literary license in order to change the details of their accounts for artistic reasons. And so they often would modify a story so that it was no longer expressing what really happened, in order to make it a better story (he uses the example of the healing of Jairus’ daughter as an example); or they would tell a story as if it happened, but not really mean that it happened – that is, some of their accounts are actually not historical records of what took place (he gives as an example one of the key events that allegedly occurred at Jesus’ death).”*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/> [highlighting added]

Editor’s Note: I AGREE WITH BART EHRMAN’S EVALUATION OF LICONA!!!!!!

# Bart Ehrman continues...

“The only people who think the Gospels are absolutely accurate in every detail are Christian fundamentalists.”

Editor's Note:

AGREE WITH BART EHRMAN'S EVALUATION OF LICONA!!!!!!

Editor's Note: Ehrman points out the deviation of Licona from orthodoxy!!!!

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/>

# Bart Ehrman continues...

*"I take heart in Mike's statements that the authors of the Gospels often used literary devices in the molding of their stories, and that in doing so they were simply doing what other authors of the period did, authors such as Plutarch or Suetonius."*

*"I completely agree that when we are looking at ancient sources such as the Gospels, we need to situate them in their own historical context and see how authors of their own day presented their accounts. Ancient writers simply didn't have the tools of research that are available to us today. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – whatever their real names, and whoever they actually were – did not have data retrieval systems or databases. They didn't even have libraries. Or, many written sources to go on. They can't be expected to have produced historical accounts the way modern biographers and historians produce historical accounts."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/> highlighting added.

# Bart Ehrman continues...

*"But does that mean that we can then conclude that these books are accurate? That seems to be Mike's position – that if the Gospels are as accurate as Plutarch or Suetonius, then they can be seen as accurate."*

*I think a lot of readers will think that this is somewhat skirting the real issue and changing the terms of our debate. Most readers, when they want to know if the Gospel accounts 'tell it like it was' – that is, that the Gospels narrate events that actually happened in the way that they are described – they are not asking whether the Gospels are 'as good as' some other books. They simply want to know: Did this event happen? And did it happen in the way the Gospels say it did? They do not want to know if Matthew's account of Jesus is about as good as Plutarch's account of Romulus. Most people don't know that Plutarch wrote a Life of Romulus. Why would they care if Matthew's Gospel is as good as a book they've never heard of? They want to know whether Matthew's account accurately describes what happened in Jesus's life."*

Editor's Note:

I AGREE WITH BART EHRMAN'S EVALUATION OF LICONA!!!!!!

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/> [highlighting added]

# Bart Ehrman insightfully notes...

*“Even if Matthew’s account of Jesus were as good as Plutarch’s of Romulus—that wouldn’t make it reliable.”*

Bart Ehrman

Editor’s Note:

I AGREE WITH BART EHRMAN’S EVALUATION OF LICONA!!!!!!

## Bart Ehrman notes...

*"I should point out that even if Matthew's account of Jesus were as good as Plutarch's account of Romulus, that would definitely not make it very reliable! Many of Plutarch's Lives are notoriously unreliable, historically. It's kind of like saying that I must have been a good tennis player because I was at least as good as everyone else in my high school. But what if no one in my high school was any good in tennis? We can't say that Matthew must be reliable because he is at least as good as skilled Plutarch – which by the way, he is not, as any classicist will tell you – unless we know how reliable Plutarch is."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/highlighting> added.

# Bart Ehrman recognizes...

*“So, does Matthew accurately describe what actually happened in Jesus’s life? Mike has already told us that he thinks in some cases the answer is no. Matthew has employed literary license in order to change details in his accounts so they didn’t happen as he described, and he tells some stories that are ‘non-historical’ – that is, they didn’t happen at all.*

*But Mike then wants to say that Matthew is, despite all that, historically reliable. I don’t think most people would think that this is what we today mean by ‘historically reliable.’ And I think a lot of people – including many people reading this back and forth – would very much like to know how often Mike thinks this sort of thing happens in Matthew. Does Matthew frequently change his stories and make up other ones that he doesn’t think happened? How would we know? If an author is willing to change the details of one story, why not other stories? Why not lots of stories? Why not most of his stories? And how would we know? Moreover, if he is willing to make up a story and present it as something that happened when he knew full well that it didn’t happen (as Mike concedes Matthew did), then how often did he do that? A few other times? Lots of other times? If he did it lots, how is he accurate?”*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/> highlighting added

# Praise God for Bart Ehrman's honesty!!!!!!

Tweet this:

If an author's willing to change the details of one story—why not other stories? @BartEhrman

*"In short, to say that Matthew was doing that because everyone was doing it doesn't really help us out very much, if what we want to know is whether we can trust that what Matthew tells us happened actually happened, and happened in the way that he says it happened. Just because everyone else changed and made up stories, does that mean Matthew is accurate when he does so? That's kind of like saying that I haven't broken the law when I got a speeding ticket because everyone goes over the speed limit."*

<http://www.thebestschools.org/special/ehrman-licona-dialogue-reliability-new-testament/ehrman-detailed-response/>

# Bart Ehrman, in sum...

Ehrman points out the ABSOLUTE INCONSISTENCY OF LICONA'S POSITION & ANY EVANGELICALS WHO AGREE WITH HIM.

\*\*\*\*LICONA'S SOLUTION IS WORSE THAN THE PROBLEM!!!!

\*\*\*\*LICONA'S SOLUTION IS SELF-DEFEATING!

But Ehrman has left the faith . . .  
That historical-criticism wrought



# The following evangelicals have publicly supported Licona asserting his view is in line with biblical inerrancy . . .

*" We the undersigned are aware of the above stated position by Dr. Michael Licona, including his present position pertaining to the report of the raised saints in Matthew 27: He proposes that the report may refer to a literal/historical event, a real event partially described in apocalyptic terms, or an apocalyptic symbol. Though most of us do not hold Licona's proposal, we are in firm agreement that it is compatible with biblical inerrancy, despite objections to the contrary. We are encouraged to see the confluence of biblical scholars, historians, and philosophers in this question. [highlighting added]*

W. David Beck, Ph.D.

Craig Blomberg, Ph.D.

James Chancellor, Ph.D.

William Lane Craig, D.Theol., Ph.D.

Jeremy A. Evans, Ph.D.

Gary R. Habermas, Ph.D.

Craig S. Keener, Ph.D.

Douglas J. Moo, Ph.D.

J. P. Moreland, Ph.D.

Heath A. Thomas, Ph.D.

Daniel B. Wallace, Ph.D.

William Warren, Ph.D.

Edwin M. Yamauchi, Ph.D.

# “In line with biblical inerrancy”

WHAT DO THESE EVANGELICAL CRITICAL SCHOLARS  
MEAN BY “INERRANCY”?

ARE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF INERRANCY BEING PROPOUNDED?

DOES THE TERM NOW HAVE ANY REAL SIGNIFICANCE AS  
“WITHOUT ERROR” AS IT RELATES HISTORY?

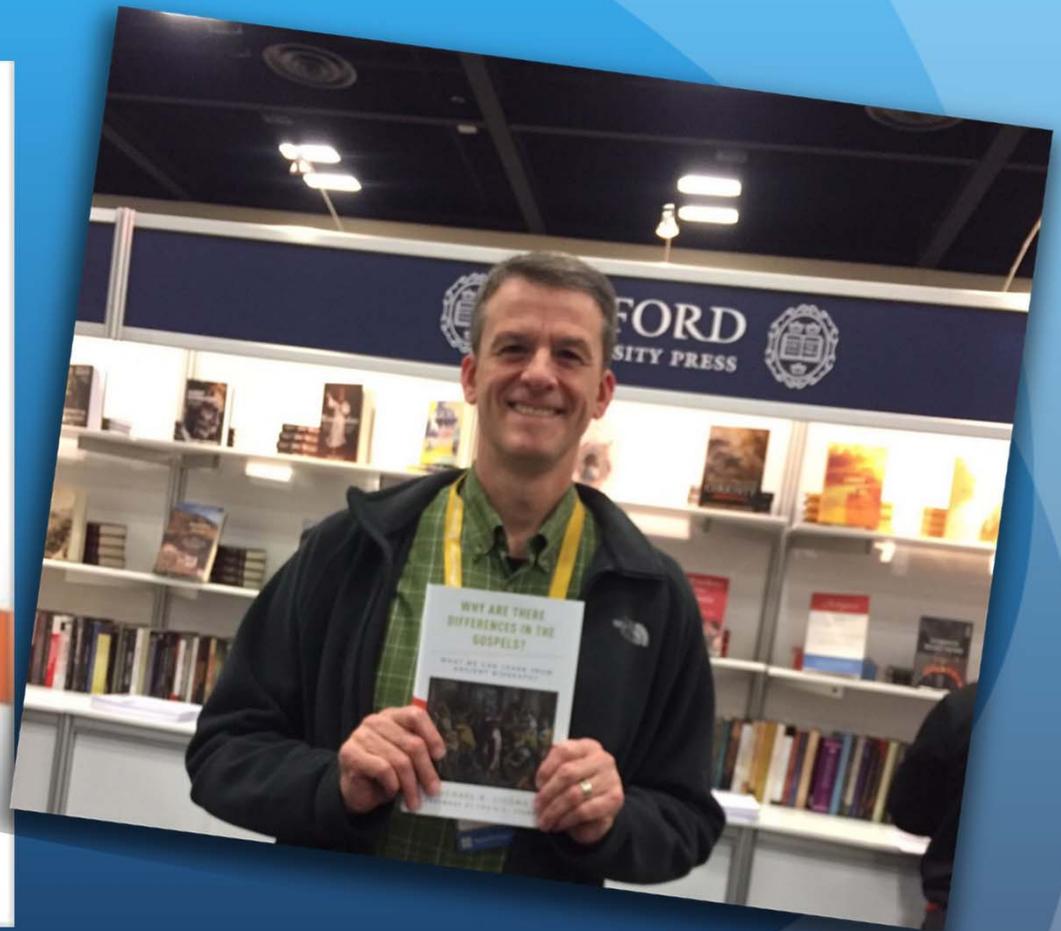
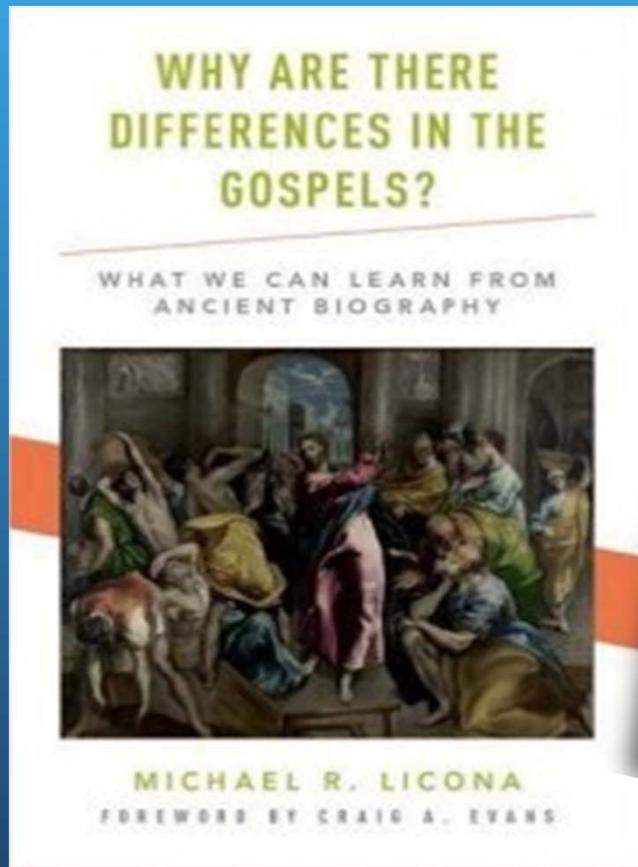
In a more recent YouTube presentation, LICONA SAYS “probably Mark is confused” concerning the location of the Feeding of the 5000.”



# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



His new book . . . more is coming!



NAME-CALLING BEGINS QUICKLY . . . .

## Craig Evans

Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins  
Dean of the School of Christian Thought,  
Houston Baptist University,  
who writes the "Foreword," warns . . .



Licona's work "cautions naïve conservatives who rely on simplistic harmonizations and pat answers that really do not do justice to the phenomena."

Licona mentions "ultra conservatives" who object to his approach.

# Craig Evans . . . .



“Many Christian readers of Dr. Licona’s book will be surprised by his findings. Some will perhaps be troubled” —  
Forward

# EVANS CHIDES... LICONA THANKS...

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

high regard for the stories of Jesus, especially for his words.

Many Christian readers of Dr. Licona's book will be surprised by his findings. Some will perhaps be troubled. Hopefully all will read his book with an open, teachable mind. Those who regard the Gospels as inspired and trustworthy, but are troubled by their apparent discrepancies, should be encouraged by Dr. Licona's careful, informed study. His work exposes the rapid assertions of the hacks, to the effect that the Gospels are filled with errors and contradictions and so cannot be trusted. At the same time, it cautions naïve conservatives who rely on simplistic harmonizations and pat answers that really do not do justice to the phenomena.

It is a pleasure for me to commend Dr. Licona's well-researched and well-written book to all readers.

Craig A. Evans, PhD, DHabil, John Bisagno Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins and Dean of the School of Christian Thought, Houston Baptist University.

## Acknowledgments

I WOULD LIKE to express my gratitude to four classical scholars for their assistance: to John Ramsey most of all, who provided a great deal of assistance throughout the first half of this project, especially for pericopes #1–22 in [chapter 3](#), a portion of [chapter 5](#), and all of Appendix 4; to Christopher Pelling for reviewing the introduction, [chapters 1–2](#), and pericopes #23–36 in [chapter 3](#); to Rainer Hirsch-Luipold for reviewing portions of [chapters 2–3](#), and pericopes #23–36 in [chapter 3](#); and to Steven L. Jones, my colleague at Houston Baptist University (HBU), for reviewing the introduction through [chapter 3](#).

I likewise wish to express my thanks to the following New Testament scholars for their part in this work: to Darrell Bock and Craig Keener for reviewing the entire manuscript except for [chapter 5](#) and the conclusion; to Craig Blomberg and Darrell Bock for reading a paper I presented in 2015 at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, which became the basis for [chapter 5](#), and for providing response papers to it, which provided helpful ideas; to Craig Blomberg, Darrell Bock, Lynn Cohick, Gary Habermas, Randy Richards, and Dan Wallace for showing an interest in the thesis of this book while providing critical feedback to ideas they allowed me to run by them. I am also grateful to my son-in-law, Nick Peters, for his initial assistance.

I want to express my thanks to my HBU colleague Jerry Walls, who continuously pushed me to submit my book proposal to Oxford University Press (OUP) until I did; to Cynthia Read at OUP for being a pleasure to work with; to HBU for allowing me a flexible teaching schedule in order to

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complete my research for this volume; to William Lane Craig and Greg Monette, who both encouraged me to push forward with this research when I became weary of it; and to Craig Evans, Craig Keener, Greg Monette, my Doktorvater Jan van der Watt, and Dan Wallace, all of whom encouraged me to pursue truth no matter where it led when my observations made me uncomfortable.

I want to express my gratitude for the Support Team Members of Risen Jesus, Inc., who provided consistent financial assistance, to *Sola Scriptura* in Indonesia and its partners, who provided a research grant that gave me precious time to focus on my research for this book. I am grateful to Bryant Paul Richardson for creating the three graphics illustrating the three major solutions to the Synoptic Problem. I am grateful to Paul Brinkerhoff and Lois Stück of Grace and Truth Communications for editing the manuscript for this book. They greatly improved it. I am thankful to my wife, Debbie Licon, who patiently listened to me while I ran ideas past her and provided valuable feedback during the seven and a half years I was engaged in this project, and, having read a near-final draft, provided valuable comments and suggestions. She is truly a βουθήσων (Gen. 2:18).

My friend Paul Maier had intended to embark on a research project similar to what is contained in this volume but was unable to because of challenges he and his wife had to face concerning her health. I hope this volume satisfies his curiosity.

## Abbreviations

IN THE TEXT AND NOTES, references to ancient authors and their works when abbreviated follow the abbreviations used in the *SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd ed.), supplemented by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th ed.), as are references to journals and other works of classical and biblical scholarship. Some alternate abbreviations are also included parenthetically as they appear in quoted material. For the reader's convenience, full Latin (or Greek) titles are provided along with their English titles. All references to Jewish, intertestamental, Greco-Roman, and patristic literature not mentioned below are given in full.

All English translations of Plutarch and all other quotations of ancient authors are from the volumes in the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise indicated. All English translations of Theon are from [George A. Kennedy's \*Proquyasmata\*](#), unless otherwise indicated. Kennedy's English translation of Hermogenes and Aphthonius is based on the Greek texts provided by [Hugo Rabe, \*Prolegomenon Sylloge\*](#) (Leipzig: Teubner, 1931). For more detail on Rabe, see [Kennedy, \*Proquyasmata\*](#), 90–91. Kennedy's English translation of Nicolaus is based on the Teubner text provided by [Joseph Felton in 1913](#). All Scripture quotations, including the Septuagint (LXX), are the author's translation. Other English translation of quotations from ancient sources is indicated as such if translated by the author.

Author names are generally used in full along with works when first mentioned to avoid abbreviating too concisely for readers not specializing in classical or biblical studies. Whether abbreviated or used in full, other frequently cited works appear as follows (entries are grouped by category

## Apparent Syllogism- presented in “scholarly” wording

- Ancient biography [e.g., Plutarch] used “compositional devices”
- The Gospels are ancient biography [like Plutarch *Lives*]
- **CONCLUSION:** The canonical Gospels [e.g., like Plutarch] use “compositional devices”

“COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES”—a loaded term where the devil is in details of meaning/definition

# Actual Syllogism—presented w/o intellectual varnish



- Ancient biography [e.g., Plutarch] is a mixture of truth, legend, creative [made-up] embellishment, historical accuracy and inaccuracy, etc., etc.
- The Gospels are ancient biography [like Plutarch *Lives*]
- **CONCLUSION:** The canonical Gospels [e.g., like Plutarch] is a mixture of truth, legend, creative [made-up] embellishment, historical accuracy and imprecision (or, inaccuracy) etc., etc.

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



## REPLY TO GOSPELS USE OF GRECO-ROMAN BIOI COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES

- (1) EVERY ONE OF THESE SPECULATIONS OF LICONA AS TO THE GOSPELS USING SUCH GRECO-ROMAN “COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES” HAS A MUCH MORE REASONABLE, MORE NATURAL ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION or *HARMONIZATION*, WITHOUT EVER HAVING TO RESORT TO SUCH COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES.
- (2) His explanations of Compositional devices appear to stem from A LOW VIEW OF INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY [SIC]
- (3) The Two-Source theory drives much of his conclusions—IF TWO SOURCE WRONG—AND IT IS—MANY OF THESE ASSERTIONS ARE TENUOUS.
- (4) P.S. NEVER DID ANY CHURCH FATHER EVER SAY MARK WAS WRITTEN FIRST!—Greatly neglected Gospel

# CONCLUSION—GRECO-ROMAN BIOI HYPOTHESIS

- (1) That Gospels are Greco-Roman *bioi* ABSOLUTE FRAUD!
- (2) Invented as a Scholarly FAD!
- (3) Although started by Talbert, British scholarship has caused it to predominate as a moderating influence against German form-critical idea that Gospels are all myth-legend.
- (4) British response by this tactic: Gospels are only partially myth, have some core of historicity some places.

# Luke's words in Acts 17:21— Paul at Areopagus . . . A LESSON

“Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new”

Seminary dissertation goal: express something new or new discovery

NT GOAL: HOLD FAST! Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in <sup>b</sup>sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

2 Timothy 2:2—“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

# LICONA'S PREMISE—

## —Plutarch is standard for Gospels history reporting

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

### Foreword

ALL WHO READ the New Testament Gospels carefully will observe a great many similarities and a great many differences. The similarities are what we expect. After all, the four Gospels are talking about the same person, Jesus of Nazareth. It is the observation of the differences that creates the problem. The wording of something Jesus says appears in two or three forms in the Gospels. Sometimes where Jesus says it differs from one Gospel to another. How is this to be explained? Should these discrepancies be regarded as errors? Were the Gospel writers poor historians? Have they told the truth about Jesus?

It is very understandable that modern readers of the Gospels raise these questions. If historians today produced parallel accounts of the life and accomplishments of a United States president or a British prime minister, which exhibited the kinds of discrepancies that we find in the Gospels, no doubt their work would be sharply criticized.

In large part this explains the problem. We moderns have very different expectations of what constitutes historiography, or the “writing of history.” Most of us have no idea how the ancients understood history or how it should be written. Many of us probably assume that the ancients wrote their histories the way we moderns do, or at least tried to. If we think this, we are wrong. In fact, many of us have little idea how the ancients thought the life and teaching of a great man should be preserved and passed on. This is especially important in the case of someone like Jesus, who as a teacher (or “rabbi”) taught disciples (“learners”). How he taught, what he expected his disciples to learn, and how he expected them to teach others all come into

play in the writing of the Gospels. In other words, the pedagogy (manner of teaching) of Jesus is every bit as important as ancient historiography for understanding the Gospels and why they tell the story of Jesus differently.

To understand the New Testament Gospels and the kind of biography or history that they offer, it is necessary to compare them to the biographies and histories that were written in their time, not our time. This is what Michael Licona has done in his learned study *Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?* Dr. Licona addresses this important question by inquiring into how the ancients wrote history. He focuses on Plutarch, who flourished at the end of the first century and the first two decades of the second century and authored the *Lives*. The choice of Plutarch is a good one because in several biographies he frequently covers the same ground, thus creating a number of parallels or, we might say, “synoptic” accounts not unlike what we have in the New Testament Gospels, especially in the first three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—which scholars call the Synoptic Gospels because of their many parallels.

What Dr. Licona shows is that the writers of the New Testament Gospels often edit their material in ways very similar to what Plutarch did with his material. This similarity enables us to evaluate the Gospels in their time and environment. Just as Plutarch compresses stories, sometimes conflates them, inverts the order of events, simplifies, and relocates stories or sayings, so do the authors of the New Testament Gospels.

However, compared to the compositional practice of Plutarch, the authors of the Gospels were far more conservative, especially when it comes to the editing and paraphrasing of the words of Jesus. Indeed, it has been observed that the authors of the New Testament Gospels are far more conservative in their paraphrasing of the words of Jesus than was Josephus in his paraphrasing of the words of Israel’s ancient Scripture. What the evidence seems to show is that while the authors of the New Testament Gospels exhibit many of the compositional practices of their day, they also had a very

# Gospels = Greco-Roman Biography

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

as history rather than biography.<sup>32</sup> They recognize that the prologues to his Gospel and its sequel, Acts, reflect Luke's familiarity with Greco-Roman historiography. That is, he knew and was probably writing in a manner that had strong affinities with Hellenistic or Greco-Roman histories. Therefore, some ancient biographies, including one or more of the Gospels, may be said to resist firm grouping within a genre.<sup>33</sup> For our purposes, we only need to recognize that the New Testament Gospels bear a strong affinity to Greco-Roman biography. Accordingly, we should not be surprised when the evangelists employ compositional devices similar to those used by ancient biographers. In fact, we should be surprised if they did not.

Burridge and Gould say Bultmann was correct in asserting that the Gospels do not look anything like modern biography. What Bultmann neglected to observe, however, is that neither do any other ancient biographies.<sup>34</sup> Differing from modern biography, which is a product of the nineteenth century, ancient biographical conventions provided authors a license to depart from the degree of precision in reporting that many of us moderns prefer.

Generally speaking, ancient authors took fewer liberties when writing histories than when writing biographies. However, there are plenty of exceptions when even the more careful historians of that era engaged in history writing using the same liberties we observe in biographical writing. A history was meant to illustrate past events whereas a biography was meant to serve as a literary portrait of its main character. Accordingly, if an adapting or bending of details would serve to make a historical point or illuminate the qualities of the main character in a manner that rendered them clearer, the historian and biographer were free to do so, since their accounts would be "true enough."<sup>35</sup>

Ancient historians and biographers varied in their commitment to historical accuracy. Whereas Tacitus is regarded as a fairly accurate

historian, Lucian of Samosata reported that when the Greek historian Aristobulus of Cassandreia read to Alexander a story he had invented concerning a battle between Alexander and Porus, in which Alexander had single-handedly killed an elephant, Alexander discarded the book and said Aristobulus should be treated in like manner (*Hist. conscr.* 12). Plutarch's *Lives* and *Suetonius's Lives of the Caesars* (*De vita Caesarum*) are regarded as more accurate literary portraits of their main characters than Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (*Vita Apollonii*), which is a combination of history and fiction.<sup>36</sup>

The historical accuracy of ancient literature may be viewed in a manner similar to what we observe in movie theaters today. Some movies claim at the beginning to be "based on true events" while others claim to be "inspired by true events." The latter will involve more dramatic license than the former. Even in the former, however, we expect reenacted conversations to be redacted to varying degrees for clarity, dramatic impact, and artistic improvement.<sup>37</sup>

## Observations of a Student of the New Testament

Conducting research in a different discipline requires a very steep learning curve. This research involved more than I had anticipated. Being engaged in historical Jesus research combined with a growing understanding of early Christianity does not necessarily provide one with knowledge about the late Roman Republic. Emperors, proconsuls, prefects, and Jewish tetrarchs were only a few of the political positions held in the world in which the earliest Christians lived and the New Testament authors wrote. Augustus led Rome at a time when the Republic was in the beginning stages of a transition

# GOSPELS STANDARD IS PLUTARCH

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

toward empire, a process that continued throughout Jesus's lifetime. The role of the senate, the various political posts, and the varying dates on which the posts were to be taken and vacated were just a few of many matters that impacted my research and had to be learned.

There are bound to be some errors in this volume, despite the fact that four classical scholars and two New Testament scholars graciously viewed it with the intent of catching the more obvious ones. Of course, I alone am responsible for any errors that remain.

The Loeb Greek text of Plutarch's *Lives* has been tagged and is available for all to view at the Perseus Project (online)<sup>38</sup> and within Logos Bible Software. But that edition is nearly a century old. I learned that a more recent version of the Teubner text is available and is the preferred critical Greek text used by classical scholars. Unfortunately, the current Teubner text is pricey. Plutarch's *Lives*, at least the nine I am considering in this volume, appear in six volumes and cost approximately \$600 USD. In light of this, one comes quickly to appreciate the affordability of critical Greek New Testaments, which are far more extensive than Teubner's Greek texts of Plutarch's *Lives* and may be purchased for less than \$50 USD.<sup>39</sup> Though using the most current Teubner text for Plutarch's *Lives*, I will be employing the reference system of verse numbering found in Loeb unless otherwise indicated, since the Loeb Greek text is readily available to so many and this book is written primarily for students of the canonical Gospels.

My work in Plutarch's *Lives* has provided me with a much greater appreciation for what those of us who study the New Testament have available to us. Commentaries on the New Testament literature are found in an abundance that truly overwhelms. It is a sobering thought that when my life is over I will not have consulted as much as one-third of the commentaries on the New Testament literature. Such abundance is far from the case when we come to Plutarch. Furthermore, the manuscript support for our present critical Greek text of the New Testament is superior to what

we have for any of the ancient literature. As of the time I am writing this chapter, there are 5,839 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.<sup>40</sup> A dozen or so of these manuscripts have been dated to have been written within 150 years of the originals, and the earliest (P<sup>52</sup>) has been dated to within ten to sixty years of the original.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, of the nine *Lives* of Plutarch we will be considering, only a few dozen Greek manuscripts have survived. The earliest of these is dated to the tenth or eleventh century, or roughly eight to nine hundred years after Plutarch wrote them. Moreover, while the wealth of manuscripts for the New Testament literature leaves us very few places where uncertainty remains pertaining to the earliest reading or at least the meaning behind it, there are few if any places where a gap in the manuscripts forces scholars to amend the text with a reading that appears in no Greek manuscript or even one that is contrary to what we read in the manuscripts.<sup>42</sup> This is not the case with Plutarch's *Lives*.

In short, this research project has humbled me concerning my initial lack of understanding of the late Roman Republic (an understanding that, of course, is still growing) and has greatly increased my appreciation for the wealth of both the available resources for the study of the New Testament literature and the available Greek manuscripts. This project also kindled in me a strong interest in the events leading to the fall of the Roman Republic for their own sake. The personalities involved, the events themselves, and their outcomes are fascinating.

Some final comments must be made in terms of some content of this volume. It contains research that may be of interest to both students of the Gospels and students of classics. Because many of us who are students of the New Testament are largely unfamiliar with matters pertaining to Roman history, I must include some content that will be quite elementary to students of classics. Likewise, many students of classics will be deficient in their understanding of the New Testament. Accordingly, some of the content

# PLUTARCH DID IT, THEREFORE SO DO GOSPELS

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

Accordingly, modern readers must be prepared to recalibrate their expectations when reading ancient biography and history. There are similarities, but there are also important differences.

## Dating of the Lives

As stated earlier, most scholars hold that Plutarch wrote his *Lives* between ca. 90 to 120 CE. However, the chronology in which Plutarch penned them is difficult to establish.<sup>26</sup> Since our present research focuses on only nine of Plutarch's fifty extant *Lives*, we may be able to provide a narrowed dating of those *Lives*. Appealing to Plutarch's increasing knowledge, around fifty cross-references to another *Life* within the nine, and cross-fertilization in which Plutarch exploits a story in the *Life* he is writing and that he mentioned in a previously written *Life*, Pelling concludes that *Cicero* and *Lucullus* were the first of the nine to be written, while "*Pompey*, *Cato Minor*, *Crassus*, *Caesar*, *Brutus*, and *Antony*—stand closely together, peculiarities which are best explained in terms of simultaneous preparation."<sup>27</sup> *Sertorius* may have been the last of the nine to be written.<sup>28</sup>

For purposes of this project, I will assume the following dates and composition:

100–110 CE: *Lucullus* and *Cicero*<sup>29</sup>

110 CE and perhaps a bit later: *Pompey*, *Cato Minor*, *Crassus*, *Caesar*, *Brutus*, and *Antony* (or *Antonius*)<sup>30</sup>

115–20 CE: *Sertorius*

Since Plutarch's biographical project took approximately three decades,

there is a possibility, even a likelihood, that he discovered more reliable data that he used when writing the set of six than what he had before him a few years earlier when writing *Lucullus* and *Cicero*. This could, though not necessarily, account for some of the differences between the accounts. Accordingly, we are able to detect Plutarch's use of compositional devices with greater confidence when identifying how he tells the same story differently within the set of six *Lives*.

## Compositional Devices of Plutarch

In addition to the liberties previously mentioned, classical scholars have recognized a number of compositional devices that are "practically universal in ancient historiography."<sup>31</sup> Although not always identified by the same terms, the following are some of the compositional devices we will observe in Plutarch's *Lives*, at least the nine *Lives* we will be considering.<sup>32</sup>

**Transferral:** When an author knowingly attributes words or deeds to a person that actually belonged to another person, the author has transferred the words or deeds.

**Displacement:** When an author knowingly uproots an event from its original context and transplants it in another, the author has displaced the event. Displacement has some similarities with *telescoping*, which is the presentation of an event as having occurred either earlier or more recently than it actually occurred. Plutarch displaces events and even occasionally informs us he has done so. In *Cat. Min.* 25.5, having told the story of Hortensius's request of Cato that he be allowed to marry Cato's wife, Marcia, Plutarch adds, "All this happened later, but as I had mentioned the women of Cato's family it seemed sensible to include it here."<sup>33</sup>

**Conflation:** When an author combines elements from two or more events or people and narrates them as one, the author has conflated them.

# PLUTARCH did it....

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

Accordingly, some displacement and/or transferal will always occur in the conflation of stories.

**Compression:** When an author knowingly portrays events over a shorter period of time than the actual time it took for those events to occur, the author has compressed the story.

**Spotlighting:** When an author focuses attention on a person so that the person's involvement in a scene is clearly described, whereas mention of others who were likewise involved is neglected, the author has shined his literary spotlight on that person. Think of a theatrical performance. During an act in which several are simultaneously on the stage, the lights go out and a spotlight shines on a particular actor. Others are present but are unseen. In literary spotlighting, the author only mentions one of the people present but knows of the others.

**Simplification:** When an author adapts material by omitting or altering details that may complicate the overall narrative, the author has simplified the story.

**Expansion of Narrative Details:** <sup>34</sup> A well-written biography would inform, teach, and be beautifully composed. If minor details were unknown, they could be invented to improve the narrative while maintaining historical verisimilitude. In many instances, the added details reflect plausible circumstances. This has been called "creative reconstruction" and "free composition."<sup>35</sup>

**Paraphrasing:** Plutarch often paraphrased using many of the techniques described in the compositional textbooks. I had initially considered creating a synopsis of Plutarch's parallel pericopes\* that we will be examining in the next [chapter](#), which would be arranged in a manner similar to [Kurt Aland's Synopsis of the Four Gospels](#).<sup>36</sup> However, I decided against including a synopsis because Plutarch paraphrases so often; plus we do not observe in his *Lives* anything close to the near "copy and paste" method that is very often employed by Matthew and Luke.

## ***Law of Biographical Relevance***

Throughout his *Lives*, Plutarch employs the *law of biographical relevance*.<sup>37</sup> A story is told in a manner that is most relevant to the main character. This can take the form of relating a matter from the perspective of the main character in a particular *Life*, but when telling the same story in a different *Life*, the author shifts to a new perspective suited to the main character of that *Life*.<sup>38</sup> For example, in Plutarch's *Cato Minor*, Caesar is power hungry, deceptive, and conniving, whereas in [Plutarch's Caesar](#) he is a patient diplomat who does much good for the state and the *demos*.\*

Biographical relevance also plays out when details of an event pertaining to a person in one *Life* do not appear when the same event is reported in another, since those details possess little significance related to the main character of that *Life*. Plutarch mentions Caesar's assassination in his *Caesar*, *Brutus*, *Antony*, and *Cicero*. In *Brutus* and *Antony*, Plutarch devotes far less attention to the assassination itself than in his *Caesar* and then moves along to describe the aftermath, since this is the beginning of the most prominent part of the *Lives* of Brutus and Antony. In *Cicero*, Plutarch merely mentions the assassination and then devotes only a little space to the immediate aftermath, since Cicero's role in it was relatively small.

## ***The Relevance of Plutarch's Lives to Understanding Gospel Differences***

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### The Relevance of Plutarch's Lives to Understanding Gospel Differences

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began to notice a few patterns related to the type of differences that surfaced. Since patterns can be seen in virtually anything, I sought to discern whether the patterns I observed were coincidental or intentional. Perhaps the answer could be found by reading other biographies written by rough contemporaries of the evangelists and looking for similar patterns of differences in the way some of them told the same stories. I made a list of all of the extant biographies written within roughly 150 years on each side of the life of Jesus. There are less than one hundred, of which Plutarch is responsible for writing fifty.

Upon concluding my first read of Plutarch's *Lives*, I noticed that nine of them feature characters who had lived at the same time, and most of them had known each another. Sertorius, Lucullus, Cicero, Pompey, Crassus, Caesar, Younger Cato, Brutus, and Antony were all involved in events that ultimately led to the fall of the Roman Republic.

There are only a few examples of literature from the period we are considering in which the author's source or sources are easily discerned.<sup>39</sup> On occasion, the author identifies his sources, while in other cases we can observe very close verbal agreement with another source. However, with only a few exceptions, the source(s) used by an ancient author is difficult to access, if not impossible.<sup>40</sup> Plutarch provides historians with a unique opportunity. Because these nine figures participated in many of the same events, there is extensive overlapping of content in the *Lives* featuring them. For example, Plutarch reports Caesar's assassination in his *Lives* of Caesar, Cicero, Brutus, and Antony. So rather than comparing how four authors told the same story, we are able to compare how the same author told the same story on multiple occasions while often using the same sources.<sup>41</sup> Many differences appear, and when the same type of difference recurs repeatedly, it suggests Plutarch's alterations were intentional and that, in such cases, the differences may have resulted from a compositional device he was employing.

“Very likely performed acts that led to these memories” “Not to say that these acts occurred precisely as described in the Gospels” “nor is it to say we can know those acts were divine miracles and exorcisms” “probably historical events that lay behind many of the stories” . . . “kernels”

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most cases, we are reading the voice or gist of what was said (*ipsissima vox\**), that is, a paraphrase.<sup>19</sup>

There are many observations of differences in the pericopes that follow for which potential devices are neither described in the compositional textbooks nor observed being employed by Plutarch. We will keep in mind that many of the compositional devices in use by Plutarch are likewise not found in the compositional textbooks. Nor are they taught in any of the ancient literature that has survived. Accordingly, much of what an ancient author did and why he did it will remain in the realm of informed guesswork for modern historians. We must keep in mind that since we cannot enter a time machine, return to the first and early second centuries, and interview the evangelists and Plutarch pertaining to their compositional practices, I am only surmising some of their compositional techniques, given what we learn from the compositional textbooks, a few other sources, and the rare opportunities where we can compare how an ancient author redacted the source we know he used.

This chapter and the one that follows contain nineteen pericopes that appear on two or more occasions throughout the canonical Gospels. Although there are many more than those that follow, I have limited myself to those pericopes I regard as having the best chance of containing differences resulting from the same type of compositional devices described in the compositional textbooks and inferred from the pericopes we examined in Plutarch's *Lives*. On the rare occasion when I have touched on a lengthy discourse of Jesus, I have only mentioned one or a few elements in that discourse.

I assume Markan priority in this study and that Matthew and Luke often use Mark as their source. This is most clearly detected when significant verbal similarities are present. Since Mark predates Matthew and Luke, Mark will usually appear prior to Matthew and Luke in the references. When Mark is probably the source used by Matthew and/or Luke, I place double

forward slashes between them (e.g., Mark 16:6 // Matt. 28:5–6). Although I hold the Two-Source Hypothesis with the present majority of scholars, I recognize this position does not enjoy anything near a consensus and numerous significant scholars are in dissent. For convenience, I often use Two-Source terminology.

This chapter is not meant to serve as a commentary on specific texts. Accordingly, I will rarely offer comments pertaining to the historicity of an event or logion and/or its possible theological implications. Unfortunately, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to discuss Jesus of Nazareth in a sense that is neutral of metaphysical commitments. Naturalist scholars will tend to regard stories of Jesus's miracles in the Gospels as being entirely legendary in character, since miracles do not occur in their estimation. Christian scholars who are to varying degrees committed to tradition have no problems with the occurrence of miracles. Therefore, they tend to view miracle reports appearing in the Gospel narratives with more confidence in their historicity. I have unashamedly chosen membership in the latter camp. However, I have attempted to describe the Gospel texts in a manner that is largely neutral of partisan theological and philosophical commitments, focusing on their differences while making judgment calls pertaining to historicity only on occasion. If the nearly universal consensus of scholars is correct that Jesus's earliest followers remembered him as a miracle-worker and exorcist, he very likely performed acts that led to these memories. Of course, that is not to say we can know those acts were divine miracles and exorcisms. Nor is it to say the events occurred precisely as described in the Gospels. It is to say that there are probably historical events that lay behind many of the stories of miracles and exorcisms we read in the Gospels. Even many of those holding that some of the stories have been substantially revised and embellished maintain that historical kernels lay behind them.

Each pericope follows a format similar to what we observed with the pericopes in Plutarch in the preceding chapter: References are provided in

Much of dialogue of Pilate and Jesus possibly may be “Johannine Creation” “creatively reconstructed the dialogue” “multiple recensions of Gospels” “authorial redaction to accommodate different recipient” “reconstructed the dialogue with literary artistry”

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scholars: “I feel about John like I feel about my wife; I love her very much, but I wouldn’t claim to understand her.”<sup>14</sup> Clement of Alexandria referred to John as a “spiritual Gospel.”<sup>15</sup> Origen noted several narratives in John having parallels in the Synoptics that he regarded as impossible to harmonize in a historical sense and that often their truth must be sought for not in the letter but in the message, which must be spiritually interpreted.<sup>16</sup>

I have no objective to solve the Johannine puzzle in this volume. Therefore, on most of the occasions where John differs from one or more of the Synoptics, only the difference will be noted with little or no attempt to account for why it exists. Those interested in pursuing Johannine differences further may consult the commentaries.

## *Dealing with Differences in the Gospels*

In many cases it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine if an evangelist has altered his source or is using another. We must also be open to the possibility that there were multiple recensions of the Gospels and that Luke used an earlier or later recension of Mark than the one possessed by Matthew. Different recensions may have existed for a variety of reasons, such as multiple drafts or authorial redaction to accommodate a different recipient.

It is also possible, perhaps probable, that some differences may carry the appearance of being in greater tension with one another than is actually the case because the Gospel narratives are not exhaustive. The discussions between Jesus and Pilate are described in much greater detail in John (18:33–38; 19:8–11) than in the Synoptics. It could be suggested that much of the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus is a Johannine creation, since the Synoptic narratives do not suggest that anyone else was present to overhear the exchanges, much less any of Jesus’s disciples. Of course, this suggestion

can neither be confirmed nor disconfirmed. However, it is worth observing what Luke 23:3–4 says: “Pilate asked Jesus, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ And Jesus answered, ‘Yes.’ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, ‘I find no cause for guilt in this man.’” Luke’s report seems implausible if read independently of John. Would the Roman governor respond in such a manner after Jesus had just affirmed himself as a king?<sup>17</sup> Yet Pilate’s response to Jesus’s claim to be a king is entirely plausible if a dialogue had occurred between the two that was at least somewhat similar to what we read in John. Since John was probably written after Luke and is largely independent of Luke, both evangelists must have known a tradition such as we read in John. Whether John received detailed information from someone who had been present at Jesus’s dialogue with Pilate or whether he knew a very basic gist of what was said and creatively reconstructed the dialogue with literary artistry is impossible to know.

Jesus almost certainly preached the same messages and told the same parables on multiple occasions over the course of his ministry. Like any good teacher, he would adapt his teachings to his particular audience. When a story with striking similarities appears in different contexts and contains differences, it is often difficult to discern whether (a) we are reading about two similar but different events and a few of the details from one have cross-pollinated to the other; (b) one of the evangelists displaced the pericope from its original context, redacted it, and transplanted it in another; (c) the pericope was free-floating outside of any context and each evangelist planted it where he thought fitting; or (d) we are reading a “stump speech” that Jesus gave on many occasions.<sup>18</sup>

It is safe to assume that nearly every conversation narrated in the ancient literature, if historical, is a summary of content recalled by the author and/or his sources. In some cases, the text may come very close to reflecting the actual wording used on that occasion (*ipsissima verba*\*). However, in most cases, we are reading the voice or gist of what was said (*ipsissima*

## Man with Withered Hand-Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11 Man with Withered Hand-Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11—events located to different days; one-sides address turned into dialogue

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out?” (Matt. 12:11).<sup>32</sup>

It could be that Matthew knew of both stories and, given his tendency to abbreviate, redacted portions of Luke’s second story and then conflated those portions with the first story.<sup>33</sup> Consider this logion from the first component in Luke (the healing) when compared with the pericope in Matthew:

Which of you having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath will not immediately raise him up [ἀνασπάσει, *anaspasei*]? (Luke 14:5)

What man among you who having only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath will not take hold of it and lift it out [ἐγερει, *egerei*]? How much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:11–12)

However, teachers in antiquity as well as today often vary an illustration, anecdote, parable, or fable. Accordingly, as is often the case, it is difficult if not impossible to discern whether an author is reporting a separate event or has heavily redacted an existing one.

Minor differences appear pertaining to the actions of the Pharisees. In Mark 3:6 and Matt. 12:14, the Pharisees “counseled” (συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν, *sumboulion edidou*) with the Herodians pertaining to how they could “destroy” (ἀπολέσωσιν, *apolesōsin*) Jesus, while in Luke 6:11, they (i.e., the scribes and Pharisees) “discussed” (διελάλουν, *dielaloun*) with one another what they might “do” (ποιήσαιεν, *poiēsaiēn*) to Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

### Summary

•It is possible that Matthew locates this event on a different

day than Luke.

- Matthew converts Jesus’s one-sided address to the Jewish leaders into a dialogue with them.
- Luke substitutes some terms found in Mark and Matthew.

## #4 (#85) Healing the Centurion’s Servant (Matt. 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10)<sup>35</sup>

### Narrative

There was a centurion in Capernaum who had a slave who was valuable to him but was sick and near death. After Jesus entered Capernaum, the centurion sent Jewish elders to ask Jesus to come and save the life of his slave. They came to Jesus and asked him on behalf of the centurion to heal his servant, adding that the centurion loved the Jews and had built their synagogue. So Jesus went with them. When they were not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Jesus who told him the centurion said he was not worthy for him to come into his house. But he knew that Jesus, like himself, was a man of authority who issued commands and they were carried out. Therefore, Jesus only needed to issue the command and he knew that his slave would be healed. Jesus marveled at the centurion’s faith and turned to the others with him and said, “Truly I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith!” And the slave was healed.

### Analysis

There is one major difference between the accounts. In Luke, the centurion sent elders and friends to Jesus but never saw him. Matthew brushes out the elders and friends from his narrative and instead has the centurion go to

# Gadarene Demonaics “illustrate multiple demons by adding a second demoniac?” “conflated two stories” “ illustrated multiple demons through creating an additional person”—Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39

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Mark, and Luke in this pericope is not nearly as close as we find in many other pericopes. Was Matthew using a different source? Or did he seek to illustrate multiple demons by adding a second demoniac? Or did he understand the “we” in Mark, whom Luke follows, to refer to two demoniacs and that Mark had shone his spotlight on the demoniac who was speaking? It is difficult to know. Furthermore, for reasons unknown to us, Matthew doubles up elsewhere when the other Gospels present one figure. A blind beggar in Mark 10:46–52 and Luke 18:35–43 becomes two beggars in Matt. 20:29–34.<sup>38</sup> A donkey in Mark 11:1–11 // Luke 19:29–34 // John 12:12–15 becomes a donkey and her colt in Matt. 21:1–11.

There is another possible solution. Matthew is prone to abbreviate stories found in Mark. He narrates this particular story using a mere 135 words compared to 324 used by Mark.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps Matthew has doubled up the demoniac in order to compensate for not telling the story of Jesus healing another demoniac mentioned earlier in Mark 1:21–28.<sup>40</sup>

## Summary

•Matthew may have used a different source or illustrated multiple demons through creating an additional person or conflated two stories. However, it could also be that Mark, followed by Luke, has shone a literary spotlight on the main demoniac whom Matthew reveals.

## #6 (#95, 138) *Jairus’s Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage (Mark 5:21–43; Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56)*

## Narrative

Jesus crossed over the Sea of Galilee again, and a crowd welcomed him. A ruler of the synagogue there named Jairus knelt before Jesus and asked him to come to his house and heal his twelve-year-old daughter, who was about to die. Jesus agreed, and as they were on their way, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came to Jesus. She was broke, having spent all that she had on physicians who had been unable to help her. After hearing reports about Jesus, she thought if she could get close enough just to touch his garment she would be healed. So she came up and touched the fringe of his robe, and immediately she felt in her body that she was healed. But Jesus, perceiving that power had gone forth from him, stopped and turned to the crowd around him, asking who had touched him. The woman realized that her act was not hidden. So she came before Jesus and fell down before him with fear and trembling and explained why she touched him and how she was healed. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman, some people from Jairus’s house came with the bad news that his daughter had just died. But Jesus told Jairus not to fear but to believe and that she would be well. When they arrived, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Jairus and his wife into the house. Some inside were weeping loudly. Jesus told them not to weep because the girl was only asleep. But they laughed at him. He then went in to where the girl was, took her hand, and said, “Little girl, arise!” Immediately, she returned to life and got up.

## Analysis

There are a number of interesting differences in this pericope. The first one concerns the context in which it occurs. This will be discussed in the next [chapter](#). In Mark 5:35, people (plural) from Jairus’s house came and told

# Gospel writers “confused” events—Anointing in Bethany; events “transplanted” from original context

Kindle

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Simon thinks that if Jesus were a true prophet, he would know the woman anointing him was a sinner and, accordingly, would not allow her to anoint him. In Mark // Matthew and John, it is because the woman could have sold the ointment and given the proceeds to the poor. It is difficult to decide if Luke is referring to a different event or has redacted the same event narrated by the other Gospels.<sup>64</sup> If Luke preserves a different event, some of the similarities, and especially those with John but differing from Mark, may be plausibly understood as the two events becoming confused, resulting in details that have cross-pollinated.<sup>65</sup>

Since we are seeking to identify clear examples of compositional devices discussed in previous chapters, we will proceed with the understanding that Mark, Matthew, and John all refer to the same event while not considering Luke. Numerous differences appear between these three accounts. The woman is anonymous in Mark 14:3 // Matt. 26:7,<sup>66</sup> while John 12:3 (cf. 11:1–2; 12:1–2) identifies her as Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha.<sup>67</sup> In Mark 14:3 // Matt. 26:6, the host is identified as Simon the leper, whereas he is anonymous in John.<sup>68</sup>

Mark 14:1 // Matt. 26:2 place the anointing two days prior to Passover, while John 12:1 says it occurred six days before Passover. Either Mark (followed by Matthew) or John have displaced the event. Mark may have done so in order to bring the symbolic anointing of Jesus for his burial closer to the event itself.<sup>69</sup> However, it may be that John displaced the event. Not only does he probably displace an event elsewhere (see pericope #10 earlier in this chap.), but it would have been proper practice for him to displace the anointing from its original context and transplant it here. We recall Lucian recommending that stories should be joined together in a narrative like links in a chain and with overlapping material when possible.<sup>70</sup> Just prior to the anointing in John, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in the presence of the latter's sisters, Mary and Martha (11:1–44). Perhaps John recalled at this point that he had a story about Mary to which he had already alluded (11:1–2), so he tells it here, linking the two with Mary serving as the overlap.<sup>71</sup>

In Mark 14:3, 5, the alabaster jar and pure nard ointment were “expensive” (πολυτελοῦς, *polutelous*), worth “more than 300 denarii.” In John 12:3, 5, it was an “expensive” (πολυτίμου, *polutimou*) pound of pure nard ointment worth “300 denarii.”<sup>72</sup> We observed differences in numerical specificity in pericope #26 in the previous chapter, where Plutarch reports that Caesar subdued “300 nations” in *Caes.* 15.3 but “more than 300 nations” in *Pomp.* 67.6. Matthew 26:7 describes the product as “expensive” (βαρυτίμου, *barutimou*)<sup>73</sup> ointment without specifying its contents or monetary value.<sup>74</sup>

In Mark 14:3 // Matt. 26:7, she pours the ointment on Jesus's head, whereas she pours it on his feet in John 12:3.<sup>75</sup> As mentioned above, John may have cross-pollinated some of the details from a different event we observe in Luke. Whether John did this intentionally cannot be determined.

Those named who were offended by her act differ. In Mark 14:4, it is “some [of those present].” In Matt. 26:8, it is the disciples. In John 12:4–5, it is Judas Iscariot. Mark is not specific and may have had in mind a group consisting only of some of Jesus's disciples or also included others who were not his disciples. Matthew is perhaps more specific than Mark, while John may be shining his literary spotlight on Judas Iscariot, who may have been the one to express what several of them were thinking.

**Summary**

- Mark or John displace an event from its original context and transplant it in another either to raise tension in Mark's narrative or to link it with another story involving the same

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# Mark confused or “not remembered in precise manner”?

## -Feeding 5000 location—Mark 6:31-56; Matthew 14: Luke 9:10-17

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feeding the crowd arose and that the evangelists used their literary artistry to work it into their narratives in different manners. However, one might posit that the issue arose on both occasions, that John focused on the earlier while the Synoptics followed the latter, and that John compressed the story and omitted Jesus’s teaching and healing the crowd on this occasion.

In Luke 9:14, the people were to sit in groups of about fifty. In Mark 6:40, they sat in groups of fifties and hundreds. In Matthew and Luke, the twelve baskets were full of leftover “pieces” (κλασμάτων, *klasmatōn*). In Mark, the twelve baskets were full of leftover “pieces and fish.” In John, they were full of leftover “pieces from the five barley loaves.”

Only Matt. 14:28–31 reports that Peter also walked on water. Only Mark 6:51 // Matt. 14:32 report the wind stopped when Jesus (Matt.: and Peter) entered the boat. Only John 6:21 reports they were immediately at their destination when Jesus entered the boat. Mark 6:51 says the disciples were “greatly amazed,” whereas Matt. 14:33 says the disciples “worshipped [προσεκύνησαν, *prosekunēsan*] him, saying, “Truly you are God’s Son!”

The largest difference concerns the location where Jesus fed the five thousand. In Mark 6:32 // Matt. 14:13, it was in a “lonely place” (ἔρημον τόπον, *epēmon topon*) where Jesus and his disciples had withdrawn. In Luke 9:10, Jesus had withdrawn to a town named Bethsaida. The Sea of Galilee is not exactly round but is wider in its upper third. If we view this large lake as a clock, Bethsaida is located at 12:30 and a little inland. In John 6:1, they crossed to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, although it is not stated from where they came or where they went.

After Jesus had fed the five thousand, he ordered his disciples to get into a boat and cross the Sea of Galilee. In Mark 6:45, Jesus urged his disciples to get into a boat and go ahead of him “to the other side, to Bethsaida” (εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαιδάν, *eis to peran pros Bēthsaidan*). This appears to be in conflict with Luke 9:10, which places the feeding at or near Bethsaida. In Matt. 14:22, Jesus urged his disciples to get into a boat and go ahead of

him to the other side. Given the verbal similarities, it seems probable that Matthew’s source is Mark. But Matthew may be aware of a problem with Mark’s “to Bethsaida” and omits it. In John 6:16–17, the disciples got into a boat and were crossing to the other side of the sea “to Capernaum” (εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ, *eis Capharnaoum*), which is located at 11:00 on our clock.<sup>53</sup>

Next we observe where the evangelists tell us they landed. Mark 6:53 and Matt. 14:34 say they landed at Gennesaret (10:00).<sup>54</sup> John 6:21 says they landed where they had intended, Capernaum (6:17), which bordered on the region of Gennesaret (11:00).<sup>55</sup>

Harmonizing the accounts in order to reconcile the differing details pertaining to the location of the feeding is difficult. Luke places it at or very close to Bethsaida, whereas Mark places it anywhere but Bethsaida, since after the feeding Jesus tells his disciples to cross over to Bethsaida. Matthew, Mark, and John tell us they landed on the west side of the lake, and John tells us that is where they had intended to land. Accordingly, it will not work to harmonize the accounts by asserting the disciples intended to go to Bethsaida but were blown off course and landed in Capernaum.<sup>56</sup>

### Summary

- The evangelists paraphrase slightly.
- Either John slightly compresses or one or more of the evangelists artistically weave elements into their narrative that were not remembered in a precise manner.

**#9 (#166, 263, 313, 253) Who Is the Greatest? (Mark 9:33–37; 10:13–16, 35)**

## Who is greatest? (Mark 9:33-37; Matthew 18:1-6; Luke 9:46-48 et al—dialogue changed or “transferred” “displacing and transplanting . . . in a different context”

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followed me will be seated on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Luke locates this logion at the Last Supper, while Matthew locates it on an earlier occasion.

We come to the third occasion. Mark 10:14b // Luke 18:16b render “the kingdom of God,” whereas Matt. 19:14b renders “the kingdom of heaven” (substitution).<sup>58</sup> Mark 10:15 // Luke 18:17 report Jesus saying, “Truly, I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child will never enter it.” Matthew 18:3 has a similar statement placed in an earlier context (the first occasion just considered above): “Truly, I tell you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew may have redacted and displaced this teaching to an earlier context (the first situation in this pericope), or Jesus taught it on both occasions.

### Summary

- Matthew transfers by having the disciples initiate the discussion rather than Jesus.
- Matthew displaces a portion of Jesus’s teaching and transplants it in a different context.
- Mark transfers the mother’s request to her sons, since they were probably the initiators or Matthew adds her in order to cast James and John in a better light.
- Matthew substitutes “kingdom” for “glory.”
- Luke probably paraphrased a teaching of Jesus before displacing and transplanting it in a different context.
- Luke either paraphrases and substitutes terms or uses a different source.
- Mark or Matthew substituted a term.

### **#10 (#271–76 [cf. #25]) Jesus in Jerusalem (Cleansing of the Temple); Cursing a Fig Tree; Return to Bethany (Mark 11:12–14, 20–26; Matt. 21:18–22; Luke 19:45–46)**

#### Narrative

Jesus entered Jerusalem, went into the temple, and looked around. But since it was late in the day, he and his disciples left and went to Bethany (Mark 11:11). On the following day, Jesus was hungry when he and his disciples were returning to Jerusalem. He noticed a fig tree by the road and walked up to it. Although the tree had leaves, there were no figs on it, so Jesus cursed it. Then they continued their journey into the city.

Upon entering the temple, Jesus saw people buying and selling inside. He drove them out and overturned their merchant tables, quoting Isa. 56:7 and alluding to Jer. 7:11, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’ But you have made it a robbers’ den.” That evening, Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and returned to Bethany. The Jewish leaders felt threatened by Jesus because the people were impressed by his teachings. So they sought for a way to have him killed.

The following morning, Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem. On their way they came upon the fig tree Jesus had cursed on the previous day and observed it had since withered and died. Peter was astonished and said, “Look, Rabbi! The tree you cursed has died!” Jesus told them to have faith in God and that if they had enough faith they could order a mountain to be thrown into the sea and it would obey them. Whatever they asked for in prayer, it would be granted if they believed it.

# Temple Cleansing . . . “displaced . . . to beginning of Jesus’s ministry”; questions changed to commands and statements; “alters the nature of the command and Jesus’s reply”

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chief priests, scribes, and elders *asked* Jesus by what authority he did these things and who gave it to him. In Luke 20:1–2, the chief priests, scribes, and elders *ordered* Jesus to inform them by what authority he did these things and who gave it to him. Luke changed a question to a command. In John 2:18–22, the Jewish leaders (not further identified) *asked* Jesus what sign he would provide them in order to prove he had the authority to cleanse the temple.

Jesus answered the Jewish leaders differently. In all three Synoptics (Mark 11:29–33 // Matt. 21:24–27 // Luke 20:3–8), Jesus replied with a *quid pro quo*. If they would tell him on whose authority John baptized, God’s or man’s, he would tell them on what authority he cleansed the temple.<sup>61</sup> In John 2:19, instead of replying with a *quid pro quo*, Jesus told them the sign he offered was that if they “destroy this temple” (i.e., his body; see 2:21–22), he would rebuild it in three days.<sup>62</sup> In both the Synoptics and John, the requests of the Jewish leaders possessed the same gist: prove that you have the authority to do what you have just done. But Jesus’s reply differs. In the Synoptics, he offered them a *quid pro quo*, whereas in John he told them his future resurrection would be the sign they sought.

**Summary**

- Matthew has certainly compressed at least one element in the pericope (cursing the fig tree) and perhaps (with Luke) another (Jesus’s entering Jerusalem and the temple cleansing to have occurred on the same day).
- John may have displaced the temple cleansing to the beginning of Jesus’s ministry.
- Mark presents a question where Matthew and Luke render it as a statement and John as a command.
- Mark and Matthew present a question that Luke changes to a

command. If John is referring to the same temple cleansing, he alters the nature of the command and Jesus’s reply.

**#11 (#278) Parable of the Vineyard and Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1–12; Matt. 21:33–46; Luke 20:9–19)**

**Narrative**

After the Jewish authorities questioned Jesus’s authority, he replied by telling a parable against them. A man prepared a vineyard and leased it to tenants before going away for a considerable time. When the proper time came, the owner of the vineyard sent some of his servants to collect what the tenants owed him. But the tenants mistreated the servants. So the owner sent other servants, whom they also mistreated in various ways, even killing some. Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking the tenants would listen to him. But the tenants conspired with one another and killed the son, thinking the vineyard would become theirs since the son was the heir.

Jesus asked what the proper response of the owner would be and answered that he would kill the tenants and hand over the vineyard to others who would keep their promise to give the owner what is due. Jesus then quoted Ps. 118:22–23: “The very stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.” He continued, “Therefore, I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. The one falling on this cornerstone will be broken to pieces and the one on whom it falls will be crushed.” The Jewish authorities knew Jesus had spoken the parable against them, so they sought to arrest him. However, because they

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# Parable of the Vineyard and Wicked Tenants—“creates a dialogue”

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feared the people, they left and planned how they might trap him in his words.

### Analysis

Since Jesus told this parable in the same context in all three of the Synoptics, the same event is certainly in view. Yet numerous differences appear. Matthew is the only evangelist to include, “Therefore, I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”

In Mark and Luke, the owner sends a different servant on three occasions. On each occasion, the tenants mistreat the servant. They beat and send away the first servant. On the second occasion, they beat (Mark: head strike) and shamefully treat the servant (Luke: then send him away empty-handed). The owner then sends a third servant, whom they kill (Luke: wound and cast out of the vineyard). Matthew compresses the three occasions into one, saying the owner sent three servants whom the tenants beat, killed, and stoned. He is referring to one rather than a combination of occasions, since in 21:36 Jesus said the owner then sent more servants than he had *the first time* (πλεονας τῶν πρώτων, *pleionas tōn prōtōn*). In Mark, after these three rounds, the owner continued to send more servants in what appears to be several additional rounds, whereas in Matthew the owner sent more than three servants in a second round. Luke is silent on these. Finally, the owner sent his son. In Mark, the tenants killed him and cast him out of the vineyard, while Matthew and Luke invert the order by casting him out of the vineyard first and then killing him.

In Mark 12:9 and Luke 20:15–16, Jesus asked what the owner of the vineyard would do. He then answered his own question, saying the owner would kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. However, Matt. 21:41 takes Jesus’s statements and creates a dialogue with his interlocutors,

adding words for effect: “They said to him, ‘He will put those evil men to a miserable death and will rent the vineyard to other tenants who will give to him what he is due at the appointed time!’” In doing so, Matthew transfers the answer from Jesus to the chief priests and Pharisees and adds for effect. Of course, the differences could result from the flexibility allowed within the handing on of oral tradition or because only the core of the story was known to one or more of the evangelists who then creatively reconstructed the scene, each differently. However, we must keep in mind that Matthew and Luke probably have Mark’s Gospel in front of them and often quote it verbatim. Accordingly, it may be more likely that the differences here result from Matthew and Luke altering Mark than from the flexibility of oral tradition.

The following chart (Figure 4.5) lists most of the differences.

### Summary

- Matthew compresses the story throughout.
- Matthew and Luke (or their source) invert the order of details.
- Matthew takes Jesus’s teaching and creates a dialogue with his interlocutors. He also adds for effect.

Table 4.1 Parable of Vineyard and Wicked Tenants Comparison

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Three servants (beaten, killed, stoned)	One servant (beaten, sent away)	One servant (beaten, sent away)
	One servant (struck head, treated shamefully)	One servant (beaten, treated shamefully, sent away)
	One servant (killed)	One servant (wounded, cast out of vineyard)

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# Anointing in Bethany— “displace an event from its original context and transplant it in another”

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

## Summary

- 
- Mark or John displace an event from its original context and transplant it in another either to raise tension in Mark's narrative or to link it with another story involving the same characters in John.
  - Differences in numerical specificity are present.
  - John may cross-pollinate details from a different event.
  - Mark perhaps shines a literary spotlight on Judas.

## #13 (#309–12) *The Last Supper (Mark 14:17–25; Matt. 26:20–29; Luke 22:14–23; John 13:1–30; 1 Cor. 11:21–23)*

### Narrative

While Jesus was eating the Passover meal with his disciples one evening, he rose from the table, took off his outer robe, tied a towel around himself, and poured water into a basin. He then began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel he had wrapped around himself. When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not understand now what I am doing. But you will understand afterward.” Peter said, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.” Peter said, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head.” Jesus said to Peter, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet. But he is clean all over. And you [plural] are clean. But not all of you.” He said this because he knew one of them was going to betray him.

After he had washed all of their feet, he put on his robe, returned to his

place at the table, and said, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord. And you are correct. If then I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example. And a servant is not greater than his master. You are blessed if you do these things.”

Then he said to them, “Truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.” His disciples were sorrowful and looked at one another. They asked Jesus, “Is it I?” Jesus answered, “It is one of the Twelve; one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him. But woe to the man who betrays him! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” Judas said, “Is it I, Master?” Jesus answered, “Yes.” Judas immediately left, and it was night.

Jesus said to his disciples, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. For I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in God's kingdom.” While they were eating, he took bread, blessed, and broke it, then gave it to the disciples and said, “Take. Eat. This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” He then took a cup, gave thanks, gave it to them and said, “All of you, drink it. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for you. Truly, I tell you that I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until I drink it new in God's kingdom.”

### Analysis

There are several differences in this pericope. Only John narrates Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. All four Gospels have Jesus tell his disciples that one of them eating with him that evening will betray him. Only in John 13:18 does Jesus quote Ps. 41:9, “The one eating my bread has lifted up his heel against me.”

In Mark 14:18, Matt. 26:21, and John 13:21, Jesus said, “Truly, I tell you that one of you eating with me will betray me.”<sup>76</sup> In Mark 14:19–20 and

# Last Supper— “John may have displaced the celebration of the Passover meal to have occurred one day later”

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The most profound difference pertains to the day on which Jesus's last meal with his disciples is said to have occurred. In the Synoptics, it is clear that the Last Supper is a Passover meal that was eaten on the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is the typical day to eat it (Mark 14:12–16; Matt. 26:17–19; Luke 22:7–13). However, there are several elements in John's Gospel that suggest he has located the Last Supper a day earlier than what is portrayed in the Synoptics. First, in John 13:1, the Last Supper is eaten “before the Feast of the Passover.”<sup>81</sup> Second, there is nothing in John's account of the meal that suggests it was a Passover meal (13:2–16:26). Third, in 18:28, in the morning the Jewish leaders led Jesus, whom they had arrested the previous evening, into the Praetorium (i.e., the governor's residence). But they did not enter with Jesus in order to avoid being defiled and, therefore, prevented from eating the Passover meal that evening. Fourth, in 19:14, John identifies the day Jesus was handed over to Pilate as the day of preparation of the Passover. Mark 15:42 says it was a day of preparation, “which is, the day before the Sabbath.” However, John 19:31 says, “For the day of that Sabbath was great” (ἡν γὰρ μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου, *ēn gar megalē hē hēmera ekeinou tou sabbatou*), perhaps suggesting that this was no ordinary Sabbath, which would be consistent if the Passover meal fell on that Sabbath. John appears deliberate in his attempts to lead his readers to think the Last Supper was not a Passover meal. And if we were to read John's Gospel apart from any knowledge of the Synoptics, we would regard John as reporting that Jesus was crucified prior to the celebration of the Passover meal. There is a plausible reason for this, which we will consider in pericope #15 below. For now, we may suggest that John may have displaced the celebration of the Passover meal to have occurred one day later than we find in the Synoptics.<sup>82</sup>

## Summary

- Luke compresses dialogue and substitutes terms.
- Luke (or the tradition from which he drew) presents the relationship of Jesus informing his disciples of his betrayal by one of them and his administering the Eucharist in opposite order to how they are narrated by Mark // Matthew.
- Matthew adds to clarify and substitutes terms.

## #14 (#332–33) *Jesus before the Sanhedrin and Peter's Denial (Mark 14:53–72; Matt. 26:57–75; Luke 22:55–71; John 18:13–27)*

## Narrative

After being arrested, Jesus was taken to the house of Caiaphas, who was the high priest at the time. The chief priests, scribes, and elders had assembled there. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus but at a distance.<sup>83</sup> A former high priest named Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas.<sup>84</sup> Annas knew the other disciple, so he was able to enter the court of the high priest while Peter remained outside. The other disciple went out and spoke to the woman guarding the door and brought Peter inside.

While Peter warmed himself by the fire, one of those present recognized him and said, “He was also with Jesus.” But Peter denied it. A little later, someone else saw Peter and likewise accused him of being with Jesus. Once again Peter denied it. Still later, another accused Peter of being with Jesus, and he denied it a third time. Immediately, a cock crowed. Jesus turned and

# Jesus before Sanhedrin— “event itself remembered while some of the peripheral details were not” “crafted, or creatively reconstructed them as part of their literary artistry”

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being divine in a sense similar to the Jewish Son of Man.<sup>93</sup> Thus, Luke’s redaction preserves the essence of the exchange. Another possibility is that Luke narrates an event only alluded to by Mark 15:1 // Matt. 27:1: the morning meeting at which the Jewish leaders consulted and decided to have Jesus put to death. Although Jesus’s confession is very similar, it is possible that the council put the same question to him, giving him a final opportunity to repudiate any lofty claims about his identity. It is also possible that Luke conflates portions of the first meeting into a second one.

In Mark 14:65 // Matt. 26:67–68, they beat, spit upon, and mock Jesus after the counsel condemned him. In Luke 22:63–65, it is prior to meeting with the counsel.

## Summary

- Matthew substitutes by using a synonym.
- In all of the Synoptics, the accusations against Peter are offered as a statement. In John, they are always offered in the form of a question.
- Luke may have translated the dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders into terms that would have been clearer to his Gentile readers.
- Luke reverses Mark’s order of Jesus being condemned and the abuse given him afterward, placing the abuse prior to his condemnation. This is similar to his apparent reversal of the order in which Matthew narrates the second and third temptations<sup>94</sup> and when the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom.<sup>95</sup>
- The discrepancies in details between Mark and Luke pertaining to who accused Peter of being affiliated with Jesus

and the specific locations where the accusations occurred suggest the event itself was remembered while some of the peripheral details were not. Thus, one or more of the evangelists reported the details as he or his sources recalled them, crafted, or creatively reconstructed them as part of their literary artistry.

## #15 (#344–48) *The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (Mark 15:22–41; Matt. 27:33–56; Luke 23:33–49; John 19:17–37)*

### Narrative

As Jesus was being led away to his execution, some women along the way were weeping. Jesus told them not to weep for him but rather for themselves and their children because very tough times were coming. They arrived at a place called “Golgotha,” which translated means “Skull Place.”<sup>96</sup> They offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh, but he declined. At 9 a.m., they crucified Jesus with two thieves, one on each side of him. The four soldiers divided his clothes among themselves and cast lots for a nice tunic that remained. A tablet with the charge against Jesus was placed above his head on the cross. The charge was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek and read, “The King of the Jews.” The Jewish chief priests went to Pilate and asked him to change the charge to “this man said, ‘I am King of the Jews.’” But Pilate declined their request.

Some of those present were insulting him, yelling, “Aha! You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself and

# Jesus Crucifixion-- "If Plutarch has displaced, . . . John could alter day and time . . . to symbolize" and "imprecise memory"

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the time used by the Romans for their civil day while the Synoptics are following a different timetable in which the workday begins at 6 a.m.<sup>101</sup> Others suggest the Passover was often celebrated on different days, since there were disputes over the proper day on which the Passover fell<sup>102</sup> or because of the different times at which days started and ended for Galilean and Jerusalem Jews.<sup>103</sup> Still others suggest that any meal during the week of Passover could be referred to as a Passover meal and that the discrepancy in time (i.e., third versus sixth hour) could result from John rounding up and Mark rounding down.<sup>104</sup> Robert Stein considers these as well as a few other explanations and concludes, "[I]t is doubtful that any of the explanations has a particularly high degree of certainty."<sup>105</sup>

Some scholars think John altered the day and time of Jesus's crucifixion in order to emphasize theological points, specifically that Jesus is the burnt offering for sins and the Passover Lamb.<sup>106</sup> In this view, John has displaced the day and time of Jesus's crucifixion. Plutarch may have made a similar chronological move in reference to Julius Caesar. Plutarch, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio report how Caesar once wept while at the statue of Alexander.<sup>107</sup> When asked why he wept, Caesar answered that he was now the same age as was Alexander when he had conquered the world while he, Caesar, had yet to accomplish any great deed. Suetonius and Dio place the event in Spain during Caesar's quaestorship in 69–68 BCE. Plutarch also locates the event in Spain; however, he places it immediately after Caesar's praetorship, which ended six years later in December 62.

Since Alexander was thirty when he invaded India during his final campaign, and Caesar was thirty-one or thirty-two when quaestor and thirty-eight when his term as praetor expired, the timing of the event is more at home in the context described by Suetonius and Dio. Pelling thinks that "Plutarch may well be up to something here,"<sup>108</sup> for it is here and the period

that follows when Caesar's ambitions for power became central in [Plutarch's Caesar](#).<sup>109</sup> Thus, it appears that Plutarch has displaced the story and transplanted it around seven years later in order to draw attention to the beginning of Caesar's quest for power. If Plutarch can alter the year in which Caesar wept when considering the inferiority of his own accomplishments in comparison to those of Alexander in order to emphasize Caesar's ambitious character, John could alter the day and time of Jesus's crucifixion to symbolize the sacrificial quality of Jesus's death. And we have previously observed how either Mark or John changed the day when the woman anointed Jesus.<sup>110</sup>

In Mark 15:26, the tablet on Jesus's cross read, "The King of the Jews." In Matt. 27:37b, it is "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"; in Luke 23:38, "This is the King of the Jews." In John 19:19b, it is "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Archer proposes this reflects three messages in three languages on the tablet: Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.<sup>111</sup> This will not do, since there are four versions. It is preferable to recognize that paraphrasing and/or imprecise memory is responsible for the differences in wording.

In Mark 15:40–41, Matt. 27:55–56, and Luke 23:49, women who had followed Jesus from Galilee stood at a distance from his cross. In John 19:25–27, they were standing "by the cross of Jesus" (παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, *para tō staurō tou Iēsou*) and conversing with him. John is not necessarily in tension with the Synoptics here; the women are near Jesus while he is alive. In the Synoptics, the women view him from a distance after he had died.

Those of the party of Jesus who were present at Golgotha differ. In Luke 23:49, they are all of Jesus's acquaintances and women who had followed him from Galilee. In John 19:25, four women are said to have been standing by Jesus's cross, and their names are provided. In the following verse (19:26), we learn that Jesus's Beloved Disciple is also there. Accordingly,

## Crucifixion— becomes cruci-fiction thru “imprecise memory or reporting” “John may have altered day and time of Jesus’s crucifixion to symbolize the sacrificial quality of Jesus’s death”

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reports that Jesus cried out loudly, “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit,” then died; and John reports that Jesus said, “It is finished,” then died. These are quite different renditions. Since Luke does not provide a next-to-last statement from Jesus on the cross and one could quite plausibly suggest Mark // Matthew simply did not provide the words of Jesus’s final statement when he cried out loudly, the differences could be said to appear between Mark // Matthew and John in Jesus’s next-to-last statement and between Luke and John in Jesus’s final statement.

Virtually all specialists of John’s Gospel acknowledge that the evangelist often adapted the traditions about Jesus.<sup>116</sup> These two utterances of Jesus may be an instance when we can observe the extent to which John redacted existing tradition.

For the next-to-last logion, it appears that John has redacted “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?” (Mark // Matthew) to say, “I am thirsty.” Daniel Wallace proposes that since every occurrence of “thirst” in John carries the meaning of being devoid of God’s Spirit,<sup>117</sup> the evangelist has reworked what Jesus said “into an entirely different form.” It is “a *dynamic equivalent transformation*” of what we read in Mark // Matthew. Accordingly, in John, Jesus is stating that God has abandoned him. In Mark 15:34, Jesus quotes Ps. 22:1: “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?” Thus, John can write, “Knowing that everything had now been accomplished, *in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled* [i.e., Ps. 22:1], Jesus said, “I am thirsty” (John 19:28, emphasis added).<sup>118</sup> John has redacted Jesus’s words but has retained their meaning.<sup>119</sup>

Jesus’s final logion in Luke 23:46, “Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit” (a quote from Ps. 31:5, LXX), becomes “it is finished” in John 19:30. What is finished? John says Jesus had come to “take away the sin of the world” by laying down his life for it (John 1:29; cf. 3:17; 10:15, 17; 12:47). His redemptive work on the cross was now complete (John 19:28, 30), and he

could return to his Father (John 7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10; 20:17). John redacts Jesus’s words, and although he maintains their gist, he adds some theological flavoring that is consistent with the portrait of Jesus he has painted from the very beginning: Jesus is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of others.

Of interest are the portents reported to have occurred surrounding Jesus’s death. Mark 15:33–39, Matt. 27:46–54, and Luke 23:44–45 report (a) darkness from noon until 3 p.m., and (b) that the veil in the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. Only Matthew adds that the earth shook, the rocks split, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the dead saints were raised. These came out of the tombs after Jesus’s resurrection, went into Jerusalem, and appeared to many.<sup>120</sup>

Mark 15:38 // Matt. 27:51 narrate the temple veil tearing in two after Jesus’s death, whereas Luke 23:45 narrates its occurrence prior to his death. Perhaps Luke has altered the order in which he presents events in order to change things up slightly.<sup>121</sup>

Mark 15:39 reports that when the centurion observed how Jesus had died, he proclaimed that Jesus was “truly” (ἀληθῶς, *alēthōs*) the “Son of God.” Matthew 27:54 is similar, except it is the centurion and those guarding Jesus with him who observe and proclaim. Luke 23:47 has only the centurion say Jesus was “certainly [ὄντως, *ontōs*] innocent/righteous [δίκαιος, *dikaïos*].”

### Summary

- Matthew substitutes a word in order to allude to Ps. 68 (LXX), which describes a man who cries out to God, having been rejected by all.
- John may have altered the day and time of Jesus’s crucifixion to symbolize the sacrificial quality of Jesus’s death.
- Paraphrasing and/or imprecise memory or reporting is

## Crucifixion— becomes cruci-fiction thru “imprecise memory or reporting” “either Luke displaces an event or Mark”

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responsible for differences in wording.

- John does not intend to provide a complete list of Jesus’s followers at the cross.
- Either Luke displaces an event or Mark // Matthew alter details.
- John redacts Jesus’s words yet retains their meaning (*ipsissima vox*). He sometimes adds theological flavoring.
- Luke appears to reverse the order in which he presents some events.

#16 (#352–53, 356) The Resurrection (Mark 16:1–8; Matt. 28:1–10, 16–20; Luke 24:1–51; John 20:1–29; 21:1–24)<sup>122</sup>

### Narrative

Early on the Sunday morning after Jesus’s crucifixion, there was an earthquake and an angel rolled the stone away from Jesus’s tomb and sat upon it. Those guarding the tomb were terrified, and at some point they fled. Shortly thereafter, a number of Jesus’s women followers went to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. When they arrived, they found the stone had been rolled away.

The women fled from the tomb and reported these things to the disciples, who found it difficult to believe them. So Peter and the Beloved Disciple ran to the tomb and entered it. Jesus’s body was not there, just as the women had claimed. However, they noticed the linen cloths in which Jesus had been buried were folded neatly. The two disciples went home.

Mary Magdalene, however, remained at the tomb and was weeping. Stooping into the tomb, she saw two angels who asked her why she wept. She said someone had taken her Lord and she did not know where his body now was. When she turned around, she saw Jesus standing there but did not recognize him. He, too, asked her why she wept and whom she sought. Mary

thought he was the gardener and told him that if he had taken Jesus’s body to let her know where he had placed it and she would go and get it. Jesus said, “Mary.” Then she knew it was him and exclaimed, “Rabbi!” Mary ran to the disciples and informed them she had seen Jesus. The guards reported what had occurred at the tomb to the Jewish chief priests, who bribed them to say the disciples had stolen Jesus’s body while they slept.

Later that day, two of Jesus’s followers were walking toward their town of Emmaus, which was a little less than seven miles outside Jerusalem. One of them was named Cleopas. Jesus joined them along the way, but they were kept from recognizing him. They appeared quite sad, and Jesus asked why. They answered they had hoped Jesus was the Messiah who would free them from Rome, but the Jewish leaders had handed him over to the Romans, who had crucified him only three days prior. They added that some of their women folk had gone to the tomb that morning, discovered it empty, and reported to Jesus’s disciples that angels there told them Jesus had risen from the dead. As a result, some of the disciples ran to the tomb and also found it as the women had said but did not see Jesus there. Jesus then explained to the Emmaus disciples from the Scriptures that the Messiah had to die and be glorified. Since evening was near, they invited him to stay with them. And when they reclined for a meal, Jesus blessed some bread and distributed it to them. They then recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. So they got up and left for Jerusalem to inform Jesus’s disciples what had occurred.

When they arrived, the disciples were gathered in a room behind locked doors, hiding in fear of the Jewish leaders. They explained to the disciples that Jesus had appeared to them. The disciples replied that Jesus had also appeared to Peter sometime earlier that day. While they were still conversing, Jesus appeared in their presence and said, “Peace be with you.” They were stunned. He showed them his hands and side and invited them to touch him. He then asked for some food to prove he was not a ghost. They

# Resurrection . . . “evangelists have engaged in a bit of creative reconstruction” “Gospels bear a strong affinity to Greco-Roman biography”

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Magdalene first encountered the risen Jesus, (2) Jesus’s message to Mary Magdalene, (3) whether there were angels at the tomb during the initial visit by the women, (4) the number of Jesus’s male disciples who were present when Jesus first appeared to them, and (5) whether Jesus first appeared to the male disciples in Jerusalem or in Galilee. It is of interest that all but the first of these differences can be resolved quite easily if John’s Gospel were removed from our consideration.

Should John’s Gospel be excluded from our analysis of the resurrection narratives? Almost all scholars think John has exercised greater flexibility in the manner that he relayed stories about Jesus and that it was the last of the four Gospels to be written. However, John contains a few traditions found in only one of the Synoptics’ resurrection narratives, such as the visit of Peter and others to Jesus’s tomb after the women announced that his body was gone (Luke), Jesus’s appearance to Mary Magdalene (Matt.), and Jesus’s first appearance to a group of his male disciples in Jerusalem (Luke). If John wrote independent of the Synoptic traditions as most scholars think, these multiple points of contact with unique Synoptic traditions caution us against dismissing John. Therefore, the tensions remain.

## Summary

- Luke and John shine their literary spotlights, and it is likely that Mark and Matthew do likewise.
- Paraphrasing and the use of different sources are likely the cause of certain differences.
- Matthew or John relocated an appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene.
- It is possible that Matthew (and the Synoptics) have conflated and compressed numerous elements in the narrative and were forced to redact other elements in order to improve the

narrative flow or that one or more of the evangelists have engaged in a bit of creative reconstruction.

- Either Luke conflated two appearances into one or John has crafted an appearance.

## Chapter Summary

Since the Gospels bear a strong affinity to Greco-Roman biography, we might anticipate that their authors would employ at least some of the literary conventions of that genre. In this section on the Gospels, we have focused our attention on sixteen pericopes appearing in two or more of the Gospels (three more are considered in chap. 5). Although there are many more, I have limited myself to those pericopes I regard as having the best chance of containing differences resulting from the same type of compositional devices described in the compositional textbooks and inferred from the pericopes we examined in Plutarch’s *Lives*.

The literature is vast pertaining to the literary relationships that exist between the Gospels. We proceeded with the assumption accepted by the overwhelming majority of New Testament scholars that Mark wrote first and that Matthew and Luke made robust use of Mark as their primary source. Accordingly, in pericopes where substantial verbal correspondences exist between Mark and Matthew or between Mark and Luke or among Mark, Matthew, and Luke but differences are present, we are fairly safe in concluding that Matthew or Luke or both have either redacted Mark or have drawn from one or more sources in addition to Mark.

To be expected, the evangelists employ numerous techniques observed in the compositional textbooks. We observed that they substitute words and phrases, alter syntax, change the inflection of a term from singular to plural (or vice versa), add in order to intensify, clarify, translate, or expand upon

Summary . . . “Displace an event from its original context” “Matthew occasionally transfers what one person said to lips of another” “creatively reconstructed . . . as part of literary artistry” “Gospel writer used ‘standard conventions’ for writing history and biography in his day” 135

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

because all four Gospels feature the same main character, Jesus. It is not as though we can compare how the story of Peter denying Jesus is reported by the Gospels and by a *Life of Simon Peter* or how the ministry of John the Baptist is reported by the Gospels and by a *Life of John the Baptist*.<sup>159</sup> So everything the Gospels report about Jesus is biographically relevant to Jesus.

In one instance, there is a very slight difference in numerical specificity. In another instance, we observed that a list of names provided by the evangelist was not meant to be exhaustive.

We observed the evangelists employing several of the compositional devices we inferred in our analysis of Plutarch's *Lives*. The evangelists occasionally displace an event from its original context and transplant it in another either to raise tension in the narrative or to link it with another story involving the same characters. They simplify, though not often. More than the other evangelists, Matthew occasionally transfers what one person said to the lips of another. And the evangelists occasionally change the recipients being addressed. They compress and probably conflate stories. Because Matthew is known to abbreviate often, it should come as no surprise to observe that he compresses more often than the other evangelists. Luke and John make use of literary spotlighting, and Mark and Matthew probably do. However, spotlighting is not nearly as prominent in the Gospels as we observed in Plutarch's *Lives*. Yet, spotlighting may be occurring more often than is within our ability to recognize it, since Jesus is the main character in all four Gospels.

In a few instances, it is difficult to determine which evangelist may be employing a compositional device. For example, in assessing whether the earliest version of the story included one or two blind men whom Jesus healed, one is hard-pressed to adjudicate whether the two blind men in Matthew resulted from him doubling up and conflating two healings, which would be consistent with his tendency to abbreviate, or that the single blind

man in Mark resulted from Mark's knowledge of two blind men being present while shining a spotlight on a person known to his readers or identifying his source, or because Matthew preferred a version of the story that differed from Mark's.

In the pericopes with notable differences we assessed, only a handful of instances cannot be plausibly understood in light of the specific compositional devices we are considering: Mark and Luke provide descriptions of the location of the feeding of the five thousand that puzzle, Mark // Matthew narrate a woman pouring expensive perfume on Jesus's head while John has her pouring it on his feet, the persons who accused Peter of being affiliated with Jesus leading to his denials and the specific locations where the accusations occurred, the location of Jesus's post-resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene, and whether Jesus first appeared to a group of his male disciples in Jerusalem or in Galilee. However, as we observed in a few of the pericopes in our analysis of Plutarch's *Lives*, these sorts of discrepancies could suggest the event itself was remembered while some of the peripheral details were not.<sup>160</sup> As a result, ancient authors, including the evangelists, may have reported the peripheral details either as they or their sources recalled them, or even creatively reconstructed them as part of their literary artistry in writing a quality narrative.<sup>161</sup>

In short, a very large majority of the differences we have observed could be the result of an evangelist using a different source or employing the compositional devices that were standard conventions for writing history and biography in his day. Moreover, these differences almost always appear in the peripheral details.

# “synthetic chronological placement” “presented as historical, but the stated chronology is artificial” “John has changed the day and time that Jesus was crucified in order to make theological point seems most plausible”

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the impression that it occurred subsequently to the event preceding it in the narrative but does not require that it occurred at that time. For example, immediately after narrating Jesus healing a paralytic, Mark says Jesus went out again by the sea and taught a crowd (2:13). Although readers will get the impression Jesus did this after healing the paralytic, Mark’s language does not *require* such a chronological progression.<sup>20</sup> We will refer to instances of this second way of narrating as *implied chronology*.

There are also occasions when an evangelist presents a chronology of events in which the timing is specified. For example, Mark says Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law; then he says, “When the sun set that evening,” they brought to him all those having sicknesses and demons (1:30–32). Mark is not vague pertaining to the time at which Jesus healed the sick and demon-possessed. It occurred on the same day Jesus healed Simon’s mother-in-law. We will refer to instances of this third way of narrating as *explicit chronology*.

For our purposes then, we will speak of three types of chronology: floating, implied, and explicit. Although these types can be helpful, the degree to which chronology is *implied* will vary. In some cases, the chronology may be so strongly implied that it is close to being *explicit*. Thus, an explicit chronology in one Gospel could be considered to be in conflict with the same events presented in a strongly implied chronology in another Gospel. And it is here that we will focus our attention.

Our first and perhaps best candidate for synthetic chronological placement in the Gospels is found in a pericope we previously examined of a woman in Bethany who anointed Jesus.<sup>21</sup> Mark 14:1, followed by Matthew 26:2, locates the anointing two days prior to Passover and after Jesus’s triumphal entry, while John 12:1 says it occurred six days before Passover and prior to the triumphal entry. Either Mark or John appear to have changed the day, using synthetic chronological placement in order to bind the anointing explicitly to a different context than where it actually occurred.

Lucian would have smiled with approval. The event is presented as historical, but the stated chronology is artificial.<sup>22</sup>

As a second example of synthetic chronological placement, we also observed that the Gospels appear to differ on the day and time that Jesus was crucified.<sup>23</sup> The Synoptics state clearly that Jesus was crucified after the Passover meal had been eaten, whereas John seems to suggest that his crucifixion occurred prior to the Passover meal. Opinions differ regarding how best to explain this difference.

In my view, Keener’s suggestion that John changed the day and time that Jesus was crucified in order to make a theological point seems most plausible, because no one reading John’s account independently of the Synoptics would get the impression the Last Supper was a Passover meal. In fact, they would get precisely the opposite impression. However, in the end, I do not think certainty on the matter is possible.

For the remaining three examples of synthetic chronological placement in the Gospels, we will now consider three pericopes not previously discussed.

## #17 (#42, 84) *The Cleansing of the Leper* (Mark 1:40–45; Matt. 8:1–4; Luke 5:12 –16)

A leper approached Jesus, knelt before him, and said, “Lord, you can make me clean if you are willing.” Jesus touched the man and said, “I am willing. Be cleansed.” Immediately, the leprosy left the man. Jesus then instructed him to say nothing to anyone but rather to go show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded as proof to others.

This pericope appears in all three Synoptics. Luke narrates it using a floating chronology, introducing the story with, “While he was in one of the

# Cleansing of leper Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16— “displaced events” . . . “synthetic chronological placement” “synthetic chronology”

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

let the dead bury their dead. They then got into the boat and crossed the lake. Jesus fell asleep in the boat and had to be awakened in order to calm the wind and waves. In Matthew, Jesus crossed the lake only hours after healing Peter's mother-in-law, whereas in Mark and Luke, he remained overnight in Capernaum.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, Matthew explicitly locates the two people telling Jesus they want to follow him in Capernaum on the evening of the day he healed Peter's mother-in-law, which was near the very beginning of Jesus's ministry (Matt. 8:14-23). But Luke places them explicitly in the context of Jesus's final journey to Jerusalem, while he and his disciples were walking along the road (Matt. 9:51-62, esp. 51, 57).<sup>28</sup> Whether we are seeing a floating anecdote that the evangelists explicitly connect to contexts they deemed appropriate, or whether one of them displaced the event from its historical context and transplanted it in another, it seems likely that synthetic chronological placement is being employed.

## **#18 (#33, 139) Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6a; Matt. 13:53-58; Luke 4:16-30)**

When was Jesus rejected at Nazareth? Luke locates it at the beginning of Jesus's ministry, shortly after he was tempted in the desert (Luke 4:15-30), while Mark and Matthew place it later in Jesus's ministry (Mark 6:1-6 // Matt. 13:53-58). Are different events being narrated? Or has Luke conflated this rejection with another in the same town (see Matt. 4:13-17; 13:53-58 // Mark 6:1-6)? Or has either Luke or Mark displaced the story to a different time? Certainty eludes us. Notwithstanding, there are good reasons to think Luke has displaced the story and linked it explicitly to the beginning of

Jesus's ministry.

Mark reports the following string of events: Jesus calms a stormy Sea of Galilee, cures a demoniac named Legion, heals a hemorrhaging woman, raises Jairus's daughter, is rejected at Nazareth, sends out the Twelve, is inquired about by Herod, is briefed by his disciples, who have now returned, then feeds the five thousand.<sup>29</sup> This long string of events is mentioned by Luke and in the same order as they appear in Mark with only one exception—Jesus's rejection at Nazareth—which is missing from Luke's string. Luke has instead placed that event earlier in Jesus's ministry.

So we will travel back to the beginning of Jesus's ministry and view what is going on there in the Synoptics. All three narrate Jesus being tempted in the desert and then returning to Galilee. Matthew and Luke then say Jesus left Nazareth and went to Capernaum (Matt. 4:13 // Luke 4:16-31).<sup>30</sup> But Luke provides more details, informing us that Jesus left Nazareth because he was rejected there and almost killed (Luke 4:16-30). Of course, it is possible that Jesus was rejected twice at Nazareth.<sup>31</sup> However, consider the following: First, as previously observed, Luke follows Mark in a long string of stories in which only this one is missing but appears in a different context. Second, there are strong parallels between the story in all three Synoptics: Jesus was preaching in their synagogue on a Sabbath (Mark 6:2 // Matt. 13:54 // Luke 4:16); the people's response was "Hey, we know this fellow's family" (Mark 6:3 // Matt. 13:55-56 // Luke 4:22); and Jesus's reply to them was that a prophet is not accepted in his own town (Mark 6:4 // Matt. 13:57 // Luke 4:24). These suggest either Mark or Luke displaced the story and placed it in a different context using a synthetic chronology.<sup>32</sup>

Cleansing  
of Leper



# Jesus rejection at Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6a; Matthew 13:53-58 Luke 4:16-30)—“displaced . . . event from its historical context and transplanted it” “synthetic chronological placement” “displaced . . . and placed it in a different context using synthetic chronology”

Kindle

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

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**#19 (#25, 271, 273; cf. 276) The Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:1–17, 27–33; Matt. 21:1–27; Luke 19:28–20:8; John 12:12–22)**

When did Jesus cleanse the temple? John 2:11–13 places it explicitly at the beginning of Jesus's ministry, shortly after his first miracle in Cana of Galilee.<sup>33</sup> However, all three Synoptics explicitly place it within a week of his

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# “altered chronology” in Gospels because Plutarch, Sallust and Tacitus “altered the chronology of the event and five examples where the evangelists may have done likewise”

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WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY

third set. For some reason, the number fourteen is important to Matthew. A number of scholars have suggested that Matthew is employing a device known as *gematria* in which Hebrew letters are assigned numerical values. For example, *dalet* (ד, *d* or “D”) is the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet while *vav* (ו, *v* or “V”) is the sixth. Since there are no separate letters for vowels in Hebrew, the name “David” (דָּוִד, *dauid*) has a numerical value of fourteen (D = 4, V = 6, D = 4). Thus, in arranging his genealogy in three sets of fourteen, Matthew was probably emphasizing Jesus’s Davidic ancestry: Jesus is the son of David, the Messiah. This is literary artistry, Matthew shaping his genealogy of Jesus to make a theological point. And this is precisely what some scholars suggest John has done here and elsewhere in his Gospel in order to emphasize Jesus’s role as the sacrificial Passover Lamb who takes away our sins.<sup>32</sup> While certainty is not possible, the timing of the temple cleansing in John is a candidate for synthetic chronological placement.

implied or even explicit chronology presented in another Gospel. In most of these instances, it appears that one of the evangelists altered the chronology of an event. In some of these, the reasons for doing so can be plausibly surmised to produce a smooth-flowing narrative, highlight a point the evangelist desired to make, provide a contextual home for an orphaned story, or for reasons not apparent to us.<sup>38</sup> Having examined numerous pericopes in Plutarch’s *Lives* and the Gospels, we are now prepared to summarize our findings and draw some final conclusions.

**Summary**

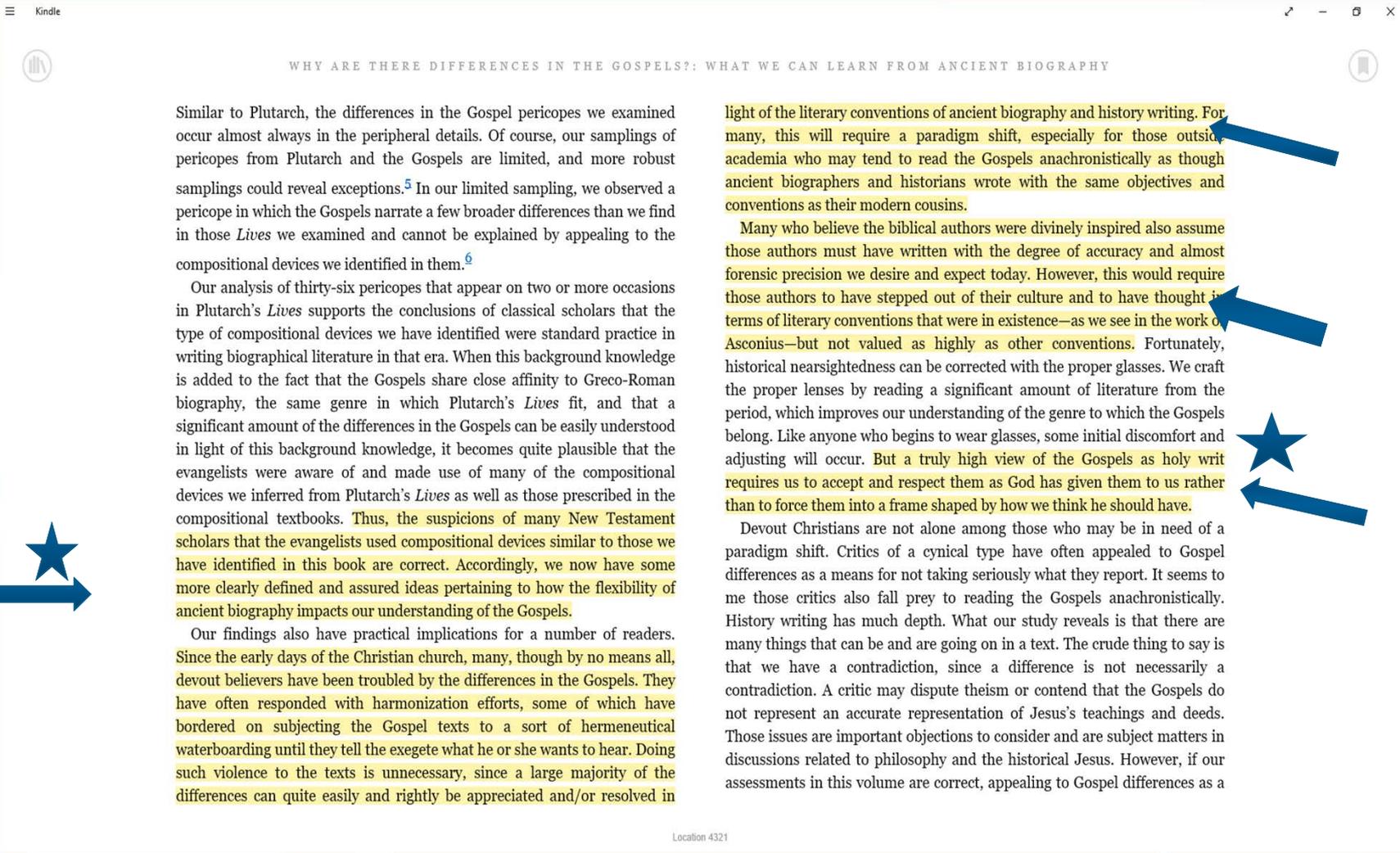
In this chapter, I have provided five examples in which Plutarch, Sallust, and Tacitus appear to have altered the chronology of an event and five examples where the evangelists may have done likewise. We observed three types of chronology in the Gospels: floating, implied, and explicit. Lucian taught that the proper method for writing history is not to provide a collection of stories in a disjointed manner but instead to connect the stories like links of a chain, using overlapping material when possible. We observed Matthew doing this more than the other evangelists and Luke doing it least often, at least if we are thinking of linking events in a chronological manner. Luke may have instead preferred to link events thematically. On occasion, the explicit chronology presented in one Gospel appears in tension with the strongly

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“CONCLUSION”—“suspicion of many NT scholars that the evangelists used compositional devices similar to those we have identified in this book are correct.” “a truly high view of the Gospels as holy writ requires us” to accept that Gospels did what Licona asserts



Similar to Plutarch, the differences in the Gospel pericopes we examined occur almost always in the peripheral details. Of course, our samplings of pericopes from Plutarch and the Gospels are limited, and more robust samplings could reveal exceptions.<sup>5</sup> In our limited sampling, we observed a pericope in which the Gospels narrate a few broader differences than we find in those *Lives* we examined and cannot be explained by appealing to the compositional devices we identified in them.<sup>6</sup>

Our analysis of thirty-six pericopes that appear on two or more occasions in Plutarch's *Lives* supports the conclusions of classical scholars that the type of compositional devices we have identified were standard practice in writing biographical literature in that era. When this background knowledge is added to the fact that the Gospels share close affinity to Greco-Roman biography, the same genre in which Plutarch's *Lives* fit, and that a significant amount of the differences in the Gospels can be easily understood in light of this background knowledge, it becomes quite plausible that the evangelists were aware of and made use of many of the compositional devices we inferred from Plutarch's *Lives* as well as those prescribed in the compositional textbooks. Thus, the suspicions of many New Testament scholars that the evangelists used compositional devices similar to those we have identified in this book are correct. Accordingly, we now have some more clearly defined and assured ideas pertaining to how the flexibility of ancient biography impacts our understanding of the Gospels.

Our findings also have practical implications for a number of readers. Since the early days of the Christian church, many, though by no means all, devout believers have been troubled by the differences in the Gospels. They have often responded with harmonization efforts, some of which have bordered on subjecting the Gospel texts to a sort of hermeneutical waterboarding until they tell the exegete what he or she wants to hear. Doing such violence to the texts is unnecessary, since a large majority of the differences can quite easily and rightly be appreciated and/or resolved in

light of the literary conventions of ancient biography and history writing. For many, this will require a paradigm shift, especially for those outside academia who may tend to read the Gospels anachronistically as though ancient biographers and historians wrote with the same objectives and conventions as their modern cousins.

Many who believe the biblical authors were divinely inspired also assume those authors must have written with the degree of accuracy and almost forensic precision we desire and expect today. However, this would require those authors to have stepped out of their culture and to have thought in terms of literary conventions that were in existence—as we see in the work of Asconius—but not valued as highly as other conventions. Fortunately, historical nearsightedness can be corrected with the proper glasses. We craft the proper lenses by reading a significant amount of literature from the period, which improves our understanding of the genre to which the Gospels belong. Like anyone who begins to wear glasses, some initial discomfort and adjusting will occur. But a truly high view of the Gospels as holy writ requires us to accept and respect them as God has given them to us rather than to force them into a frame shaped by how we think he should have.

Devout Christians are not alone among those who may be in need of a paradigm shift. Critics of a cynical type have often appealed to Gospel differences as a means for not taking seriously what they report. It seems to me those critics also fall prey to reading the Gospels anachronistically. History writing has much depth. What our study reveals is that there are many things that can be and are going on in a text. The crude thing to say is that we have a contradiction, since a difference is not necessarily a contradiction. A critic may dispute theism or contend that the Gospels do not represent an accurate representation of Jesus's teachings and deeds. Those issues are important objections to consider and are subject matters in discussions related to philosophy and the historical Jesus. However, if our assessments in this volume are correct, appealing to Gospel differences as a



# MY CONCLUSION . . .

- (1) What is Licona's Definition and Understanding of "Inerrancy"?
- (2) If ETS has "inerrancy" statement to sign and it corresponds to ICBI"—THIS **AIN'T** NO ICBI INERRANCY or ORTHODOXY INERRANCY by any means
- (3) QUO VADIS evangelicals? Quo Vadis ETS?

The Testimony of the Gospels . . . NOW CHANGED . . . WE HAVE ERRED! NEW TRANSLATION . . . BREAKING NEWS

John 14:26—“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, <sup>c</sup>He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance ~~all~~ [SOME, well a few things of the GIST] that I said to you.”

John 16:13—“But when He, <sup>a</sup>the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you [according to the standards of Plutarch and Greco-Roman bioi] what is to come.”

1 John 4:6—“The Spirit of Truth” has SET HIS HIGH! TO THE STANDARD of the level of Plutarch’s LIVES!

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



## **A CHART ON THE GOSPEL WRITERS' USE OF JESUS' WORDS & DEEDS**

EVANGELICAL VIEW	NON-EVANGELICAL VIEW
REPORTING THEM	CREATING THEM
SELECTING THEM	CONSTRUCTING THEM
ARRANGING THEM	MISARRANGING THEM
PARAPHRASING THEM	EXPANDING THEM
CHANGE THEIR FORM (Grammatical Change)	CHANGE THEIR CONTENT (Theological Change)
CHANGE THEIR WORDING	CHANGE THEIR MEANING
TRANSLATE THEM	MISTRANSLATE THEM
INTERPRET THEM	MISINTERPRET THEM
EDITING	REDACTING

# ETS Breakout Session on Licona's New Book 2016



ETS 2016—Parallel Session Review of Licona's *Why are There Differences in the Gospels* (Blomberg, Strauss, Bock, Licona, McNabb)

# "IT'S A MAD HOUSE" . . . ETS



Tyler McNabb,  
chairing ETS breakout on Licona's book  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Houston Baptist University

BAPTIST WHO CONVERTED TO ROMANISM IN  
2012

<https://heroicvirtuecreations.com/2012/07/30/ordained-baptist-becoming-catholic/>

<http://deepertruthblog.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-catholic-defender-two-conversion.html>



## EMAIL TO JAMES WHITE (Apologist)

<http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php/2013/05/23/a-case-study-in-apostasy/>

From: **tyler mcnabb**

Subject: Debate

Date: May 18, 2013 8:32:34 AM MST

To: James White

James,

I pray that you are doing well! I have no idea if you know what has occurred since last summer, so I not only wanted to update you on what has occurred but I also wanted to end this email with a proposal for some sort of debate. **During the month of August I recommitted myself to Catholic theology and last December I officially entered communion with Rome.** I wanted to see if you might be interested in a debate. Though I do not have as an impressive resume as you do, I do indeed have a resume. Besides having participated in professional debate, I have a MA in Philosophy of Religion and a BA in Biblical Studies. I am also starting my PhD in Philosophy from the University of Glasgow this year. Furthermore, I am also a professor at community college in North Carolina. It is at this college that I teach New Testament and World Religions.

I propose the following topic:

Knowledge of Catholicism: Can one know that Catholic teaching is true?

I move in the fall to the U.K. so I would love to figure something out before then.

Thanks,

Tyler D. McNabb

# One Final Thought...

IF THE GOSPELS ARE JUST LIKE GRECO-ROMAN BIOI . . . .

- THEY ARE JUST DOCUMENTS OF FAULTY MEN.
- THEY ARE NOT INSPIRED AT ALL.
- THEY ARE ASSUREDLY FILLED WITH ERROR.
- NOT ONLY MARK IS CONFUSED BUT MATT, LUKE, JOHN!

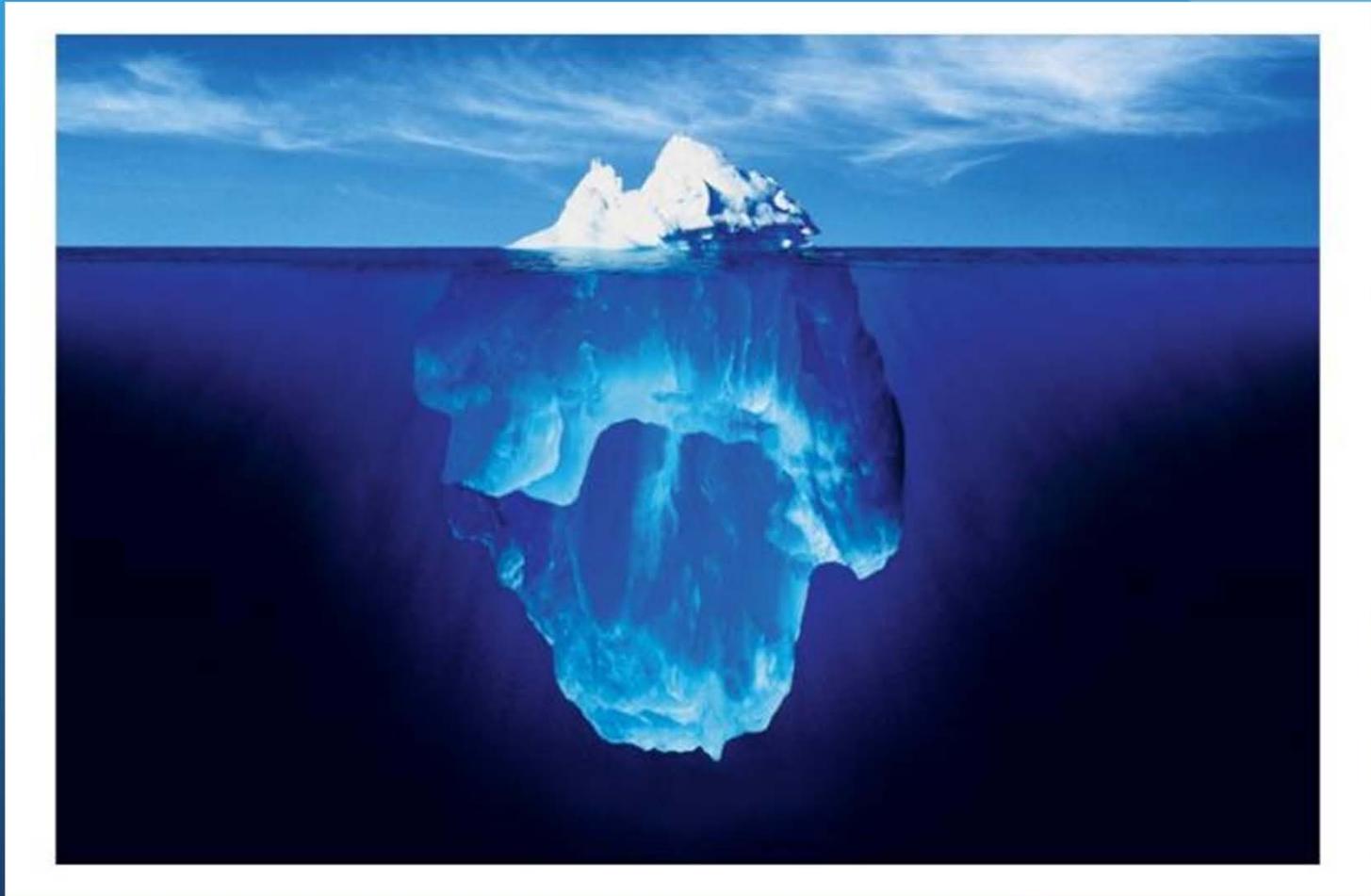
## THE MODEL OF THE GOSPELS IS THE OLD TESTAMENT NOT GRECO-ROMAN BIOI! PROMISE (OT) FULFILMENT (NT GOSPELS)

MAJOR ELEMENTS COMMON TO OT/NT WRITING PATTERN CORRESPONDENCE	OLD TESTAMENT PATTERN FROM HISTORY, PROPHECY, and TYPOLOGY	NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN OF FULFILLMENT FROM OT HISTORY, PROPHECY, AND TYPOLOGY
Recording of Deeds and Words of God— Pattern of Jewish Memorization	Deuteronomy 6:4-6--SHEMA "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. Great Discourses of Moses (Pentateuch, e.g. Exo 33:12-23; 35:1-20)	Luke 1:1-4-careful reporting of Jesus's Deeds and Words as the Son of God; Mark 1:1—"beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God" Matthew/Luke centers on Great Discourses of Jesus (e.g. 5-7 Sermon on the Mount) John centers on Great teachings of Jesus (e.g. John 17—Jesus High Priestly Prayer)
Emphasis on Eyewitness Testimony to confirm matters	Deuteronomy 17:6-7; 19:15-20	Prologue of John 1:1-18; 1 John 1:1-3; Luke 1:1-4—"many who were eyewitnesses and servants of Word"; Acts 1:3—"many infallible proofs" John 12:41 cf. Isa 6—Isaiah saw His Glory

## THE MODEL OF THE GOSPELS IS THE OLD TESTAMENT NOT GRECO-ROMAN BIO! PROMISE (OT) FULFILMENT (NT GOSPELS)!

Emphasis on Great Men of Faith KEY PEOPLE IN SALVATION HISTORY	Abraham in Gen. 12-50 (and his family) progeny); Exodus-Moses; Ruth; Esther; 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	Jesus as Son of God—John 1:1-3 Jesus as Davidic King and Messiah (Luke 1:32; 18:38) who fulfills OT promise of a Davidic Heir (Acts 2:29-36)
Emphasis on Predictive Prophecy	Multitude of Predictions of Future King of Israel and His Kingdom; Deut. 19: Isaiah 53	Jesus seen as Fulfillment of OT prophecies; Matthew—"In other that the words of Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled" Acts 6:
Emphasis on Words of Old Testament Saints formed pattern for Words of Jesus in New Testament	Abraham, Moses Samuel, David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, Major and Minor Prophets	Teaching and Preaching of Jesus (Sermon on Mount, Sending out of the Twelve and 70;
Covenants of Old and New Testament	Mosaic Covenant as Precatory for New (Jer. 31:31-33; Ezek. 36:25-27)	Fulfillment of New Covenant Predictions in Jesus (Luke 22:20);
Emphasis One and Importance of OT Genealogy	Old Testament Emphasis Genealogy from Adam (Gen. 11:27) through Abraham to David () and his scions (Ezra)	Emphasis on Jesus's Genealogy as Promised King of Israel (Matt. 1; Luke 3)

# TIP OF THE ICEBERG AMONG EVANGELICALS



# Or, "What's the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?"



# Many Evangelicals' New Position

Old and New Testament are "POETIC HISTORY."



They believe that Genesis and many other parts of Scripture are neither literal history in the plain, normal sense or poetic fiction.

Somewhere in the middle is the truth, e.g., Gen. 1-3 cannot be taken in the plain, normal sense of its words but indicates that something happened in history but not literally as it says.

# Neo - Evangelicals' Position

POETIC HISTORY is another way of saying "allegorical interpretation."

The historical is merely a vehicle for a truth that is behind the outward kernel of "history."

One cannot take it as "historical" in the normal sense nor "fictional" but the excluded middle of telling something that happened but not in a literal sense.

# Philosophical Position that is Popular among Some Evangelicals

Locution - what the text says (words); affirms; text of Scripture itself.

Illocution - why the author wrote text (purpose); what he meant; author's purpose in writing the text; what author intended to do with the text.

This position says that what the Bible says (words) can may be inspired, but only the purpose of the text is inerrant.

Thus, Genesis 1-3 says God created in six days (not accurate/correct/true) but what it's purpose is (God created the world; author's purpose is writing Gen. 1-3) is inerrant.

# Popular Philosophical Position

Things affirmed in the text (locutions; words; the text of Scripture itself) that are not in accordance with the author's purpose (illocution) are not inspired or inerrant.

WHAT is said is not inspired (meaning)—just WHY it is said (purpose).

Things affirmed in text are a vehicle for author's purpose and should not be considered inerrant in their meaning.

# Reply to Popular Philosophy

Purpose does not determine meaning because what one says can be understood apart from why one says it (its purpose).

Example: "Here is a gift of ONE MILLION DOLLARS."

One clearly understands the meaning even if the purpose (giving of the money by the giver) is not clear.

Even if later more information is given on the purpose, the meaning is still clear.

## Genre or Literature Style Position Used to Define Inerrancy

Use of allegory (non-literal, non-historical interpretation), in some form or another, to deny the plain, normal sense of Scripture.

Denial of historical sense of passage.

Proponents say it is a matter of style of literature, not inerrancy.

Often Jewish hermeneutics that were non-literal (Second Temple Judaism) is accepted, i.e., midrash, apocalyptic style, etc.

VERY ancient tactic used by aberrant groups in church history.

# Genre or Literary Style

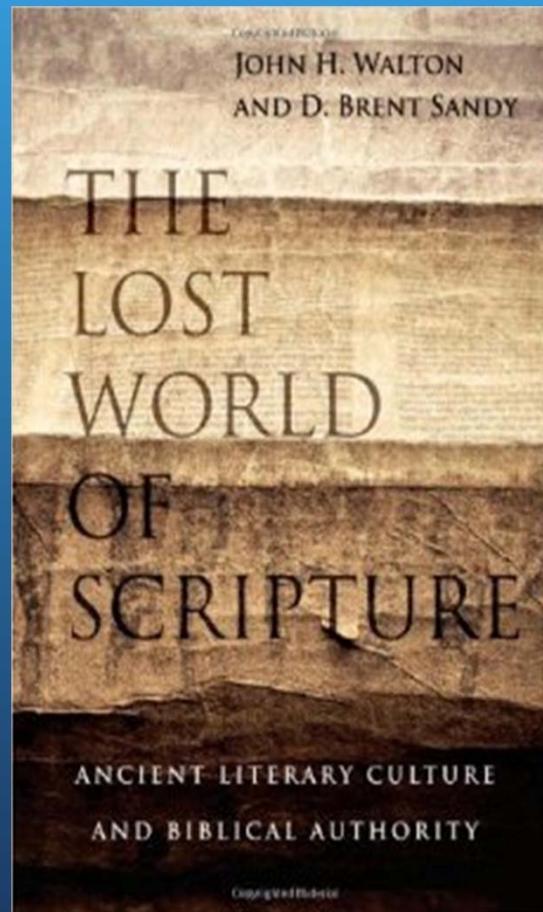
Often used to undermine literal meaning when unacceptable for some reason of the interpreter.

REPLY—CONTEXT DETERMINES GENRE: The text must be read and understood before its genre or style can be determined. Understanding a text comes before its identification as to style.

Normal meaning of language must be used prior to understanding style.

*A PRIORI* Style or genre conclusion does not determine the basic meaning of the text.

Genesis 1-3 A Test Case  
"THE LOST WORLD OF SCRIPTURE"  
John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy

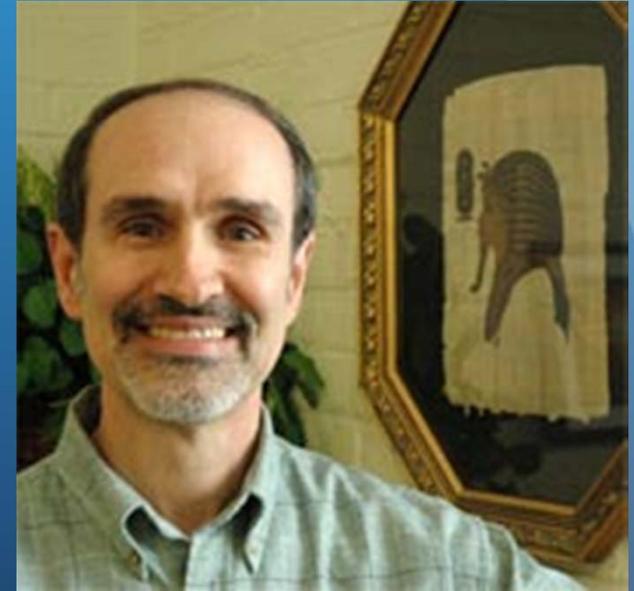


# Genesis 1-3 A Test Case

John H. Walton



D. Brent Sandy



# Genesis 1-3 A Test Case

Walton and Sandy use speech act theory in approaching Genesis 1-3.

*"The Bible contains no new revelation about the material workings and understanding of the Material World" (Proposition 4, pp.49-59).*

*The Bible's "explicit statements about the material world are part of the locution and would naturally accommodate the beliefs of the ancient world. As such they are not vested with authority. We cannot encumber with scriptural authority any scientific conclusions we might deduce from the biblical text about the material world, its history or its regular processes. This means that we cannot draw any scientific conclusions about such areas as physiology, meteorology, astronomy, cosmic geography, genetics or geology from the Bible. For example, we should believe that God created the universe, but we should not expect to be able to derive from the biblical texts the methods that he used or the time that it took. We should believe that God created humans in his image and that through the choices they made sin and death came into the world. Scientific conclusions, however, relating to the material processes of human origins (whether from biology in general or genetics in particular) may be outside the purview of the Bible. We need to ask whether the Bible is making those sort of claims in its illocutions" (p. 55). [underlining added]*

# Genesis 1-3 A Test Case

Thus, Genesis 1 and 2 may well indicate God's creation but not the means of how he created, even when the locutions say "evening and morning"; "first day" etc. Much of what is in Genesis 1 reflects "Old World Science": "*one could easily infer from the statements in the biblical text that the sun and moon share space with the birds (Gen. 1). But this is simply a reflection of Old World Science, and we attach no authority to that conclusion. Rather we consider it a matter of deduction on the part of the ancients who made no reason to know better.*" (p. 57).

For them, "*[the] Bible's authority is bound into theological claims and entailments about the material world. For them, since the Bible is not a science textbook, its 'authority is not found in the locution [words] but has to come through illocution [purpose]'*" (p. 54).

Genesis 1-2, under their system, does not rule out evolution; nor does it signify creation literally in six "days." Such conclusions press the text far beyond its purpose to indicate God's creation of the world but not the how of the processes involved. W/S conclude, "*we have proposed that reticence to identify scientific claims or entailments is the logical conclusion from the first two points (not a science textbook; no new scientific revelation) and that a proper understanding of biblical authority is dependent on recognizing this to be true*" (p. 59).

They assert that "*it is safe to believe that Old World Science permeates the Old Testament*" and "*Old World Science is simply part of the locution [words, etc.] and as such is not vested with authority*" (p. 300). [underlining added]

# Genesis 1-3 A Test Case

Thus, for Walton and Sandy, the purpose of Genesis 1-3 (illocution) is to state that God created the world, but the locution (words used, i.e. "evening, morning," "first day, second day, etc.") do not convey actual facts of creation.

Evolution and long periods, etc. may have well been the mechanism but God in Genesis accommodated himself man's primitive understanding.

THE AUTHOR OF GENESIS' ONLY PURPOSE/INTENT IS TO CONVEY THE FACT OF CREATION BUT NOT HOW GOD CREATED.

# International Council on Biblical Inerrancy

## CHICAGO STATEMENT 1978

### Article XVIII:

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teachings or rejecting its claims to authorship.

# International Council on Biblical Hermeneutics

## CHICAGO STATEMENT ON HERMENEUTICS 1982

### Article XIII:

We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of the biblical text.

We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on the biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

# International Council on Biblical Hermeneutics

## CHICAGO STATEMENT ON HERMENEUTICS 1982

### Article VI:

We affirm that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.

We deny that, while the Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

# International Council on Biblical Hermeneutics

## CHICAGO STATEMENT ON HERMENEUTICS 1982

### Article XIV:

We affirm that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact.

We deny that any event, discourse or saying in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”





***“AS GO THE  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARIES,  
SO GOES THE  
CHURCH.”***

J. Gresham Machen  
(1881-1937)

## J. Gresham Machen:

1. U.S. Presbyterian theologian
2. Eloquent spokesmen for the evangelical position in the “fundamentalist vs. liberal” controversies of the 1920s and 1930s.
3. He fought the good fight against the inroads of liberal theology from those Presbyterian ministers who vowed on their ordination to uphold the divine authority of the Word of God in Holy Scripture, and then spent the rest of their lives preaching doctrines contrary to the Word of God.

### FULL QUOTE:

*“ [M]any theological seminaries today are nurseries of unbelief; and because they are nurseries of unbelief the churches that they serve have become unbelieving churches too. As go the theological seminaries, so goes the church. That is certainly true in the long run. Look out upon the condition of the Church throughout the world today, and you will see that it is true.”*

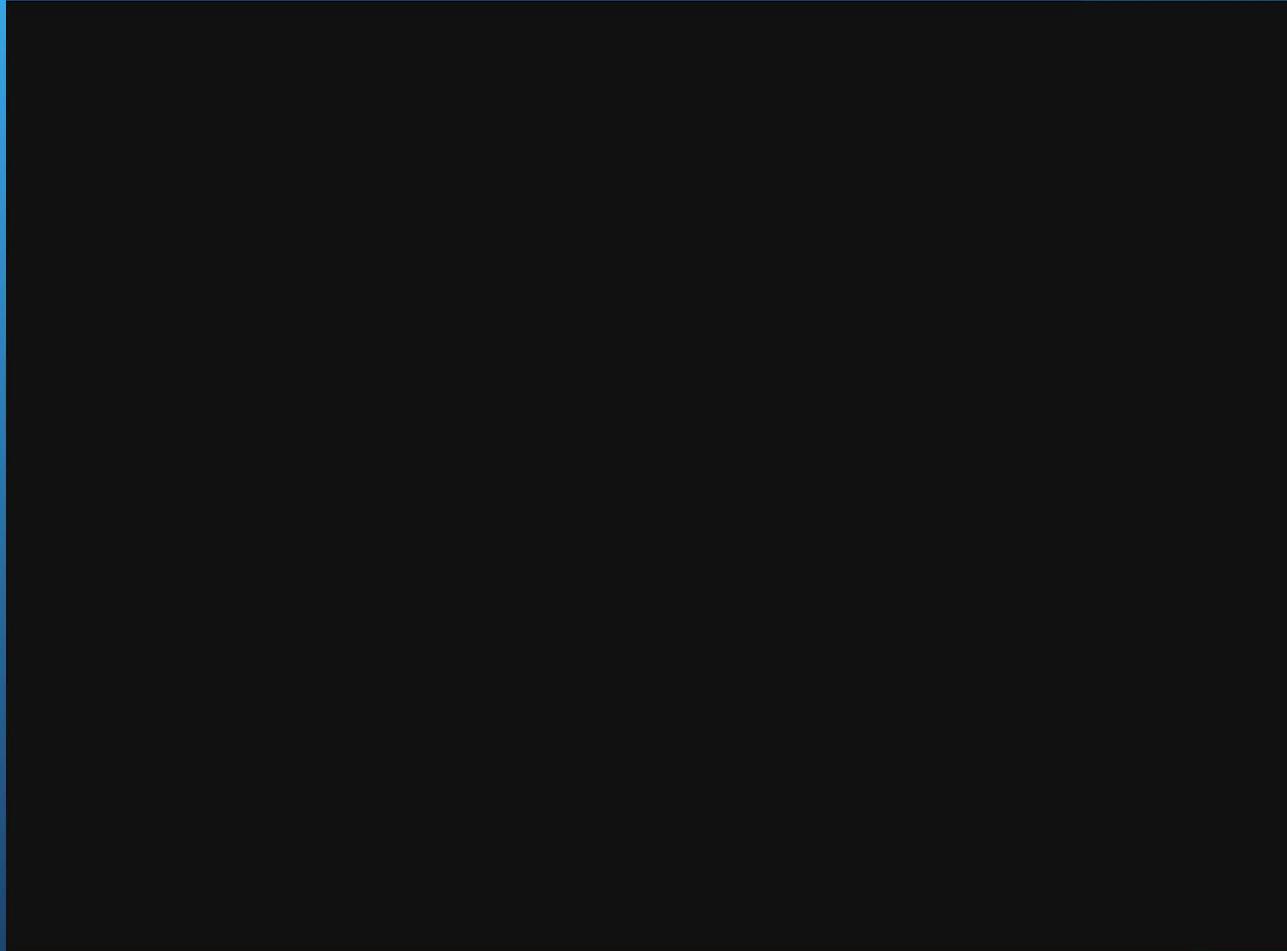
*The Christian Faith in the Modern World (Eerdmans, 1936), p65.*

# William Lane Craig

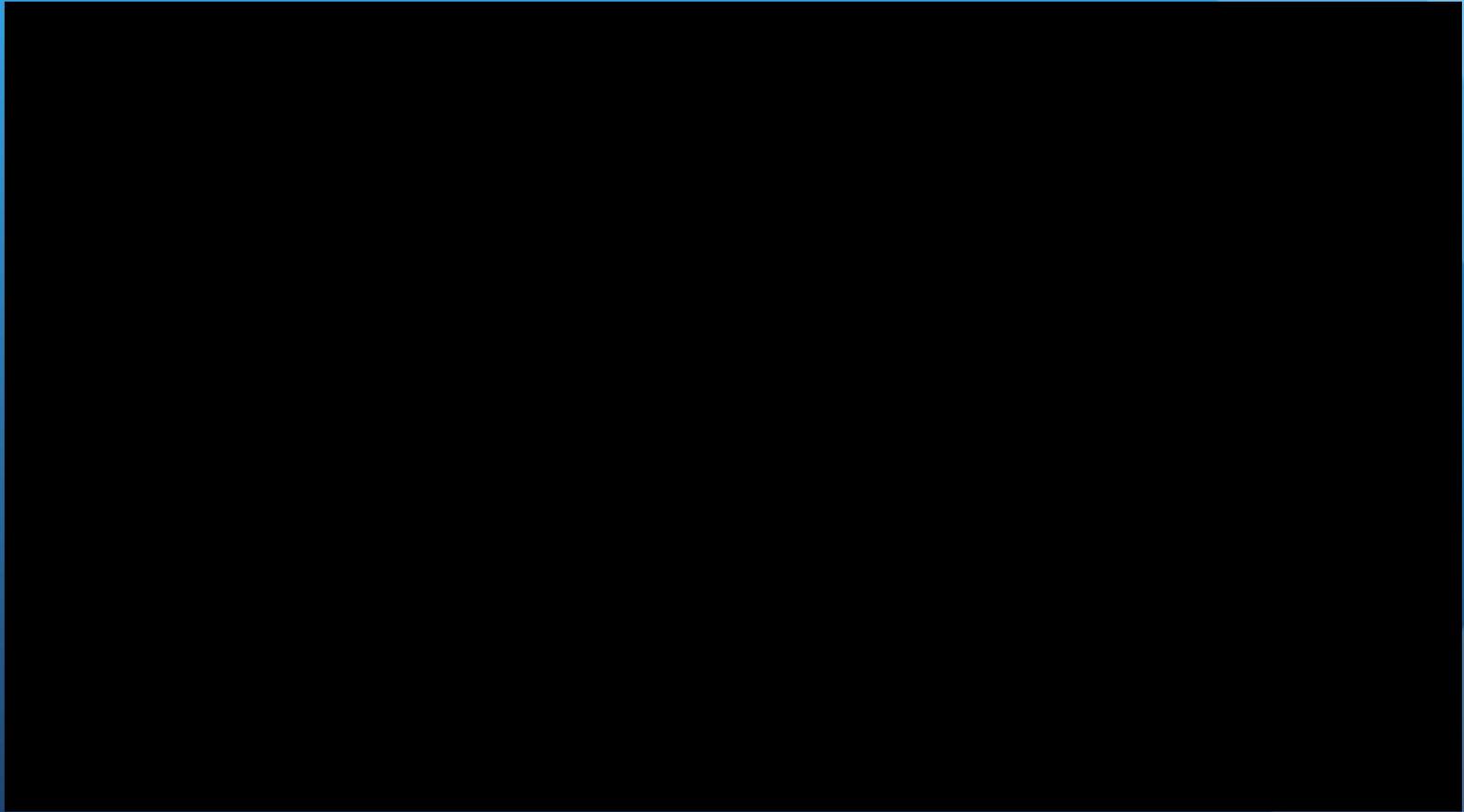
Research Professor of Philosophy  
at Talbot School of Theology  
in La Mirada, California



Islamic Apologetics??? uses the following from  
Craig



# Were there Guards at Tomb?



# Craig holds to limited inerrancy

*"The Evangelists had no intention that their stories should be taken like police reports, accurate in every detail." - i.e., only intentions are inerrant, not details.*

*"What matters is that the central idea is conveyed, often in some key words and climaxing in some saying which is repeated verbatim; but the surrounding details are fluid and incidental to the story."*

He supports Licona's ancient Greco-Roman bioi hypothesis that views truth and legend were mixed.

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-price-biblical-errancy#ixzz3TYTtBOCx>

# Craig holds to limited inerrancy

*" To illustrate, at one time in my Christian life I believed that Jesus actually cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem twice, once near the beginning of his ministry as John relates, and once near the end of his life, as we read in the Synoptic Gospels. But an understanding of the Gospels as ancient biographies relieves us of such a supposition, for an ancient biographer can relate incidents in a non-chronological way. Only an unsympathetic (and uncomprehending) reader would take John's moving the Temple cleansing to earlier in Jesus' life as an error on John's part."*

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-price-biblical-errancy#ixzz3TYTtBOCx>

# Inerrancy is a peripheral belief

*"Ehrman had, it seems to me, a flawed theological system of beliefs as a Christian. It seems that at the center of his web of theological beliefs was biblical inerrancy, and everything else, like the beliefs in the deity of Christ and in his resurrection, depended on that. Once the center was gone, the whole web soon collapsed. But when you think about it, such a structure is deeply flawed."*

*At the center of our web of beliefs ought to be some core belief like the belief that God exists, with the deity and resurrection of Christ somewhere near the center. The doctrine of inspiration of Scripture will be somewhere further out and inerrancy even farther toward the periphery as a corollary of inspiration. If inerrancy goes, the web will feel the reverberations of that loss, as we adjust our doctrine of inspiration accordingly, but the web will not collapse because belief in God and Christ and his resurrection and so on don't depend upon the doctrine of biblical inerrancy."*

<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-price-biblical-errancy#ixzz3TYTLZwCm>

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



## 2 Belief systems among evangelicals now

#1-Historical Critical Evangelicals: "inerrancy on the outside" of the black circle. Christ in the middle yellow.

Inerrancy on outside



Christ  
in  
center

## 2 Belief systems among evangelicals now

#2-orthodoxy: "inerrancy in the center" of the black circle. Christ in the middle yellow. GOD'S UNFAILING WORD TESTIFIES TO REALITY OF CHRIST!

Inerrancy on inside—as testimony to certainty of testimony to Christ

Question: IF DOCUMENTS CAN'T BE TRUSTED THAT TESTIFY TO HIM, THEN HOW CAN YOU KNOW CHRIST IS CENTER?

Faulty witness that makes things up or is inaccurate cannot with any certainty place Christ in center!



Christ immediately after in red

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



## #2 VIEW IS BIBLICAL VIEW!

John 5:39 "Search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me"

His Person/Mission finds foundation in Inerrant/Authority of Scripture!

Luke 24:25 "And he said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> 'Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with <sup>a</sup>Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

## #2 is Biblical View!

Luke 16:31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

**BELIEVE/PROOF IN JESUS'S MISSION &  
RESURRECTION STARTS WITH BELIEF IN  
INERRANT/AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF  
GOD!**

## Recently named among, “The 50 Most Influential Living Philosophers” by the Best Schools Website

<http://www.thebestschools.org/features/most-influential-living-philosophers/>

William Lane Craig, Biola University, Research Professor of Philosophy (also teaches at Houston Baptist University) ranked #11

“The Best Schools” website run by

James Barham

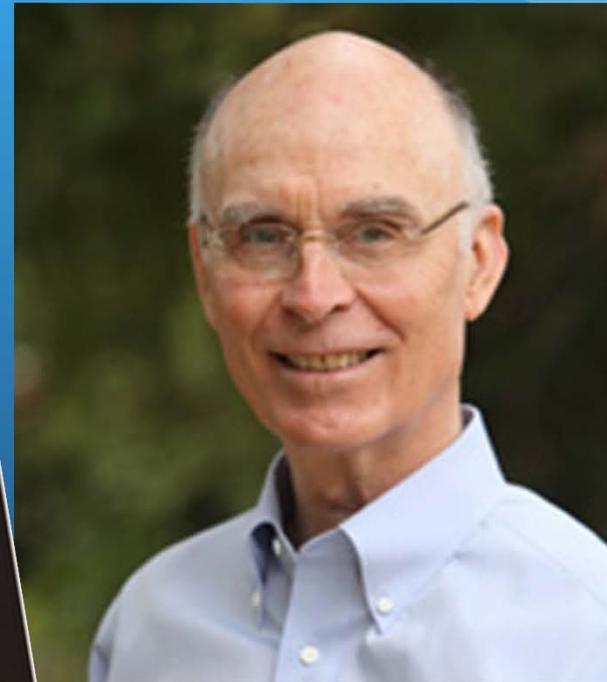
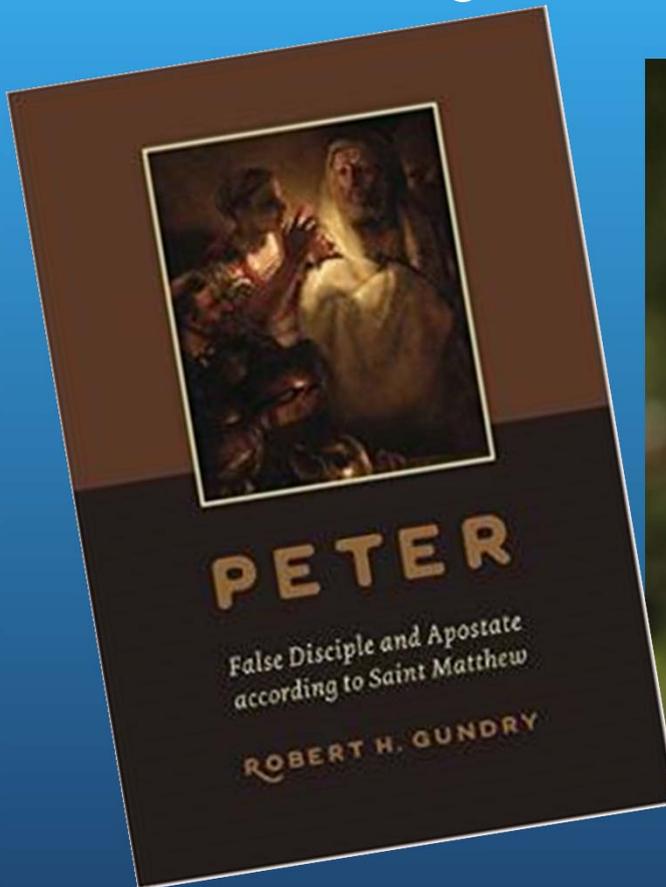
(1) is the General Editor of TheBestSchools, lives in Chicago, Illinois. Originally from Dallas, Texas, he was educated at the University of Texas at Austin (B.A. in classics), at Harvard University (M.A. in history of science), and at the University of Notre Dame (Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science).

- (2) He is an atheist--<http://www.thebestschools.org/about/>

<http://www.uncommondescent.com/education/james-barham-at-best-schools-fesses-up-hes-an-atheist-but-he-thinks-reality-is-real/>



Robert H. Gundry  
Professor of NT, Westmont College (retired)  
Taught since 1962

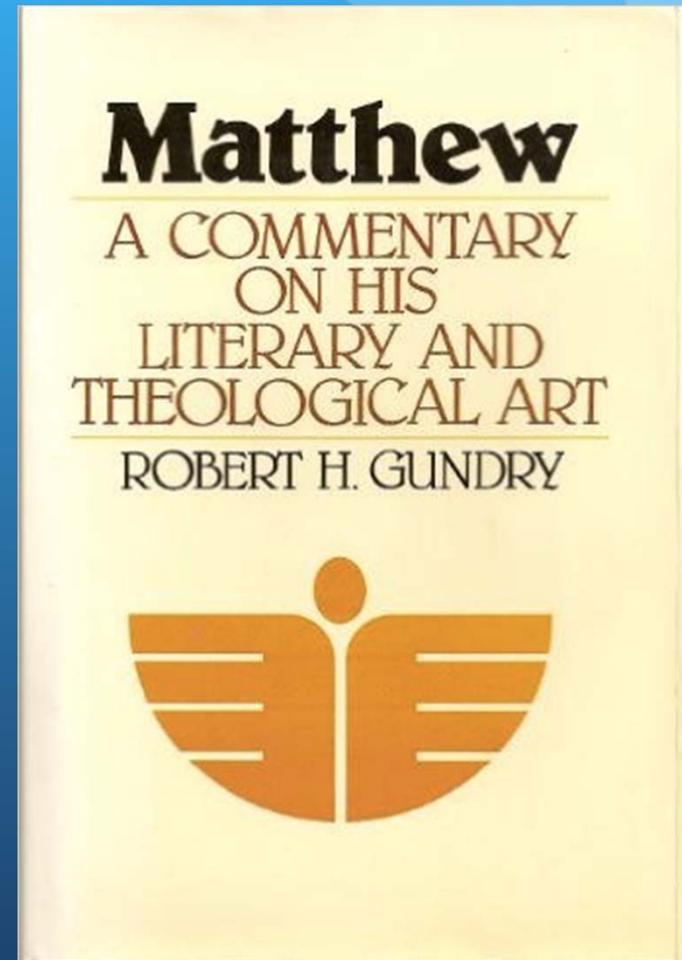


*HE'S BACK!*

1982 A.D.

ROBERT GUNDRY

*“Matthew:  
A Commentary on  
His Literary and  
Theological Art”*



# Robert Gundry

Used an interpretative approach called "MIDRASH" on Matthew's material.

Midrash is "text with commentary" rabbinical approach, i.e., says commentary on text is NOT necessarily historical or factual in genre.

# Robert Gundry

*"Clearly, Matthew treats us to history mixed with elements that cannot be called historical in a modern sense. All history writing entails more or less editing of materials. But Matthew's editing often goes beyond acceptable bounds..."*

*Matthew's subtractions, additions, and revisions of order and phraseology often show changes in substance; i.e., they represent developments of the dominical tradition that result in different meanings and departures from the actuality of events" (p. 623).*

Robert Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) as well as *A Commentary on His Handbook for A Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

The latter note: an updated version of the 1982 commentary.

# Robert Gundry

*" Comparison with the other gospels, especially with Mark and Luke, and examination of Matthew's style and theology show that he materially altered and embellished historical traditions and that he did so deliberately and often" (p. 639).*

*" We have also seen that at numerous points these features exhibit such a high degree of editorial liberty that the adjectives 'midrashic' and 'haggadic' become appropriate" (p. 628).*

Midrash means it did not happen in history as it was presented in the Gospels.

# Robert Gundry

- *" We are not dealing with a few scattered difficulties. We are dealing with a vast network of tendentious changes" (p. 625).*

This means it did not happen in history as it was presented in the Gospels.

- *" Hence, 'Jesus said' or 'Jesus did' need not always mean that in history Jesus said or did what follows, but sometimes may mean that in the account at least partly constructed by Matthew himself Jesus said or did what follows" (p. 630).*

This means it did not happen in history as it was presented in the Gospels.

# Robert Gundry

- *"Semantics aside, it is enough to note that the liberty Matthew takes with his sources is often comparable with the liberty taken with the OT in Jubilees, the Genesis Apocrypha, the Targums, and the Midrashim and Haggadoth in rabbinic literature" (p. 628).*

This means it did not happen in history as it was presented in the Gospels.

- *"These patterns attain greatest visibility in, but are by no means limited to, a number of outright discrepancies with the other synoptic."*

At least they are discrepancies so long as we presume biblical writers were always intending.

# Robert Gundry

*" Matthew selects them [the Magi] as his substitute for the shepherds in order to lead up to the star, which replaces the angel and heavenly host in the tradition" (p. 27).*

The Magi, the star and the heavenly hosts did not happen as is presented in the Gospels.

*" That Herod's statement consists almost entirely of Mattheanisms supports our understanding Matthew himself to be forming this episode out of the shepherd's visit, with use of collateral materials. The description of the star derives from v. 2. The shepherds' coming at night lies behind the starry journey of the magi" (p. 31).*

# Robert Gundry

*"He [Matthew] changes the sacrificial slaying of 'a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,' which took place at the presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:24; cf. Lev 12:6-8), into Herod's slaughtering the babies in Bethlehem (cf. As. Mos. 6:2-6)" (pp. 34, 35).*

This means these did not happen in history as it was presented in the Gospels.

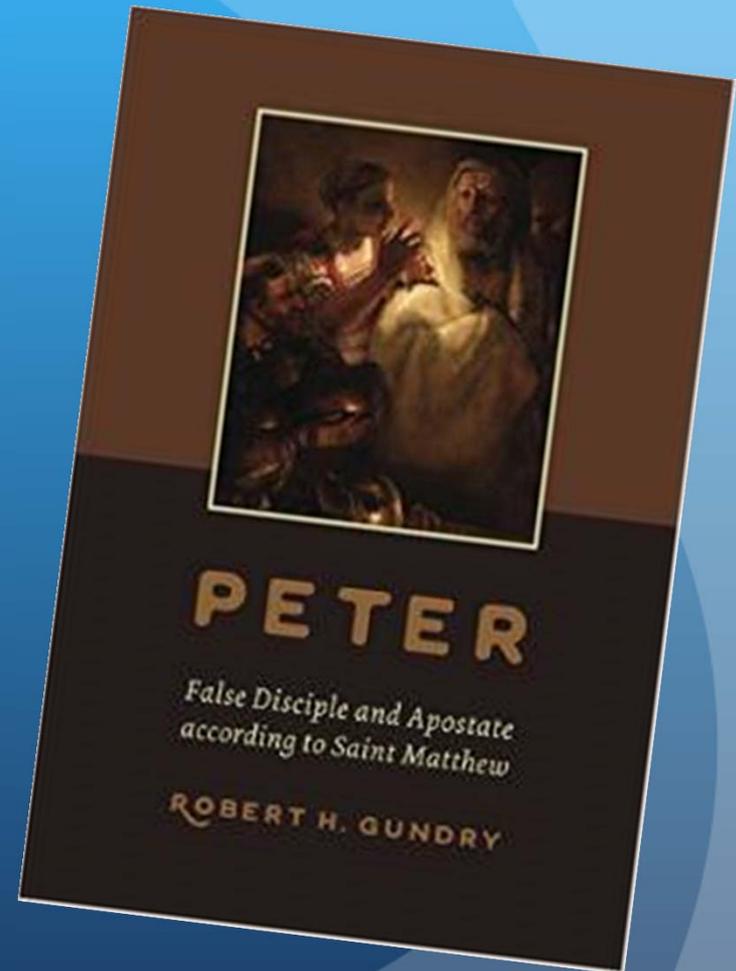
# October 6, 2014

Gundry's Lecture:  
"Peter: False Apostle & Apostate  
According to Matthew."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIoN9EuOGXE&feature=youtu.be>

Response:

<http://defendinginerrancy.com/robert-gundry-declares-peter-apostate/>



# His book is now out!

Gundry now asserts that Matthew viewed Peter as an apostate and false disciple (previewed in his Matthew commentary p. 548-49; 589-90).

Based in selective “cherry-picking” of verses through bibliology.

Question: Gundry believes that Mark based his Gospel on Peter’s preaching, giving validity to Papias that Mark based his Gospel on Peter’s preaching (*HE* 3.39.15) (*Matthew*, 621). He also believes the 2/4 Document Hypothesis (Mark/Q) and that Mark was behind Matthew as a source (*Matthew*, 621).

\*\*\*\*KEY: Why would Matthew use an apostate (Peter behind Mark) as his source if he truly believed Peter was an apostate?

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# MICHAEL BIRD

Lecturer in Theology at Ridley Melbourne College  
of Mission and Ministry



# Michael Bird-ETS 2013

*"The whole discussion was going well, very gentlemanly, until some idiot asked, 'Since evangelicals are more comfortable with biblical criticism these days, why don't we reinstate Bob Gundry? Bob Gundry was dismissed 30 years ago for his views about midrash and Matthew.'"*

*(NB: the idiot who suggested it was me).*

*Mohler responded with an emphatic "no," because a commitment to inerrancy requires "a commitment to certain methodologies." To which I responded, "Which methodologies and who decides?" My complaint has always been that many inerrantists preach the inerrancy of the text but practice the inerrancy of their interpretation. In other words, inerrancy is not just about scripture, but about setting up fence posts against certain interpretations of scripture."*

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/euangelion/2013/11/reflections-on-ets-and-the-conference-theme-of-inerrancy/#ixzz3IEK0hNk8> [underlining added]

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# “Egregious”

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/egregious>

Lit. “standing out from the flock”

## adjective

- 1—Outstandingly bad; shocking.
- 2—archaic Remarkably good.

## Origin

Mid 16th century (in egregious): from Latin egregius illustrious, literally standing out from the flock, from ex- out + grex, greg- flock. Sense 1 (late 16th century) probably arose as an ironic use.

## Pronunciation:

egregious

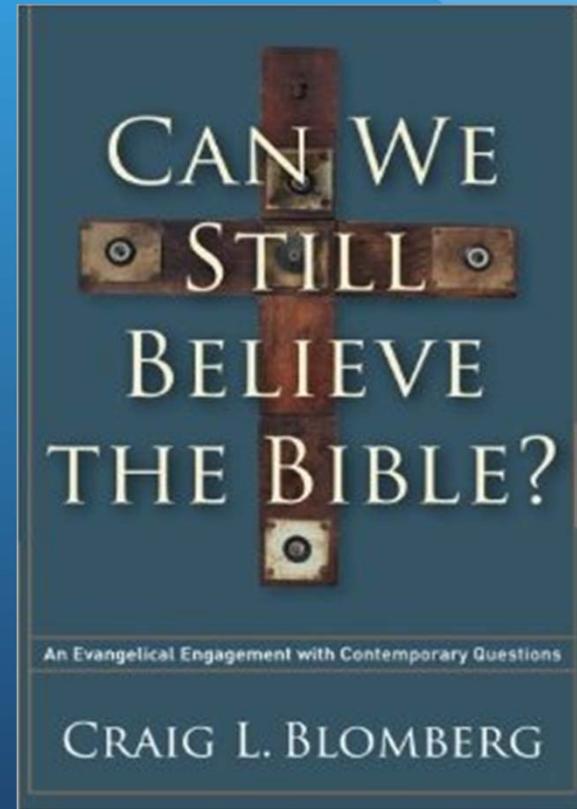
/ɪˈɡriːdʒəs/

# Craig Blomberg

Distinguished professor of  
New Testament,  
Denver Seminary



## ***Can We Still Believe the Bible?***



## Robert Yarborough, President, ETS in 2013 presidential address says of Blomberg's book

*"Excellent recent books demonstrate the cogency and vitality of a reverent and indeed an inerrantist stance. Two such books were made available to me in pre-publication form for this address.*

*The first is by Craig Blomberg, Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions. Blomberg takes up six issues that he finds foundational to an affirmation of the Bible's comprehensive credibility like that affirmed by this society. In each of these categories, Blomberg cites the literature of those who reject a high view of the Bible's veracity or authenticity. As he points out, those critical of the Bible's truth often do not return the favor, stonewalling evangelical arguments and publications as if that class of scholarship did not even exist. Blomberg calls attention to the best studies he can find that reject his viewpoint. He then argues for the position from his inerrantist standpoint. He notes, 'Not a single supposed contradiction' in Scripture 'has gone without someone proposing a reasonably plausible resolution.' He also notes the irony that some are abandoning inerrancy today when 'inerrantists have the ability to define and nuance their understanding of the doctrine better than ever before.' " [underlining added]*

# Yarborough continues...

*"This book is refreshing and important not only because of its breadth of coverage of issues, viewpoints, and literature. It is evenhanded in that both enemies of inerrancy and wrong-headed friends are called on the carpet. Blomberg revisits incidents like Robert Gundry's dismissal from this society and the kerfuffle over a decade ago surrounding the TNIV and inclusive language. He does not mince words in criticizing those he sees as overzealous for the inerrancy cause. Nor is he bashful in calling out former inerrantists who, Blomberg finds, often make their polemical arguments against what they used to believe with less than compelling warrant. I predict that everyone who reads the book will disagree strongly with the author about something. At the same time, the positive arguments for inerrancy are even more substantial. It is clear that Blomberg is not content with poking holes in non-inerrantist arguments. He writes, "I do not think one has to settle for anything short of full-fledged inerrantist Christianity so long as we ensure that we employ all parts of a detailed exposition of inerrancy, such as that found in the Chicago Statement." Or again: "These Scriptures are trustworthy. We can still believe the Bible. We should still believe the Bible and act accordingly, by following Jesus in discipleship." I am skimming some of his concluding statements, but the real meat of the book is inductive demonstration of inerrancy's plausibility based on primary evidence and scholarship surrounding that evidence. If only a book of this substance had been available when I was a college or grad school student!"*

[underlining added]

# Can We Still Believe the Bible?

Although he states he does not hold to some of these personally, Blomberg asserts, for example, the following theological positions can be compatible with the doctrine of inerrancy (this is a mere sampling):

- 1) Genesis 1-3 as non-literal
- 2) Adam and Eve as symbols for every man and woman (p. 152)
- 3) Evolutionary and progressive creation (pp. 151-153)
- 4) A non-historical Jonah (p. 160)
- 5) The possibility of three Isaiahs (p. 162)
- 6) Daniel as Apocalyptic genre rather than prophetic (p. 163-164)

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# Can We Still Believe the Bible?

- 6) allowance of possibility of midrash interpretation of the Gospels as advocated by Robert Gundry as not impacting inerrancy (pp. 165-168)—“To this day, thirty years later, not a single critic of Gundry who believed his view was inherently contradictory has offered what Carson defines above as ‘intelligent response’” (p. 167)
- 7) pseudepigraphy as fully in line with inerrancy in NT epistles under the guide of a “literary device” or “acceptable form of pseudonymity” (168-72). He argues that we don’t know the opinions of the first century church well-enough on pseudepigraphy to rule it out: “[B]arring some future discovery related to first-century opinions, we cannot pontificate on what kinds of claims for authorship would or would not have been considered acceptable in Christian communities, and especially in Jewish-Christian circles when the New Testament Epistles were written” (p. 172)

# Blomberg on Licona

In 2012 Blomberg came out in defense of Licona:

*"I don't find the latter option at all implausible. That's not to say that I'm confident it's the correct one, just that no one should excoriate a scholar who suggests it. Authorial intent is tied closely to literary form."*

Roundtable Discussion, 2012, Southeastern Theological Review 3/1 (Summer 2012) 71-98 (p. 76-77)

# Blomberg on Licona

In 2012, Blomberg called upon Mohler and Geisler to apologize for their disagreement with Licona:

*"Drs. Geisler and Mohler need to apologize in the same public forums in which they censured Dr. Licona, for having been inappropriately harsh and unnecessarily simplistic in their analyses. Second, all the Christian leaders who worked behind the scenes to get Dr. Licona removed from various positions, including already extended speaking invitations, likewise need to publicly seek Dr. Licona's forgiveness. Then, if he wishes to remain within the SBC, a courageous SBC institution of at least comparable prestige to those that let him go needs to hire him."*

("Roundtable," p. 81)

## In 2014, Blomberg says he disagrees with Licona's position

*"I have yet to be persuaded by Licona's initial views of Matthew 27:51-53, but would love to see additional comparative research undertaken" (Can We Still Believe the Bible, p. 177).*

***Blomberg says he supports ICBI,  
and that Licona's position does not violate ICBI.***



*"It [Licona's position] most certainly does not violate the doctrine of inerrancy, at least not as conceived by the widely used Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. Article XIII of that document explicitly declares, 'We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose.'" (Roundtable Discussion" [Summer 2012, p. 81])*

However, ICBI goes on to clarify  
in Article XVIII:

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

# 1984 Robert Gundry

Blomberg came out in defense of Robert Gundry implying that Gundry was dealt with *ad hominem* during the ETS debate on Gundry's position:

*"One author [Gundry] is dealt with ad hominem"* (JETS 27/4 (December 1984), "Slippery Slope," 1984).

## Blomberg writes in 2014

*"To this day, thirty years later, not a single critic of Gundry who believed his view was inherently contradicting inerrancy has offered what Carson defines . . . as 'intelligence response' - wrestling in detail with the exegetical and historical methods and their applications that Gundry utilized."*  
(*Can We Still Believe the Bible*, p. 167).

## Blomberg in 2014 disagrees with Gundry's position

*"I reject Gundry's approach to Matthew as highly unlikely."*  
(*Can We Still Believe the Bible*, p. 177).

# Can We Still Believe the Bible?

According to Blomberg, one can hold any of the following views without denying the inerrancy of Holy Scripture:

*Coin in fish's mouth-* "Yet even the most superficial application of form criticism reveals that this is not a miracle story, because it is not even a story."  
(*"NT Miracles and Higher Criticism"* in JETS 27/4 [December 1984] 433)

*"Further problems increase the likelihood of Jesus' command being metaphorical."*  
(*Ibid.*, 433)

# Craig Blomberg

Craig Blomberg asserts in reference to the story of the coin in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17:24-27, *"It is often not noticed that the so-called miracle of the fish with the coin in its mouth (Matt 17:27) is not even a narrative; it is merely a command from Jesus to go to the lake and catch such a fish. We don't even know if Peter obeyed the command. Here is a good reminder to pay careful attention to the literary form."*



Craig Blomberg, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New Testament Criticism," *Do Historical Matters Matter?*, 354 fn. 32

# Blomberg: "It's the GENRE!"

"Belief in inerrancy, at least as defined by the Chicago Statement, does not preclude any interpretive options presented here [about Genesis 1 and Creation]. What is inconsistent with scriptural inerrancy is the claim that there is no God behind creation at all." (CWSB, 151)

On this page, Blomberg mentions "day-age theory," "progressive creation," "billions of years," "gap theory" [Gen. 1:1-2]; Genesis 1 as a "literary framework, given the poetic form that dominates the Hebrew," "John Walton... shifting the focus from original creation altogether."

# Craig Blomberg

*"I believe in an old earth and theistic evolution."*

From Guest Post Written by Dr. Craig Blomberg on "Why I Am Still a Christian." By John W. Loftus at 12/15/2008 in:

<http://debunkingchristianity.blogspot.com/2008/12/guest-post-written-by-dr-craig-blomberg.html>

# Craig Blomberg— “at the moment”

*“I... Opt for a combination of progressive creation and a literary-framework approach to Genesis one . . . I lean in the direction of Kidner’s approach to Genesis 2-3, but am open to other proposals.”  
(CWSBB, 177)*

He reveals that “I will happily disclose where I come down at the moment” in discussing these issues in Chapter 5.  
(CWSBB, 177)

*“Nothing in principle should prevent the person who upholds inerrancy from adopting a view that sees Adam (“man” or Adam) and hawwa (“life” or Eve) as symbols for every man and woman, created in the image of God, but sinful by virtue of their own rebellious choices in succumbing to Satan’s lures.”  
(CWSBB, 152) [underlining added]*

# Craig Blomberg

*"None of this theology [about Job's view on suffering] requires Job to have ever existed any more than the teaching of the parable of the Good Samaritan requires the Samaritan to have been a real person." (CWSBB, 156)*

He added, *"Almost nothing is at stake if Job never existed, whereas everything is at stake if Jesus never lived."*

(CWSBB, 223)—REPLY—MAYBE GENRE ABOUT JESUS IN GOSPELS IS NON-LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE—AFTER ALL, GENRE IS KEY QUESTION—  
"FAIRYTALE" THAT CONVEYS SPIRITUAL TRUTH LIKE GENESIS 1-3?



*"Surely, however, someone might argue, Jonah must be completely historical, because Jesus himself likens his death and resurrection to Jonah's experience with the great fish (Matt. 12:40; Luke 11:30). Actually, this does not follow at all." (CWSBB, 157)*

# Craig Blomberg

On Isaiah's unity...

*"Ultimately, what one decides about its [the Book of Isaiah's] composition or formation need not have anything to do with biblical inerrancy at all" (CWSBB, 162-3).*

However, Blomberg does say *"I still find the arguments for the unity of Isaiah under a single primary author, even if lightly redacted later, more persuasive (or at least less problematic) than most do" (CWSBB, 177).*

# Craig Blomberg

On the book of Daniel:

*"Perhaps two works [chs. 1-6 and chs. 7-12] associated with the prophet Daniel and his successor, written at two different times, were combined."*

(CWSBB, 164)

But Blomberg says, *"My inherent conservatism inclines me in the direction of taking it as a genuine predictive prophecy, but I listen respectfully to those who argue for other interpretations and continue to mull them over."*

(CWSBB, 177)

## KEY in this for Blomberg is GENRE, not historicity!

*"My conclusions on each topic are not the point of this chapter" [i.e. Chapter 5-CWSBB].*

 "The point is that all of these examples raise the issue of genre of a certain book, section, or passage of Scripture. *The truth claims of the Bible, appropriately cherished by inerrantists, can never be determined apart from our best assessment of the literary forms and genres involved."* (CWSBB, 177). [underlining added]

# Craig Blomberg

“The Chicago Statement could have stressed this more, but is reasonably highlighted.” [CWSBB, 178]

*“Institutions or organizations that claim to abide by it must allow their inerrantist scholars the freedom to explore the various literary options without fear of reprisal.”*

(CWSBB, 178)

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# My response . . .

Please note: Article XVIII of ICBI—“we deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativising, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teachings, or rejecting its claims to authorship.”

# A Question of Literary Genre

On the one hand, Blomberg says:

- *"I will be happy to disclose where I come down at the moment."*

So when CWSBB was written **in 2014**...

He believes "progressive creationism" and "a literary framework to Genesis" (i.e., not six literal days).

- *"I lean in the direction of Derek Kidner's approach to Genesis but open to other."*
- *"I suspect that biblical scholars who, like me, have found their faith fortified by the evidence the longer they have studied it may have an increasing obligation in our pluralistic world to give an account of the hope that is in them." (CWSBB, 12)*
- *"Ironically, when individuals draw the boundaries of inerrancy more narrowly than this, it is they who have unwittingly denied inerrancy, at least as defined by the Chicago Statement!" (CWSBB, 178).*

I'm confused!



# WHAT IF THE BIBLE IS MOSTLY OR ALL NON-LITERAL GENRE?

- (1) THE INTERPRETER CAN MAKE THE BIBLE SAY WHATEVER HE/SHE WANTS IT TO SAY OR MEAN
- (2) THEN THE BIBLE HAS NO REAL MEANING
- (3) NO OBJECTIVE CONTROL OVER MEANING

# My response . . . TO THIS GENRE OVERRIDE

Please note: Article XVIII of ICBI—“we deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativising, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teachings, or rejecting its claims to authorship.”

# Questions:

- If the issue is not inerrancy but genre or style, can a non-literal genre or style be imposed on a passage at any time, i.e., a priori?
- GRAMMATICO HISTORICAL APPROACH: CONTEXT DETERMINES GENRE—NOT *A PRIORI* REASONING!
- If the plain sense is removed, can there be any control on the passage's meaning?
- If the sense is non-literal, then can any meaning now be imposed on the biblical text?

# Questions:

- If any non-literal understanding can be imposed, can the Bible now mean whatever the interpreter wants it to mean, rather than what it does mean?
- If it means almost anything through imposing a non-literal genre/style, then can the Bible really mean anything?
- Is almost any non-literal sense now inerrant?

# What Is Happening?

- Imposition of an ARBITRARY genre - literary style on the text prior to exegesis.
- Imposition of Greco-Roman Bioi - Licona.
- Imposition of Midrash - Gundry.
- Imposition of speech-act theory - Walton & Sandy.
- Imposition of scientific pre-conclusions (evolution) on the text of Scripture - Blomberg.

I'm still confused!



# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# BLOMBERG: blame inerrantists!

Are there certain mistaken hermeneutical presuppositions made by conservative evangelicals that play into the hands of liberal critics?

<http://theologica.blogspot.com/2008/03/interview-with-craig-blomberg.html>

*Absolutely. And one of them follows directly from the last part of my answer to your last question. The approach, famously supported back in 1976 by Harold Lindsell in his *Battle for the Bible* (Zondervan), that it is an all-or-nothing approach to Scripture that we must hold, is both profoundly mistaken and deeply dangerous. No historian worth his or her salt functions that way. I personally believe that if inerrancy means “without error according to what most people in a given culture would have called an error,” then the biblical books are inerrant in view of the standards of the cultures in which they were written. But, despite inerrancy being the touchstone of the largely American organization called the Evangelical Theological Society, there are countless evangelicals in the States, and especially in other parts of the world, who hold that the Scriptures are inspired and authoritative, even if not inerrant, and they are not sliding down any slippery slope of any kind. I can’t help but wonder if inerrantist evangelicals making inerrancy the watershed for so much has not, unintentionally, contributed to pilgrimages like Ehrman’s. Once someone finds one apparent mistake or contradiction that they cannot resolve, then they believe the Lindells of the world and figure they have to chuck it all. What a tragedy!*

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# “Egregious”

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/egregious>

Lit. “standing out from the flock”

## adjective

- 1—Outstandingly bad; shocking.
- 2—archaic Remarkably good.

## Origin

Mid 16th century (in egregious): from Latin egregius illustrious, literally standing out from the flock, from ex- out + grex, greg- flock. Sense 1 (late 16th century) probably arose as an ironic use.

## Pronunciation:

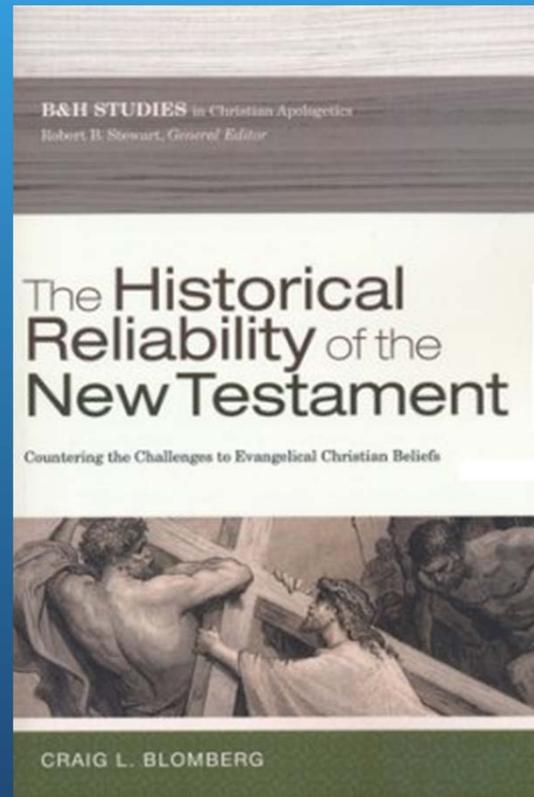
**egregious**

/ɪˈɡriːdʒəs/

## April 2, 2015—Gary Gilley Review of *CWSBB*

- “Inerrancy is the subject of the next two chapters. He opens with an attack on those he deems on the far right of the evangelical community, such as Norman Geisler, Robert Thomas and David Farnell (p. 120, cf. 142-143, 166-168). These men are concerned about the drift they see today in the area of inerrancy as defined by the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (p. 123), a drift that Blomberg denies. Good material is found in these pages but Blomberg works hard to convince the reader that believing in inerrancy does not mean accepting a literal Adam and Eve, a young earth (pp. 150-155), Job or Jonah as historical characters (pp. 155-163), the single authorship of Isaiah (pp. 160-164), nor the traditional view of the authorship of the New Testament books (pp. 169-171). He personally accepts some of these things, such as theistic evolution, and rejects others (p. 177), but sees none of these issues as germane to inerrancy (p. 164).
- Blomberg turns to miracles in the last chapter as a support for the trustworthiness of Scripture. He defends modern reports of the miraculous including trips to heaven and resurrections (pp. 180-186), believes that Joel 2:28-32 was fulfilled at Pentecost (p. 203), is enthusiastic concerning Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement (p. 209), and delivers a scathing attack on cessationism (pp. 210-211). In addition he seems to believe that there are 2 billion true Christians on the planet and 200 million of them have participated in some way with a miracle (p. 218). And he affirms that some Mormons are saved (p. 272). This is all very disturbing.
- Returning to inerrancy in the conclusion, Blomberg believes only a tiny minority of Christians have ever accepted it (p. 221-222) and it is thus not particularly important in the big picture of the Christian faith. As a matter of fact the one affirmation in the Chicago Statement that he rejects is a warning concerning the grave consequences of rejecting inerrancy (p. 273). Clearly Blomberg sees inerrancy as a good but dispensable doctrine, which is truly unfortunate in a book defending the trustworthiness of Scripture.”

# New book—just out . . .



UPDATE: “Most Agregious of all” “errors and misrepresentations” of his published works by Geisler, Farnell, Roach, and company, p. XXVII.

- New book, Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* (BH, 2016)

### Update on the Gospels . . .

Blomberg says, “A large volume of evidence corroborates the narrative backdrops in the Synoptic Gospels and supports the probability of the teachings and actions of Christ within that context. The criteria of dissimilarity and embarrassment enable us to envision a substantial portion of Jesus’s words and deeds being authentic.” [underline added] (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p13)

### MY RESPONSE:

Are there any that are not authentic? Does probability imply also a possibility of inauthenticity?

### Update on the coin in the fish’s mouth . . .

Blomberg says regarding “the so-called miracle of the coin in the fish’s mouth. When one examines the literary form, one discovers this is not a narrative with declarations about what ‘happened,’ but merely a series of commands to the apostle Peter. Did he obey Jesus and go to the Sea of Galilee? Matthew never tells us . . . . I never said I don’t believe Peter could have gone to the lake and caught such a fish, and . . . There is no ‘story’ to deny. The verse is not narrative in form—i.e., a series of past-tense, indicative mood statements declaring certain things to have happened. It is a series of commands. We simply do not know whether Peter obeyed them.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 694 fn. 81). Underlining added.

# *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*

## On the Synoptics

One can “have confidence that they preserved the true gist of what Jesus said and did” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 719).

My RESPONSE: Do we have the words Jesus spoke (“heaven and earth will pass away but ~~my words~~ MY GIST will not”--) the gist?

On John, the Gospel is “most probably historically accurate by a variety of standard criteria of authenticity.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, 720).  
Underlining added

My RESPONSE: Does “most probably historically accurate” imply also a possibility of inauthenticity? Criteria of authenticity can be used also by the other side to show that it is NOT accurate.

# *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*

## On Pseudepigraphy:

- Certain conservative scholars [are] closing the door on pseudonymity *a priori*. Because they personally cannot envision a scenario in which the practice could be morally acceptable, they do not even investigate the data. They simply announce that the theory is unacceptable, and they build into their doctrinal statements affirmations (or interpretations of affirmations) that anyone believing or teaching that Paul did not write all thirteen books attributed to him in the New Testament cannot be a part of their institution or organization. Yet they seem oblivious to the fact that it is such *a priori* dismissal that often pushes people into positions like Ehrman's! If there is no middle ground for acceptable pseudonymity and certain people are not convinced by arguments for traditional claims of authorship, they are left with nowhere to turn except to charge the New Testament writers with duplicity." (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 138) [underlining added]
- **My Response:** Please note: Article XVIII of ICBI—"we deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativising, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teachings, or rejecting its claims to authorship." I guess the whole ICBI committee is guilty here from Blomberg's position!
- Blomberg questions, "But does the appearance of an individual's name in the opening verse of a letter automatically make a 'claim to authorship' and if so, what kind of authorship?" (Blomberg, *HRNT*, 351).

# *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*

“Missing in most of these conversations are a number of crucial topics. We do not have evidence that early Christianity accepted pseudonymity as a legitimate device in the testimony that exists. Unfortunately, we have no evidence at all for Christian perspectives on the topic earlier than the late second century.”  
(Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 351)

“The question that unfortunately cannot be answered unless new evidence is discovered is how first-century Christians would have envisioned these practices [i.e., pseudonymity]. Did many of them, given their Jewish roots, see it as at least sometimes acceptable and involving no intention to deceive, only to have their Gentile counterparts 150 years later proffer a different opinion? Or was the reason later Christians unanimously rejected the practice because of some development at the outset of the Christian movement that led believers to differentiate themselves from previous Jewish convictions on the topic? Both hypotheses are realistic enough, but neither can be demonstrated given the current limitations in what we know about the ancient Mediterranean world.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, 357). [underlining added]

# *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*

“It is tragic, therefore, when pseudepigraphy becomes a ‘hill,’ on which some scholars have ‘to die.’ It is heartbreaking when an excellent professor is fired from an institution or a good pastor ousted from a church merely for defending pseudonymity somewhere in the canon. It is appalling that some in the church or academy feel they have to draw their confessional lines so tightly that such a practice is categorically excluded. Whether a certain New Testament book was written by the person whose name appears in what we now consider to be the first verse of its first chapter is a matter ultimately for students of historical and literary criticism to determine.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 357). [underlining added]

He concludes for Paul’s epistles, “Gentile Christian attitudes to pseudepigraphy by the mid- to late second century increasingly crystallized around the end of the spectrum of opinion that treated them as deceptive. Pre-Christian Judaism apparently accepted a broad cross-section of pseudepigraphical genres as a legitimate literary device, although we do not know if they believed any of the Hebrew canon of Scripture was pseudepigraphical. When did these attitudes change? What were Jewish and Gentile Christian reactions to pseudonymity in the mid-first century? The only honest answer is that we simply don’t know.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, p. 408) [underlining added]

## *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*

- “Are their ways, therefore, to envisage pseudonymity as an acceptable practice for the early Christian community? [I. H] Marshall has surely demonstrated that the answer to that question is yes, even if one chooses to use a different term for the practice. Is this then the best way to account for any or all of the disputed Pauline letters? Not necessarily.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, 408).

P.N. Harrison (1921)

P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1921), 12

Harrison [prior to Marshall] contended similarly that the pseudepigraphical writer . . .

“was not conscious of misrepresenting the Apostles in any way; he was not consciously deceiving anybody. It seems far more probable that those to whom, in the first instance, he showed the result of his efforts, must have been perfectly well aware of what he had done. It is not to be supposed that he made any attempt to impose upon his friends, by inscribing his epistles on old and worn papyri or in old-fashioned writing! They went out for what they really were, and the warm appreciation with which the best minds in the Church received them, would not be tinged with any misunderstanding as to the way in which they had been written.” (p. 12)

# *Historical Reliability of NT (2016)*



Good news! It is my understanding of his discussion in *HRNT* that he believes all 13 of Paul's epistles and the non-Pauline that bear his name were written by the authors whose names were associated with it.

On Pauline letters and pseudonymity, “On the one hand, there is enough varied evidence from ancient Jewish and Christian circles, and enough unknowns about first-century attitudes, that we cannot dismiss all forms of pseudonymity as necessarily deceptive. Some may well have been an accepted literary device, even among first-century Christians, but it is hard to tell.” (Blomberg, *HRNT*, 721) [underlining added]

However, he does assert that “Some posthumous composition was most likely needed to put 2 Peter into the form in which we now have it, but it still can be viewed as Petrine in origin.” (Blomberg, 508-09, *HRNT*, 509).

## Finally, in *Blomberg's Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (2007)

"[T]he Gospels may be accepted as trustworthy accounts of what Jesus said and did. One cannot hope to prove the accuracy of every detail on purely historical grounds alone; there is simply not enough data available for that. But we may certainly speak of 'general reliability.' Moreover, as one's investigation proceeds, the evidence becomes sufficient to declare that what can be checked is accurate, so that it is entirely proper to believe that which cannot be checked is probably accurate as well. Other conclusions, widespread though they are, seem not to stem from even-handed historical analysis but from religious or philosophical prejudice." (note: underlining added)

Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 2007) 320.

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



## RESPONSE TO EARLY CHURCH ACCEPTANCE OF ANY FORM OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHY

“The Patristic Church was unanimous in rejecting for their canonical Scriptures letters they believed to be falsely attributed to an apostle of Jesus Christ”—E. Earl Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents*, p. 324.

Serapion (ca. 190) of Antioch:

“For we, brothers, receive both Peter and the other apostles as Christ. But pseudepigrapha in their name we reject, as men of experience, knowing that we did not receive such from the tradition”—“Gospel of Peter”  
rejected by Serapion!

## RESPONSE TO ACCEPTANCE OF ANY FORM OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHY

Ellis, "In the patristic church apostolic pseudepigrapha when discovered were excluded from the church's canon. This applied whether or not the pseudepigrapha were orthodox or heretical" (p. 324)

Ellis, "The hypothesis of innocent apostolic pseudepigrapha . . . . Is a modern invention that has no evident basis in attitude or writings of the apostolic and patristic church" (p. 324)

\*\*\*Benign Pseudepigraphy idea traced to F. C. Baur and his Fichte/Hegelian dating of NT Books!!!!

# RESPONSE TO ACCEPTANCE OF ANY FORM OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHY

A few (among many) indications in the NT period that pseudepigraphy would be rejected:

- (1) Paul's regular opening of letters with "apostle of Jesus Christ"—indicating unique authority to write!
- (2) Paul's concern that his apostleship was on par with others (1 Cor. 9:1-3)
- (3) By branding those who questioned his apostleship as "false apostles" (2 Cor. 11:13)
- (4) Paul told church to reject any letters not from him—2 Thess. 2:2—"letter as if from us, to the effect that <sup>d</sup>the day of the Lord <sup>e</sup>has come. <sup>3</sup> <sup>a</sup>Let no one in any way deceive you"

## RESPONSE TO ACCEPTANCE OF ANY FORM OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHY

David Laird Dungan, *Constantine's Bible, Chapter 5—"Eusebius' Defense of Catholic Scripture"* (pp. 54-93)

*Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History 3:25-1-7 "is the most detailed list of approved and non-approved writings of the New Testament to appear in the church up to that time" (p. 69)*

*His discussion demonstrates an unbroken chain of acceptance and custody from the earliest bishops to his day of the NT Canonical books "with no single dissenting vote" "all the way back to the beginning" of "authentic" "apostolic" writings—"those closest to Jesus Christ" "directly from the hands of the apostles in the first place and had passed them down from bishop to bishop" "unanimously acknowledged by all orthodox bishops in apostolic succession throughout the empire, all the way back to the beginning" -['whole of the church of God under heaven' -Ecclesiastical History 3.24.2]*

## RESPONSE TO ACCEPTANCE OF ANY FORM OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHY

- “Claims to inspiration, no matter how extravagant, were of not avail unless what was inspired coincided with received orthodoxy”—i.e., unanimous testimony of all orthodoxy from beginning of church (p. 90).
- EUSEBIUS LIST is “one that is as hard as granite” (p. 92)
  - CONCLUSION:--Pseudepigraphy/“BENIGN” pseudepigraphy idea is a MODERN INVENTION with NO evidence in earliest church history

# ICBI 1978 Inerrancy...

## Article IX:

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the biblical authors were moved to speak and write. We deny that the finitude or falseness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

# ICBI 1978 Inerrancy...

## Article XII: Inerrancy of the whole

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit.

We deny that biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science.

We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

# ICBI 1978 Inerrancy...

## Article XVIII:

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

# ICBI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XIII:

We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

# IBCI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XV:

We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

We deny the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

# ICBI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XXII:

We affirm that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.

We deny that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

# Note on J. I. Packer

In 1980, Packer said, "But Lindsell almost (not quite) implies that you don't believe in inerrancy unless you interpret all Scriptures as he does, and that seems to me an expository weakness."

"But now it really is important that we inerrantists move on to crystallize an a posteriori hermeneutic which does full justice to the character and content of the infallible written word *as communication*, life-embracing and divinely authoritative. Other we could win "the battle for the Bible" and still lose the greater battle for the knowledge of Christ and of God in our churches, and in men's hearts."

*Beyond Battle for the Bible* (1980, p.)

PLEASE NOTE: Some evangelicals now use this as an excuse for interpreting the Bible as non-historical Genre in many places, e.g. Gen 1-11, especially 1-3 as "poetic history"

# Note on J. I. Packer

- For instance, Justin Taylor, VP of Crossway, appears to imply that Packer allowed for an *a priori* imposing of non-historical genre categories on the text of Scripture  
(<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2014/08/07/j-i-packers-critique-of-harold-lindsell-on-inerrancy-and-interpretation/>)

However, this is a misunderstanding of Packer.

- (1) This comment of formulating a hermeneutic by Packer was stated in 1980.
- (2) Packer participated in and affirmed ICBI Hermeneutics of 1982 that denied the legitimacy of imposing *a priori* categories on the text that would negate something presented as historical

# IBCI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XV:

We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

We deny the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

# Note on J. I. Packer

“Packer and other classic evangelicals rightly understand there is a separation (or the better term would be distinction) between inerrancy and hermeneutics, however, not a *total* separation (more on this below). In other words, as classic evangelical and signer of the CSBI statement, Henry Blocher said to *Baptist Press* November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, “It is thus possible to talk of Scripture’s supreme authority, perfect trustworthiness, infallibility and inerrancy and to empty such talk of the full and exact meaning it should retain by the way one handles the text.” (Roach and Geisler, “Misinterpreting J. I. Packer,” August 13, 2014, [defendinginerrancy.com](http://defendinginerrancy.com))

# Note on J. I. Packer

Packer affirmed emphatically,

Article XIII:

“We deny that generic categories **which negate historicity** may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual” (emphasis added).

In fact, Packer considered the Council on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982) an attempt to “crystallize an *a posteriori* hermeneutic”!

## Note on J. I. Packer . . .

“By way of historical purview, I (Norman Geisler) being one of the ICBI framers with Packer, can testify to the fact that we consciously had Robert Gundry in mind when we penned these words [i.e., ICBI 1982 Hermeneutics]. For Gundry had just denied that sections of the Gospel of Matthew (like the story of the Wise Men—Mt. 2) were historical. Eventually, Gundry was asked to resign from the Evangelical Theological Society in 1983, by an overwhelming majority of the Society for these declarations. Note again, the Summit II Conference took place in 1982, predating Gundry’s actual resignation in 1983. The point being, the Summit II Conference was to prevent Gundry like approaches, not a reaction to the ETS decision on Gundry like approaches.” (Roach and Geisler, *Misunderstanding J. I. Packer*, [defendinginerrancy.com//August 13, 2015](http://defendinginerrancy.com//August 13, 2015))

# Note on J. I. Packer

- Packer has made it very clear, contrary to the claims of Neo-Evangelical theologians and their view of inerrancy, that he does not approve of any hermeneutic which denies the historicity of the biblical narrative (the gospels in particular). For example, when he was asked whether Mike Licona's hermeneutic, which denies the historicity of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27 by declaring them as legend and factually inaccurate, was in accordance with the classic doctrine of inerrancy, Packer wrote:
- "As a framer of the ICBI statement on biblical inerrancy who once studied Greco-Roman literature at advanced level, I judge Mike Licona's view that, because the Gospels are semi-biographical, details of their narratives may be regarded as legendary and factually erroneous, to be both academically and theologically unsound (Letter, May 8, 2014)."

# Note on Packer . . . January 12, 2017

January 12, 2017— From Norman L. Geisler . . . (defendinginerrancy.com)

- J.I. Packer Stands Firm on Inerrancy
- January 12, 2017
- To Whom It May Concern:

"I called J. I. Packer at about 1:50 pm. EST today (Thursday, January 12, 2017). We had about a 15-minute talk on ICBI, inerrancy, and Mike Licona. I told him that rumors had come to me from Licona supporters that Packer may have changed or modified his view on inerrancy. He denied flatly that he had changed his view on the topic. As for my specific question as to whether or not he still supported the ICBI statement on inerrancy, he said that rumors to the contrary were "categorically and absolutely false." He gave the same answer to my second question as to whether he had changed his view about Mike Licona's view expressed in Packer's letter (of 5/8/2014) which declared that Licona's position was contrary to the ICBI statement on inerrancy. The statement reads:

# Note on Packer . . . January 12, 2017

January 12, 2017 . . .

'As a framer of the ICBI statement on biblical inerrancy and once studied Greco-Roman literature at advanced level, I judge Mike Licona's view that, because the Gospels are semi-biographical, details of their narratives may be regarded as legendary and factually erroneous, to be both academically and theologically unsound.'

Packer insisted that he strongly stands by both his affirmation of the ICBI statements on inerrancy and that Licona's views were categorically contrary to it. He described Mike's view as "muddled" and illogical, but wished to keep the door open to discuss the issue with him."

Sincerely serving,

Norman L. Geisler

<http://defendinginerrancy.com/j-i-packer-stands-firm-on-inerrancy/>

# Note on J. I. Packer on February 22, 2017 (one month later)

Unfortunately, Packer is inconsistent with his view on dehistoricizing the Gospels . . .

From Licona's Facebook . . .

"I received a pleasant surprise in yesterday's mail: a personal letter from J I Packer with the following endorsement for my new book on Gospel differences:

'Professor Licona's new book is a monograph exploring some compositional techniques which the synoptic evangelists appear to have used. Clarificatory and thorough, it is an accomplished piece of work, which it is a pleasure to commend.'

Packer concluded his letter saying, 'Publication by OUP is something of a triumph; let me congratulate you on that too.'

This past June, Greg Monette, Dan Wallace, and I had the privilege of speaking at the same conference with Packer and spending time with him. In July, I returned to Vancouver to speak at a different conference with Paul Copan. Paul and I got to spend some personal time with Packer once again. He's 90 now, still has a sharp mind, and is refreshingly humble. What an honor it has been to meet this giant in the faith and get to know him."

[https://www.facebook.com/michael.r.licona/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/michael.r.licona/?ref=page_internal)

# Note on John Sproul:

- R. C. Sproul declared consistently, however:
- “As the former and only President of ICBI during its tenure and as the original framer of the Affirmations and Denials of the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, I can say categorically that Mr. Licona’s views are not even remotely compatible with the unified Statement of ICBI” (Letter, May 22, 2012).

## QUESTION:

- Does the term “inerrancy” now have multiple meanings or definitions among “inerrantists”?
- Has it been redefined?
- YES!!!!

# Bock on Blomberg (ch.4)

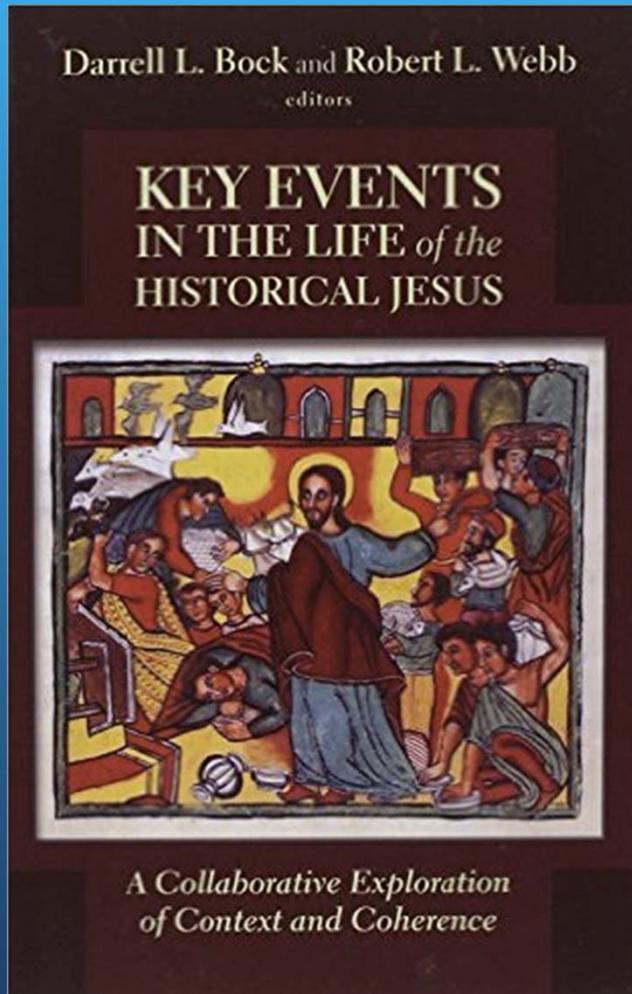
Dr. Darrell L. Bock (PhD, University of Aberdeen) wrote about chapter 4 of Blomberg's book:

*"Craig Blomberg's fourth chapter in Can We Still Believe the Bible, examines some objections to inerrancy from both the right and the left. Yes, there is a position to the right of holding to inerrancy. It is holding it in a way that is slow to recognize solutions that fit within the view by undervaluing the complexities of interpretation. People are far more familiar with those who challenge inspiration and doubt what Scripture declares on the left, but others attempt to build a fence around the Bible by being slow to see where legitimate discussion exists about how inerrancy is affirmed. To make the Bible do too much can be a problem, just as making it do too little."*

[underlining added]

[https://blogs.bible.org/bock/darrell\\_l.\\_bock/craig\\_blombergs\\_can\\_we\\_believe\\_the\\_bible-\\_chapter\\_4](https://blogs.bible.org/bock/darrell_l._bock/craig_blombergs_can_we_believe_the_bible-_chapter_4)

# Key Events - Bock and Webb



# IBR STUDY GROUP, searching for the “historical Jesus” using historical-critical ideology



# These authors assume post-modern historiography

- In essence, post-modern historiography asserts that nothing can be known for certain.
- Certainty is not possible in history.
- History is always a matter of interpretation and the interpreter's bias.

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# Robert Webb asserts:

*" Given the nature of historiography [i.e., the adoption of a form of post-modernism by these evangelicals] discussed...and the manner in which the criteria of authenticity function, one must realize that judgments of authenticity or historicity are matters of greater or lesser probability, as are the explanations and hypotheses built upon them.*

*Certainty—as one assumes in mathematics or hopes for in the sciences—is not realistic or possible in the historical enterprise...Thus the judicious historian weighs the evidence and provides judgments along a scale of 'highly probable' though 'possible' to 'unlikely.'*

*Occasionally a historian might even use terms like 'virtually certain' or 'most unlikely,' but such extreme judgments should probably be reserved for situations in which virtually all the evidence overwhelmingly points in one direction. Otherwise, readers and other historians may in turn judge the evidence as 'going beyond the evidence.' "*

*(Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus,73).*

# Remember The Jesus Seminar?

They developed a scale of colors for the various sayings of Jesus:

- **RED** - Jesus said it.
- **PINK** - Jesus probably said it.
- **GRAY** - Jesus did not say it, but might be close to his ideas.
- **BLACK** - Jesus did not say it.

RESULT: no more than 20% attributed to Jesus, or said by Him.

# Bock and Webb assert

*" Unlike the Jesus Seminar, the Jesus Group does not vote on the specific sayings or events from the life of Jesus. Rather, each event is assessed as a complete unit. It is examined to determine the evidence for the event in question, as well as the elements that make up this event.*

*Then, given these results, the examiner develops the event's significance for understanding Jesus' life and ministry. Sometimes ratings assessing the possibility or probability of an event or a detail within it are used as a way of expressing what can be demonstrated historically.*

*In other cases, alternative configurations of the sequencing of events are assessed. Judgments like these belong to the author of the article, not necessarily to the entire group, but they are made after interaction with the group."*

Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, "Introduction of the IBR Jesus Group" *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.2 (2000), 259.

# Bock says...

Bock— "footprints" of Jesus are in the Gospels.

Bock, "Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? No, We Need Context, A Response to 'The Jesus We'll Never Know,'" posted in *CT* on April 9, 2010.

[www.Christianitytoday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html](http://www.Christianitytoday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html)  
(Accessed on 5/28/2013 - no longer available).

Question: How much does one know about someone if just the "footprints" survive?

## Bock says...

He insists that historical Jesus studies push *"people to appreciate that if even the gist of the gospel story is right, then they must think through who Jesus is" and the Gospels convey "the footprints God leaves behind when we appreciate the context in which he acted."*

For evangelical Darrell Bock, Gospel study has, at best, "burden of proof," "probability," and "gist" in historical demonstration of the Gospels. Darrell Bock, "Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? No, We Need Context, A Response to 'The Jesus We'll Never Know.'" "

Posted in *Christianity Today* on April 9, 2010.

[www.ChristianityToday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html](http://www.ChristianityToday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html). (Accessed on 5/27/2013 - no longer available)

# Webb insists...

All writing of history is interpretation.

History, like the Gospels, must be examined for the surviving traces of what actually happened in the Gospels.

Criteria of authenticity must be used to see if what the Gospels say actually happened.

# Webb insists...

He continues:

*"Surviving traces (i.e., ST) are the material used by the historian. Usually this material consists of written records of past events as reported and recorded by those closely (or not so closely) involved in the events. These written accounts may be based upon oral traditions that have been collected later or an account derived from eyewitnesses of the events. It may even be written by an eyewitness or, to the other extreme, it may be written by someone who has no real knowledge of the events but has an idea what could have, or should have, happened.*

*Whatever is the case, surviving traces involve the perspectives and interests of the eyewitnesses, the perspectives and traces of those who passed on the traditions, and the perspectives and interests of the person who wrote the account... Surviving traces are hardly "raw" or "objective" data. The nature of those surviving traces is such that they require the later historian to develop a historical method... to properly handle these surviving traces. So these surviving traces are not "history" either, for they are only the "stuff" that has survived from the past—fragmentary, incomplete, and quite possibly biased, and perhaps even contradictory and incorrect."*

Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, "Introduction of the IBR Jesus Group" *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.2 (2000), 14.

# Webb insists...

For Webb, "*the term 'history' should be reserved for a later historian's narrative account (i.e., NA) of a past event (i.e., PE) that is his/her understanding of that event based upon the interpretation [italics added] of surviving traces (i.e., ST).*"

In other words, "history" is a narrative account that involves INTERPRETATION or, in other words, the potential biases of the historian, conscious or otherwise, that interplay with the surviving traces, thus history is mainly indirect knowledge rather than direct.

Webb directly applies these principles to the Gospels and historical Jesus studies with some observations: "[w]ith reference to Jesus, the surviving traces...consist of two basic types: the discrete narrative episodes in the Gospels (i.e., the individual pericopae) and other sources (e.g., Josephus), as well as the overall portraits created by these early authors...these earliest portraits are...the earliest surviving attempts" [to give ] "a coherent picture" [about Jesus]. (This term "surviving traces" seems to correspond closely to Bock's "footprints" of Jesus in the Gospels.)

Ibid., 15, 16 note 13.

Bock, "Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? No, We Need Context, A Response to 'The Jesus We'll Never Know,'" posted in *CT* on April 9, 2010.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html>.

Accessed on 5/28/2013 (no longer available).

## Bock—“This book will likely not be understood by some”



I have been back from ETS, IBR and SBL in Atlanta last November, where we discussed a book I have edited with Robert Webb on the Historical Jesus entitled *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (just out in paperback with Eerdmans). This book will likely not be understood by some. What we have done is to play by the rules of Historical Jesus study and made the case for 12 key events in Jesus' life in the process. There is a lot of discussion of historical background in the process. This book was a decade long collaborative project involving Jesus scholars in the IBR, eleven of us wrote essays on the twelve events plus an introduction and a conclusion with a chapter on method. James Charlesworth reviewed our book at IBR and gave it a solid thumbs up. In a realm where many people use historical argument to deconstruct Jesus, we have argued for the trustworthiness of these core events not by appealing to arguments of theology and inspiration but by making a case for them through the methods others often use to raise doubts about events tied to Jesus. Also taking place at SBL was a discussion on historical method in which Dr. Webb, myself and Craig Keener participated as evangelicals with responses from Amy-Jill Levine and Robert Price. That was a lively couple of hours, but a solid conversation. If you are interested in Historical Jesus discussion, this book is full of information and detail. It does weigh in at 800 pages plus.

[http://blogs.bible.org/bock/darrell\\_i\\_bock/key\\_events\\_in\\_the\\_life\\_of\\_the\\_historical\\_jesus\\_recognition\\_and\\_other\\_thoughts](http://blogs.bible.org/bock/darrell_i_bock/key_events_in_the_life_of_the_historical_jesus_recognition_and_other_thoughts) [12/15/2010 ] [underlining added]

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# RESPONSE OF SBL to BOOK:

QUESTION: WHO AMONG NT SKEPTICS WOULD BE CONVINCED BY SUCH AN APPROACH?

The retort of Society of Biblical Literature's Robert Miller suffices to this evangelical, critical scholar endeavor to searching: "arguments about the historical Jesus can be productive only among those who already agree on a number of contested questions about historiographical method and the nature of the Gospels. Therefore, debates about the historical Jesus that occur between the "evangelical camp" (which sees the canonical Gospels as fully reliable historically) and the "traditional camp" (which sees the Gospel as blends of fact and fiction) are futile."

He further notes, "Scholarship from one camp is unavoidably unpersuasive to the other camp"

Robert J. Miller, "When It's Futile to Argue about the Historical Jesus: A Response to Bock, Keener, and Webb," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011), 85.

# SO WHAT IS REALLY LOST IN THIS SCHOLARLY GAME OF SEARCHING?

## BOTTOM LINE:

- (1) TRUST IN GOD'S WORD—"Probabilities" Game
- (2) GOSPELS LOOSE BECAUSE THIS TACTIC MERELY ACCENTUATES DOUBT & UNCERTAINTY OF GOD'S WORD
- (3) An completely unnecessary evangelical surrender/capitulation to hostile negative presuppositions
- (4) Gospels defamed and undermined in this skeptical approach!—only difference is degree of skepticism—some vs. much

# Criteria of Authenticity

- (1) C/A assume what they are trying to prove! CIRCULAR
- (2) Believe or not believe something in gospels? Just *a priori* select criteria to prove already what you want to believe or disprove what you don't want to believe
- (3) Built upon acutely subjective, dubious foundation of doubt
- (4) Same C/A can be used by both sides and come up with opposite conclusions—might have happened (critical evangelical scholars) vs. probably didn't happen (liberal critical scholars)

# WHO LOSES: HOUSE [LEFT] ALWAYS WINS!



- (1) Play by the rules of the left, and the left always wins
- (2) Theological left can use the same arguments against Gospels as did these evangelical critical scholars!
- (3) NO ONE ON THEOLOGICAL LEFT IS CONVINCED.
- (4) NO ONE ON THEOLOGICAL RIGHT OF CRITICAL EVANGELICAL SCHOLARS IS CONVINCED OF THE APPROACH!
- (5) LOSER IS ALWAYS THE GOSPELS WHEN SUBJECTED TO IDEAS OF PROBABILITIES—IT “MIGHT” HAVE HAPPENED.

## STATE OF EVANGELICALISM REGARDING SEARCHING FOR JESUS IN GOSPELS

- ❖ Resurrection “probability”—probably/might have happened but can’t prove it historically.
- ❖ Let’s apply “criteria of authenticity” to see if it might have happened.
- ❖ Heaven and earth will pass away but the GIST of my words will not.
- ❖ Gospels are the “footprints” of Jesus
- ❖ “Inerrancy” NOW: the Bible is inerrant so long as you realize that it is filled with errors and confusion

## STATE OF EVANGELICALISM REGARDING SEARCHING FOR “HISTORICAL JESUS” IN GOSPELS

- ❖ developed among theological left as a deliberate psychological operation to raise doubt/uncertainty about the Gospel record of Jesus’s life
- ❖ Hostile philosophical presuppositions cannot be removed from the method as evidenced by even the “evangelical results”—this “beast” of searching cannot be tamed
- ❖ Lessing’s hypothesized “ugly ditch” of an alleged gap between Jesus of faith and the Jesus of history now has influence among evangelical critical scholars
- ❖ historical Jesus NEVER existed—it is the true “myth”—only Jesus of Gospels is actual Jesus—only actual Jesus of Gospels can save
- ❖ “historical Jesus” called “scholarly joke” because of 300-400 different Jesuses posited—only Jesus not accepted by liberals is real Jesus of Gospels
- ❖ Searching for “historical Jesus” wants to find “existential Jesus” or Jesus that has subjective meaning to searcher
- ❖ IMAGINE using this for alter call or affirming faith of a child!

# A THOUGHT—DENIAL BY DOUBT

2 Peter 2:1—False teachers bring in destructive divisions (αἱρέσεις ἀπωλείας) that are characterized by “denying the Lord that purchased them”

ONLY THE BIBLICAL JESUS PRESENTED BY APOSTOLIC EYEWITNESSES SAVES (1 John 4:1-4)

Searching for the MYTHOLOGICAL “historical Jesus” is casting doubt upon the Jesus of the Bible by stating it “might //probably//should” be Him who redeemed. ONLY THE BIBLICAL JESUS SAVES (1 John 4:1-4)

Genesis 3:1—Satanic doubt—“has God said” i.e., it casts doubt on the Jesus of the Gospels Who is the ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE

Searching is FALSE TEACHING at its most cunning—DENIAL BY DOUBT

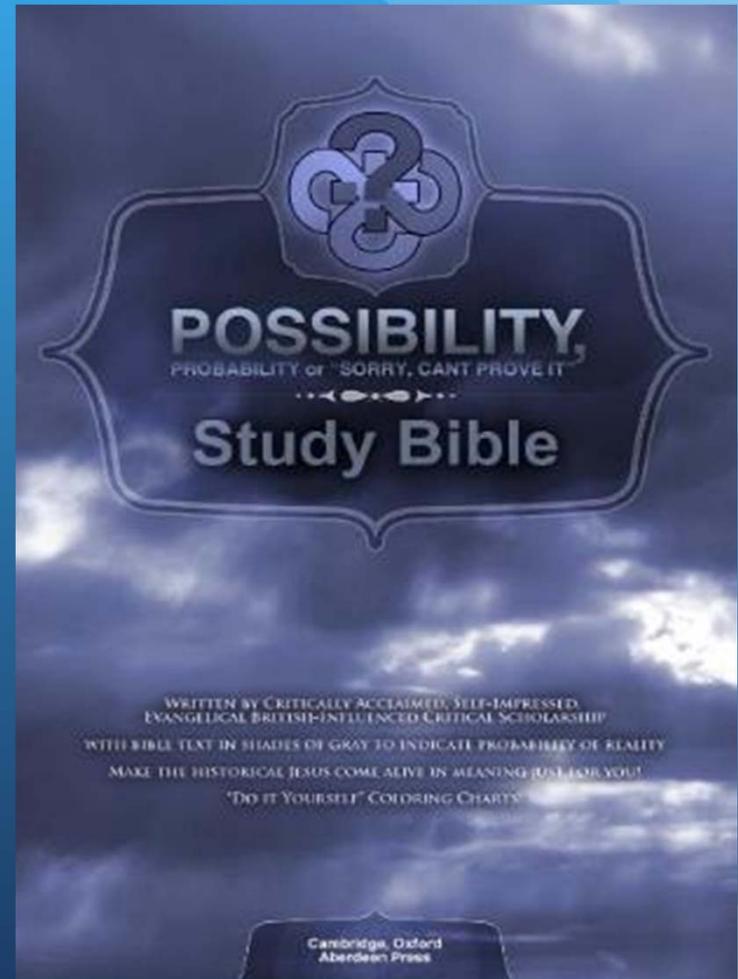
# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# CONCLUSION ON SEARCHING

- (1) As with Greco-Roman bioi, it is a theological FAD
- (2) It is a biblical & theological FRAUD
- (3) True “myth” is idea of “historical Jesus” that is a negative philosophical term/concept
- (4) Germans failed 2x in this game by their rules of skepticism, and British are failing in third quest—labeled a “scholarly joke”
- (5) The only real Jesus of history is the Jesus of the Bible (Matt/Mark/Luke/John)

PROPOSED: New Evangelical Critical Study Bible—“Shades of Grey” SPECIAL EDITION  
 “MICKEY MOUSE Magic Drawing Slate” study notes at bottom when you change your mind on genre”



# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# Luke's words in Acts 17:21—Paul at Areopagus . . . A LESSON

“Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new”

GOAL OF SEARCHING: A NEW JESUS! Rather than Jesus of Bible!

Seminary dissertation goal: make a “unique” contribution

NT GOAL: HOLD FAST! Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in <sup>b</sup>sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

2 Timothy 2:2—“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

# One more word . . .

According to Bob Wilkin, in his article, “The Range of Inerrancy” (November 1, 2015, *Grace in Focus*) . . .

In personal conversation with Wilkin, Wilkin reported that Bock and many other critical evangelical scholars advocate that in inerrancy, one should be mindful of an excluded middle in inerrancy:

POETIC HISTORY. Genesis 1-3 would not be all history or all poetic fiction, i.e.,

- a. Literal history—what is written is what happened in precisely the wording given
- b. \*Poetic history—Adam and Eve historical but the story of creation and fall is told using figurative//poetic language. How much is figurative or symbolic can be debated. This is “discussible” in inerrancy.
- c. Poetic fiction—nothing historical; all non-historical.

# Here are some quotes . . .

D. A. Carson, NT scholar . . .

“There is more ambiguity in the interpretation of these chapters than some Christians recognize....I hold that the Genesis account is a mixed genre that feels like history and really does give us some historical particulars [emphasis added]. At the same time, it is full of demonstrable symbolism. Sorting out what is symbolic and what is not is very difficult.” (Carson, *The God Who is There*, 15).

# And again . . .

Craig Keener, NT scholar . . .

“Apart from some Israelite parables, nowhere else in the Bible do we read anything like this: a talking serpent convinces Man and Wife to pluck a fruit that is Knowledge.

Not surprisingly, many biblical scholars, *including evangelical biblical scholars*, suspect some figurative language here [emphasis added]. Modern questions aside, is it possible that this way of reading the narrative is closer to how it was meant to be read?”

([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-s-keener/isyoungearth-creationismbiblical\\_b\\_1578004.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-s-keener/isyoungearth-creationismbiblical_b_1578004.html)).

Another thought . . .

According to Bob Wilkin, "From my discussions with Bock, this also appears to be the majority position at Dallas Seminary and within the Evangelical Theological Society."

Wilkin, "The Range of Inerrancy"

**GENETICISTS** KNOW EVOLUTION ISN'T VALID--PROBLEM OF TYING THEOLOGY TO FADS—DNA AGAINST IT

- Darwinian Evolution IMPOSSIBLE—PLANT GENETICIST—  
John Dr Sanford has written a book: *Genetic Entropy  
and the Mystery of the Genome*

*“Selection slows mutational degeneration, but does not even begin to actually stop it. So even with intense selection, evolution is going the wrong way—toward extinction!”—Plant geneticist Dr John Sanford*

*EVOLUTION DIDN'T INDEED CAN'T HAPPEN! DNA TOO COMPLEX; ANY CHANGES RESULTS IN DOWNWARD TREND TOWARD EXTINCTION!*

# Dr. Sanford

'My recent book resulted from many years of intense study. This involved a complete re-evaluation of everything I thought I knew about evolutionary genetic theory. It systematically examines the problems underlying classic neo-Darwinian theory. The bottom line is that Darwinian theory fails on every level. It fails because: 1) mutations arise faster than selection can eliminate them; 2) mutations are overwhelmingly too subtle to be "selectable"; 3) "biological noise" and "survival of the luckiest" overwhelm selection; 4) bad mutations are physically linked to good mutations,<sup>2</sup> so that they cannot be separated in inheritance (to get rid of the bad and keep the good). The result is that all higher genomes must clearly degenerate. This is exactly what we would expect in light of Scripture—with the Fall—and is consistent with the declining life expectancies after the Flood that the Bible records.'

## Dr. Sanford . . .

'The problem of genetic entropy (genomes are all degenerating), is powerful evidence that life and mankind must be young. Genetic entropy is probably also the fundamental underlying mechanism explaining the extinction process. Extinctions in the past and in the present can best be understood, not in terms of environmental change, but in terms of mutation accumulation. All this is consistent with a miraculous beginning, a young earth, and a perishing earth—which “will wear out like a garment” ([Hebrews 1:11](#)). Only the touch of the Creator can make all things new.'

# What is the New SHIFT?

DNA experts increasingly seeing ALIENS as those who created us,

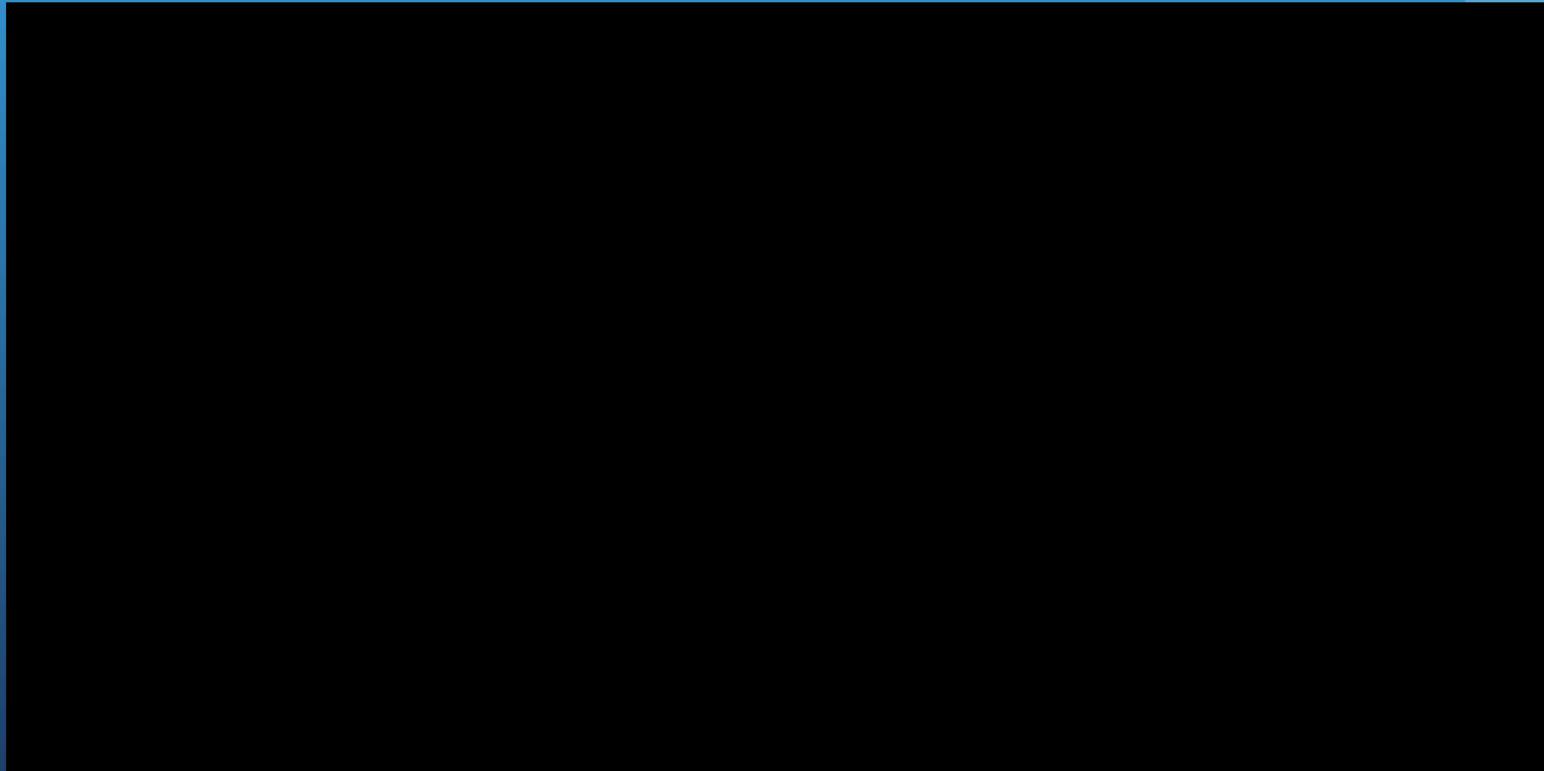
1973—article--"Directed Panspermia"—Francis Crick (of James Watson who discovered double helix of DNA) and chemist Leslie Orgel.

Crick—*Life Itself*-- In 1981 Crick published a book-length essay entitled *Life Itself: Its Origins and Nature*, in which he presented a theory about the origin of terrestrial life. His main idea was what he called "directed panspermia," namely, the possibility that terrestrial life might not have originated on Earth at all.

Instead, extraterrestrial intelligences, or ETIs, living on a planet outside of our solar system about four billion years ago, might have known of our (as yet lifeless) planet Earth, with its mild climate, salubrious atmosphere, and oceans of nutritious primeval soup. So, they sent a rocket Earthward, loaded with living ET microbes. On impact with planet Earth, the rocket discharged its microbial cargo into our as yet sterile terrestrial oceans, and the rest is Darwinian history.

ALIEN—RIDLEY SCOTT—PROMETHEUS-- god who was the creator of mankind and its greatest benefactor

Cutting edge idea is not evolution but alien involvement in human creation . . .



# Alien message encoded in our DNA

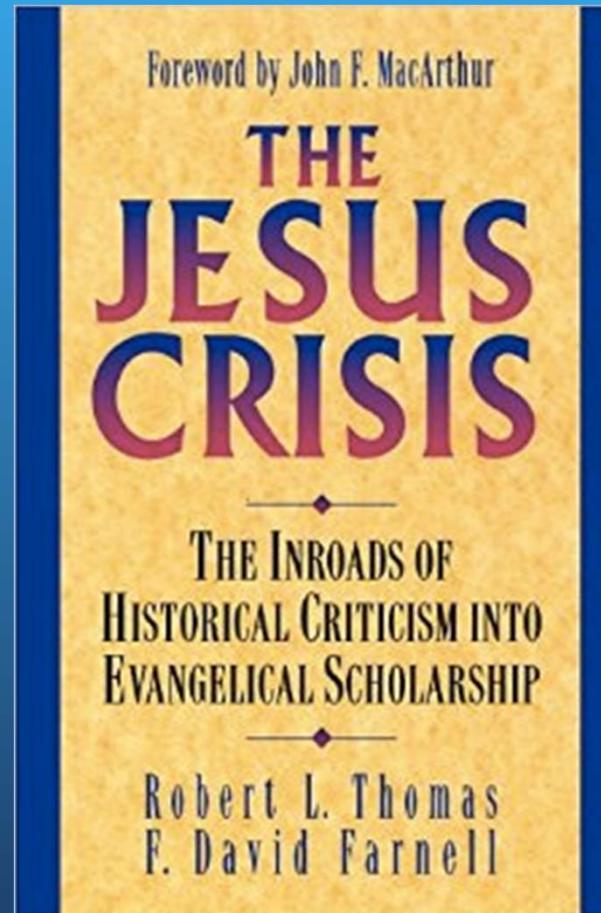
- <http://www.seeker.com/is-an-alien-message-embedded-in-our-genetic-code-1767370398.html>
- <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1303/1303.6739.pdf>



The “Wow! signal” of the terrestrial genetic code Vladimir I. shCherbaka and Maxim A. Makukovb\*

LET'S KEEP UP WITH THE SHIFTING CUTTING-EDGE OF SCHOLARSHIP HERE!

# The Jesus Crisis (1998)



# The Jesus Crisis (1998)

1. The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus did not preach the Sermon on the Mount as is recorded in Matthew. It is perhaps a collection of Jesus' sayings placed into the genre of a sermon on a mountain by the writer of Matthew (see below). Jesus did not say all of the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12. He may have said three or four of the eight or nine total.
2. The Commissioning of the Twelve in Matthew 10 is a group of instructions compiled on different occasions and organized by the author of Matthew. It was not spoken of by Jesus on a single occasion as presented.

# The Jesus Crisis (1998)

3. The parables of Matthew 13 and Mark 4 are collections (i.e., anthologies) that Jesus uttered on different occasions rather than on a single occasion as the author of Matthew presented.
4. The Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 did not happen in its entirety as is presented in Matthew. The writers artificially created this sermon and changed elements of it.

# The Jesus Crisis (1998)

5. The negative portrayal of the Pharisees in the Gospels is not accurate. They were, in reality, decent people whom Matthew (or the other gospel writers) portrayed in a negative light because of a bias against them.
6. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are not accurate records.
7. The visit of the Magi is fictional and the Magi are not real characters.
8. Jesus did not say the Great Commission, as is recorded in Matthew 28.

The list of 1-8 are catalogued in the "Introduction: "The Jesus Crisis: What is it? By Robert L. Thomas, in *The Jesus Crisis*, pp. 34.

# WHY?

## 2 Corinthians 12:3-5

<sup>3</sup> And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— <sup>4</sup> was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. <sup>5</sup> On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.

# WHY?

## Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

# WHY?

## 1 Corinthians 1:18 - 2:14

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

14 ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ· μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἔστιν καὶ οὐ δύναται γινῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.

# WHY?

## Romans 1:18-20

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

18 Αποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων

# QUO VADIS EVANGELICALS?

GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL

**VS.**

HISTORICAL CRITICAL  
INTERPRETATION



# QUO VADIS EVANGELICALS?

GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL

**VS.**

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL  
INTERPRETATION



# Grammatico-Historical

- Rules of Grammar
- Facts of History



# International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978

## Article XIII:

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

# Historical Critical

- Post-modernistic Historiography
- Anti-supernaturalism to interpret the text, i.e., ideology.



# OBSERVATIONS

OUR EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES ARE IN DECLINE SPIRITUALLY AND BIBLICALLY, ESPECIALLY REGARDING INERRANCY.

AN ACADEMIC ELITE OF CRITICAL EVANGELICAL SCHOLARS  
HAVE A TYRANICAL HOLD ON FUTURE PREACHERS AND  
TEACHERS IN EVANGELICAL SCHOOLS

THE BIBLE IS NOW SAFER IN THE HANDS OF THE LAY  
PERSON IN THE PEW THAN WITH THESE CRITICAL  
EVANGELICAL SCHOLARS

# Final Warning

MANY CRITICAL EVANGELICAL SCHOLARS ARE ATTEMPTING  
TO CHANGE THE DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS OF  
INERRANCY IN UNORTHODOX WAYS.

YOU MUST ASK ANY SCHOLAR NOW,  
SO YOU SAY YOU BELIEVE IN INERRANCY,  
WHAT THEN DO YOU MEAN BY THE TERM "INERRANCY?"

ICBI 1978 and 1982 is now dismissed!

# Vital Issues in the Inerrancy Debate (2016)

THE INERRANCY OF GOD'S WORD has been attacked throughout church history. Today's assaults are unique since neo-evangelicals now surrender to post-modernist ideas of history and historical-critical ideologies that assault this vital doctrine. They seek to redefine the orthodox meaning of inerrancy. Since the signing of the Chicago Statements, troubling signs have once again appeared in recent years among many who either did not fight the battles for the inerrancy of Scripture as did the *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* or who do not remember the troubling times that caused their development. The nature and definition of "inerrancy" are now being changed to include ideas of fallibility. *History is forgotten*. The need arises for sounding the alarm for *Vital Issues in Inerrancy*. Evangelical schools and churches that broke away earlier to defend inerrancy surrender now to academic prestige and scholarly bids instead of faithfulness to God's inerrant Word. The contributors pray that the Lord will raise up a new generation with the spiritual fervency of the *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* to uphold the inerrancy of God's Word: Isaiah 40:8 — "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

"From within the Washington beltway somewhere there arise the seminarians that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty! What is the case politically is even more the case theologically. As this book illustrates, the resounding standards established at the close of the twentieth century by the ICBI, Missouri Synod Lutherans, and Southern Baptists are now subject to reinterpretation by those who seem to prefer a priesthood of scholars over a priesthood of believers. David Farnell and his fellow editors have responded in these pages, holding high the standard of the full reliability of God's word. This is a crucial volume for a day of flagging confidence in the Bible."

—PAIGE PATTERSON  
*President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

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**WS**

FARNELL

Vital Issues in the Inerrancy Debate

# Vital Issues *in the* Inerrancy Debate

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Foreword by

PAIGE PATTERSON

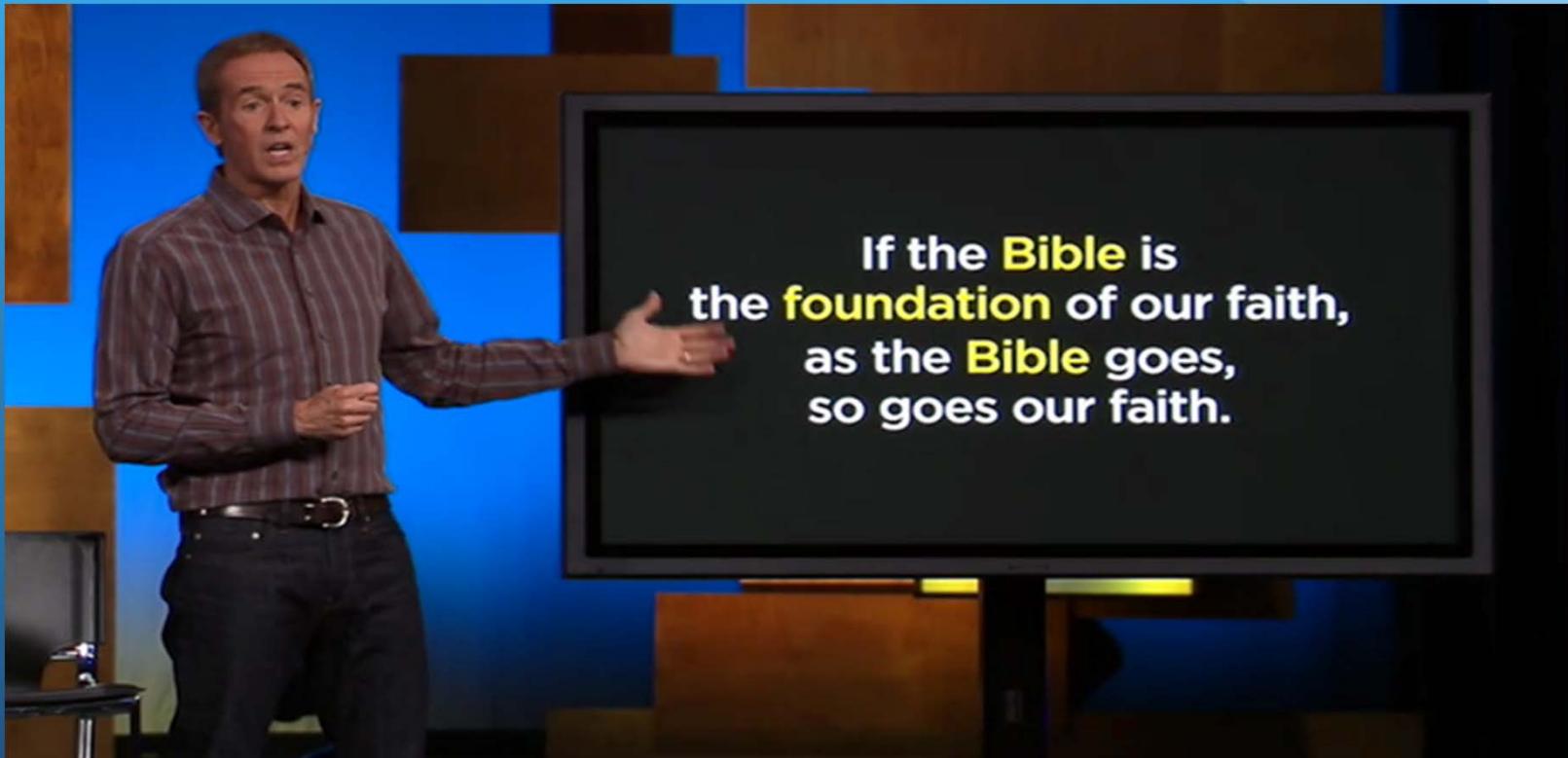
SHOCKWAVES IN CHURCHES

AS GO  
THE SEMINARIES,  
SO GO  
THE CHURCHES

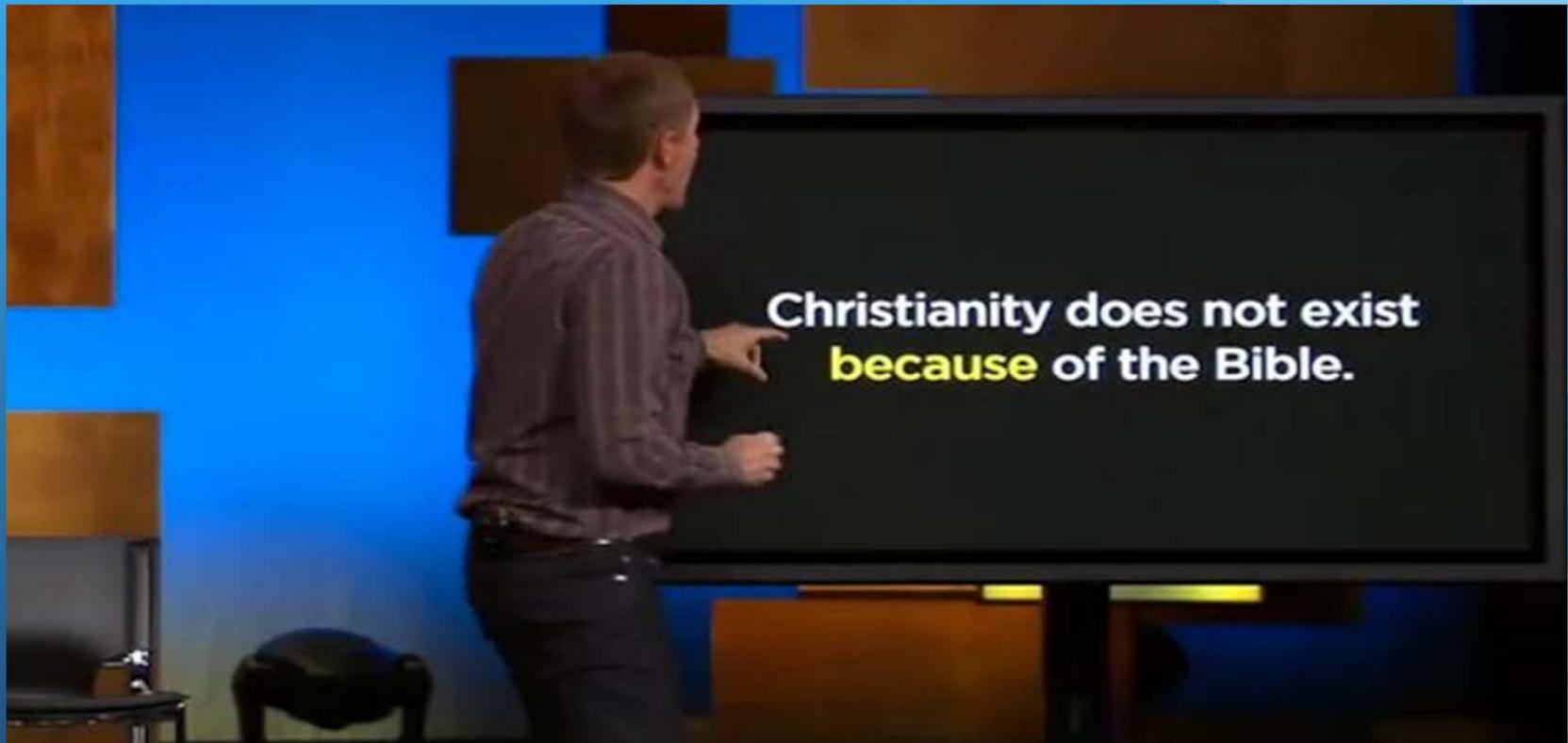
# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



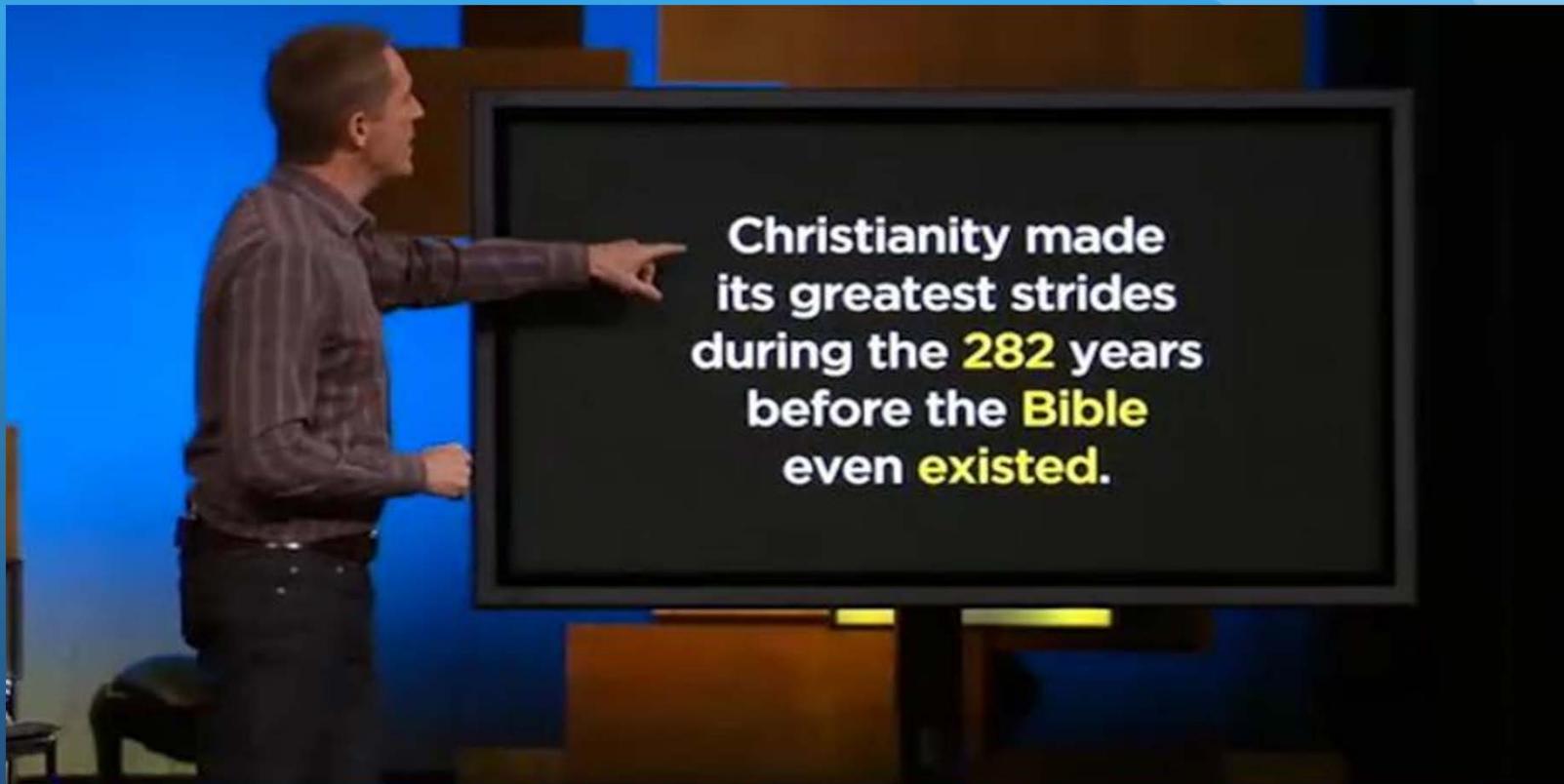
# Andy Stanley . . .



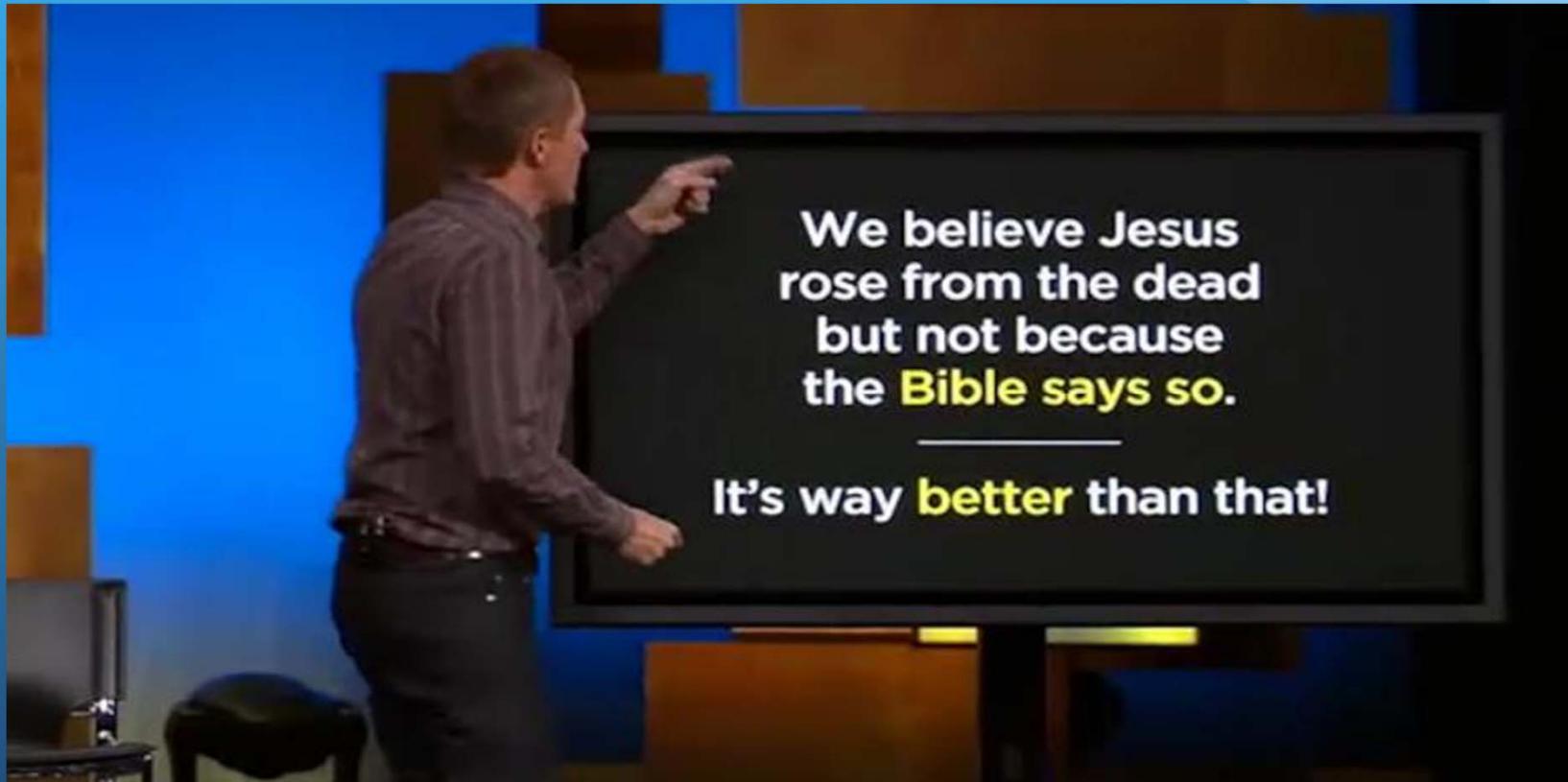
# Andy Stanley . . .



# Andy Stanley . . .



# Andy Stanley . . .



# Andy Stanley . . . .

- Christianity—don't miss this—Christianity does not hang by the thread of “the Bible tells me so!” And if your church sent you off to college with that house of cards, I apologize! And if your entire life, your whole thing has been ‘I gotta defend the Bible, I gotta defend the Bible, uh oh, there's information that looks like it contradicts the Bible, I can't look over there, honey don't look over there!’ I'm so sorry you were left with a fragile version of our faith *because the original version— the pre-Bible version— was defensible, it was endurable, it was prosecutable, it was fearless, it was compassionate, and it was compelling.* So, now that you're an adult, now that you've grown up, now that I'm challenging you to embrace the grown-up God, and the grown-up version of the precious, precious, precious scriptures that I take so seriously, not because they're in the Bible, but *because Jesus rose from the dead* and Jesus talked about the Jewish scriptures. So, now that you're an adult, let me just say this to you: *Jesus loves you, this you know.....*

# Andy Stanley . . .

- It is not about the Bible, it is all about a “who.” It is not about a “what” it is not about a book, it is about a “who.” It has everything to do with about who Jesus claimed to be and the fact that He punctuated his claims by dying on the cross and rising from the dead and predicting His own death and resurrection. And, fortunately for us, the eyewitnesses of those events documented those events. But they did—this is important—they did not document what they believed, they documented what they saw.
- So, if you stepped away from Christianity because of something in the Bible... if you stepped away from the Christian faith because of Old Testament miracles... if you stepped away from the Christian faith because you couldn't reconcile 6,000 years with a four and a half billion year old earth in something you heard in Biology, something you learned in Biology? I want to invite you to reconsider because the issue has never been 'is the Bible true?'
- The issue has always been 'who is Jesus?' Christianity... Christianity did not disrupt the Roman empire because of a true Bible. Christianity disrupted the Roman empire because of a resurrected Savior. So... Jesus loves you this you can know... a resurrected Savior who loves you, this you can know. He died for your personal sin to prove it was so. If you have stepped away from Christianity because of the Bible, I want to encourage you to reconsider. I'm convinced you may have stepped away unnecessarily.

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# ANDY, ANDY, ANDY Stanley . . .

“For the first 300 years, the debate centered on an event, not a book”—Andy Stanley

## QUESTION FOR ANDY:

How did they know about the Resurrection event after eyewitnesses died? (AD 100)

## ANSWER:

THE OT and THE NT TESTIFY to these events

ROAD TO EMMAUS--Luke 24:25-27—“And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

# Andy Stanley

Luke 16:25-26—SCRIPTURE BRINGS BELIEF, JESUS SAID!—  
not silly preachers today.

THEY POINTED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT . . .

Luke 16:31 “But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

PAUL SAID, Rom. 10:17 “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

# Andy . . .

If the Bible errs, why should we believe witnesses who erred when they wrote their testimony in the Bible?

Is your God so pathetically weak that he cannot guarantee that His Word gets it right through the power of His Spirit  
John 14:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:4-6—THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



ANDY!

One must not  
commit  
**PREACHEROLATRY!**

LET'S TALK ABOUT ETS  
EVANGELICAL  
THEOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY—or, those  
who teach believers

# Evangelical Theological Society

“Founded in 1949, the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) is a group of scholars, teachers, pastors, students, and others dedicated to the oral exchange and written expression of theological thought and research. The ETS is devoted to the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures and the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Society publishes a quarterly journal, the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)*, an academic periodical featuring peer reviewed articles, as well as extended book reviews, in the biblical and theological disciplines. ETS also holds national and regional meetings across the United States and in Canada.”

<http://www.etsjets.org/about>

## Records of the Evangelical Theological Society -Collection 243

<http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/243.htm>

- Historical Background
- In the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a reaction to the modernist movement among some conservative Protestants. They issued a call to return to the "fundamentals" to restore the emphasis on inerrant and authoritative teachings of the Bible to its former wide acceptance. A number of factors following World War I resulted in a general public reaction in the 1930s against the "Fundamentalists," as they came to be called, and subsequent withdrawal of conservative believers into a closed circle of independent congregations, para-church, and professional groups with increasingly less contact and interaction with mainline Christian denominations. Post-World War II years produced a rising concern among conservative scholars of the necessity to counteract this withdrawal of conservatives from the wider world of scholarly activity. While many Fundamentalists tended to be anti-intellectual, some conservatives, calling themselves Evangelicals, began to challenge liberal solutions.

# Evangelical Theological Society

“The Evangelical Theological Society arose out of a long-standing and keenly perceived need for interaction and wider dissemination of conservative research on biblical and theological issues. Conservative, Evangelical scholars were equally concerned that the Bible was no longer being supported as authoritative in many schools and seminaries, among leaders of main-line denominations, or in published research. By providing an Evangelical arena of intellectual interchange and disseminating the results to a larger public, it was hoped that exposition and defense of Evangelical positions could be added to existing scholarly theological literature more liberal in content.”

Evangelical Theological Society—“subscribe annually in writing” to one creedal statement

“The decision was made to form a society composed of independent individuals of conservative, Evangelical conviction with one common denominator: scholarship based on the concept of biblical inerrancy. These individuals were not required to be affiliated with schools and seminaries and were not to be limited to specific denominational or theological traditions. For these reasons, the creedal statement was limited to one sentence: “The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.” It was also decided that papers should not be limited to biblical and exegesis studies but were to range the entire field of theological disciplines.”

# ARTICLE III-IV—CONSTITUTION

## Doctrinal Basis:

ARTICLE III: Doctrinal Basis: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs. God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory."

## ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1.

Membership in the Society shall be on an individual rather than an institutional basis.

### Section 2.

Every member must subscribe in writing annually to the Doctrinal Basis.

# ETS BYLAWS—PARAGRAPH 12

“For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy](#) (1978). The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture's testimony to itself. A proper understanding of inerrancy takes into account the language, genres, and intent of Scripture. We reject approaches to Scripture that deny that biblical truth claims are grounded in reality.” [underlining added]

# ICBI 1978 Inerrancy...

## Article XII: Inerrancy of the whole

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit.

We deny that biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science.

We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

# ICBI 1978 Inerrancy...

## Article XVIII:

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

# ICBI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XIII:

We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

# IBCI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XV:

We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

We deny the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

# ICBI 1982 Hermeneutics

## Article XXII:

We affirm that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.

We deny that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

# QUESTIONS: FOR ETS MEMBERSHIP

- (1) Does the term “inerrancy” now have multiple meanings or definitions among “inerrantists” at ETS?
- (2) Has “inerrancy” been redefined at ETS?
- (3) Does ETS violate its own bylaws on the meaning of “inerrancy” or dismiss inerrancy as unimportant?
- (4) Has ETS lost its founding purpose? To UPHOLD THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY?
- (5) WILL ETS LEADERSHIP & SOCIETY AS A WHOLE REMOVE THOSE WHO SAY THEY “BELIEVE IN INERRANCY” BUT CONTRADICT INERRANCY BY THEIR ACTIONS IN WRITING OF DENIAL OF THE ACCURACY, TRUTHFULNESS OR HISTORICITY OF SCRIPTURE, E.G., EVENTS & PERSONAGES

I have heard it said . . .

In the present state of ETS,  
even LUCIFER WOULD BE  
ACCEPTED AS A MEMBER!

I'm sure also he would be  
welcomed at SBL!

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



# IF NOT—QUO VADIS? What Direction, ETS?

## CONCLUSION:

EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY APPARENTLY NO  
LONGER FOLLOWS ITS ORIGINAL CHARTER OF 1949 SO . . .

ETS IS BECOMING NOTHING MORE THAN A SOCIETY OF  
BIBLICAL LITERATURE WITH NO REAL STANDARDS BEYOND  
RELIGIOUS INTELLECTUALISM

**ETS SHOULD MERGE  
WITH SBL!!!!!!**

# D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

*New Book—The Passionate Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Lawson-2016)

*“Martyn chose not to pursue a formal seminary education due to the theological liberalism that had infected British universities. He believed he was divinely gifted by God to fulfill the task to which he had been called and had no need of a formal education that compromised Scripture”*  
(p. 10)

## *The Christian Soldier* (1977)—Lloyd Jones

“There can be no doubt whatsoever that all the troubles in the Church today . . . are due to a departure from the authority of the Bible. And, alas, it was the Church herself that led in the so-called Higher Criticism that came from Germany just over a hundred years ago. Human philosophy took the place of revelation, man’s opinions were exalted and Church leaders talked about ‘the advance of knowledge and science’ and ‘the assured results,’ of such knowledge. The Bible then became a book just like any other book, out of date in certain respects, wrong in other respects . . . . There is no question at all that the falling away, even in Church attendance, in this country [Britain] is the direct consequence of the Higher Criticism.”

(p. 210) [underlining added]

## *The Christian Soldier—Lloyd Jones*

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"We all therefore have to face this ultimate and final question: Do we accept the Bible as the Word of God, as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice, or do we not? Is the whole of my thinking governed by Scripture, or do I come with my reason and pick and choose out of Scripture and sit in judgment upon it, putting myself and modern knowledge forward as the ultimate standard and authority? The issue is crystal clear. Do I accept Scripture as a revelation from God, or do I trust to speculation, human knowledge, human learning, human understanding and human reasons? Or, putting it still more simply, do I pin my faith to, and subject all my thinking to, what I read in the Bible? Or do I defer to modern knowledge, to modern learning, to what people think today, to what we know at this present time which was not known in the past? It is inevitable that we occupy one or the other of those two positions." (p. 211) [underlining added]

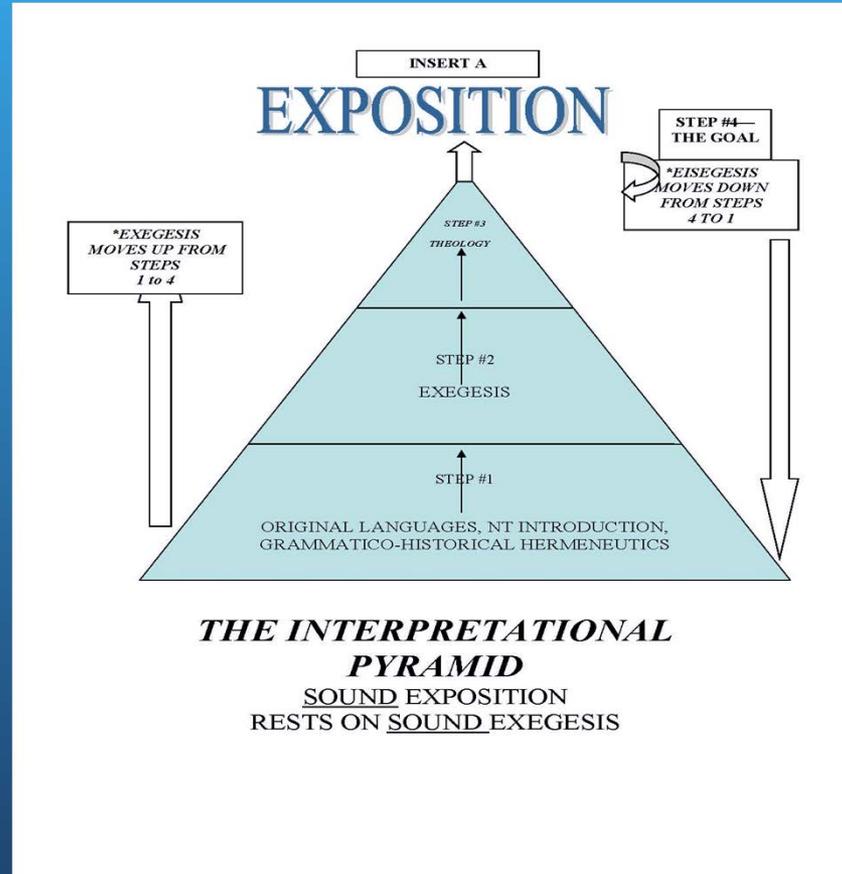
## *The Christian Soldier—Lloyd Jones*

“The Protestant Reformers believed not only that the Bible contained the revelation of God’s truth to men, but that God safeguarded the truth by controlling the men who wrote it by the Holy Spirit, and that He kept them from error and from blemishes and from anything that was wrong . . . . The world talks about advance in knowledge, its science, and so on, but actually we are going round in cycles, and we are back exactly where Christians were 400 years ago. We are having to fight once more the whole battle of the Protestant Reformation” (p. 211-212-  
underlining added)

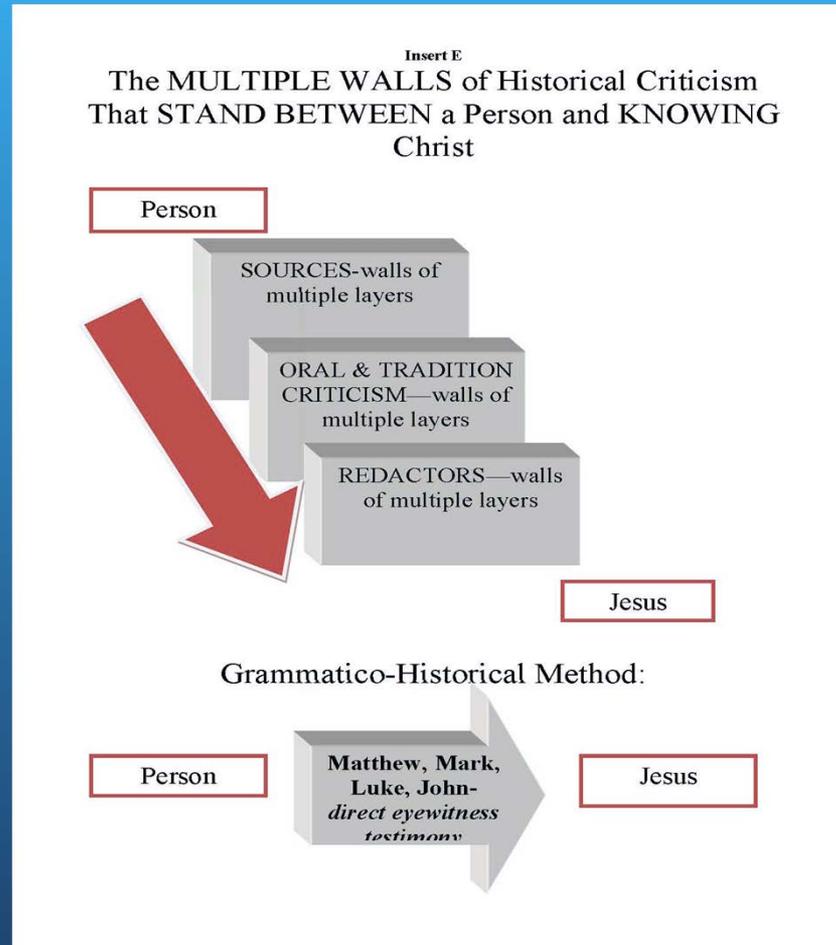
MY OWN PERSONAL CONCLUSION—not only the tyranny of Romanism, we face the growing tyranny of . . .

# EVANGELICAL SCHOLAROLATRY!

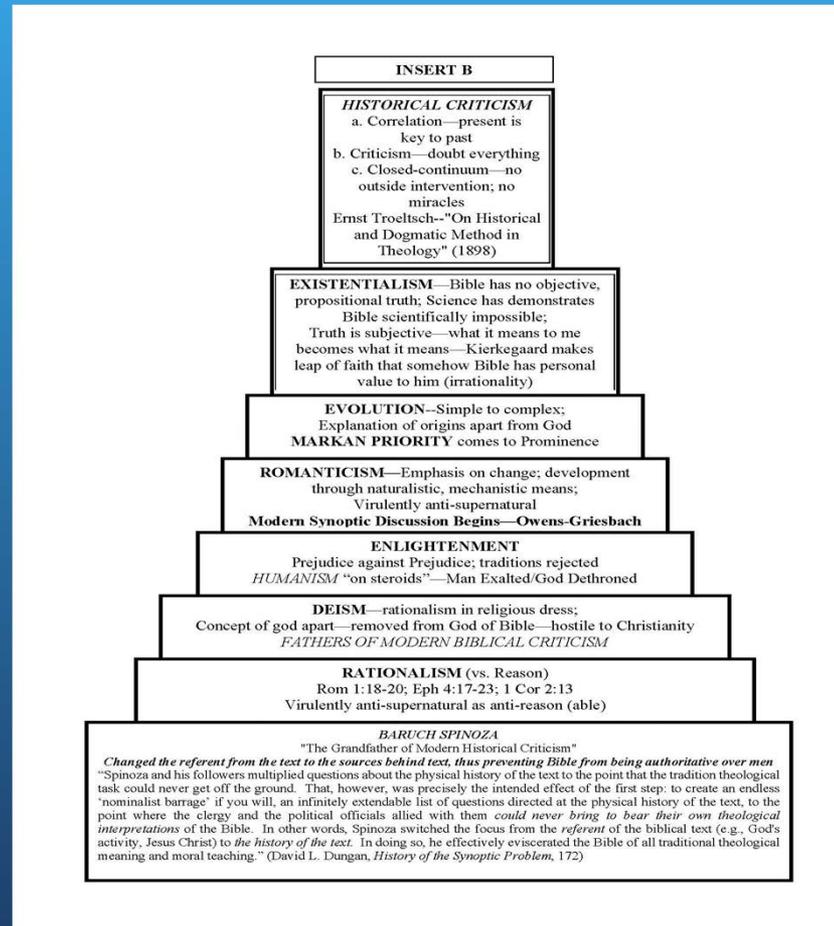
# The Problem: Historical-Critical Ideologies (see *The Jesus Quest*)



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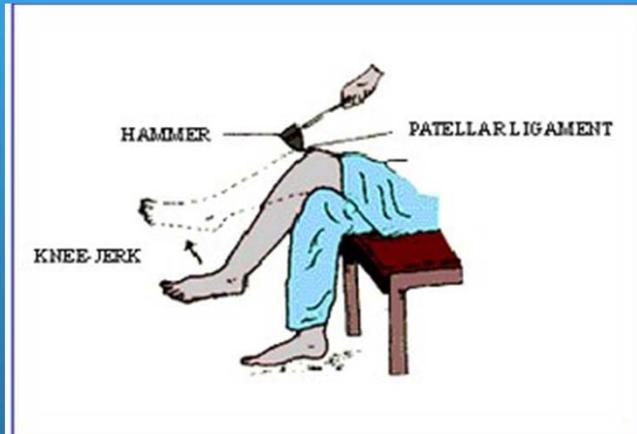
# The Problem: Historical-Critical Ideologies (see *The Jesus Quest*)



# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”



Evangelical Critical Scholars' favorite term for guys like me!—"KNEE JERK FUNDAMENTALIST"



## KNEE-JERK REACTION

IDIOMLAND.COM

*Meaning*

**AN INSTANT, INSTINCTIVE  
RESPONSE TO A SITUATION**

SHE SAID "NO" WITHOUT THINKING,  
IT WAS A **KNEE-JERK REACTION**



## MY RESPONSE

James 3:1 Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

1 Peter 5:17 or *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

# “What’s the IMPACT on PULPIT AND PEW?”

