Who Wrote The Gospels?

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Text:

Introduction:

# If you believe that Jesus was **raised** from the dead, why do you believe that?

## It is an **astounding claim**. Virtually all of human history and our own personal experience shouts: **“Dead men stay dead!”**

## If it happened, it happened a **long time ago**, in a **country** far away, and you were **not there** to see it or its results

# If you believe in the resurrection of Jesus, you should believe for the **same reasons** that you believe in **anything** that happened in the past

## That **Julius Caesar** crossed the Rubicon (exact date unknown, alluded to in January, 49 BC)

## That **George Washington** defeated the Hessians at Trenton (Dec. 25-26, 1776)

## That **Abraham Lincoln** delivered the Gettysburg Address (Nov. 19, 1863)

## That **Charles Blondin** walked across the Niagara river on a tightrope (June 30, 1859)

## Etc.

# We believe in historical events because of the **credible testimony of eyewitnesses** to those events and/or the **careful and reliable reports** of others who have investigated that testimony and shared it with the world

# You should believe in the resurrection of Jesus because you are convinced the NT contains the **credible and reliable reports** of **eyewitnesses** (Jn. 19:35; 21:24-25) and/or **those who interviewed** those eyewitnesses (Lk. 1:1-4)

## Jesus told the apostles that they would be **His witnesses** to the world (Lk. 24:48; Jn. 15:27; Acts 1:8)

## The apostles repeatedly claimed to be **eyewitnesses** of the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32; 3:14-15; 5:32; 10:39, 41; 13:31)

## Luke reports that the apostles **gave witness** to Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 4:33)

## Ananias said that Paul would be Jesus’ **witness** (Acts 22:15)

## Jesus told Paul that he would be **a witness** of what he had seen and what would be revealed to him (Acts 26:16)

# But here’s **the rub**. Agnostics, atheists, and skeptics, like Bart Ehrman, Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, *et al.* argue that **the gospels can’t be trusted** because:

## **The Gospels Are Anonymous Since They Contain No Internal Indications Of Authorship**

## **The Attributions Of Authorship Are Late**

## **The “Traditional Names” Were Attributed To The Gospels To Give Them Prestige**

## **The Titles Attached To The Gospels Were Added Much Later**

## **The Authors Of The Gospels Were Not Eyewitnesses**

## **The Gospels Were Written Long After The Events They Report**

## **The Gospels Were Not Written Near Palestine**

## **There Was A High Illiteracy Rate In Ancient Palestine; Therefore, It Is Unlikely That The Gospels Were Written By The “Traditional Authors”**

## **Forgery Was Prevalent In The First Century**

## **The Gospel Accounts Of The Resurrection Are Contradictory**

### Note: These objections are documented, explained, and evaluated in a later section (See [below](#_General_Objections_To))

# In the light of this **skeptical criticism**, do you see why we need to **talk about** this subject?

## Imagine the kind of **effect** these skeptical claims would have on the impressionable minds of **high school and college students** who have never heard anything like this before

## Imagine the **effect** of these skeptical claims on the **average Christian in the pew**

## Are we **equipping** our kids and our people to **skillfully evaluate** these skeptical objections?

# In this lecture, we will consider **two main questions**:

## **Who Wrote The Gospels?**

### *David F. Strauss*: “It would most unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight in favour of the **credibility** of the biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was **written by eye-witnesses**, or even by **persons nearly contemporaneous** with the events narrated.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Life of Jesus*, 2nd Ed., 1892, 69)

### We will explain and evaluate the evidence for the **“traditional authorship”** of the Gospels

### We will explain and evaluate the **major objections** to the “traditional authorship” of the Gospels

## **When Were The Gospels Written?**

### We will explain and evaluate the evidence for **the dating** of the Gospels’ composition

Body:

# **WHO WROTE THE GOSPELS?**

## *The External Evidence For The Traditional Authorship Of The Gospels*:[[1]](#footnote-2)

### The **strongest evidence** for “traditional authorship” is the **external evidence** (i.e. evidence outside the NT) which consists of:

#### The **names** associated with the four Gospels

#### The **titles** in the Greek MSS of the four Gospels

#### The **early attributions** of the four Gospels to their “traditional authors”

#### The **early and widespread use** of the four Gospels

### **Names**

#### The first and most obvious way to tell **who wrote something** is to look for **a name** on it

#### All four of our Gospels bear the names of people who were either **Jesus’ apostles** (Matthew & John) or **close associates** of His apostles (Mark & Luke)

#### Only the names of the **“traditional authors”** were associated with the Gospels in the writings of the “Church Fathers”

#### The **writers** must have been **known** to the original recipients

##### **Theophilus** must have **known** who wrote “Luke” and “Acts” (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3)

###### *Richard Bauckham*: “The clearest case is Luke because of the dedication of the work to **Theophilus** (1:3), probably a **patron**. It is inconceivable that a work with a **named dedicatee** should have been **anonymous**. The author’s name may have featured in an **original title**, but in any case would have been **known** to the **dedicatee** and **other first readers** because the author would have **presented** the book to the dedicatee.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 301)

##### The **recipients of “John”** must have **known** who wrote it

###### The author of “John” & others **saw** Jesus’ glory (Jn. 1:14)

###### Since a **rumor** was spread among the brethren about the **beloved** **disciple** (Jn. 21:18-23), his **identity** must have been **known**

##### How were the original writers **known**?

###### **Word of mouth**

*Richard Bauckham*: “Such works would often have been **circulated** in the first instance among **friends** or **acquaintances** of the author who would **know who the author was** from the **oral context** in which the work was first read. **Knowledge of authorship** would be **passed on** when copies were made for other readers, and the name would be noted, with a **brief title**, on the outside of the scroll or on **a label** affixed to the scroll.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 300)

*Richard Bauckham*: “In the **places** where they were written their authorship would have been **well-known** and those **scribes** who first **added the titles** most certainly knew from whom the works **originated**.” Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 536)

*Craig Blomberg*: “The **first communities** to which each was **written** would have **known the origin** of the documents sent to them from the **Christian courier** who was assigned to deliver them and, according to the custom of the day, who probably read them aloud to the assembled congregation, possibly even adding interpretive explanations and/or fielding questions afterwards. Only when **more than one Gospel began to circulate together**, and especially when the **fourfold collection** of first-century Gospels was complete, would the **need to distinguish** one from another via **written titles** become **essential**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 11)

*Graham Stanton*: “[A]s soon as Christian communities regularly **used more than one written account** of the actions and teaching of Jesus, it would have been necessary to **distinguish** **them** by some form of **title**, especially in the context of readings at worship.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and* Gospel, 79, quoted in Pitre, 20)

###### **A title** on the autograph

Before titles were attached to ancient books, their **authorship** would have been **known**

###### **A tag** on the outside of the scroll

“It is unlikely that a Greco-Roman literary work would have been **published** **anonymously**. Usually the name of the author, if not **indicated directly in the text**, was **attached as a tag to the scroll**. Though the earliest manuscript we have that bears the title **‘The Gospel According to Luke’** (as a postscript) is from the **end of the second century**, the heretic **Marcion** acknowledged **Luke** as the **author** as early as **A.D. 135**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1507)

#### Summary: The names traditionally associated with the four gospels were **not likely invented**

### **Titles**

#### Titles were **commonly attached** to ancient books

##### *Richard Bauckham*: “In the first century CE, **most authors** gave their books **titles**, but the practice was **not universal**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. 303)

##### **Tags** were commonly put on the scrolls to identify them

##### Why do skeptics **accept** the titles attached to **secular works** but **reject** the titles attached to the **Gospels**?

#### Titles would have been **necessary** to **distinguish** the Gospels from one another when churches came to **possess more than one Gospel**

##### *Richard Bauckham*: “Whether or not any of these titles originate from the authors themselves, **the need for titles that distinguished one Gospel from another would arise as soon as any Christian community had copies of more than one in its library and was reading more than one in its worship meetings**. For the former purpose, it would have been necessary to identify books externally, when, for example, they were placed side-by-side on a shelf. For this purpose **a short title with the author’s name would be written either on the outside of the scroll or on a papyrus or parchment tag that hung down when the scroll was placed horizontally on a shelf**. In the case of codices, **‘labels appeared on all possible surfaces: edges, covers, and spines.’** In this sense also, therefore, **Gospels would not have been anonymous when they first circulated around the churches**. A church receiving its first copy of one such would have received with it **information**, at least in **oral form**, about its **authorship** and then used its **author’s name** when **labeling the book** and when reading from it in worship.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 303)

##### **Tertullian criticizes Marcion** for publishing his gospel without a name[[2]](#footnote-3)

#### The titles were attached to the Gospels **fairly early**

##### *William Mounce*: “These titles were added sometime **before the end of the first century**, prompted most likely by the presence of two or more gospels that needed to be distinguished. Part of Hengel’s argument is that the authorship of the four gospels was **unanimously attributed** to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John by the **middle of the second century**, and the only way for this to have happened was for the church to have **known for quite some time who wrote the Gospels**. If the authors’ names were truly not attached to their writings, **multiple names** would have been attached (as is the case with Hebrews). To state it simply: if nobody knew for six decades who wrote the Gospels, the second-century witness wouldn’t have been **unanimous**. Rather, it would have been **highly contested**, and we’d have records of that. Instead, we find **the traditional names** as the ***only* names**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Why I Trust the Bible*, 21)

##### *James Patrick Holding*: “Second-century testimony is **unanimous** in attributing the four Gospels to the persons that now carry their name. This suggests that they **received their titles early**; for if they had not, there would have been a **great deal of speculation** as to who had written them…. It is rather harder to believe that the Gospels **circulated anonymously for 60 or more years** and then someone finally thought to put authors on them -- and managed to get the whole church across the Roman Empire to **agree**.” (Bold emphasis added, Tektonics, 10)

#### The titles of the Gospels are **unusual**

##### Normally, titles on secular works had the **author’s name** in the **genitive case**

###### Aristotle’s *Poetics*

###### Plato’s *Republic*

##### The titles on the Gospels are **different**:

###### **“Gospel according to….”** [*euangelion kata*….]

###### **“According to….”** [*kata*….]

*Richard Bauckham*: “Throughout the early manuscript tradition, from c. 200 onward, the only titles for all four canonical Gospels are in the form **‘Gospel according to …’** (*euangelion kata …*)*,* with the exception of manuscripts Vaticanus and Sinaiticus which have the short form **‘According to.…’**” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. 302)

##### *Martin Hengel*: “The **uniformity** of this **unusual** **form** of title strongly suggests that the titles ‘were **not** **secondary additions** but part of the Gospels as originally circulated…. [T]hese superscriptions were not added to the Gospels secondarily, long after their composition…” (Bold emphasis added, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ*, 2000, 50)

#### The titles attached to the Gospels are **ubiquitous**

##### Apart from MSS **fragments**, which would not have titles, there are **no Greek MSS** of the Gospels without **attached titles**, with one exception [P1]

###### *Brant Pitre*: “The first and perhaps biggest problem for the anonymous Gospels is this: ***no anonymous copies*** *of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* ***have ever been found***. They do not exist. As far as we know, they never have.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus*, 15)

See [Appendix A](#AppendixA)

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “**All known ancient Greek manuscripts** containing the beginning of one of the Gospels **include the titles** ‘According to Matthew,’ ‘According to Mark,’ and so on. Yet it seems **improbable** that all of the Gospel writers would have **independently** chosen to call their works ‘According to [so-and-so].’” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 11)

###### *Craig Evans*: “In **every single text** that we have where the **beginning** or the **ending** of the work survives, we find the **traditional authorship**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the* Manuscripts, 53)

#### The titles attached to the Gospels are **uniform** and **unequivocal**

##### The attached titles uniformly attribute the Gospels to the **“traditional authors”**: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

###### *Brant Pitre*: “The second major problem with the theory of the anonymous Gospels is the **utter implausibility** that a book circulating around the Roman Empire **without a title** for almost a **hundred years** could somehow at some point be **attributed to exactly the same author** by scribes throughout the world and yet leave **no trace of disagreement** in any manuscripts.” (Bold emphasis added, Pitre, 18-19)

###### *Craig Evans*: “There are **no anonymous copies** of the Gospels and there are no copies of the canonical Gospels under **different names**. Unless evidence to the contrary should surface, we should stop talking about **anonymous Gospels** and late, **unhistorical superscriptions and subscriptions**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the* Manuscripts, 53)

##### There are **no competing candidates** for Gospel authorship

###### If the Gospels were **truly anonymous**, we would expect to find Greek MSS with **different titles** or **no titles**

*James Patrick Holding*: “Skeptics and critics might have a better case if they could find a copy of **Matthew** that is instead attributed to, say, **Andrew**, or to **no one at all**; or a copy of what is obviously **Mark** that is attributed to **Barnabas**. But **the titles are unanimous and unequivocal** -- there is **no variation** in them at all, and critics have also not provided any examples of Gospel texts with **no title**, and (with one exception) cannot: ‘There is **no trace of such anonymity** [concerning the Gospels],’ and the testimony to their authorship is **unanimous** across broad geographic and chronological lines [Heng.4G, 54].” (Bold emphasis added, Tektonics, 8)

##### In the Greek MSS tradition of **Hebrews**, we find **different titles**, but not with the Gospels

###### *Craig Evans*: “In my view, the **strongest argument** against the assumption that the Gospels originally circulated anonymously is that **anonymous works acquired diverse and conflicting titles and claims of authorship**. We see this in the New Testament in the case of the **Epistle to the Hebrews**. The work is **anonymous**, so it is not surprising that **three or four names** are suggested as its author. But this is **not the case** with respect to any of the four Gospels. There simply are **no competing claims**. Matthew is always known as Matthew, Mark always as Mark, and so on.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the* Manuscripts, 52)

###### *Dewayne Bryant*: “[T]he early church was virtually **unanimous** on their authorship. If they were **truly anonymous**, there would have been a **great deal of dispute** concerning their authorship. Since scholars disagree as to who wrote the book of **Hebrews**, why is there such a **far-reaching consensus** concerning the four gospel records?” (Bold emphasis added, “Answering Professor Ehrman’s Essay,” 2)

| **The Letter To The HebrewsActual Anonymous Manuscripts** |
| --- |
| **Title/Subscript** | **Manuscript** | **Date** |
| To the Hebrews | Papyrus 46 | 2nd century |
| To the Hebrews | Codex Sinaiticus | 4th century |
| To the Hebrews | Codex Vaticanus | 4th century |
| To the Hebrews written from *Rome* | Codex Alexandrinus | 5th century |
| To the Hebrews written from *Italy* | Codex Porphyrianus | 9th century |
| To the Hebrews written from *Italy* by *Timothy* | Minuscule 1739 | 10th century |
| To the Hebrews written from *Rome* by *Paul* to those in *Jerusalem* | Minuscule 81 | 11th century |
| To the Hebrews written in *Hebrew* from *Italy* *anonymously* by *Timothy* | Minuscule 104 | 11th century |
| Italics added, Harold Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews:* *Hermeneia*, 31-35 |

###### *Brant Pitre*: “[S]ome early Church writers say **Paul** wrote Hebrews but didn’t identify himself; others say **Luke** translated Paul’s letter from Hebrew into Greek; others say Hebrews was written by **Barnabas**, the companion of Paul; and still others say it was written by **Clement**, the bishop of Rome. In the late second century AD, Origen of Alexandria simply threw up his hands and declared: ‘As to who wrote the epistle [to the Hebrews],’ **only ‘God knows’** (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6.25.14).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus,* 21)

**Clement of Alexandria** attributed the book of Hebrews to **Paul** (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:14:2-3, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:261)

**Caius** did not attribute the book of Hebrews to Paul (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:20:3, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:163)

**Tertullian** may have attributed the book of Hebrews to **Barnabas** [if he is not referring to the *Epistle of Barnabas*] (“On Modesty,” 20,97 ANF, 1885, 4:97)

**Origen** reported that others claimed that the book of Hebrews was written by **Clement** of Rome or **Luke**, but **only God knew** (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:25:13-14, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:273)

**Origen** attributed Hebrews to **Paul** (*De Principiis*, 3:1:10; Commentary on John 1:23, ANF, 9:309; Commentary on John 2:6, ANF, 9:328; Commentary on John 10:11, ANF, 9:388)

###### In **P46** Hebrews is **sandwiched** between Romans and 1 Corinthians, suggesting that **Paul** was believed to be the author

##### *Brant Pitre*: “That’s what you get with a truly anonymous book of the New Testament: actual **anonymous manuscripts**, and actual **ancient debates** over who wrote it. But that’s precisely what you ***don’t* find** when it comes to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. **No anonymous copies**…**no debate** among ancient Christians over who wrote the Gospels.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus,* 22)

##### *Martin Hengel*: “[I]f [the Gospels] had first **circulated anonymously** and had been **given their titles only at a secondary stage** and **independently** of one another in the different communities, because a title was needed for announcing reading in worship, this must necessarily have resulted in a **diversity of titles**, as can be illustrated by many examples from antiquity…. *There is no trace of such anonymity*.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Four Gospels*, 54, quoted in Pitre, *The Case for Jesus,* 22)

#### The titles include **three unlikely candidates**

##### Matthew, Mark, & Luke are **“minor players”**

##### If the authorship of the Gospels were **anonymous** and truly **unknown**, why were three Gospels **attributed** to such **“minor players”**?

##### Objection: Some of the apocryphal Gospels are attributed to **“minor characters”** (e.g. “The Gospel of Nicodemus,” “The “Gospel of Philip, “Gospel of Thomas,” etc.)

###### Response: These “gospels” were **way too late** to have been written by the men they are attributed to. With some exceptions, these “apocryphal gospels” were attributed to **apostles**, not non-apostles like Mark and Luke

#### The titles are found in Greek MSS that are **geographically diverse**

#### If the four Gospels were **truly anonymous** and later **incorrectly or falsely attributed** to Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John, as skeptics claim, **how did this come about**?

##### Step 1: Someone had to **write** the Gospel

##### Step 2: Someone had to **attribute** the Gospel to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John

##### Step 3: Someone had to **explain** his peculiar possession of this Gospel – why this Gospel had previously **disappeared** or was **unknown**

##### Step 4: Someone had to **convince** the church at large to accept this Gospel as genuine

##### What is the **likelihood** that all this happened **four different times** within the lifetime of the **eyewitnesses**?

###### Note: The **apocryphal Gospels** were not produced until after the eyewitnesses had **died**

##### How could **anonymous gospels** have been **“palmed off on”** first- and second-generation Christians who would have **known better**?

###### Believers in the 70s-90s, when critics suppose that the Gospels were authored anonymously, would have **known of no works** of Matthew and the others

###### Believers after the 90s who descended from this generation and lived into the lifetime of Papias would have had **no tradition of such documents** (Holding, Tektonics, 12)

#### The early “Church Fathers” did not **uncritically accept authorship** **claims**

##### Some questioned whether **Peter** really wrote 2 Peter

##### Some questioned whether **John** really wrote Revelation

#### Summary: The titles of the Gospels are **unusual** and **uniform** – too consistent for **anonymity**

### **Attribution**

#### **Augustine** (354-430)[[3]](#footnote-4)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Hippo** and a voluminous writer on philosophical, exegetical, theological and ecclesiological topics. He formulated the Western doctrines of **predestination** and **original sin** in his writings against the Pelagians.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 488)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Augustine*: “Now, those **four evangelists** whose names have gained the most **remarkable circulation** over the whole world, and whose number has been fixed as four… are believed to have written in the order which follows: first **Matthew**, then **Mark**, thirdly **Luke**, lastly **John**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Harmony of the Gospels,” 1:2:3, NPNF, 1888, 1.6:78)

###### *Augustine*: “Of these four, it is true, only **Matthew** is reckoned to have written in the **Hebrew language**; the others in Greek.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Harmony of the Gospels,” 1:2:4, NPNF, 1888, 1.6:78)

###### *Augustine*: “**Mark** follows him [Matthew, ksk] closely, and looks like his **attendant** and **epitomizer**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Harmony of the Gospels,” NPNF, 1:2:4,1888, 1.6:78)

#### **Jerome** (~AD 345-419)

##### His Credentials:

###### “Gifted **exegete** and exponent of a classical Latin style, now best known as the **translator** of the **Latin Vulgate**. He defended the perpetual virginity of Mary, attacked Origen and Pelagius and supported extreme ascetic practices.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 495-496)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Jerome* [392-393]: “**MATTHEW**, also called Levi, **apostle** and aforetimes publican, composed **a gospel** of Christ at first published in **Judea** in **Hebrew**for the sake of those of **the circumcision** who believed, but this was afterwards **translated into Greek** though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been **preserved until the present day** in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the **Nazarenes** of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it.” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 3, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:362)

###### *Jerome* [392-393]: “**MARK** the disciple and interpreter of **Peter** wrote a **short gospel** at the request of the brethren at Rome embodying what he had heard Peter tell. When Peter had heard this, he **approved** it and **published** it to the churches to be read by his authority as Clemens in the sixth book of his Hypotyposes and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, record. Peter also mentions this Mark in his first epistle….” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 8, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:364)

###### *Jerome* [392-393]: “**LUKE** a **physician** of **Antioch**, as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and **companion** of all his journeying, he wrote **a Gospel**…. He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title **Acts of the Apostles**, a history which extends to the second year of Paul’s sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city.” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 7, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:363)

###### *Jerome* [392-393]: “Some suppose that whenever Paul in his epistle says **‘according to my gospel’** he means the **book of Luke** and that **Luke** not only was **taught** the gospel history by the apostle **Paul** who was not with the Lord in the flesh, but also by **other apostles**. This he too at the beginning of his work declares, saying ‘Even as they delivered unto us, which from the beginning were **eyewitnesses** and **ministers** of the word.’ So he wrote the gospel as he had heard it, but composed the Acts of the apostles as he himself had seen. He was buried at Constantinople to which city, in the twentieth year of Constantius, his bones together with the remains of Andrew the apostle were transferred.” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” 7, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:364)

###### *Jerome* [392-393]: “**JOHN**, the **apostle** whom Jesus most loved, the son of Zebedee and brother of James, the apostle whom Herod, after our Lord’s passion, beheaded, most recently of all the evangelists wrote **a Gospel**, at the request of the bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics and especially against the then growing dogma of the Ebionites, who assert that Christ did not exist before Mary.” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 9, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:364)

#### **Athanasius** (~AD 295-373)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Alexandria** from 328, though often in exile. He wrote his **classic polemics** against the Arians while most of the eastern bishops were against him.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 488)

##### His Testimony:

###### In his Festal Letter XXXIX (367), Athanasius wrote, “it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you **the books included in the Canon**, and **handed down**, and **accredited as Divine**….” (Bold emphasis added, “Festal Letters,” 39:3, NPNF, 1892, 2.4:551-552)

###### He then went on to enumerate the same OT and NT books that Protestants consider **canonical** today (“Festal Letters,” 39:4-5, NPNF, 1892, 2.4:552)

#### **Eusebius** (~AD 260-340)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Caesarea**, partisan of the Emperor Constantine and **first** **historian** of the Christian church. He argued that the truth of the gospel had been foreshadowed in pagan writings but had to defend his own doctrine against suspicion of Arian sympathies.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 492)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “1 …And so greatly did the splendor of piety illumine the minds of Peter’s hearers that they were not satisfied with hearing once only, and were not content with the unwritten teaching of the divine Gospel, but with all sorts of entreaties they besought **Mark**, a follower of Peter, and the one whose **Gospel** is extant, that he would leave them a written monument of the doctrine which had been **orally communicated** to them. Nor did they cease until they had prevailed with the man, and had thus become the occasion of the **written Gospel** which bears the name of **Mark**. “2 And they say that **Peter**, when he had learned, through a revelation of the Spirit, of that which had been done, was pleased with the zeal of the men, and that the work obtained **the sanction of his authority** for the purpose of being used in the churches. Clement in the eighth book of his Hypotyposes gives this account, and with him agrees the bishop of Hierapolis named Papias.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 2:15:1-2, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:115-116)

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “7 But **Luke**, who was of Antiochian parentage and a physician by profession, and who was especially intimate with Paul and well acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us, in **two inspired books**, proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of these books is **the Gospel**, which he testifies that he wrote as those who were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, as he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself.” 8 And they say that Paul meant to refer to **Luke’s Gospel** wherever, as if speaking of some gospel of his own, he used the words, **“according to my Gospel.”** (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:4:7-8, 1890, NPNF, 2.1:136)

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “5 …Nevertheless, of all the **disciples** of the Lord, only **Matthew** and **John** have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. “6 For **Matthew**, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed **his Gospel** to writing in his **native tongue**, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence. “7 And when **Mark** and **Luke** had already published **their Gospels**, they say that **John**, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the **Gospel orally**, finally proceeded to **write** for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry.” ” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:24:5-7, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:152-153)

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “11 They say, therefore, that the apostle **John**, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his **Gospel** an account of the period which had been **omitted** by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Saviour during that period; that is, of those which were done before the imprisonment of the Baptist. “12 John accordingly, in his Gospel, records **the deeds of Christ** which were **performed before the Baptist was cast into prison**, but the other three evangelists mention the events which happened after that time. “13 One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at **variance** with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to **John** contains the **first acts of Christ**, while the **others** give an account of the **latter part of his life**. And the **genealogy** of our Saviour according to the flesh **John** quite naturally **omitted**, because it had been **already given** by **Matthew** and **Luke**, and began with the doctrine of his divinity….” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:24:11-13, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:153)

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “15 But as for **Luke**, in the beginning of his **Gospel**, he states himself the **reasons** which led him to write it. He states that since many others had more rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of the events of which he had acquired perfect knowledge, he himself, feeling the necessity of freeing us from their uncertain opinions, delivered in his own Gospel an **accurate account** of those events in regard to which he had learned the **full truth**, being aided by his **intimacy** and his **stay** with **Paul** and by his **acquaintance** with the **rest of the apostles**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:24:15, 1890, 2.1:153-154)

###### *Eusebius* [~AD 313-324]: “3 **Pantænus** was one of these, and is said to have gone to **India**. It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to **Matthew**, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them, and left with them **the writing of Matthew** in the **Hebrew language**, which they had preserved till that time.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 5:10:3, 1890, 2.1:225)

#### **Hippolytus** (~AD 160-236)

##### His Credentials:

###### “Recent scholarship places Hippolytus in a **Palestinian context**, personally familiar with **Origen**. Though he is known chiefly for *The Refutation of All Heresies*, he was primarily a **commentator** on Scripture (especially the Old Testament) employing **typological** **exegesis**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 495)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Pseudo-Hippolytus*: “3. **John**, again, in **Asia**, was **banished** by **Domitian** the king to the **isle of Patmos**, in which also he **wrote his Gospel** and saw the **apocalyptic vision**; and in **Trajan’s time** he **fell asleep** at **Ephesus**, where his remains were sought for, but could not be found.” (Bold emphasis added, “On the Twelve Apostles,” ANF, 1886, 5:255)

###### *Pseudo-Hippolytus*: “7. And **Matthew** wrote the **Gospel** in the **Hebrew tongue**, and published it at **Jerusalem**, and fell asleep at Hierees, *a town* of Parthia.” (Bold emphasis added, “On the Twelve Apostles.” Epistle LXXIII, ANF, 1886, 5:255)

#### **Tertullian** (~AD 160-225)

##### His Credentials:

###### “Brilliant **Carthaginian apologist** and **polemicist** who laid the foundations of **Christology** and **trinitarian** **orthodoxy** in the West, though he himself was later estranged from the catholic tradition due to its laxity.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 504-505)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Tertullian* [~AD 207]: “We lay it down as our first position, that the **evangelical Testament** has **apostles** for its authors, to whom was assigned by the Lord Himself this office of publishing the gospel. Since, however, there are **apostolic men** also, they are yet not alone, but appear with apostles and after apostles; because the preaching of disciples might be open to the suspicion of an affectation of glory, if there did not accompany it the authority of the masters, which means that of Christ, for it was that which made the apostles their masters. Of the **apostles**, therefore, **John** and **Matthew** first instil [*sic*] faith into us; whilst of **apostolic men**, **Luke** and **Mark** renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the one only God the Creator and His Christ, how that He was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfil the law and the prophets. Never mind if there does occur some **variation in the order** of their narratives, provided that there be **agreement in the essential matter of the faith**, in which there is **disagreement with Marcion**. Marcion, on the other hand, you must know, ascribes no author to his Gospel, as if it could not be allowed him to affix a title to that from which it was no crime (in his eyes) to subvert the very body. And here I might now make a stand, and contend that **a work ought not to be recognised**, which **holds not its head erect**, which exhibits no consistency, which gives no promise of credibility from the fulness of **its title** and the just profession of its author.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Five Books against Marcion,” 4:2, ANF, 1885, 3:347)

###### *Tertullian* [~AD 207]: “**Luke**, however, was not an apostle, but only an **apostolic man**; not a master, but a **disciple**, and so inferior to a master—at least as far subsequent to him as the apostle whom he followed (and that, no doubt, was **Paul**) was subsequent to the others….” (Bold emphasis added, “The Five Books against Marcion,” 4:2, *ANF*, 1885, 3:347)

###### *Tertullian* [~AD 207]: “On the whole, then, if that is evidently **more true** which is **earlier**, if that is **earlier** which is from the **very beginning**, if that is from the **beginning** which has the **apostles** for its authors, then it will certainly be quite as evident, that that **comes down** from the apostles, which has been kept as a **sacred deposit** in the **churches** of the apostles. …. I say, therefore, that in them (and not simply such of them as were founded by apostles, but in all those which are united with them in the fellowship of the mystery of the gospel of Christ) that **Gospel of Luke** which we are defending with all our might has stood its ground from its **very first publication**…. The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence to the **other Gospels** also, which we possess equally through their means, and according to their usage—I mean the Gospels of **John** and **Matthew**—whilst that which **Mark** published may be affirmed to be **Peter’s** whose interpreter Mark was. For even **Luke’s form** of the Gospel men usually ascribe to **Paul**. And it may well seem that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Five Books against Marcion,” 4:5, ANF, 1885, 3:349-350)

#### **Origen of Alexandria** (~AD 185-254)

##### His Credentials:

###### “Origen had traveled widely - to **Rome**, and in **Greece** and **Asia Minor** as well as in **Egypt** and **Palestine** - and had observed both the agreements and the differences among churches of different regions in their attitude toward the several New Testament writings; he was well aware that the views of his own church were not identical with those of other churches everywhere. Without attempting to lay down a judgment of his own, he makes note of the practice of the church, classifying the books as **‘acknowledged’** or **‘disputed’**; besides these, there are a number which are simply **‘false’**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 529)

###### “Influential **exegete** and **systematic** **theologian**. He was **condemned** (perhaps unfairly) for maintaining the preexistence of souls while purportedly denying the resurrection of the body. His extensive works of exegesis focus on the **spiritual meaning** of the text.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 500)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Origen*: “CONCERNING the **four Gospels** which **alone** are **uncontroverted** in the Church of God under heaven, I have **learned by tradition** that the Gospel according to **Matthew**, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was **written first**; and that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism. The second written was that according to **Mark**, who wrote it according to the **instruction of Peter**, who, in his General Epistle, acknowledged him as **a son**, saying, ‘The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth **Mark my son**.’ And third, was that according to **Luke**, the Gospel commended by Paul, which he composed for the converts from the Gentiles. Last of all, that according to **John**.” (*Commentary on Matthew*, ANF, 9:412)

###### *Eusebius quoting Origen*: “4 “Among the **four Gospels**, which are the **only indisputable ones** in the Church of God under heaven, I have **learned by tradition** that the first was written by **Matthew**, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the **converts from Judaism**, and published in the **Hebrew** **language**. “5 The second is by **Mark**, who composed it according to the **instructions of Peter**, who in his Catholic epistle acknowledges him as a **son**, saying, ‘The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth **Marcus, my son**.’ ““6 And the third by **Luke**, the Gospel commended by **Paul**, and composed for **Gentile converts**. Last of all that by **John**.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 6:25:6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:273)

###### *Eusebius quoting Origen*: “9 Why need we speak of him who reclined upon the bosom of Jesus, **John**, who has left us **one Gospel**, though he confessed that he might write so many that the world could not contain them?” (Bold emphasis added, (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 6:25:9, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:273)

###### “Now **the Gospels are four**. These four are, as it were, the elements of the faith of the Church, out of which elements the whole world which is reconciled to God in Christ is put together…. The Gospels then being four, I deem the first fruits of the Gospels to be that which you have enjoined me to search into according to my powers, the **Gospel of John**, that which speaks of him whose genealogy had already been set forth, but which begins to speak of him at a point before he had any genealogy. For **Matthew**, writing for **the Hebrews** who looked for Him who was to come of the line of Abraham and of David, says: ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.’ And **Mark**, knowing what he writes, narrates the beginning of the Gospel; we may perhaps find what he aims at in John; in the beginning the Word, God the Word. But **Luke**, though he says at the beginning of Acts, ‘The former treatise did I make about all that Jesus began to do and to teach,’ yet leaves to him who lay on Jesus’ breast the greatest and completest discourses about Jesus. For none of these plainly declared His Godhead, as **John** does when he makes Him say, ‘I am the light of the world,’ ‘I am the way and the truth and the life,’ ‘I am the resurrection,’ ‘I am the door,’ ‘I am the good shepherd;’ and in the **Apocalypse**, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.’ We may therefore make bold to say that the **Gospels** are the **first fruits of all the Scriptures**, but that of the Gospels that of **John** is the **first fruits**.” (“Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of John,” 1:6, ANF, 1897, 9:299-300)

#### **Clement of Alexandria** (~AD 155-220)

##### His Credentials:

###### “A **highly educated Christian convert from paganism**, head of the **catechetical school** in **Alexandria** and pioneer of Christian scholarship. His major works, Protrepticus, Paedagogus and the Stromata, bring Christian doctrine face to face with the ideas and achievements of his time.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 489)

###### Clement was a **philosopher** who traveled abroad, including **Greece**, **Italy**, **Syria**, **Palestine**, and finally to **Alexandria**, Egypt. Alexandria was a melting pot of all sorts of religious and philosophical ideas. There he heard the gospel from **Pantaenus**, the teacher of the **Alexandria Catechetical School**. Clement became a **believer** and in time, Clement became the **head** of the school in Alexandria.

##### His Testimony:

###### *Clement* [~AD 207]: “And in the Gospel according to **Matthew**, the **genealogy** which begins with **Abraham** [Mt. 1:1-2, 16] is continued down to Mary the mother of the Lord.” (The Stromata, 1:21, ANF, 2:334)

###### *Clement* [~AD 207]: “And **John** the apostle says: “No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,” [Jn. 1:18] —calling invisibility and ineffableness the bosom of God.” (*The Stromata*, 5:12, ANF, 1885, 2:463)

###### *Clement* [~AD 207]: “**Mark**, the follower of Peter, while Peter publicly preached the Gospel at Rome before some of Cæsar’s equites, and adduced many testimonies to Christ, in order that thereby they might be able to commit to memory what was spoken, of what was spoken by Peter, wrote entirely what is called the **Gospel according to Mark**. As **Luke** also may be recognised by the style, both to have composed the **Acts of the Apostles**, and to have **translated Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus,” ANF, 1885, 2:573)

###### *Eusebius quoting Clement of Alexandria*: “And such a ray of godliness shone forth on the minds of Peter’s hearers, that they were not satisfied with the once hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with all manner of entreaties importuned **Mark**, to whom the **Gospel** is ascribed, he being the **companion of Peter**, that he would **leave in writing a record of the teaching which had been delivered to them verbally**; and did not let the man alone till they prevailed upon him; and so to them we owe the **Scripture** called the **‘Gospel by Mark.’** On learning what had been done, through the revelation of the Spirit, it is said that the apostle was delighted with the enthusiasm of the men, and **sanctioned the composition** for reading in the Churches. Clemens gives the narrative in the sixth book of the Hypotyposes.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus,” ANF, 1885, 2:579)

###### *Eusebius quoting Clement of Alexandria*: “5 …Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only **Matthew** and **John** have left us **written memorials**, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. “6 For **Matthew**, who had at first preached to the **Hebrews**, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his **Gospel** to writing in **his native tongue**, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence. “7 And when **Mark** and **Luke** had already published their **Gospels**, they say that **John**, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the **Gospel** **orally**, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was **lacking** in them an account of the **deeds** done by Christ at the **beginning** of his ministry. “8 And this indeed is true. For it is evident that the three evangelists recorded only **the deeds done by the Saviour for one year** after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and indicated this in the beginning of their account.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,”3:24:5-8, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:152-153)

###### *Eusebius quoting Clement of Alexandria*: “11 They say, therefore, that **the apostle John**, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of **the period which had been omitted** by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Saviour during that period; that is, of those which were done **before the imprisonment of the Baptist**…. “12 **John** accordingly, in his **Gospel**, records the **deeds** of Christ which were **performed before the Baptist** **was cast into prison**, but the other three evangelists mention the **events which happened after that time**. “13 One who understands this can no longer think that the **Gospels** are at **variance** with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the **first acts of Christ**, while the others give an account of the **latter part of his life**. And the genealogy of our Saviour according to the flesh John quite naturally omitted, because it had been already given by Matthew and Luke, and began with the doctrine of his divinity, which had, as it were, been reserved for him, as their superior, by the divine Spirit.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,”3:24:11-13, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:153)

###### *Eusebius referring to Clement of Alexandria*: “6 The **Gospels** containing the genealogies, he [Clement] says, were **written first**. The Gospel according to **Mark** had this occasion. As **Peter** had preached the Word publicly at **Rome**, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present **requested** that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should **write them out**. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. “7 When **Peter** learned of this, he neither directly **forbade** nor **encouraged** it. But, last of all, **John**, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being **urged by his friends**, and **inspired by the Spirit**, composed a **spiritual Gospel**. This is the account of **Clement**.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 6:14:6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:261)”

#### **Irenaeus** (~AD 135-202)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Lyons** who published the most famous and influential refutation of Gnostic thought.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 495)

###### **Irenaeus** was a disciple of **Polycarp** who was a disciple of **John** (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3:3:3)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “1. We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the **Gospel has come down to us**, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the **Scriptures**, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed ‘perfect knowledge,’ as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. **Matthew** also issued a written Gospel among the **Hebrews** in their own **dialect**, while **Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome**, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, **Mark**, the disciple and interpreter of **Peter**, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. **Luke** also, the companion of **Paul**, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, **John**, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at **Ephesus** in Asia.” (Bold emphasis added, “Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:1:1, ANF, 1885, 1:414)

Note: Irenaeus may be dependent on **Papias** here

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “2. … If any one do not agree to these truths, he **despises** **the companions of the Lord**; nay more, he **despises** **Christ** Himself the Lord; yea, he **despises the Father** also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics.” (Bold emphasis added, “Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:1:2, ANF, 1885, 1:415)

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “1. **Luke** also, the **follower** and **disciple** of the **apostles**, referring to Zacharias and Elisabeth, from whom, according to promise, John was born, says: ‘And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’ [Lk. 1:6]” (“Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:10:1, ANF, 1885, 1:423)

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “5 Wherefore also **Mark**, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his **Gospel narrative**: ‘The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make the paths straight before our God. [Mk. 1:1-3]” (“Irenæus against Heresies, 3:10:5, ANF, 1885, 1:425-26)

###### *Irenaeus*: “7. …So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that **the very heretics themselves bear witness to them**, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine. For the **Ebionites**, who use **Matthew’s Gospel** only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord. But **Marcion**, mutilating that according to **Luke**, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains. Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by **Mark**, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified. Those, moreover, who follow **Valentinus**, making copious use of that according to **John**, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shown in the first book. Since, then, **our opponents do bear testimony to us, and make use of these [documents],** our proof derived from them is firm and true.” (Bold emphasis added, “Irenæus against Heresies,” ANF, 1885, 1:428)

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “8. It is not possible that the **Gospels** can be either **more** or **fewer** in number than they are. For, since there are **four** **zones** **of the world** in which we live, and **four principal winds**, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the ‘pillar and ground’ of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have **four pillars**, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.” (“Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:11:8, ANF, 1885, 1:428)

Note: After making this statement, Irenaeus then goes on to **quote** from the **opening verses** of the four gospels naming their authors as **John**, **Luke**, **Matthew**, and **Mark** in this order

###### *Irenaeus* [~AD 180]: “1. But that this **Luke** was **inseparable** from Paul, and his **fellow-labourer** in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces, not as a matter of boasting, but as bound to do so by the truth itself. …. As **Luke** was **present** at all these occurrences, he **carefully noted them down in writing**, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these [particulars] proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise, and that he was not ignorant of the truth. That he was not merely a follower, but also a fellow-labourer of the apostles, but especially of Paul, Paul has himself declared also in the Epistles, saying: ‘Demas hath forsaken me, … and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.’ From this he shows that he was **always attached to and inseparable** from him. And again he says, in the Epistle to the Colossians: ‘**Luke**, the **beloved physician**, greets you.’ But surely if Luke, who always preached in company with Paul, and is called by him ‘the beloved,’ and with him performed the work of an evangelist, and was **entrusted to hand down to us a Gospel**, learned nothing different from him (Paul), as has been pointed out from his words, how can these men, who were never attached to Paul, boast that they have learned hidden and unspeakable mysteries?” (“Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:14:1, ANF, 1885, 1:437-438)

###### *Eusebius quoting Irenaeus*: “2 ‘**Matthew** published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the church in Rome. “3 After their departure **Mark**, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also transmitted to us in writing those things which Peter had preached; and **Luke**, the attendant of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel which Paul had declared. “4 Afterwards **John**, the disciple of the Lord, who also reclined on his bosom, published his Gospel, while staying at Ephesus in Asia.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 5:8:2-4, NPNF, 1890, 2:1:222)

##### Objection: Irenaeus was merely **copying** what **Papias** said, so his testimony cannot be considered **independent**

###### Evaluation:

*James Patrick Holding*: “[T]his is a **gratuitous assumption**. Simply because Irenaeus knew of Papias' work does not mean that Papias was his **sole source** of knowledge for this information. The same argument could be made concerning virtually any other writer or reporter of information, with just as much credence. Irenaeus also offers **more information** than is available from Papias (as quoted by Eusebius), which suggests an **independent** **investigation** or **more sources** of information.” (“The Authorship of Matthew’s Gospel,” 3)

#### **Theophilus of Antioch** (Late 2nd Century)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of Antioch. His only surviving work is *Ad Autholycum*, where we find the first Christian commentary on Genesis and the first use of the term **Trinity**. Theophilus’s apologetic literary heritage had influence on Irenaeus and possibly Tertullian.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 505)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Theophilus of Antioch* [Late 2nd Century]: “And hence the **holy** **writings** teach us, and all the **spirit-bearing** [inspired] **men**, one of whom, **John**, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,’ [Jn. 1:1] showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, ‘The Word was God; all things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not one thing came into existence.’ [Jn. 1:2-3]” (Bold emphasis added, *To Autolycus*, 2:22, ANF, 1885, 2:103)

#### **The Muratorian Canon/Fragment** (~AD 170)

##### Historical Background:

###### “The Muratorian Fragment is the **oldest list** of New Testament books we have discovered. The original document is dated to the **late 2nd century** and lists **22** of the 27 books that were later included in the New Testament. “It was discovered by (and named after) the Italian historian **Ludovico Muratori** in the **Ambrosian Library** in northern Italy and was published by him in **1740**. The manuscript copy that Muratori discovered was written in **Latin** and has been dated to the **7th to 8th century**, but several internal indicators have convinced most experts – Christian and non-Christian – that the original Muratorian Fragment should be **dated near the end of the 2nd century**.” (https://isjesusalive.com/who-wrote-the-gospels/)

###### The **early part of the MSS is lost**, but virtually all scholars agree that it referred to **Matthew** and **Mark**.

###### It refers to the **episcopate** of **Pius I** of Rome (d: 157) as recent

##### Its Testimony:

###### *Casius*, Presbyter of Rome: “I.… those things at which he was present he placed thus.2 **The third book of the Gospel, that according to Luke**, the well-known physician Luke wrote in his own name in order after the ascension of Christ, and when Paul had associated him with himself as one studious of right. Nor did he himself see the Lord in the flesh; and he, according as he was able to accomplish it, began his narrative with the nativity of John. **The fourth Gospel is that of John**, one of the disciples. When his fellow-disciples and bishops entreated him, he said, ‘Fast ye now with me for the space of three days, and let us recount to each other whatever may be revealed to each of us.’ On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should narrate all things in his own name as they called them to mind. And hence, although different points are taught us in the several books of the Gospels, there is no difference as regards the faith of believers, inasmuch as in all of them all things are related under one imperial Spirit, which concern the *Lord’s* nativity, His passion, His resurrection, His conversation with His disciples, and His twofold advent,—the first in the humiliation of rejection, which is now past, and the second in the glory of royal power, which is yet in the future. What marvel is it, then, that John brings forward these several things so constantly in his epistles also, saying in his own person, ‘What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, that have we written.’ For thus he professes himself to be not only the eye-witness, but also the hearer; and besides that, the historian of all the wondrous facts concerning the Lord in their order.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Caius,” III Canon Muratorianus, ANF, 1886, 5:603)

#### **P75** (~AD 175-225)

##### Historical Background:

###### It is the **oldest extant MSS** containing “Luke”

###### It is a part of the **Bodmer Papyrus** collection

##### Its Testimony:

###### At the end of the MSS it contains the title: **“The Gospel According To Luke”** (“Luke, Gospel of,” The Lexham Bible Dictionary)

#### **The Anti-Marcionite Prologue** (~AD 175)

##### Historical Background:

###### “The **anti-Marcionite prologues** are **three short prefaces** to the gospels of **Mark**, **Luke** and **John**. No prologue to Matthew is known. They were originally written in **Greek**, but only that to Luke survives in the original language. All three were translated into **Latin** and are preserved in some **40 manuscripts** of the Vulgate Bible…. “They are originally **independent texts**, not all of the same date nor by the same author. …. All three were originally dated to the **late 2nd century** AD, but are now considered of **uncertain date**. If they are based in part on the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus of Rome, they must be no earlier than the **3rd century**. If a 2nd-century date is correct, as Bruce thought, then the prologue to Luke is the **earliest** **surviving text** to name **Luke** as the **author** of the **Acts** of the Apostles….” (*Wikipedia*)

##### Its Testimony:

###### “**Mark** recorded, who was called **stumpy finger** (*Colobodactylus*), because he had fingers that were too small for the height of the rest of his body. He himself was **the interpreter of Peter**. After the death of Peter himself, the same man wrote **this gospel** in the parts of **Italy**.” (www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/AntiMarcionitePrologues)

###### “Indeed **Luke** was an **Antiochene Syrian**, a **doctor** by profession, a **disciple** of the apostles: later however he **followed Paul** until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in **Boetia**. Therefore — although gospels had already been written — indeed by **Matthew** in **Judaea** but by **Mark** in **Italy** — moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of **Achaia**, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his, but also that it was of the greatest importance for him to expound with the greatest diligence the whole series of events in his narration for the Greek believers, so that they would not be led astray by the lure of Jewish fables, or, seduced by the fables of the heretics and stupid solicitations, fall away from the truth. And so at once at the start he took up the extremely necessary (story) from the birth of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a companion in the perfecting of the people, likewise in the introducing of baptism and a companion in martyrdom. Of this disposition the prophet Malachi, one of the twelve, certainly makes mention. And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the **Acts of the Apostles**. Later the apostle **John** wrote the **Apocalypse** on the island of **Patmos**, and then the **Gospel** in **Asia**.” (www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/AntiMarcionitePrologues)

###### “The **Gospel of John** was revealed and given to the **churches** by **John** while still in the body, just as **Papias** of Hieropolis, the close disciple of John, related in the exoterics, that is, in the last five books. Indeed he wrote down the gospel, while John was dictating carefully. But the heretic Marcion, after being condemned by him because he was teaching the opposite to him (John), was expelled by John. But he (Marcion) had brought writings or letters to him (John) from the brothers which were in Pontus.” (www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/AntiMarcionitePrologues)

#### **The Diatessaron** (~AD 170)

##### Historical Background:

###### Mid-19th century German critics argued that **the Diatessaron could not have included John** because they believed that John had not been written yet. They argued that the fourth Gospel was written **~ AD 170**

###### No one could check because there were **no extant copies** of the Diatessaron

###### Then in **1888**, the Diatessaron was **rediscovered**

##### Its Testimony:

###### Its opening words were: **“In the beginning was the Word and the word was with God, and the Word was God….”** (Jn. 1:1) (*The Diatessaron*, Section I, ANF, 1897, 9:43)

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “His *Diatessaron*, from the Greek phrase **‘through four** [Gospels]’, roughly follows the outline of **Matthew** for most of Jesus’ ministry, and of **John** for Jesus’ final week, while inserting supplementary information from **Mark** and **Luke** at the places Tatian felt most appropriate.” ([*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*](https://ref.ly/logosres/hstrclrlblgspls?ref=Page.p+28&off=273&ctx=stian+named+Tatian.+~His+Diatessaron%2c+fro), Second Edition, 2007, 28)

#### **Justin Martyr** (~AD 100-165)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Palestinian** **philosopher** who was **converted** to Christianity, ‘the only sure and worthy philosophy.’ He traveled to **Rome** where he wrote **several apologies** against both pagans and Jews, combining **Greek philosophy** and **Christian theology**; he was eventually **martyred**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 497)

###### Justin had lived in **many different places**

##### His Testimony:

###### *Justin Martyr*: “And on the day called **Sunday**, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and **the memoirs of the apostles** or **the writings of the prophets** are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally **instructs**, and **exhorts** to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and **pray**, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, **bread** and **wine and water** are brought, and the president in like manner offers **prayers** and **thanksgivings**, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, **give** what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But **Sunday** is the day on which we all hold our **common assembly**, because it is the **first day** on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day **rose from the dead**. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.” (“The First Apology of Justin,” 67, ANF, 1885, 1:186)

Justin identified the **“memoirs”** as the **Gospels**

*Justin Martyr*: “For the apostles, in **the memoirs** composed by them, which are called **Gospels**, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, “This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;” and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, “This is My blood;” and gave it to them alone.” (Bold emphasis added, “The First Apology of Justin,” 66, ANF, 1885, 1:185)

Objection: But Justin never **identifies** “the memoirs of the apostles” as the work of **Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke**, or **John**

This is **puzzling**, if the authors of the Gospels were **known**, since Justin does **quote** others by **name**:[[4]](#footnote-5)

**Psalms** (ANF, 1885, 1:213)

**Jeremiah** (ANF, 1885, 1:200, 205, 208, 234-235, 238, 256, 301)

**Zechariah** (ANF, 1885, 1:180, 209, 219, 221-222, 238, 251, 256, 260)

**Malachi** (ANF, 1885, 1:208, 215, 258)

**Esdras** (ANF, 185, 1:234, 259)

**Plato** (ANF, 1:165, 169-170, 177, 182-183, 192-193, 196-198, 275-276, 278-289, 291, 296, 298-299)

**Pythagorus** (ANF 1:169, 197-198, 274, 279-281, 291, 298-299)

However, **quoting** a source without **naming** the author does not prove that the source was **anonymous**

**Irenaeus** believed that the Gospels were written by **Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke**, and **John** (*Against Heresies*, 3:1:1, ANF, 1885, 1:414); yet sometimes he **quoted** a Gospel without **identifying** its author (*Against Heresies*, 4:30:3, ANF, 1885, 1:503)

Furthermore, Justin’s quotations **correspond beautifully** with various statements in the Synoptic Gospels

For the Gospels to be **read** **as Scripture** in **weekly services**, they must have been **very highly regarded** and **well known** to Christians throughout the world.

###### *Justin Martyr*: “For in **the memoirs** which I say were drawn up by **His apostles** and **those who followed them**, [it is recorded] that **His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying** [Lk. 22:44], and saying, **‘If it be possible, let this cup pass** [Mt. 26:39]:’ His heart and also His bones trembling; His heart being like wax melting in His belly: in order that we may perceive that the Father wished His Son really to undergo such sufferings for our sakes, and may not say that He, being the Son of God, did not feel what was happening to Him and inflicted on Him.” (“Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” CIII, ANF, 1885, 1:251)

Note: While **“those who followed them”** could include many contemporary apostolic disciples, if we take Justin seriously, **“the memoirs of the apostles”** could not have been written by **anyone outside** the 13 men who served as **apostles** (Acts 1:13, 26; 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 1:1). That **restricts** the pool of possible candidates for authorship considerably

###### *Justin Martyr*: “And when it is said that He changed the name of one of the apostles to **Peter** [Mk. 3:16]; and when it is written in the **memoirs** of **Him** that this so happened, as well as that He changed the names of other two brothers, the sons of Zebedee, to **Boanerges**, which means sons of thunder [Mk. 3:17]….” (“Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew.” (“Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” CVI, ANF, 1:252)

###### Is “the memoirs of Him” **Jesus** or **Peter**?

###### *Justin Martyr*: “Accordingly, when **a star rose in heaven** at the time of His birth, as is recorded in **the memoirs** of His apostles, the **Magi** from Arabia, recognising [sic] the sign by this, came and worshipped Him [Mt. 2:1-12].” (Bold emphasis added, “Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” ANF, 1885, 2:252)

See [Appendix B](#AppendixB)[[5]](#footnote-6)

#### **Celsus** (fl. ~AD 175-177)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Celsus**…was a 2nd-century **Greek philosopher** and **opponent** of early Christianity. His literary work, ***The True Word*** …survives exclusively in quotations from it in ***Contra Celsum***, a refutation written in **248** by **Origen** of Alexandria. *The True Word* is the earliest known **comprehensive criticism** of Christianity.” (Bold emphasis added, *Wikipedia*)

###### In his criticism of Christianity, Celsus draws from the **four traditional Gospels** and **only from them** – nothing from the so-called **“Gnostic Gospels”**

##### His Testimony:

###### *Origen quoting* *Celsus*: “All these statements are taken from **your own books**, in addition to which we need no other witness; for ye fall upon your own **swords**.” (“Origen against Celsus, 2:74, ANF, 1885, 4:461)

#### **Papias of Hierapolis** (~AD 60-130)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Hierapolis** in Phrygia who may have known the apostle **John**. Through his writings, which are extant only in **fragments** preserved in Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*, Papias **influenced later theologians** including **Irenaeus**, **Hippolytus** and **Victorinus**, and provided an **important witness** to traditions about the origins of the Gospels.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 500)

###### Papias wanted to know what the **apostles** **had said in the past** and what **living witnesses were saying** in the present

*Jerome quoting Papias*: “I considered what **Andrew** and **Peter** said, what **Philip**, what **Thomas**, what **James**, what **John**, what **Matthew** or **any one else** among the disciples of our Lord, what also **Aristion** and **the elder John**, disciples of the Lord had said, not so much that I have their books to read, as that **their living voice is heard until the present day in the authors themselves**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” 18, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:367)

*Eusebius quoting Papias*: “3 He says: ‘But I shall not hesitate also to put down for you along with my interpretations whatsoever things I have at any time **learned carefully from the elders and carefully remembered**, guaranteeing their truth. For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those that **speak much**, but in those that **teach the truth**; not in those that **relate strange commandments**, but in those that **deliver the commandments** given by the Lord to faith, and springing from the truth itself.
 “4 If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the **elders**, — what **Andrew** or what **Peter** said, or what was said by **Philip**, or by **Thomas**, or by **James**, or by **John**, or by **Matthew**, or by any other of the **disciples** of the Lord, and what things **Aristion** and the **presbyter** **John**, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from **the books** would profit me as much as what came from **the living and abiding voice**.” (Eusebius of Caesaria. “The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:39:4, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:170-171)

###### Jerome and Irenaeus said that Papias **knew John**

*Jerome* [392]: “Papias, the **pupil of John**, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia, wrote only five volumes, which he entitled *Exposition of the words of our Lord*….” (“Lives of Illustrious Men,” Ch. 18, NPNF, 2.3, 367)

*Irenaeus* [120-202]: “Now testimony is borne to these things in writing by Papias, an ancient man, who was a **hearer of John**, and a **friend of Polycarp**, in the fourth of his books; for five books were composed by him.” (“Fragments of Papias,” ANF, 1:153)

*Irenaeus* [120-202]: “4. And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, the **hearer of John**, and a **companion of Polycarp**, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled…by him.” (“Against Heresies,” 5:33:4, ANF, 1:563)

Note: Eusebius (~AD 260-339/40) quotes this statement by Irenaeus (“Church History,” 3:39:1, NPNF, 2.1, 170)

###### Eusebius believed that Papias **knew “John the elder,”** not John the apostle

*Eusebius*: “2 But Papias himself in the preface to his discourses by no means declares that he was himself a **hearer** and **eye-witness** of the holy apostles, but he shows by the words which he uses that he received the doctrines of the faith from **those who were their friends**.” (“The Church History,” 3:39:2, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:171)

*Eusebius*: “5 It is worth while observing here that the name **John** is **twice enumerated** by him. The first one he mentions in connection with Peter and James and Matthew and the rest of the apostles, clearly meaning **the evangelist**; but the **other John** he mentions after an interval, and places him among others outside of the number of the apostles, putting **Aristion** before him, and he distinctly calls him a **presbyter**.
 “6 This shows that the statement of those is true, who say that there were **two persons** in Asia that bore the **same name**, and that there were **two tombs** in **Ephesus**, each of which, even to the present day, is called **John’s**. It is important to notice this. For it is probable that it was **the second**, if one is not willing to admit that it was the first that **saw the Revelation**, which is ascribed by name to **John**.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:39:6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:171)

###### But Eusebius’ conclusion has been **challenged** by several scholars

*Eusebius quoting Papias*: “4 If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the **elders**, — what **Andrew** or what **Peter** said, or what was said by **Philip**, or by **Thomas**, or by **James**, or by **John**, or by **Matthew**, or by any other of the **disciples** of the Lord, and what things **Aristion** and the **presbyter** **John**, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from **the books** would profit me as much as what came from **the living and abiding voice**.” (Eusebius of Caesaria. “The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:39:4, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:171)

Papias uses the same words: **“elder”** (presbyter) and **“disciple”** to refer to:

Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, & Matthew

Aristion & John

Papias also refers to what some **“said”** [past tense] and what Aristion and John **“say”** [present tense]

*Craig Blomberg*: “It is **unclear** whether Papias is referring to **one** or **two** different individuals named **John** here. It may be that the apostle John is simply **listed twice**, because he was the **only living apostle** at the end of the first century and thus he fit both groups: the original elders/apostles and the second generation of church leaders to whom Papias had access.” ([*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*](https://ref.ly/logosres/hstrclrlblgspls?ref=Page.p+27&off=1139&ctx=les%2c+were+saying%E2%80%99.9+~It+is+unclear+whethe), Second Edition, 2007, 27)

*Stewart C. Petrie*: “Papias says neither that he was ‘a **hearer** and **eye-witness’** of the apostles nor that **he was not**. He simply does not, in the passage quoted, **mention the matter**. Consequently, there is **nothing to justify the careless confidence with which Eusebius contradicts Irenaeus**. It is fair to assume that, if Eusebius had been able to produce a more positive declaration from Papias, he certainly would have done so.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Authorship of The Gospel of Matthew: A Reconsideration of the External Evidence,” NTS 14, 17-18)

*Martin* Pickup: “There is a question whether Papias received instruction from **John personally** or whether he only received instruction from **disciples of the apostles**. Irenaeus claimed that Papias was a **hearer of John**. But Eusebius understood Papias’ own writings to indicate that **he never personally had contact with any of the apostles**. Irenaeus’ understanding of the matter seems more likely to be correct, given his closer proximity to the time of Papias and also because Papias’ statement about learning from the disciples of the apostles would not negate the possibility that, in his younger days, he had heard John personally just as Irenaeus said.” (Bold emphasis added, “Who Wrote The Gospels, 6, n. 6)

##### His Testimony:

###### *Papias*: “**Matthew** put together the **oracles** [of the Lord] in the **Hebrew language**, and each one **interpreted** them as best he could.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Papias,” 3:7-17, ANF, 1885, 1:155)

###### *Eusebius quoting Papias*: “16 …. So then **Matthew** wrote the **oracles** in the **Hebrew language**[[6]](#footnote-7), and every one **interpreted** them as he was able.” (“The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:39:16, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:173)

How can we know that Eusebius is **quoting Papias accurately**?

*Craig Blomberg*: “Because Eusebius **quotes Irenaeus** also (Hist. eccl. 5.8.2), and **does so accurately** here where we can check him, we can be **more confident** than we otherwise would be that he **quoted Papias accurately** where we cannot check him.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 8)

This statement could **mean several different things**:

**“Oracles”** [*ta logia*] could refer to:

The Gospel of **Matthew**

A **Sayings Source** (like “Q”)

An early collection of Jesus’ **sayings** and **deeds**

Matthew’s **personal notes**

*Logia* is used in the NT for **“Scripture”** (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:11)

**“Hebrew language”** could mean:

The **Hebrew** language

The **Aramaic** language

The **Hebrew style** (i.e. a “literary fashion”)

**“Written in order”** [*sunetaxato*] could mean:

Written in **chronological order** (unlike Mark which was written “out of order”)

Written with a **beginning** and an **end** (Note how other historians used the term *taxis*)

Papias’ statement creates **a problem** because the gospel we have that is attributed to Matthew is written in **Greek**, and it “shows few signs of having been **translated** into Greek from an earlier Semitic text. It appears much more likely to be **an original Greek composition**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Apologetics Study Bible*, 1401)

Perhaps Papias was **mistaken** about the “Hebrew language”

However, Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate, insisted that he was given access to the **Hebrew original** possessed by the Nazareans, a Jewish-Christian sect (Bold emphasis added, *Apologetics Study Bible*, 1401)

“Other church fathers besides Jerome reported a **Hebrew Gospel** existing in their day associated with Jewish Christians. They agreed that it was in many respects **different** from the biblical Matthew, though connected with that apostle.” (Bold emphasis added, *Apologetics Study Bible*, 1402)

Perhaps he was referring to **something other** than the First Gospel

###### *Eusebius quoting Papias*: “**Mark**, the **interpreter of Peter**, wrote down **carefully** what he remembered, both the **sayings** and the **deeds** of Christ, but **not in chronological order**, for he **did not hear** the Lord and he **did not accompany** Him. At a later time, however, he did **accompany Peter**, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but not with the object of making a **connected series** of the discourses of our Lord. So, Mark made **no mistake** in writing the individual discourses in the order in which he recalled them. His one concern was not to **omit a single thing** he had heard or to leave out any untruth in this account.” (“The Fragments of Papias.” *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1947, 1:379)

###### *Eusebius quoting Papias*: “15 …. This also the presbyter said: **Mark**, having become **the interpreter of Peter**, wrote down **accurately**, though not indeed **in order**, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither **heard** the Lord nor **followed** him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a **connected account** of the Lord’s discourses, so that Mark committed **no error** while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to **omit** any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them **falsely**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,” NPNF, 3:39:15, 1890, 2.1:172-173)

*Simon Gathercole*: “Attribution of the second Gospel to Mark goes back to **John the elder** in the **first century**. This cannot be more than about **20 years** after the composition of the Gospel. In the light of this, it seems **extremely unlikely** that there was a time when **Mark was not associated with the Gospel**.” (“The Alleged Anonymity of the Canonical Gospels,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 69, no. 2 [October 2018]: 475, quoted in Mounce, 23, n. 11)

*Martin Pickup*: “Papias says that Mark was Peter’s *hermeneutēs*, a term that could mean ‘**interpreter**,’ but here perhaps more likely means **‘translator.’** Papias’ point would be that **Mark translated Peter’s Aramaic discourses about Jesus into Greek**. If so, then what we have in the Gospel of Mark is largely a **translated** **transcription** of the words of Peter himself.” (Bold emphasis added, p 6, n. 7)

Objection: Papias **does not quote** from Mark or Matthew, so we don’t know if he was **referring to our Gospels** by those names

###### *Papias*: “And the presbyter said this. **Mark** having become the **interpreter** of Peter, wrote down **accurately** whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in **exact order** that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither **heard** the Lord nor **accompanied** Him. But afterwards, as I said, he **accompanied Peter**, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord’s sayings. Wherefore Mark **made no mistake** in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to **omit** **anything** he had heard, and not to **put anything fictitious** into the statements.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Papias,” 3.7-17, ANF, 1885, 1:154-155)

##### Objections to Papias’ testimony:

###### Objection #1: **Papias did not know any eyewitnesses**

Explanation:

*Bart Ehrman*: “…Papias is not himself an **eyewitness** to Jesus’s life and **does not know eyewitnesses**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, 29)

Evaluation:

Jerome and Irenaeus claim that **Papias knew John**

Eusebius interprets a statement of Papias to mean that he knew **John the elder**, not John the apostle

However, Eusebius’ interpretation **may not be correct**, and it has been **challenged** (See [above)](#EusebiusJohn)

Even if Eusebius is correct, Papias was still **close in time** to the apostles, knowing **John** or those who **knew him**

###### Objection #2: **Papias relied only on** **hearsay**

Explanation:

*Richard Carrier*: “Papias also said he **rejected** what **books** said and instead relied only on **hearsay**, because he considered that to be **more** **reliable**. He was thus clearly the **least reliable** sort of source we could possibly want.” (Bold emphasis added, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 324)

Evaluation:

Papias does not say that he **rejected the use of books**

He says that he **preferred living voices** to written books

###### Objection #3: **Eusebius regarded Papias as a man of** **“very limited understanding”**

Explanation:

*Eusebius*: “13 For he appears to have been of **very limited understanding**, as one can see from his discourses. But it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Iranæus and any one else that may have proclaimed similar views.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 3:39:13, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:172)

*Bart Ehrman*: “Later church fathers who talk about **Papias** and his book are **not overly enthusiastic**. The ‘father of church history,’ the fourth-century Eusebius of Caesarea, indicates that, in his opinion, Papias was **‘a man of exceedingly small intelligence’** (*Church History*, 3.39).” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, 29)

*Richard Carrier*: “From the quotations we have, we can tell that Papias was a **very gullible fellow**, so much so that even Eusebius called him **‘a man of very little intelligence.’**” (Bold emphasis added, *On the Historicity of Jesus*, 324)

Evaluation:

Eusebius’ assessment of Papias had very little to do with the quality of **Papias’ writing** and everything to do with Eusebius’ **theological disagreements** with Papias about eschatology (Who Was Papias’ Source?: Exploring The Identity of John the Elder)

Since Eusebius **quoted** **Papias** concerning **gospel authorship**, he evidently viewed him as a **trustworthy source** for historical matters

*Monte A. Shanks*: “[Eusebius’s] statement that Papias **influenced many**…others is a tacit admission concerning Papias’ intelligence and literary capacity. Eusebius’s admission argues that Papias was **not so incompetent** that he was **incapable** of **significantly influencing** future leaders of the church in the generations that followed.” (Bold emphasis added, *Papias and the New Testament*, 178)

###### Objection #4: **Papias is notoriously unreliable**

Explanation:

*Bart Ehrman*: “There is, though, still a further and even more compelling reason for doubting that we can trust Papias on the authorship of the Gospels. It is that we really **cannot trust him on much of anything**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, 30)

Papias made **ridiculous statements**

*Apollinaris of Laodicea quoting Papias*: “Judas walked about in this world as a weighty example of impiety. **He was so inflamed in the flesh that he could not pass where a wagon could easily pass, in fact not even the bulk of his head alone could pass**. For they say that the lids of his eyes were so swollen that neither could he see any light at all, nor could a doctor aided by instruments see his eyes. Such was their depth from the outer surface of his body. **His genitals appeared to be more nauseating and enlarged than any other genitalia**, and **he passed through them pus and even worms that converged from throughout his body**, causing an outrage on account of the simple necessity of life. After many tortures and punishments, they say, he died in his own land. His land remains until now desolate and uninhabited on account of the stench. Even to this day, **no one can travel through that place without holding their nose**. So great was the judgment that spread through his flesh upon the earth.” (Cramer’s catena on Acts ch. 1)

*Bart Ehrman*: “Does anyone think that Judas really **bloated up** larger than a house, **emitted** **worms** from his genitals, and then **burst** on his own land, creating a **stench** that lasted a century? No, not really. But it’s one of the two Gospel traditions that Papias narrates..” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, 30)

*Papias*: “[As the elders who saw John the disciple of the Lord remembered that they had heard from him how the Lord taught in regard to those times, and said]: ‘The days will come in which **vines shall grow**, having each **ten thousand branches**, and in each branch **ten thousand twigs**, and in each true twig **ten thousand shoots**, and in every one of the shoots **ten thousand clusters**, and on every one of the clusters **ten thousand grapes**, and every grape when pressed will give **five-and-twenty metretes of wine**. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, ‘I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.’ In like manner, [He said] that **a grain of wheat** would produce **ten thousand ears**, and that every ear would have **ten thousand grains**, and every grain would yield **ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour**; and that apples, and seeds, and grass would produce in similar proportions; and that all **animals**, feeding then only on the productions of the earth, would become **peaceable** and **harmonious**, and be in perfect subjection to man.” [Testimony is borne to these things in writing by **Papias**, an ancient man, who was a **hearer** **of John** and a **friend of Polycarp**, in the fourth of his books; for five books were composed by him. And he added, saying, “Now these things are credible to believers.” (“Fragments of Papias,” ANF, 1885, 1:153-154)

*Bart Ehrman*: “**Really**? **Jesus taught that**? Does anyone really think so? No one I know. But does Papias think Jesus said this? Yes, he absolutely does. … **The only traditions about Jesus we have from his pen are clearly not accurate**. Why should we think that what he says about Matthew and Mark are accurate?” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Before the Gospels*, 30)

*Richard Carrier*: “As expected, the things which [Papias] tells us are **ridiculous**. For instance, one excerpt we have … tells us **this [absurd] story about Judas**. … Papias also said that Jesus promised us **vast clusters of gigantic grapes, and other nonsense**. Clearly the **legends and fabricated sayings had gotten out of hand by the time Papias wrote**, and he just **believed** **whatever he chanced to hear**. … Does Papias come anywhere near to telling us anything useful. Not really.” (*On the Historicity of Jesus*, 324-325)

Evaluation:

The information already provided about **Papias’ credentials** (See [above](#_His_Credentials:)) largely answers this objection

He made careful **inquiries**

He collected **eyewitness testimony**

He took **notes**

He **arranged** them into a coherent presentation (Holding, “The Authorship of Matthew,” 2)

Concerning the statement about **Judas**:

This portion from Papias is **quoted twice** by Apollinaris of Laodicea, and **the two quotations do not agree**. One is less exaggerated

*Apollinaris of Laodicea quoting Papias*: “Judas lived his career in this world as an **enormous example of impiety**. He was so **swollen in the flesh** that he could not pass where a wagon could easily pass. Having been **crushed by a wagon**, his entrails poured out.” (Cramer’s catena on Matthew ch. 7)

Which quotation is **true** to Papias?

*Monte A. Shanks*: “The fact that this fragment was assimilated from a collection of quotes from Theophylact as he interacted with Apollinaris’s quotes of Papias makes it **difficult to regard** either of the above conjectures as **accurate reflections** of what Papias actually wrote.” (Bold emphasis added, *Papias and the New Testament*, 205)

We do not have the **full context** of this quotation

Papias may be utilizing an ancient form of rhetoric called ***ekphrasis***

*Christopher B. Zeichmann*: “Aphthonius’ lessons (IV C.E.) on the topic confirm that **Papias’ death of Judas is an ekphrasis**. Though writing after Papias, his handbook offers the most comprehensive delineation of the perfect ekphrasis. He declares that when ‘making an ecphrasis of persons one should **go from first things to last**, that is, **from head to feet**; and in describing things, say what preceded them, what is in them, and what is wont to result…. Papias does precisely this: his description of Judas’ body **begins at the head and works its way down**, while simultaneously writing with linear chronology. Papias’ central concern in this passage was the description of Judas immediately before his death, but he also narrated events before his disease struck and after his death.” (Bold emphasis added, “Papias as Rhetorician: Ekphrasis in the Bishop’s Account of Judas’ Death,” NTS 56 428-429)

*Monte A. Shanks*: “There is little agreement on the **exact content** and **meaning** of this fragment, let alone its **original context**. … Without further Papian material **certitude is not possible**. Consequently, while data found in this fragment is interesting, it is one of the **least credible Papian fragments**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Papias* *and the New Testament*, 206)

Concerning the statement about **vine and branches**:

Papias is **not the only one** who attributed this statement to Jesus

*Irenaeus*: “[A]s the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which **vines shall grow**, each having **ten thousand branches**, and in each branch **ten thousand twigs**, and in each true twig ten thousand **shoots**, and in each one of the shoots **ten thousand clusters**, and on every one of the clusters **ten thousand grapes**, and every grape when pressed will give **five and twenty metretes of wine**. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, ‘I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.’ In like manner [the Lord declared] that a **grain of wheat** would produce **ten thousand ears**, and that every ear should have **ten thousand grains**, and every grain would yield **ten pounds** (*quinque bilibres*) of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions (*secundum congruentiam iis consequentem*)….” (Bold emphasis added, “Irenæus against Heresies,” ANF, 1885, 1:563)

*Richard Bauckham*: “We must begin by **investigating** **the sources** from which Irenaeus drew this material because, as we shall see, **Papias was not the only source**. Irenaeus introduces his quotation of Jesus’ saying by attributing it to **‘the elders.’** … Some scholars have argued that Irenaeus is here identifying **Papias as the source** from which he had taken the tradition of the elders. But several considerations rule this out. In the first place, Irenaeus says quite clearly that **Papias is an additional witness** (*kai Papias*: ‘Papias also’) to the saying he has just quoted from the elders. … **Papias bore witness in writing**, whereas **the elders reported orally** what John had said. The distinction need not mean that Irenaeus knew the tradition of the elders only as an **oral tradition**, though this is possible. He could have known it in a **written source**, but the contrast with Papias would be that the elders themselves did not write the tradition down, whereas Papias did. … So Irenaeus first quotes from the **elders**, then introduces **Papias** as an additional witness to the same saying of Jesus. ” (Bold emphasis added, “Intertextual Relationships of Papias’ Gospel traditions: The Case of Irenaeus, Haer. 5:33.3-4” in *Intertextuality In The Second Century*, 38-39)

“In each of these instances, Papias is merely **passing on an earlier tradition**. He is **not the source** of any of them.” (Video: Is Papias Reliable?)

*Charles Hill*: “There is no reason to doubt That Papias is a **faithful reporter** of what he heard and memorized, though there may be very good reason to doubt the **historical** **factuality** of much of what he reported. His reports should not be treated as **automatically** **true**, but neither as **automatically legendary**. They are **early testimonies** to what was **known** or **believed** at that time, no matter how much actual truth they contained.” (Bold emphasis added, *Who Chose the Gospels?*, 209-210)

Finally, is Papias’ statement about the vine and the branches **significantly different** from certain statements in the OT prophets? (e.g. Isa. 11:6-10; 35:1-9; 51:3; 55:12-13; 60:13-17; 65:25; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-15)

#### **Clement of Rome** (fl. 92-101)

##### His credentials:

###### “**Early church father** and second, third, or fourth **bishop of Rome** (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 15). The letter of **1 Clement** is attributed to him. He could potentially be identified with **Clement**, a Philippian Christian and associate of Paul (e.g., Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.15; Origen, *Commentary on John*, 6.36).” (*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, Lexham Press, 2016)

###### “*Earliest of the apostolic fathers*. Clement was a **presbyter** (priest) and **bishop** in **Rome** who wrote a **letter** to the church at Corinth (96), probably the **earliest Christian writing** **outside the New Testament**. Dionysius of Corinth (170) was the first to name Clement as the author of that letter. Origen, an Alexandrian theologian, and Eusebius, the first church historian, identified the writer as the ‘Clement’ listed in the Shepherd of Hermas, a Christian writing from the mid-second century. There are problems, however, with all attempts to identify Clement.” (Bold emphasis added, *Who’s Who in Christian History*, 1992, 164)

##### His testimony:

###### ***1 Clement 42:1-2***: The **apostles** received the **gospel** for us from the **Lord Jesus Christ**; Jesus the Christ was sent forth from **God**. (2) So then **Christ** is from **God**, and the **apostles** are from **Christ**. Both, therefore, came of the **will of God** in good order. (3) Having therefore received their orders and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and full of faith in the Word of God, they went forth with the firm assurance that the Holy Spirit gives, **preaching** the good news that the kingdom of God was about to come. (4) So, preaching both in the country and in the towns, they appointed their **firstfruits**, when they had tested them by the Spirit, to be **bishops** and **deacons** for the future believers. (Holmes, Michael William. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*. Updated ed., Baker Books, 1999, 75.)

#### **Polycarp** (~AD 70-156)

##### His Credentials:

###### “**Bishop** of **Smyrna** who vigorously **fought heretics** such as the **Marcionites** and **Valentinians**. He was the **leading Christian figure** in Roman Asia in the middle of the second century.” (Bold emphasis added, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction and Biographic Information*, 2005, 501)

###### “*Bishop of Smyrna and martyr*. Born of a Christian family, Polycarp claimed to have been a **disciple of John**, presumably the apostle. Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to Roman martyrdom (c. 116), wrote **letters** both to **Polycarp** and to the church of **Smyrna**.” (*Who’s Who in Christian History*, 1992, 572-73)

##### His Testimony:

###### Polycarp quotes passages from the **Synoptic Gospels** without attribution of authorship

See [Appendix C](#AppendixC)

###### Polycarp **quotes** from Paul’s letter to the Philippians and urges them to **read** it (Polycarp to the Philippians 3, ANF, 1:33). This means:

They still **had** the letter

They still knew who **sent** that letter

They still knew what was **in** that letter

They viewed it as **authoritative**

#### These men were in a **position to know the facts**, because they had **connections** with some of the apostles

##### **Clement** of Rome (30-100) knew **Peter** and **Paul** (cf. Phil. 4:3)

###### *Ignatius* (30-107): “Now it occurs to me to mention, that the report is true which I heard of thee whilst thou wast at Rome with the blessed father Linus, whom the deservedly-blessed **Clement**, a **hearer of Peter and Paul**, has now succeeded.” (Bold emphasis added, “Epistle to Mary,” 4, ANF, 1:122)

###### *Irenaeus*  (120-202): “3. The **blessed apostles**, then, having founded and built up the Church, committed into the hands of **Linus** the office of the episcopate. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the Epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded **Anacletus**; and after him, in the third place from the apostles, **Clement** was allotted the bishopric. This man, as he had **seen the blessed apostles**, and had been **conversant with them**, might be said to have **the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Against Heresies,” 3:3:3, ANF, 1:416)

##### **Ignatius** of Antioch (30-107) knew **John** (ANF, 1:45)

###### *Ignatius* (30-107): “*Ignatius, and the brethren who are with him, to* ***John*** *the holy presbyter…*.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Epistle of Ignatius to St. John the Apostle,” ANF, 1:124)

###### *Ignatius* (30-107): “*His friend Ignatius to* ***John*** *the holy presbyter…*.” (Bold emphasis added, “A Second Epistle of Ignatius to St. John, ANF, 1:125)

###### “When Trajan, not long since, succeeded to the empire of the Romans, **Ignatius, the disciple of John the apostle**, a man in all respects of an apostolic character, governed the Church of the Antiochians with great care, having with difficulty escaped the former storms of the many persecutions under Domitian, inasmuch as, like a good pilot, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the earnestness of his teaching, and by his [constant] spiritual labour, he resisted the flood that rolled against him, fearing [only] lest he should lose any of those who were deficient in courage, or apt to suffer from their simplicity.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Martyrdom Of Ignatius,” 1, ANF, 1:129)

##### **Polycarp** of Smyrna (65-100-155) was a disciple of **John** (ANF, 1:45)

###### *Irenaeus* (120-202): “4. But **Polycarp** also was not only **instructed by apostles**, and **conversed with many who had seen Christ**, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom **I also saw in my early youth**, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had **learned from the apostles**, and which **the Church has handed down**, and which alone are true. To these things **all the Asiatic Churches testify**, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time….” (Bold emphasis added, “Against Heresies,” 3:3:4, ANF, 1:416)

###### *Tertullian* (~AD 145-220): “For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which records that **Polycarp** was placed therein by **John**; as also the church of Rome, which makes **Clement** to have been ordained in like manner by **Peter**. In exactly the same way the other churches likewise exhibit (their several worthies), whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Prescription Against Heretics,” Chap. 32, ANF, 3:258)

##### **Papias** (70-155) knew **John** (ANF, 1:151)

###### *Jerome* [392]: “**Papias**, the **pupil** of **John**, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia, wrote only five volumes, which he entitled Exposition of the words of our Lord….” (“Lives of Illustrious Men,” Ch. 18, NPNF, 2.3, 367)

###### *Jerome* [392]: “The growth of this heresy is described for us by **Irenæus**, bishop of the church of Lyons, a man of the **apostolic times**, who was a **disciple** of **Papias** the **hearer** of the evangelist **John**.” (Letter LXXV, NPNF, 2.6, 156)

###### *Irenaeus* [135-202]: “Now testimony is borne to these things in writing by **Papias**, an ancient man, who was a **hearer of John**, and a **friend of Polycarp**, in the fourth of his books; for five books were composed by him.” (“Fragments of Papias,” ANF, 1:153)

###### *Irenaeus* (135-202): “4. And these things are borne witness to in writing by **Papias**, the **hearer of John**, and a **companion of Polycarp**, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled (συντεταγμένα) by him.” (Bold emphasis added, “Against Heresies,” 5:33:4, ANF, 1:563)

Note: Eusebius (~AD 260-339/40) quotes this statement by Irenaeus (“Church History,” 3:39:1, NPNF, 2.1, 170)

###### “**Papias** has the credit of association with **Polycarp**, in the friendship of **St. John** himself, and of **‘others who had seen the Lord.’**” (Bold emphasis added, “Introductory Note to the Fragments of Papias,” ANF, 1:151)

###### Anti-Marcionite Prologue: Papias is called **“John’s dear disciple”**

###### Philip of Side: Papias is called a **“disciple of John the Theologian”**

###### Note: Eusebius claimed that Papias **did not know John** (For more details see [above](#_Eusebius_believed_that))

##### **Irenaeus**, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (120-202) knew **Polycarp** who knew **John**

###### *Eusebius quoting Irenaeus*: “5 “For when I was a boy, I saw thee [Florinus, ksk] in lower Asia with **Polycarp**, moving in splendor in the royal court, and endeavoring to gain his approbation. “6 **I remember the events of that time more clearly than those of recent years**. For what boys learn, growing with their mind, becomes joined with it; so that I am able to describe the very place in which **the blessed Polycarp sat** as he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his discourses to the people, and the accounts which he gave of **his intercourse with John** **and with the others who had seen the Lord**. And as he remembered their words, and what he heard from them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of the ‘Word of life,’ Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures.” Bold emphasis added, “Church History” NPNF, 1890, 2.1:238-239)

###### *Jerome* [492]: “The growth of this heresy is described for us by **Irenæus**, bishop of the church of Lyons, a man of the **apostolic times**, who was a disciple of **Papias** the hearer of the evangelist **John**.” (Letter LXXV, NPNF, 2.6, 156)

###### *William Hendriksen*: “This testimony, coming from **a pupil of a pupil of the apostle John**, is important. Moreover, because of his **many travels** and **intimate acquaintance** with almost the entire church of his day, what this witness says about the authorship of the Third Gospel must be considered of great significance.” (Bold emphasis added, “Luke,” BNTC, 8)

###### *Monte A. Shanks*: “Twelve different fragments from ten different authors claimed that Papias had to some degree **personally known the apostle John**. It is recognized that some of these authors depended upon others for their knowledge of Papias’s connection to the apostle. Nevertheless, some of the more credible witnesses of the apostle John’s mentoring of Papias are Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome, and Anastasius of Sinai The only person that **questioned** Papias’s association with the apostle was **Eusebius**, who later in his life unashamedly and unjustifiably displayed **gross prejudice** towards Papias.” (Bold emphasis added, *Papias and the New Testament,* 269-270)

##### **Clement of Alexandria** (153-193-217) probably knew some who knew **Ignatius** and **Polycarp** and perhaps even **John**

###### “He [Clement] met in that school [Pantaenus], no doubt, **some, at least, who recalled Ignatius and Polycarp**; some, perhaps, who as children had **heard St. John** when he could only exhort his congregations to ‘love one another.’ He could afterwards speak of himself as in the next succession after the apostles. “He became the successor of Pantænus in the catechetical school, and had **Origen** for his pupil, with other eminent men.” (Bold emphasis added, “Introductory Note to Clement of Alexandria,” ANF, 2:166)

##### **Hippolytus** (170-236) was a disciple of **Irenaeus** (120-202) who was a disciple of **Polycarp** (65-100-155) who was a disciple of **John** (ANF, 5:7)

##### **Origen** (185-230-254) was a pupil of **Clement of Alexandria** (153-193-217) (“Introductory Note to the Works of Origen,” ANF, 4:223)

#### Summary: The attributions of authorship to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is **strong**, **widespread**, and **consistent**

##### *William Hendriksen*: “The evidence spans **several centuries**, from Eusebius all the way back to Papias. It comes from **every region**. From **Asia**, **Africa**, and **Europe**; that is, from the **East** (Papias of Hierapolis, Eusebius of Caesarea); the **South** (Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian of Carthage); and the **West** (Justin Martyr and the author of the Muratorian Fragment of Rome). Sometimes two regions are represented by one witness: the **East** and the **West** (Irenaeus of Asia Minor, Rome, and Lyons); the **South** and the **East** (Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea).” (“Mark,”NTC, 10:12)

### **Early Use**

#### The four canonical Gospels and Acts were **used copiously** by the early church fathers.

##### See [Appendix D](#AppendixD)

#### Early Christian writers **quoted** or **alluded** to the Gospels and other NT books without identifying these sources **by name**

##### **Clement** quotes over 40 books from the OT & the NT, and he never cites a source

##### He didn’t need to **cite sources** because:

###### His readers **had** these sources

###### They were **familiar** with them

###### They **knew what sources** he was quoting

###### They **accepted these sources** as authoritative

##### *Ignatius* (~AD 107): “Be in all things **‘wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.’** [Mt. 10:16]” (*Letter to Polycarp*, 2:2, ANF, 1:94)

##### *Polycarp*, (~AD 108): “[B]ut being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: ‘**Judge not**, that ye be not judged [Mt. 7:1]; **forgive**, and it shall be forgiven unto you [Mt. 6:12, 14; Lk. 6:37]; **be merciful** [Lk. 6:36], that ye may obtain mercy; with **what measure** ye mete, it shall be measured to you again [Mt. 7:2; Lk. 6:38]; and once more, “Blessed are the **poor**, and those that are **persecuted** for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God [Mt. 5:3, 10; Lk. 6:20].” (*Letter to the Philippians* 2:3 , ANF, 1:33)

##### *Clement of Rome* (~AD 95): “[B]eing especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake, teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spoke: ‘Be ye **merciful** [Lk. 6:36], that ye may **obtain mercy** [Mt. 5:7]; **forgive**, that it may be forgiven to you [Lk. 6:37]; as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye **judge**, so shall ye be judged [Mt. 7:2]; as ye are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with **what measure** ye mete, with the same it shall be measured to you [Mt. 7:2; Mk. 4:24; Lk. 6:38].” (1 Clement 13:1-2, ANF, 1885, 1:8)

##### *Clement of Rome* (~AD 95): “Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, ‘**Woe to that man** [by whom offences come] [Mt. 18:7; Lk. 17:1]! It were **better for him that he had never been born** [Mt. 26:24; Mk. 14:21], than that he should cast a **stumbling-block** before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a **millstone** should be hung about [his neck], and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones [Mt. 18:6-7; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:1-2].” (*1 Clement* 46:7-8, ANF, 1:17)

##### *Didache 8:2*: “Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, so pray ye: **‘Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name….’** [Mt. 6:9-13]” (Schaff, Philip. The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, 1886, 189)

###### Cf. Didache 11:3; 15:4

##### *Etc*.

#### The four canonical Gospels were appealed to as **authoritative documents**

##### Justin Martyr said that the **“memoirs of the apostles”** were **read** and **expounded** upon in Sunday worship services (See [above](#_Justin_Martyr:_))

#### A few early writers refer to the Gospels as **“Scripture”**

##### See [Appendix E](#AppendixE)

##### *Eusebius quoting Clement of Alexandria*: “And such a ray of godliness shone forth on the minds of Peter’s hearers, that they were not satisfied with the once hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with all manner of entreaties importuned **Mark**, to whom the **Gospel** is ascribed, he being the companion of Peter, that he would leave in writing a record of the teaching which had been delivered to them verbally; and did not let the man alone till they prevailed upon him; and so to them we owe the **Scripture** called the **‘Gospel by Mark.’** On learning what had been done, through the revelation of the Spirit, it is said that the apostle was delighted with the enthusiasm of the men, and sanctioned the composition for reading in the Churches. Clemens gives the narrative in the sixth book of the Hypotyposes.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus,” ANF, 1885, 2:579)

##### *Tertullian*: “…‘They were baptized,’ saith (**the Scripture**), ‘confessing their own sins.’ [Mt. 3:6]” (Bold emphasis added, “On Baptism, XX, ANF, 1885, 3:679)

##### *2 Clement 2:4* [~AD 130]: “And another **Scripture** says, ‘I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners’ [Mt. 9:13; Mk. 2:17].” (Bold emphasis added, Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers, 109)

##### *2 Clement 14:1* [~AD 130]: “…But if we do not do the will of the Lord, we will belong to those of whom **the Scripture** says, ‘My house has become a robbers’ den.’ [Jer. 7:11; Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46]” (Bold emphasis added, Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers, 121)

##### *Etc*.

###### Note: NT writers frequently quote **“Scripture”** without identifying the **author** or the **book** they are quoting (cf. Mt. 21:42 // Mk. 12:10; Mk. 15:28 (?); Lk. 4:16ff, 21; Jn. 10:34-35; 13:18; 19:24, 36-37; Acts 8:32-33; Rom. 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2-4; Gal. 3:8; 4:30; 1 Tim. 5:18; Jas. 2:8, 23; 4:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:6)

#### Some early writers cite a quotation from one of the Gospels with the words **“it is written”**

##### *Epistle Of Barnabas 4:14* [AD 70-135]: “[L]et us be on guard lest we should be found to be, as **it is written**, ‘many called, but few chosen.’ [Mt. 22:14]” (Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers, 283)

##### *Origen*. “For **it is written** that John said: ‘He who sent me to baptize said, On whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit and with fire’ [Jn. 1:32].” (Bold emphasis added, “Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of John,” Book II, ANF, 1897, 9:329)

##### *Origen*. “[A]nd as **it is written** of John the Baptist, ‘Behold I send My messenger before thy face,’ [Mal. 3:1; Mk. 1:2] the angels (messengers) of God are so called on account of their office, and are not here called men on account of their nature.” (Bold emphasis added, “Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of John,” Book II, ANF, 1897, 9:336)

##### *Origen*. “Now a similitude differs from a parable; for **it is written** in Mark, ‘To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or in what parable shall we set it forth?’ [Mk. 4:30] From this it is plain that there is a difference between a similitude and a parable.” (Bold emphasis added, “Origen’s Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew,” Book X, ANF, 1897, 9:416)

##### *Clement of Alexandria*: “And our Lord was born in the twenty-eighth year, when first the census was ordered to be taken in the reign of Augustus. And to prove that this is true, **it is written** in the **Gospel by Luke** as follows: ‘And in the fifteenth year, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zacharias.’ [Lk. 3:1-2] And again in the same book: ‘And Jesus was coming to His baptism, being about thirty years old,’ [Lk. 3:23] and so on. And that it was necessary for Him to preach only a year, **this also is written**: “He hath sent Me to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ [Isa. 61:1-2] This both **the prophet spake, and the Gospel**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Stromata, or Miscellanies,” 1:21, ANF, 1885, 2:333)

##### *Etc.*

#### This evidence takes us back **even earlier** than the evidence of attribution.

#### Use of the Gospels as **authoritative sources** means that they expected their audience to **recognize** their quotations and allusions and to **accept** them as authentic.

##### *Lydia McGrew*: “It is true that none of these authors (Clement of Rome, Polycarp, or Justin Martyr) **names the authors** of the writings from which they are quoting. But it remains a datum, requiring explanation, that clearly our own four gospels were **known at an extremely early period** and were **regarded as authoritative sources** of the words of Jesus. … An actual hypothesis with some explanatory force is that they treated and quoted these texts in this way because they already had reason to believe that **they came from the apostles or companions of the apostles**. In other words, they didn't just **inexplicably glom onto a randomly selected set of four documents** and **decide arbitrarily to treat them as holy books**, but rather treated them in this way because they already had reason to believe that **they came from authoritative and knowledgeable sources**. Hence, even the quotation of the Gospels, without specific explicit attribution to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, is external evidence and attestation relevant to the question of their authorship. And it is evidence which tells in favor of their authorship by the followers of Jesus and their companions.” (Bold emphasis added, “On Bart Ehrman and the authorship of the gospels,” quoted in “Were The Gospels Originally Anonymous? A Response to @NontraditionalCatholic)

#### How could the early Christian community have **accepted** the Gospels as **authoritative** unless they **knew** who had **written** them?

##### Objection: The book of **Hebrews** was accepted as canonical and authoritative even though its author was **unknown**

##### Response: The canonicity of Hebrews was **questioned** for some time

#### Even early critics of Christianity **quoted** or **alluded** to the Gospels and other NT books

##### *Origen*: “For they [Celsus & other critics] will not maintain that the acquaintances and pupils of Jesus Himself handed down His teaching contained in the **Gospels** without committing it to writing, and left His disciples without the **memoirs** of Jesus contained in their works. Now in these it is recorded, that **‘when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then shall ye know that the desolation thereof is nigh.’** [Lk. 21:20]” (“Origen against Celsus.” II:13, ANF, 4:437)

##### *Harry Y. Gamble*: “This means that what was at stake between gnostic and nongnostic Christians was not principally **which books were authoritative**, but rather **how the scriptures were to be rightly interpreted**. In point of fact, gnostic Christians **employed virtually all the books** that were used in the church at large. The difference lay not in the **documents**, but in **different hermeneutical programs**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The New Testament Canon: Recent Research and the Status Quaestionis,” *The Canon Debate*, 293)

#### None of the so-called **apocryphal “gospels”** are anywhere nearly so **widely used**

#### Summary: Evidence of the early use of the Gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is **overwhelming**

## *The Internal Evidence For The Traditional Authorship Of The Gospels*:[[7]](#footnote-8)

### Internal Evidence For Matthew:

#### What can we know about **the writer** of the “Gospel According To Matthew”?

##### He made significant use of **OT quotations**

###### 39 citations

###### 14 quotations

###### 158 allusions

###### 118 echos (Logos Bible Book Explorer)

##### He often quoted from **the LXX**

###### *Robert Kugler & Patrick Hartin*: “Matthew quotes the Greek translation (the Septuagint) of the Old Testament at least **60 times**, while he alludes to it on more than **100 occasions**.” (Bold emphasis added, *An Introduction to the Bible*, 388)

Mt. 1:23 & Isa. 7:14

Mt. 2:6 & Mic. 5:2

Mt. 2:15 & Hos. 11:1

Mt. 2:18 & Jer. 31:15

Mt. 2:23 & Isa. 11:1

Mt. 4:4 & Dt. 8:3

*Etc*.

##### He emphasized **typology**

###### Parallels between **Jesus** and **Moses**

###### **Jesus** as the **Son of David** (Mt. 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21;9, 15; 22:42)

###### **Jesus** as the **fulfillment of the law** (Mt. 5:17-20)

##### He focused on Jesus’ **controversies** with the **Jewish leaders**, especially the Pharisees

###### **Righteousness** must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:20-48)

###### **Eating** with sinners (Mt. 9:11-13)

###### **Plucking grain** on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:1-8)

###### Casting out **demons** (Mt. 12:22-30)

###### A **sign** from heaven (Mt. 12:38-45; 16:1-4)

###### Keeping the **traditions** of the elders (Mt. 15:1-20)

###### **Divorce** for any reason (Mt. 19:1-12)

###### The Parable of the **Landowner** (Mt. 21:33-46)

###### Paying **taxes** to Caesar (Mt. 22:15-22)

###### Jesus’ **woes** on the Pharisees (Mt. 23:1-36)

##### He was likely a **Hellenized Jew**

###### He exhibits **good Greek style**. He seems to be **“at home”** in the Roman world

##### He used the **language of finance** more than any other Gospel

###### **Total references** to money: Mt. [44x]; Mk. [6x]; Lk. [22x]

###### He uses **unique monetary terms**

“Temple tax” [*didrachmon*] (Mt. 17:24)

“Piece of money” [*stater*] (Mt. 17:27)

“Talents” [*talanton*] (Mt. 18:24; 25:15-16, 20, 22, 24-25, 28)

###### “Matthew” uses the Roman word for **“penny”** [*kodrantes*] (Mt. 5:26), while “Luke” uses the Jewish word **“mite”** [*leptos*] (Lk. 12:59)

###### When Jesus sends the apostles out on the **“Limited Commission,”** He tells them not to take:

**Gold** [*chrysos*], **silver** [*argyros*], or **copper** [*chalkos*] (Mt. 10:9)

**Copper** [*chalkos*] (Mk. 6:8)

**Money** [*argyrion*] (Lk. 9:3)

###### Matthew refers to those who **collected the temple tax** [*lambanones*], not **“tax collector”** [*telones*] (Mt. 17:24)

##### He showed the greatest level of **financial interest**

###### The magi, with their **rich gifts** (Mt. 2:11)

###### The parable about **hidden treasure** (Mt. 13:44)

###### The parable about the **discovered pearl** (Mt. 13:45-46)

###### The scribe brings out new and old treasures (Mt. 13:52)

###### The account of Peter and the **temple tax collectors** (Mt. 17:24-27)

###### The parable of the **two debtors** (Mt. 18:23-35)

###### The parable of the **workers** in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16)

###### The parable of the **talents** (Mt. 25:14-30)

###### Judas’s **betrayal money** (Mt. 26:15; 27:3-10)

###### The **bribe** given to the guards of Jesus’s tomb (Mt. 28:12) (Peter Williams, *Can We Trust The Gospels*, 83)

##### He **omitted material** in the “Gospel According To Luke” about **tax collectors**

###### The Parable of the **Pharisee** and the **Tax Collector** (Lk. 18:9-14)

###### The story of **Zacchaeus** (Lk. 19:1-10)

#### What do we know about **Matthew**?

##### He was a **tax collector** (Mt. 10:3; Lk. 5:27)

###### Being both a **Jew** and a **Roman tax collector**, he would have been able to **speak** **Aramaic** and **write quickly in Greek**

*Claudia Hezser*: “It almost goes without saying that the Jews who collaborated with the Romans in the administrative realm had to be loyal supporters of the foreign government and **knowledgeable of Greek**, that is, they must have belonged to the most assimilated circles of the Jewish population.” (Bold emphasis added, , *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*, 489-90, quoted in Pitre, *The Case for Jesus*, 210)

###### As a tax collector, Matthew would have had access to **papyrus** for writing

##### He was **called to discipleship** by Jesus (Mt. 9:9)

##### He hosted **a feast** for Jesus and His disciples (Mt. 9:10-13)

##### He was also named **“Levi”**

###### There can be little doubt that the tax collector named **“Levi”** (Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27, 29) is one and the same as **“Matthew”** (Mt. 9:9)

The **call of Levi** and the **call of Matthew** are so **similar**, they must be the **same individual** (Mt. 9:9-13; Mk. 2:13-17; Lk. 5:27-32)

**“His** [Levi’s] **house”** (Mk. 2:15; Lk. 5:29) is **“the house”** (Mt. 9:10)

##### He was one of Jesus’ **apostles** (Mt. 10:1-4; Lk. 6:12-16; Acts 1:13)

###### As an apostle, he was **an eyewitness** to:

Jesus’ **teaching**

The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7)

The Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6)

Kingdom parables (Mt. 13:10 // Mk. 4:9)

Debate over traditions (Mt. 15:1-20 // Mk. 7:1-23)

The Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 13-14)

*Etc*.

Jesus’ **miracles**

Stilling the storm (Mt. 8:23-27 // Mk. 4:36-41 // Lk. 8:22-25)

Walking on water (Mt. 14:22-33 // Mk. 6:45-52 // Jn. 6:14-21)

Feeding the 5,000 (Mt. 14:13-21 // Mk. 6:31-44 // Lk. 9:11-17 // Jn. 6:1-13)

Feeding the 4,000 (Mt. 15:32-39 // Mk. 8:1-10)

Healing the demon-possessed son (Mt. 17:14-21 // Lk. 9:37-42)

Healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mt. 20:29-34 // Mk. 10:46-52 // Lk. 18:35-43)

Cursing the barren fig tree (Mt. 12:12-13, 18-22 // Mk. 11:12-26 // Lk. 19:45-48)

*Etc*.

Jesus’ **actions**

Jesus’ preaching (Lk. 8:1-3)

Jesus’ rejection by many of His disciples (Jn. 6:60-71)

The Triumphal Entry (Mt. 21:1-11 // Mk. 11:1-11 // Lk. 19:29-44 // Jn. 12:12-19)

The Last Supper (Mt. 26:20, 29 // Mk. 14:17, 25 // Lk. 22:14-18)

Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46 // Mk. 14:32-42 // Jn. 18:1)

*Etc*.

Jesus’ **prophecies** of His Passion

1st Prediction (Mt. 16:21-26 // Mk. 8:31-37 // Lk. 9:22-25)

2nd Prediction (Mt. 17:39-40 // Mk. 9:30-32 // Lk. 9:43-45)

3rd Prediction (Mt. 20:17-19 // Mk. 10:32-34 // Lk. 18:31-34)

4th Prediction (Mt. 26:1-2)

Jesus’ **post-resurrection appearances**

The eleven & others (Mk. 16:14 // Lk. 24:33, 36-43 // Jn. 20:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:5)

500 brethren (1 Cor. 15:6)

The apostles after 8 days (Jn. 20:26-29; 1 Cor. 15:7)

The eleven in Galilee (Mt. 26:16-20 // Mk. 16:15-18)

The eleven at Jerusalem (Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8)

The eleven on the Mt. of Olives (Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11)

Jesus’ **ascension** (Mk. 16:19 [?]; Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11)

#### None of the things that we are told about Matthew **“prove”** that he wrote the “First Gospel,” but they are certainly **consistent** with that claim

### Internal Evidence For Mark:

#### What can we know about **the writer** of the “Gospel According To Mark”

##### He **focused on Peter** more than any of the other Gospels

###### Aside from Jesus, **Peter is mentioned most** in Mark and more than anyone else in the Gospel

###### **Peter’s name** is mentioned at the beginning and the end of this gospel perhaps forming an *inclusio* (Mk. 1:16; 16:7)

###### He never refers to ***Simon***Peter

##### He wrote in **rough Greek**

###### “[T]he Greek of Mark’s Gospel has a distinctly **Semitic tinge**, a fact that makes it much more likely that its author was a **Semite** who spoke **Greek** as a **second language**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1464)

##### He used several **Latinisms**

###### **At the point of death** [*eschatos echo*] (Mk. 5:23)

###### **Legion** [*legion*] (Mk. 5:9, 15)

###### **Executioner** [*spekoulator*] (Mk. 6:27)

###### **Denarius** (Mk. 6:37)

###### **Pitchers** [*xestes* = quart measure] (Mk. 7:4)

###### **Taxes** [*kensos* = “poll tax”] (Mk. 12:14)

###### **Quadrans** [*kodrantes* = a Roman coin] (Mk. 12:42)

*Robert Kugler & Patrick Hartin*: “This Roman coin **did not circulate in the East**, but was in use only in the western part of the Roman Empire. This is a strong argument that **the readers are in Rome** and Mark is referring to their currency.” (Bold emphasis added, *An Introduction to the Bible*, 375)

###### **Centurion** [*keutyrion*] (Mk. 15:39, 44-45)

###### **Scourged** [*phragelloo*] (Mk. 15:15)

###### Struck him with the **palms of their hands** [*ballo autos rhapisma*] (Mk. 14:65)

##### The “**fourth watch** of the night” (Mk. 6:48) refers to a **Roman reckoning** of time (Mt. 14:25; Mk. 13:35); a **Jewish reckoning** of time included only **three watches** (Ex. 14:24; Jdg. 7:19; 1 Sam. 11:11; Lam. 2:19)

###### This fits the patristic evidence that **Mark** wrote a **gospel** in **Italy** (Clement & Anti-Marcionite Prologue)

##### He explained several **Aramaisms**

###### **“Boanerges”** [“Sons of Thunder”] (Mk. 3:17)

###### **“Talitha cumi”** [“Little girl, I say to you, arise”] (Mk. 5:41)

###### **“Corban”** [a gift] (Mk. 7:11)

###### **“Ephphatha”** [“Be opened”] (Mk. 7:34)

###### **“Golgotha”** [“Place of a Skull”] (Mk. 15:22

###### This would fit a **Jewish author** of Palestinian origin writing to a **Gentile audience** outside Palestine

##### He explained **Jewish customs** to his readers (e.g. Mk. 7:1-5)

##### He used a **plural-to-singular** narrative device

###### See Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, chapter 7 for a detailed explanation.

##### The **layout** of the “Gospel According To Mark” aligns well with **Peter’s sermon** to the household of Cornelius (Acts 10)

| **Acts 10:36-42** | **Gospel of Mark** |
| --- | --- |
| 36: good news of peace | 1:1: beginning of good news |
| 37: baptism John preached | 1:9: baptized by John |
| 38: Jesus anointed with Holy Spirit | 1:10: Spirit descending on Him |
| 37: Beginning in Galilee | 1:16-8:26: Galilean ministry |
| 38: Doing good healing | 1:34: healings & exorcisms |
| 39: witnesses | 11:11 to 14: Jesus entered Jerusalem |
| 39: killed by hanging | 15:24: crucified him |
| 40: God raised him | 16:6: He is risen |
| 41: seen by witnesses | 16:7: Tell disciples & Peter |
| 42: preach & testify | 13:10: First commission (6:6b-13; 13:10) |

##### He may have been **the young man** who followed Jesus after He was arrested in Gethsemane and **fled naked** when some tried to lay hold of him (Mk. 14:51-52)

###### If this young man was the one who wrote the Second Gospel, it’s **not hard to understand** why he would mention this incident

###### If he did not write the Second Gospel, it’s **hard to understand** why this incident is mentioned at all

###### If he wrote the Second Gospel, then he was **a witness** to **Jesus’ arrest** in the garden

#### What do we know about **Mark**?

##### Christians gathered to pray in the home of **Mark’s mother** in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12)

###### This might suggest that Mark’s family was relatively **well off financially**, and therefore, Mark could have had certain **educational advantages**

###### Mark would also have had contact with **early Christians** and almost certainly some **eyewitnesses**

##### Mark was a companion of **Paul** and **Barnabas** for a time on the First Missionary Journey before he defected and returned home (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37-39)

###### So, he could have learned some things about Jesus from them

##### Mark was a companion of **Peter** in **“Babylon”** [Rome ?] (1 Pet. 5:13)

###### So, he had access to **Peter’s eyewitness testimony** about Jesus

##### Mark was a companion of **Paul** in **Rome** (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24; cf. 2 Tim. 4:11)

###### So, he could have learned some things about Jesus during that time

##### The NT speaks of “**John**, whose surname was **Mark**” (Acts 12:12, 25) and “**John** called **Mark**” (Acts 15:37) and “**Mark**” (Acts 15:39; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24; 1 Pet. 5:13). Are all these references to **the same person**?

###### “It is highly **unlikely**, despite the **popularity** of the name **Mark** in the first century, that **more than one Mark** could be mentioned in such **close proximity** to the ministries of Peter and Paul (and Barnabas, Silas, and Luke) **without any distinction** between them being indicated.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1464)

#### None of the things that we are told about Mark **“prove”** that he wrote the “Second Gospel,” but they are certainly **consistent** with that claim

### Internal Evidence For Luke:

#### What can we know about **the writer** of the “Gospel According To Luke”?

##### He was an **educated man**

###### Scholars say that his **literary skills** are among the best in the NT

##### He was not an **eyewitness**; therefore, not an **apostle** or **early disciple** (Lk. 1:2)

##### He must have been known by **Theophilus** (Lk. 1:3)

###### Therefore, this gospel was **not really anonymous**, as Bart Ehrman and others claim

##### He was also the **writer of** **“Acts”** (Acts 1:1-3)

###### Both have a **similar preface** (Lk. 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5)

###### Both are addressed to **Theophilus** (Lk. 1:3; Acts 1:1)

###### Both share a common **vocabulary**, **style**, **structure**, and **theological concern**

###### Both share several **common themes**

Gentiles, women, prayer, the Holy Spirit, Roman rulers, soldiers, geography, table fellowship, & hospitality (*Lexham Bible Dictionary*)

Some of these themes receive a **distinctive emphasis** in “Luke” that are not found elsewhere in the NT

###### “Acts” refers to a **“former work”** (Acts 1:1)

###### Acts 1:1 serves as a **recapitulation** of the material in “Luke”

Only “Luke” records the **ascension** (Lk. 24:50-53) if the **longer ending** of Mark is **not original** (Mk. 16:19)

Other NT writers **know of the ascension** (cf. Jn. 6:62; 20:17; Eph. 4:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16)

###### “Acts” begins where “Luke” **leaves off**:

Temporally: Jesus’ **ascension** (Lk. 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-10)

Geographically: **Jerusalem** (Lk. 24:52-53; Acts 1:9-10)

Situationally: Apostles **waiting** for the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8)

##### He knew the **LXX**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Luke & Acts** | **The LXX** |
| Lk. 3:5-6 | Isa. 40:4-5 |
| Lk. 4:18 | Isa. 61:1; 58:6 |
| Acts 2:19 | Joel 2:30 |
| Acts 2:25-26 | Psa. 16:8 |
| Acts 4:26 | Psa. 2:1 |
| Acts 7:14 | Gen. 36:27; Dt. 10:22 |
| Acts 7:27-28 | Ex. 2:14 |
| Acts 7:43 | Amos 5:26-27 |
| Acts 8:33 | Isa. 53:7-8 |
| Acts 13:41 | Hab. 1:5 |
| Acts 15:17 | Amos 9:12 |
| https://www.scripturecatholic.com/septuagint-quotes-new-testament/ |

##### He was **not a Jew**

###### He says that the **field** purchased with the wages of iniquity was called *Akel Dama* “in ***their*** own language” (Acts 1:18-19)

Evidently the writer’s native language was **different** from the Jews

###### This may help to explain **his Gentile focus**:

His emphasis on the **universality** of the gospel

His omission of material that focuses on the **Jewish law**

His substitution of **Greek equivalents** for Jewish titles

His focus on **Gentile converts** in Acts (Carson & Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 211)

##### He was one of Paul’s **traveling companions**

###### The **“we” sections** in the book of “Acts” indicate that its author **traveled with Paul**

2nd Journey: Troas to Philippi (Acts 16:10-17)

3rd Journey: Philippi to Miletus (Acts 20:5-15)

3rd Journey: Miletus to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-18)

Journey to Rome: Caesarea to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16)

###### Since the writer **accompanied Paul to Rome** (Acts 27:1-28:16), it is reasonable to assume that he was one of **Paul’s companions** mentioned in the **Prison Epistles** (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, & Philemon) or **2 Timothy**

**Aristarchus** (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24)

**Epaphras** (Col. 4:12; Phile. 23)

**Justus** (Col. 4:11)

**Luke** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)

**Mark** (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24)

**Onesimus** (Col. 4:9; Phile. 10)

**Timothy** (Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Phile. 1)

**Titus** (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6; 2 Tim. 4:10)

**Tychicus** (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12)

**Demas** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10)

**Epaphroditus** (Phil. 2:25; 4:18)

**Artemas** (Tit. 3:12)

**Crescens** (2 Tim. 4:10)

###### By the **process of elimination**, we can exclude several of Paul’s traveling companions as **the writer** of the Third Gospel and “Acts”

We can exclude **Paul** and all of his **traveling companions** that are mentioned by **name** in the book of “Acts”

**Paul** (Acts 16:17)

**Silas** (Acts 16:19)

**Aquila** (Acts 18:18; 1 Cor. 16:19)

**Priscilla** (Acts 18:18; 1 Cor. 16:19)

**Sopater** (Acts 20:4)

**Aristarchus** (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2)

**Secundus** (Acts 20:4)

**Gaius** (Acts 19:29; 20:4)

**Timothy** (Acts 20:4)

**Tychicus** (Acts 20:4)

**Trophimus** (Acts 20:4; 21:29)

That leaves:

**Epaphras** (Col. 4:12; Phile. 23)

**Justus** (Col. 4:11)

**Luke** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)

**Mark** (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24)

**Onesimus** (Col. 4:9; Phile. 10)

**Titus** (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6; 2 Tim. 4:10)

**Demas** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10)

**Epaphroditus** (Phil. 2:25; 4:18)

**Artemas** (Tit. 3:12)

**Crescens** (2 Tim. 4:10)

We can exclude anyone who **was not with** **Paul** when the writer of “Acts” was **with Paul** (i.e. within the “we” sections):

**Mark** (Col. 4:10; Phile. 24)

The writer of “Acts” traveled with Paul on his Second Missionary Journey from **Troas** to **Philippi** (Acts 16:10-17)

**Mark** did not travel with Paul on the Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-41)

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Epaphroditus** (Phil. 2:25; 4:18)

The writer of “Acts” traveled with Paul on his Second Missionary Journey from **Troas** to **Philippi** (Acts 16:10-17)

Epaphroditus was from **Philippi** (Phil. 2:25), but Paul did not visit Philippi until after he received the “Macedonian Call” in Troas (Acts 16:9-12)

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Titus** (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6; 2 Tim. 4:10)

The writer of “Acts” traveled with Paul on his Second Missionary Journey from **Troas** to **Philippi** (Acts 16:10-17)

Titus is first mentioned in **2 Corinthians**, which was written on **Paul’s Third Missionary Journey** from Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:5; 8:1; 9:2-4)

a} “Macedonia was the place from which it was written
 (2 Co 9:2, where **the present tense**, ‘I boast,’ or ‘am
 boasting,’ implies **his presence *then* in** **Macedonia**).” (Bold emphasis added, JFB, 2:299)

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Epaphras** (Col. 4:12; Phile. 23)

The writer of “Acts” traveled with Paul on his Second Missionary Journey from **Troas** to **Philippi** (Acts 16:10-17)

Paul **stopped briefly** in Ephesus near the end of his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 18:19-21)

Paul spent **three years** in Ephesus on his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 20:31), and during that time “all who dwelt in Asia **heard the word** of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:10)

Epaphras was a **Colossian** (Col. 4:12), and Colossae was **near Ephesus**

So, Epaphras probably did not become associated with Paul until his Third Missionary Journey

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Onesimus** (Col. 4:9; Phile. 10)

Onesimus was **converted** while Paul was **imprisoned in Rome** (Phile. 10)

This was sometime after the writer of “Acts” accompanied Paul to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16)

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Artemas** (Tit. 3:12)

The writer of “Acts” accompanied Paul to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16)

There is no indication that Artemas was one of Paul’s companions before his release from his **first Roman imprisonment**

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

**Crescens** (2 Tim. 4:12)

The writer of “Acts” accompanied Paul to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16)

There is no indication that Crescens was one of Paul’s companions before his **second Roman imprisonment**

So, he could not be the writer of “Acts”

By this process of elimination, that leaves:

**Justus** (Col. 4:11)

**Luke** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)

**Demas** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:10)

It seems highly unlikely that the writer of the Third Gospel would be **Demas** who eventually **apostatized** (2 Tim. 4:10)

It also seems highly unlikely that **Justus** (Col. 4:11), who is **only mentioned once**,would be the writer of the Third Gospel

So that narrows the possibilities down to **one**: **Luke** (Col. 4:14; Phile. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)

#### What do we know about **Luke**?

##### He was a **Gentile** (Col. 4:10-14)

###### Although his name is **Greek** (*Loukas*), this is **not conclusive** since Greek names were borne by Jews (e.g. Andrew = *Andreas*, Philip = *Philippos*)

###### But Paul distinguishes Luke from his **Jewish co-workers** (Col. 4:7-11, 14)

##### He was **beloved** by Paul and others (Col. 4:14)

##### He was a **physician** (Col. 4:14)

###### As a physician, Luke must have been **well-educated**

###### Luke supplies **“medical** **details”** that the other Gospel writers do not

| **Luke & “Medical Details”** |
| --- |
| **Luke** | **Matthew & Mark** |
| “*High* fever” (Lk. 4:38) | “Fever” (Mt. 8:14; Mk. 1:30) |
| “*Full* of leprosy” (Lk. 5:12) | “A leper” (Mt. 8:2; Mk. 1:40) |
| Woman *could not be healed* by any physician (Lk. 8:43) | Woman “had suffered many things from many physicians” (Mk. 5:26) |
| “*Right* hand was withered” (Lk. 6:6) | “A withered hand” (Mt. 12:10; Mk. 3:1) |
| “Cut off his *right* ear” (Lk. 22:50; Jn. 18:10) | “Cut off his ear” (Mt. 26:521; Mk. 14:47) |

###### It’s certainly reasonable to believe that the **polished Greek** of the Third Gospel’s Prologue (Lk. 1:1-4) could have been written by a **Gentile** **physician**

##### He was one of Paul’s **fellow laborers** (Phile. 24)

###### **Luke** is always mentioned alongside **Mark** (Col. 4:10-11, 14; Phile. 23-24; 2 Tim. 4:11)

###### So, if the Third Gospel [Luke] was **dependent** on the Second Gospel [Mark], as many scholars believe, Luke could have had **access** to that Gospel

##### He was a **preacher** (Acts 16:10, 13, 17)

##### He was a **companion of Paul in Rome**

###### During Paul’s **First Roman Imprisonment** (Col. 4:3, 10, 14, 18; Phile. 1, 9-10, 13, 23-24)

###### During Paul’s **Second Roman Imprisonment** (2 Tim. 4:11)

#### None of the things that we are told about Luke **“prove”** that he wrote the “Third Gospel,” but they are certainly **consistent** with that claim

### Internal Evidence For John:

#### What can we know about **the writer** of the “Gospel According To John”?

##### He was probably a **Jew**

###### His use of the **OT** (Jn. 6:45; 13:18; 19:37)

17 citations

2 quotations

15 echos

59 allusions (Logos Bible Browser)

###### His knowledge of Jewish **ideas**, **traditions**, **expectations** (Jn 1:19-49; 2:6, 13; 3:25; 4:25; 5:1; 6:14, 15; 7:26ff; Jn 10:22; 11:55; 12:13; 13:1; 18:28; 19:31, 42)

##### He was probably a **native of Palestine**

###### His knowledge of **Palestine** (Jn. 1:44, 46; 2:1; 4:47; 5:2; 9:7; 10:23; 11:54)

##### He claimed to be an **eyewitness** (Jn. 19:35; 21:24-25)

###### He beheld the Word’s **glory** (Jn. 1:14)

Peter, James, & John beheld Jesus’ glory at the **Transfiguration** (Lk. 9:28, 32; 2 Pet. 1:16-18)

Jesus’ glory was manifested **elsewhere** (Jn. 2:11; 11:4, 40)

###### There is a certain **exactness** in the details of time, place, and incidents in this Gospel (cf. Jn 1:29, 35, 43; 2:6; 4:40, 43; 5:5; 12:1, 6, 12; 13:26; 19:14, 20, 23, 34, 39; 20:7; 21:6)

###### There are **character sketches** (e.g., Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Nathanael, the woman of Samaria, Nicodemus) that are peculiar to this Gospel

##### He mentioned the kind of **“little details”** that characterize eyewitness testimony

###### He mentions the **tenth hour** (Jn. 1:39)

###### He reports that the apostles had rowed about **“three or four miles”** [lit. 25 or 30 *stadia*] when Jesus came to them walking on the water (Jn. 6:19)

###### He reports that Jesus **gave bread** to Judas (Jn. 13:26)

###### He knows Jesus’ **garments were divided** between four soldiers (Jn. 19:23)

###### He knows Jesus’ legs were **not broken** (Jn. 19:33)

###### He knows that **blood** **and water** come from Jesus’ pierced side (Jn. 19:34-35)

###### He knows that the beloved disciple **got to the tomb** before Peter (Jn. 20:4)

###### He knows the **tomb was empty**, and the **linen cloths**, and the **handkerchief** were separated from one another (Jn. 20:4-8)

###### He knows that Peter put on his **outer garment** and jumped into the sea (Jn. 21:7)

###### He knows that Jesus made **breakfast** for the seven disciples (Jn. 21:9-14)

###### He knows that the seven disciples caught **153 fish** (Jn. 21:11)

##### He mentions **incidental, unimportant details** (cf. Jn. 2:12; 11:54)

###### *Richard Bauckham*: “[T]he occasions on which the Beloved Disciple appears in the narrative are marked by **observational detail**. As Tovey puts it, ‘at every point where the beloved disciple appears … the narrative includes items of **close detail** which suggest “**on the spot,” eyewitness report**.’ …. Of course, the presence of such narrative detail cannot prove that the Gospel really does embody eyewitness reporting, but that is not what is being claimed here. The point is rather that the Gospel portrays the Beloved Disciple as **one qualified to give eyewitness reports** of the occasions on which he was present. Although there is **observational detail in other passages** of the Gospel, what is notable is how consistently the appearances of the Beloved Disciple are accompanied by such detail.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 398)

##### He was familiar with the **Sea of Galilee**

###### He is the only Gospel writer to use the term **“[small] fish”** [*opsarion*] (Jn. 6:9, 11; 21:9-10, 13)

###### He knew the Sea of Galilee by **multiple names** (Jn 6:1; 21:1)

##### The Fourth Gospel was written by the **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 21:20-24)

##### What do we **know** about the “beloved disciple”?

###### He **leaned** on Jesus’ breast at the **Last Supper** (Jn. 13:23-25)

###### He is often associated with **Peter** (Jn. 13:23-24; 18:15-16; 20:2-4, 6-7; 21:1-2, 7, 20-23

Note: **Peter** and **John** are often linked together (Mt. 17:1; Mk. 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Lk. 8:51; 9:28; 22:8; Acts 3:1, 3-4, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14)

###### He acted as an **intermediary** between Peter and Jesus during the Last Supper (Jn. 13:24-25)

###### He learned the identity of **Jesus’ betrayer** [i.e. Judas Iscariot] (Jn. 13:21-26)

###### He was known to the **high priest** (Jn. 18:15)

###### He was entrusted with **Mary’s care** (Jn. 19:26)

###### He witnessed the **spear thrust** in Jesus’ side (Jn. 19:35)

###### He and Peter were **informed** by Mary that the tomb was empty (Jn. 20:1-2)

###### He and Peter ran to **investigate** Jesus’ tomb (Jn. 20:2-4)

###### He found the tomb **empty** and believed in the **resurrection** (Jn. 20:5-8)

###### He was **one of the seven disciples** who went fishing on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus’ resurrection (Jn. 21:2, 7)

###### He **identified Jesus** for Peter at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:7)

###### He was **well-known** among Jesus disciples (Jn. 21:23)

##### **Who** was the “beloved disciple”?

###### Many **suggestions** have been offered:

Lazarus (Jn. 11:3, 5, 35-36)

Thomas

The rich young ruler (Mk. 10:21)

An unknown disciple

The ideal perfect disciple

John the elder

John Mark

The apostle John, the son of Zebedee (the traditional view)

###### I believe he was the **apostle John**, the son of Zebedee

Since he **leaned** on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper, he must have been **one of Jesus 12 apostles** (Jn. 13:23-25)

Jesus ate the Passover with **the twelve** (Mt. 26:20; Mk. 14:17-20; Lk. 22:14, 28-30)

There is no clear indication that **any other disciples** were present

**Certain apostles** are named and no one else:

Judas Iscariot (Jn. 13:2, 26, 30; cf. Mt. 26:25)

Simon Peter (Jn. 13:6, 8-9, 24, 36-37; cf. Mt. 26:33-35; Mk. 14:29-31; Lk. 22:31-34)

The beloved disciple (Jn. 13:23)

Thomas (Jn. 14:5)

Philip (Jn. 14:8)

Judas [not Iscariot] (Jn. 14:22)

He was **one of the 7 disciples** in the fishing party on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus’ resurrection (Jn. 21:1-3, 7)

Simon Peter

Thomas

Nathanael

The sons of Zebedee (James and John)

Two other disciples

If the **unnamed disciple** (Jn. 1:35, 40) and the **“other disciple”** (Jn. 18:16; 20:2-4, 8) and the **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) are all the **same person**, he is **distinguished** from **other named individuals**; therefore, he cannot be:

**Peter**

The **unnamed disciple** (Jn. 1:35, 40) is distinguished from **Peter** (Jn. 1:41)

The **“beloved disciple”** is distinguished from **Peter** (Jn. 13:23-24; 20:2-9; 21:7, 20-24)

**Andrew**

The **unnamed disciple** is distinguished from **Andrew** (Jn. 1:35, 40)

**Philip**

The **unnamed disciple** (Jn. 1:35) is mentioned in the same context with **Philip** (Jn. 1:43-44)

The **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 13:23) is mentioned in the same context with **Philip** (Jn. 14:8-9)

**Bartholomew** (Jn. 1:35, 45-49)

The **unnamed disciple** (Jn. 1:35) is mentioned in the same context with **Nathaniel** (Jn. 1:45-49)

The **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 21:7, 20) is mentioned in the same context with **Nathaniel** (Jn. 21:2)

If **Bartholomew** is **Nathaniel**, as many believe, then the unnamed disciple is probably not Nathaniel[[8]](#footnote-9)

**Thomas**

The **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 13:23) is mentioned in the same context with **Thomas** (Jn. 14:5)

**Matthew**

If Matthew wrote the **“first Gospel,”** it is unlikely that he is the “beloved disciple” who wrote the **“fourth Gospel”** (Jn. 21:20-24)

**Thaddaeus**

**Thaddaeus** (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18) is apparently **Judas** the son of James (Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13) or **Judas** [not Iscariot] (Jn. 14:22)

The **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 13:23) is mentioned in the same context with **Judas** [not Iscariot] (Jn. 14:22)

**Judas Iscariot**

The **“beloved disciple”** (Jn. 13:23) is distinguished from **Judas Iscariot** (Jn. 13:25-30)

This leaves only four apostles: **James** and **John**, the sons of Zebedee, **Simon** the Canaanite, and **James** the son of Alphaeus

**James** the son of Alphaeus was **an apostle** (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13), and he may have been **“James the Less”** (Mk. 15:40) and a **brother to Levi** [Matthew] (Mk. 2:14. Nothing else is revealed about him, so, it seems highly unlikely that he was the “beloved disciple”

**Simon** the Canaanite or the Zealot is mentioned only in the lists of the apostles (Mt. 10:4; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13). Nothing else is known about him, so, it seems highly unlikely that he was the “beloved disciple”

This leaves **James** and **John**, the sons of Zebedee

It seems likely that the “beloved disciple” was one of **Jesus’ inner circle**: Peter, James, & John who were with Jesus on certain **“special occasions”** (See [above](#_He_was_one))

If the “beloved disciple” was one of those in this **“inner circle**”:

He cannot be **James**, the son of Zebedee because he was **martyred too early** to be the author of the Fourth Gospel [~AD 44] (Acts 12:1-2)

He cannot be **Peter** because he is **distinguished** from the “beloved disciple” (Jn. 13:23-24; 20:2-9; 21:7, 20-24)

That leaves **John**, the son of Zebedee

##### The writer of the “Gospel According To John” never mentions **John** or **James**, the sons of Zebedee, by name; and he refers to Jesus’ forerunner as simply **“John,”** not John the Baptist (Jn. 1:6, 15, 19, 26, 28-29, 32, 35, 40; 3:23-24, 26-27; 4:1; 5:33; 10:40-41)

###### *Martin Pickup*: “First, if ‘the beloved disciple’ is not John the apostle, it becomes very difficult to explain why it is that this Gospel, while mentioning by name other apostles of Jesus, **fails to mention by name so prominent an apostle as John** (as well as his apostolic brother James), save for the oblique reference to **‘the sons of Zebedee’** in the Gospel’s appendix (21:2). Secondly, among the four Gospels it is striking that **John the Baptist is identified simply as ‘John’** only in the fourth Gospel; the Synoptic Gospels refer to him as ‘**John the Baptist’** in order to distinguish him from the other prominent John connected with the life of Jesus, viz., the apostle John. The fourth Gospel’s way of designating John the Baptist makes sense, however, if the author was himself John the apostle, for **he was the one person who could call the Baptist simply ‘John’ without risk of confusing his readers about who was intended**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Who Wrote The Gospels,” 19)

#### What do we know about **John**?

##### He was the son of **Zebedee** (Mt. 4:21)

##### He was the brother of **James** (Mt. 4:21)

##### His home was probably **Bethsaida** (Jn. 1:44; 12:21)

##### His mother was **Salome** (cf. Mt. 27:55-56 & Mk. 15:40-41)

###### Salome was a sister of Jesus’ mother **Mary** (Mt. 27:55-56 & Jn. 19:25)

###### So, John and Jesus were **first cousins**

###### He was related to **John the Baptist** (Lk. 1:36)

###### Salome helped **support** Jesus (Mk. 15:40 & Lk. 8:3)

##### He was part of a **fishing business** (Mt. 4:21-22; Mk. 1:19-20; Lk. 5:9-10)

###### They had at least **two boats** and **hired servants** (Mk. 1:20; Lk. 5:2)

###### He was **partners** with Peter (Lk. 5:7-10)

###### He was likely **financially secure**, if not well off

##### He was called to **discipleship** by Jesus

###### First Call [?]: Judea (Jn. 1:35-40)

###### Second Call: Sea of Galilee (Mt. 4:21-22; Mk. 1:20)

##### He was one of Jesus’ **apostles** (Mt. 10:2; Mk. 3:14-17; Lk. 6:13-14; Acts 1:13)

###### As an apostle, he was an **eyewitness** to:

Jesus’ **teaching**

Jesus’ **miracles**

Jesus’ **actions**

Jesus’ **prophecies** of His Passion

Jesus’ post-resurrection **appearances**

Jesus’ **ascension** (For more details see [above](#_Jesus’_teaching))

##### He was one of Jesus’ **“inner circle”** (Peter, James, & John)

###### The **resurrection** of Jairus’ daughter (Mk. 5:37)

###### The **Transfiguration** (Mt. 17:1 // Mk. 9:2; Lk. 9:28)

###### **Gethsemane** (Mt. 26:37; Mk. 14:33)

##### He and his brother James were called *Boanerges* [“Sons of Thunder”] apparently because they had a rather **volatile temperament** (Mk. 3:17; Lk. 9:51-55)

##### He could be **intolerant** at times (Mk. 9:38-41 // Lk. 9:49-50)

##### He was **ambitious** (Mt. 20:20-28 // Mk. 10:35-45)

##### He and others asked Jesus to explain His prophecy of **Jerusalem’s** **destruction** (Mk. 13:3-4)

##### He and Peter prepared the **Passover** for Jesus and His disciples (Lk. 22:8-13)

##### If John was the **“beloved disciple,”** then what we know about him applies to John (See [above](#_What_do_we))

##### He was among the **fishing party** on the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-3, 7, 20)

##### He was **Peter’s companion** (Lk. 22:8; Acts 3:1, 3, 11; 4:13, 19; 8:14)

##### He was one of **the pillars** in the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9)

##### He was banished to the island of **Patmos** and wrote the **Apocalypse** (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9)

##### He became known as the **apostle of love**

#### None of the things that we are told about John **“prove”** that he wrote the “Fourth Gospel,” but they are certainly **consistent** with that claim

## *General Objections To The Traditional Authorship Of The Gospels*:

### **The Gospels Are Anonymous Since They Contain No Internal Indications Of Authorship**

#### Explanation:

##### Unlike the Pauline and Petrine epistles, there are **no indications of authorship** in the content of the Gospels

##### Therefore, we **do not** and **cannot know** who wrote them

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “There were some books, such as the Gospels, that had been written **anonymously**, only later to be **ascribed** to certain authors who **probably did not write them** (apostles and friends of the apostles). Other books were written by authors who flat out **claimed to be someone they weren’t**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Interrupted*, 47)

#### Evaluation:

##### Ancient biographies were often **“formally anonymous”**

###### **Tacitus’** ***Annals*** were “formally anonymous”

Tacitus lived ~**AD 56-120**

The Annals were published ~**AD** **116**

**Pliny** is the **only contemporary** to mention Tacitus

Tacitus is **mentioned** or **quoted** in **each century** down to and including the sixth

He is not mentioned by anyone in the **seventh** or **eighth** centuries

Although the *Annals* were **“formally anonymous,”** it was commonly known that **Tacitus** was the author, and no one **doubts** this

*James Patrick Holding*: “If Tacitus is **referred to** by other people, or if he is **found in other records**, and if **others attribute a work to him**, then this is clear testimony that **he wrote the document in question**…. On the other hand, if some writer at some point (the closer to the time of Tacitus, the ‘better’) either **denies** that Tacitus wrote a given work attributed to him, or else **attributes** (without reference to Tacitus) **the work to another**, we may have reason to **suspect Tacitus' authorship**.” (*Tektonics*, 9)

###### **Plutarch’s** ***Lives*** were “formally anonymous

Plutarch lived **~AD** **46-119+**

He wrote **more biographies** that have survived than anyone else (50:60+)

His name **never appears** in his biographies

Most classical authors **did not include their names**

Yet **no one doubts** that Plutarch wrote these works

**Manuscript tradition** clearly attributes the Lives to Plutarch

**Lamprias Catalogue** (3-4th century) lists Plutarch’s writings[[9]](#footnote-10)

##### Some **OT books** (e.g. 1-2 Kings; 1-2 Chronicles) are “formally anonymous”; yet they are recognized as **canonical**

##### **Hebrews** in the NT is “formally anonymous”; yet it is accepted as canonical

### **The Attributions Of Authorship For The Gospels Are Late**

#### Explanation:

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “It was about **a century after the Gospels** had been originally put in circulation that they were **definitely named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**. This comes, for the first time, in the writings of the church father and heresiologist **Irenaeus**, around 180-85 CE.” [[10]](#footnote-11) (Bold emphasis added, *Forged*, 79)

#### Evaluation:

##### This is a **very old objection**

###### Augustine reports that **Faustus** raised this objection **~AD 400**

*Augustine*: “[W]hen I begin to quote the Gospel of His apostle Matthew, where we have the whole narrative of Christ’s birth, you forthwith **deny that Matthew wrote the narrative**, though this is affirmed by the **continuous testimony of the whole Church, from the days of apostolic presidency to the bishops of our own time**. What authority will you quote against this?” (Bold emphasis added, “Reply to Faustus the Manichæan,” Book XXVIII, NPNF, 1887, 1.4:325)

*Augustine*: “6. You [Faustus] are so hardened in your errors against the testimonies of Scripture, that nothing can be made of you; for whenever anything is quoted against you, you have the boldness to say that **it is written not by the apostle, but by some pretender under his name**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Contra Faustum,” 33:6, NPNF, 1.4, 343)

###### Augustine **answers** Faustus’ objection

*Augustine*: “**How can we be sure of the authorship of any book**, if we doubt the apostolic origin of those books which are **attributed** to the apostles by the Church which the apostles themselves **founded**, and which occupies so **conspicuous a place** in all lands, and if at the same time we acknowledge as the undoubted production of the apostles what is **brought forward by heretics** in opposition to the Church, whose authors, from whom they derive their name, lived long after the apostles?” (Bold emphasis added, “Contra Faustum,” 33:6, NPNF, 1.4, 343)

*Augustine*: “To give a single example, were not some books published lately under the name of the distinguished physician **Hippocrates**, which were **not received as authoritative** by physicians? And this decision remained unaltered in spite of some similarity in style and matter: for, when compared to the genuine writings of Hippocrates, these books were found to be **inferior**; besides that they were **not recognized as his** at the time when his authorship of his genuine productions was ascertained. Those books, again, from a comparison with which the productions of questionable origin were rejected, are with certainty attributed to Hippocrates; and any one who denies their authorship is answered only by ridicule, simply because there is **a succession of testimonies to the books from the time of Hippocrates to the present day**, which makes it unreasonable either now or hereafter to have any doubt on the subject. How do we know the authorship of the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Varro, and other similar writers, but by **the unbroken chain of evidence**? So also with the numerous commentaries on the ecclesiastical books, which have no canonical authority, and yet show a desire of usefulness and a spirit of inquiry. How is the authorship ascertained in each case, except by the author’s having brought his work into **public notice** as much as possible in his own lifetime and, by **the transmission of the information** from one to another in **continuous order**, the belief becoming more certain as it becomes more general, up to our own day; so that, when we are questioned as to the authorship of any book, we have no difficulty in answering?” (Bold emphasis added, “Contra Faustum,” 39:6, NPNF, 1887, 1.4:343)

##### There is a **“chain of custody”** linking those who attribute authorship to Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John to the apostles (For more details see [above](#_These_men_were))

### **The “Traditional Names” Were Attributed To The Gospels To Give Them Prestige**

#### Explanation:

#### Evaluation:

##### Why pick **Matthew**?

###### He was a **minor character**

The Synoptic Gospels record **his call** to discipleship and **the feast** Jesus enjoyed at his house (Mt. 9:9-13 // Mk. 2:13-17 // Lk. 5:27-32)

He is **listed** with the other apostles (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:14-19; Acts 1:13-14

###### He was a **tax collector** (Mt. 10:3; Lk. 5:27)

The Jews typically viewed tax collectors as **thieves** and **traitors**

###### Other than information that is recorded in the Gospels about the **apostles as a group**, nothing else is said about Matthew

##### Why pick **Mark**?

###### He was not an **apostle**

###### He was not an **eyewitness**

###### He was a relatively **unknown** minor figure

###### He **abandoned** Paul & Barnabas on the First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:13; 15:36-39)

###### There would have been **much better candidates** to pick from

*Darrell Bock*: “**What commends Mark as the author**, if we are going to simply pick someone to enhance the reputation of a gospel when no one supposedly knows who the author is…? **What is Mark’s reputation**? He failed to survive the first missionary journey and caused a split between Paul and Barnabas according to Acts. So how does randomly attaching his name to the book enhance that gospel’s credibility?” (Bold emphasis added, 2010)

*J. R. Edwards*: “**No early church tradition and no church father ascribes the Gospel to anyone other than Mark**. Since books of the NT normally required authorship by an apostle to qualify for acceptance into the canon, **it is unlikely that the early church would have assigned a gospel to a minor figure like John** **Mark**, whose name appears in no apostolic list, **unless he were its author**.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Gospel According to Mark,” *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* 6)

##### Why pick **Luke**?

###### He was a **minor character**

###### He was a **companion** of Paul (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phile. 24)

###### He was a **Gentile** (Col. 4:10-11, 14)

###### *D. A. Carson & Douglas Moo*: “[I]t is hard to understand why **Luke’s name** would have been attached to the gospel if it had not been there from the beginning. The manifest tendency in the early church was to **associate apostles with the books of the New Testament**. The **universal identification of a non-apostle** as the author of almost one-quarter of the New Testament speaks strongly for the authenticity of the tradition.” (Bold emphasis added, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 206)

###### *Peter Williams*: “Since neither **Mark** nor **Luke** was an **eyewitness**, it is hard to see a **motive** for anyone to **attach their names** to the Gospels unless they were the **real authors**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Can We Trust the* Gospels, 43)

##### Of the names traditionally associated with the four canonical Gospels, only the name **“John”** would have provided **“prestige”**

##### If someone were trying to **forge a Gospel**, the first names likely to be picked would be **Peter**, **James**, and **John**. But we have to wait until the second century (when the original witnesses had died out) before we get “gospels” of Peter and James.

###### *Brant Pitre*: “Virtually all scholars agree that the **apocryphal gospels**—such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of Judas—are **forgeries** that were **falsely attributed** to disciples of Jesus long after the apostles were all dead. Note that **none** of the later apocryphal gospels are **attributed to non-eyewitnesses** like Mark and Luke. The later false gospels are **attributed to people with firsthand access to Jesus**: people like Peter, or the apostle Thomas, or Mary Magdalene, or Judas, or even Jesus himself. They are **never attributed to mere followers or companions of the apostles**. Why? Because it is the **authors of the apocryphal gospels** who wanted to give **much-needed authority** to their writings by **falsely ascribing** them to people with the closest possible connections to Jesus.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus*, 23)

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “The **apocryphal** and **Gnostic Gospels** by comparison, not written until the **mid-second century** at the earliest, **choose much better known figures** from the first generation of Christianity as **pseudo-authors** of their more fictitious documents to try to gain them a hearing—**Mary** (probably Magdalene but maybe the mother of Jesus), the apostles **Philip**, **Thomas**, **Bartholomew**, **Peter**, **James**, and even **Nicodemus**. Since we know of apocryphal works falsely ascribed to Peter, if the Gospel of Mark were just another such document, granted that the church fathers attributed much of its contents to Peter already, why not just simplify things and say Peter wrote it himself?” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 10)

### **The Titles Attached To The Gospels Were Added Much Later**

#### Explanation:

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “Because our surviving Greek manuscripts provide such a **wide variety of (different) titles[[11]](#footnote-12)** for the Gospels, textual scholars have long realized that their familiar names (e.g., ‘The Gospel according to Matthew’) do not go back to a **single ‘original’ title**, but were **added later by scribes**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet*, 248-249, n. 1, quoted in Petrie, 17)

##### Since the **“autographs” are no longer extant**, no one knows whether they had **titles** or not

#### Evaluation:

##### This objection has **already been addressed** in my discussion of the Gospel titles (See [above](#_Titles))

### **The Authors Of The Gospels Were Not Eyewitnesses**

#### Explanation:

##### *Richard Dawkins*: “Nobody knows who the **four evangelists** were, but they almost certainly **never met Jesus personally**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The God Delusion*, Kindle location 1596)

##### **Geographical and cultural** **“blunders”** indicate that the authors of the Gospels were not eyewitnesses

#### Evaluation:

##### These alleged “blunders” will be discussed and evaluated in the **next section** of this outline

##### If **Matthew** and **John** wrote the Gospels attributed to them, they would have been **eyewitnesses**

##### If **Mark** and **Luke** wrote the Gospels attributed to them, they would not have been **eyewitnesses**, but no one **makes that claim** for these Gospels

##### However, this does not mean that these Gospels are **unreliable**

###### Early Church Fathers claim that Mark preserved in writing the **oral preaching of Peter** who was an **eyewitness** (See [above](#_Attribution))

###### In the prologue of the “Gospel According To Luke,” the writer claims that he **interviewed eyewitnesses** when researching his Gospel (Lk. 1:1-4)

##### **Accurate history** does not have to be **written** by **eyewitnesses** if it is **based** on **eyewitness testimony**

##### The four canonical Gospels and the “Acts of the Apostles” repeatedly indicate that:

###### Jesus commissioned His apostles to be **His witnesses** to the world (Lk. 24:48; Jn. 15:27; Acts 1:6-8)

###### Jesus said that the gospel would be preached as a “**witness** to all the nations” (Mt. 24:14

###### The “Gospel According To John” claims that John the Baptist came to **bear witness** to Jesus (Jn. 1:7-8, 15, 32

###### Peter claimed that an apostle had to be an **eyewitness** of the resurrected Lord (Acts 1:22)

###### The apostles claimed to be **eyewitnesses** (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:31; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:16; 1 Jn. 1:1-4; 10:)

###### Luke claims that the apostles **bore witness** of the resurrection (Acts 4:33)

###### Ananias said that Paul would be **a witness** (Acts 22:15)

###### Luke reported that Jesus told Paul that He had appeared to him on the Damascus road to **make him a witness** (Acts 26:16)

##### Some of the Gospels claim to be **based on eyewitness testimony**

###### **Luke** (Lk. 1:1-4)

###### **John** (Jn. 1:14; 21:20-24)

Jesus promised the apostles that they would **bear witness** of Him (Jn. 15:27)

There is an **exactness** **of detail** in the “The Gospel According To John” concerning time, place, and incidents:

The **next day** (Jn. 1:29, 35)

The **following day** (Jn. 1:43)

**Six waterpots** of stone (Jn. 2:6)

He stayed there [Sychar (Jn. 4:5)] **two days** (Jn. 4:40)

Now after the **two days** (Jn. 4:43)

An infirmity **thirty-eight years** (Jn. 5:5)

**Six days** before the Passover (Jn. 12:1)

He was a thief and had the **money box** (Jn. 12:6)

The **next day** (Jn. 12:12)

“It is he to whom I shall give a **piece of bread**…” (Jn. 13:26)

It was the **Preparation Day** of the Passover (Jn. 19:14)

It was written in **Hebrew**, **Greek**, and **Latin** (Jn. 19:20)

They “took His garments and made **four parts**” (Jn. 19:23)

Immediately **blood** and **water** came out (Jn. 19:34)

About a **hundred pounds** (Jn. 19:39)

The handkerchief was **folded** in a place by itself (Jn. 20:7)

Cast the net on the **right** (Jn. 21:6)

**153 fish** (Jn. 21:11)

Etc.

##### Eyewitness sources for the Gospels explain **their accuracy** concerning:

###### **Archaeological** details

###### **Historical** details

###### **Cultural** details

###### **Geographical** details

###### **Topographical** details

###### **Name frequencies**

###### **Embarrassing details** (Jones)

### **The Gospels Were Written Long After The Events They Report**

#### Explanation:

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “The very first surviving account of Jesus’ life was written **thirty-five to forty years after his death**. Our last canonical gospel was written **sixty to sixty-five years after his death**. That's obviously a lot of time.” (Bold emphasis added, *How Jesus Became God*, 26)

##### *Richard Dawkins*: “[T]he gospels are **not reliable accounts** of what happened in the history of the real world. All were **written long after** the death of Jesus, and also after the epistles of Paul, which **mention almost none of the alleged facts** of Jesus’ life.**[[12]](#footnote-13)**” (Bold emphasis added, *The God Delusion*, Kindle location 1536)

##### The **oral tradition** upon which the Gospels were based would have been **corrupted** within this timespan

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “[N]early all of these storytellers had **no independent knowledge** of what really happened [to Jesus]. It takes little imagination to realize what happened to the stories. You are probably familiar with the old birthday party game **‘telephone.’** A group of kids sits in a circle, the first tells a brief story to the one sitting next to her, who tells it to the next, and to the next, and so on, until it comes back full circle to the one who started it. Invariably, **the story has changed** so much in the process of retelling that everyone gets a good laugh. Imagine this same activity taking place, not in a solitary living room with ten kids on one afternoon, but over the expanse of the **Roman Empire** (some 2,500 miles across), with **thousands of participants**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction To The Early Christian Writings*, quoted in Brant Pitre, *The Case for Jesus*, The Kindle Edition, 3)

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “What do you suppose **happened to the stories** [about Jesus] over the years, as they were **told** and **retold**, not as disinterested news stories reported by eyewitnesses but as **propaganda** meant to convert people to faith, told by people who had themselves heard them **fifth**- or **sixth**- or **nineteenth**-**hand**? Did you or your kids ever play the **telephone game** at a birthday party? The kids sit in a circle, and one child tells a story to the girl sitting next to her, who tells it to the next girl, who tells it to the next, and so on, until it comes back to the one who first told the story. And it’s now a different story. …. Imagine **playing telephone** not among a group of kids of the same socioeconomic class from the same neighborhood and same school and of the same age speaking the same language, but imagine playing it for **forty or more** **years**, in **different countries**, in **different contexts**, in **different languages**. What happens to the stories? They **change**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Interrupted*, 63)

#### Evaluation:

##### Various factors would have **preserved the accuracy** of oral tradition

###### Jesus promised His apostles **guidance** from the Holy Spirit (Mt. 10:19-20; Mk. 13:11; Lk. 12:11-12; Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15)

###### **Spiritual gifts** were given to some Christians (1 Cor. 12:8, 10)

While this will **not be accepted** by those who have an **anti-supernatural bias**, these are factors that believers should not **ignore**

##### The **timespan** between ancient events and ancient secular historical accounts of these events is **much greater** than the timespan between Jesus’ life and the Gospel accounts of His life; yet no one questions the **basic reliability** of these secular historians

###### Funerary Inscription for Caesar Augustus (+0 years)

###### Plutarch (+90 years)

###### Suetonius (+100 years)

###### Tacitus (+100 years)

###### Appian (+100-150 years)

###### Dio Cassius (175-200 years)

##### Furthermore, does a timespan of 35-65 years **invalidate** an account?

###### **World War II** (1940-1945) to today

###### **The Vietnam War** (1964-1975) to today

###### **The Gulf War** (1990-1991) to today

##### Finally, a good case can be made for the **early dating** of the Gospels (See [below](#_There_are_good))

### **The Gospels Were Not Written Near Palestine**

#### Explanation:

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “[T]heir ignorance of **Palestinian geography** and **Jewish** **customs** suggests they composed their works **somewhere else** in the empire….” (*Jesus Interrupted*, 49)

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “Mark 7:3 indicates that the Pharisees ‘and all the Jews’ **washed** their hands before eating, so as to observe ‘the tradition of the elders.’ This is **not true**: most Jews **did not engage in this ritual**. If Mark had been a Jew, or even a gentile living in Palestine, he certainly would have known this.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Interrupted*, 117, n. 4)

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “Where, then, did these anonymous Greek-speaking authors living, probably, **outside of Palestine** some **thirty-five to sixty-five years** after the events that they narrate get their information.” (*Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, 46)

#### Evaluation:

##### It is true that the law of Moses required the **priests** to **wash** their hands and feet before engaging in their tabernacle/temple duties and generally these ablutions were **not imposed** on the people of Israel (cf. Ex. 30:18-21; 40:12, 30-32; Lev. 16:4, 24, 26, 28; Num. 19:7-10)

##### However, there were **certain purification rituals** that the average Israelite was required to perform in certain situations and circumstances:

###### Purification after **healed leprosy** (Lev. 14:8-9)

###### Purification after **bodily discharges** (Lev. 15:1-33)

###### Purification on the **Day of Atonement** (Lev. 16:26-28)

###### Purification after **eating animals** that died naturally or were killed by other animals (Lev. 17:15-16)

###### Purification for **the Levites** (Num. 8:5-7)

###### Purification associated with **the red heifer** (Num. 19:7-8)

###### Purification after **contact with a dead body** (Num. 19:11-13, 19-21)

###### Purification after **ceremonial uncleanness** (Dt. 23:9-11)

##### However, this does not really settle the issue because the Jews of Jesus’ time, who were heavily influenced by the **Pharisees**, may have performed **various ablutions** even though they were **not required** by the law of Moses

##### In fact, there is **good evidence** that this is precisely what they did

###### NT Evidence:

Mk. 7:8: 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the **tradition** of men—the **washing** of pitchers and cups, and many other such things **you do**.”

Jn. 2:6 [NIV]: 6 Nearby stood **six stone water jars**, the kind used by the Jews for **ceremonial washing**, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

###### Jewish Evidence:

*Aristeas* (~AD 200 BC): “305 And as is the **custom** of **all** the Jews, they **washed** their hands in the sea and prayed to God and then devoted themselves to reading and translating the particular passage *upon which they were engaged*….” (*The Letter of Aristeas*, 305, *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 1913, 2:120)

*Philo* (~AD 30): “[205] So careful was the lawgiver to guard against anyone helping to bring about the death of another that he considers that even those who have **touched the corpse** of one who has met a natural death must remain unclean until they have been **purified** by **aspersions** and **ablutions**. Indeed he did not permit even the fully cleansed to enter the temple within seven days and ordered them to purge themselves on the third and seventh.” (*The Special Laws*, 3:205, *Philo*, 1929-1962, 603-605)

*The Mishnah* contains detailed instructions concerning **ritual** **washing** (*Hagigah* 2:5-6; *Yadayim* 1:1-2.4; etc., *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, 331, 1123-1126)

###### Modern Scholarly Opinion:

*Susan Haber*: “The **centrality of impurity** to Jewish life in the Second Temple period is supported by **archaeological** **evidence**. The discovery of **mikvaot** in such diverse places as Gamla, Sepphoris, Herodium and Massada suggests that in Palestine **the removal of impurity** was **not a rite reserved only for approaching the sacred precincts of the Temple**, but was **common practice for Jews of all walks of life**.” (Bold emphasis added, “They Shall Purify Themselves”: *Essays on Purity in Early Judaism* [Society of Biblical Literature, 2008], 130-31)

“[T]he textual evidence suggests that the Jews of the Diaspora also **purified** themselves, if not through **immersion**, then by **sprinkling**, **splashing** or **hand washing**.” (Bold emphasis added, , “They Shall Purify Themselves”: Essays on Purity in Early Judaism [Society of Biblical Literature, 2008], 130-31)

##### If the Gospels were written by the **“traditional authors,”** secular sources do indicate that some of the Gospels were written **outside Palestine**

###### No one really knows where the **“Gospel According To Matthew”** was written. Various locations have been suggested:

**Antioch** of Syria

**Palestine**

**Jerusalem**

###### Early “Church Fathers” indicate that the **“Gospel According To Mark”** was written in **Rome**[[13]](#footnote-14)

###### No one really knows where the **“Gospel According To Luke”** was written. Various locations have been suggested:

**Achaia** (The Anti-Marcionite Prologue)

**Caesarea** Maritima

**Ephesus**

**Corinth**

**Rome**

Etc.

###### Early “Church Fathers” indicate that the **“Gospel According To John”** was written in **Ephesus**[[14]](#footnote-15)

*Charles Ryrie*: “Tradition is **unanimous** in assigning **Ephesus** as the place of the writing of the Gospel [of John].” (Bold emphasis added, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 2005, 281)

“The **external tradition** **is strong** that **John** came to **Ephesus** after Paul had founded the church and that he labored in that city for many years (cf. Eusebius *The Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.1). Supporting this tradition is the evidence of Revelation 1:9-11. When John was in exile on **Patmos**, an island off the coast of Asia Minor, he wrote to seven Asian churches, the first of which was **Ephesus**. That the Fourth Gospel was originally published at **Ephesus** is a good probability.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:267)

##### However, the fact that the Gospels may have been written in locations far from Palestine is **irrelevant**

###### Three of the traditional authors were **natives of Palestine**

Matthew was a **tax-collector** from **Galilee** (Mt. 9:9), and one of the twelve apostles (Mt. 10:2-3) who **accompanied Jesus** during His Public Ministry (Jn. 15:27; Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:21-22)

Mark was a resident of **Jerusalem** (Acts 12:12)

John was a **fisherman** (Mt. 4:21-22; Mk. 1:19-20; Lk. 5:7-10) from **Bethsaida** (Jn. 1:44; 12:21)

###### Although Luke was **not a native of Palestine**, and he **did not accompany Jesus** during His Personal Ministry, he did **travel with Paul to Jerusalem and Caesarea** (Acts 20:5-15; 21:1-18); therefore, he would have had **opportunities** to **interview eyewitnesses** in Palestine and **learn about the land**, as the writer of the “Gospel According To Luke” claims he did (Lk. 1:1-4)

### **There Was A High Illiteracy Rate In Ancient Palestine; Therefore, It Is Unlikely That The Gospels Were Written By The “Traditional Authors”**

#### Explanation:

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “…Christians, especially early on in the movement, came for the most part, from the **lower, uneducated classes**. There were always exceptions, of course, like the apostle Paul and the other authors whose works made it into the New Testament and who were obviously skilled writers; but for the most part, Christians came from **the ranks of the illiterate**. This is certainly true of the very earliest Christians, who would have been **the apostles** of Jesus. In the Gospel accounts, we find that most of Jesus’s disciples are **simple peasants** from Galilee – **uneducated fishermen**, for example. Two of them, Peter and John, are explicitly said to be **‘illiterate’** in the book of Acts (4:13).” (*Misquoting Jesus*, 39)

##### *Bart Ehrman*: “[T]he vast majority of Palestinian Jews in this period were **illiterate** – probably around **97%.**  The exceptions were **urban elites**. There is nothing to suggest that Matthew, the tax collector, was an urban elite who was highly educated.” (https://ehrmanblog.org/was-the-author-of-matthew-matthew-for-members/)

##### Studies of **literacy** in the ancient world indicate that at the best of times:

###### Maybe **10%** of the population could **read**

###### Far fewer of that 10% could **write** (copy out letters)

###### Fewer than that could **compose**

###### Fewer than that could compose something that was **very elegant**

##### Estimates indicate that in Palestine only **3% could read**

##### But the **Greek** of the Gospels is **excellent**

##### Yet the Jewish Sanhedrin described Peter and John as **“uneducated and untrained men”** (Acts 4:13)

#### Evaluation:

##### *Craig Blomberg*: “Common estimates of rates of literacy at only **5-10 percent** of the Roman world are almost certainly **too low**, especially in **Jewish circles** and among **men**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 49)

###### *Josephus*: “It [the law, ksk] also commands us to bring those children up in **learning** and to **exercise** them in the laws, and make them acquainted with the acts of their predecessors, in order to their imitation of them, and that they may be nourished up in the laws from their infancy, and might neither transgress them, nor yet have any pretense for their ignorance of them.” (Bold emphasis added, “Against Apion,” 2:2:204, 806-807)

##### However, a **high illiteracy rate** among the total population does not prove that Matthew Mark, Luke, and John were **illiterate**

###### Perhaps they were chosen precisely because **they could write**

###### **Abraham Lincoln** illustrates the fact that a **“hick”** from the **“sticks”** can become **highly literate**

##### **Matthew**, as a tax collector, would have known **Aramaic** as well as **Hebrew** and **Greek**

###### He quotes from the Hebrew OT and the LXX [Greek][[15]](#footnote-16) which indicates that he knew both of these languages

##### **Luke** was a **Gentile doctor**, so he would have **known Greek**

###### Note: The Greek of Luke & Acts is **more sophisticated**

##### John’s father or John had a **fishing business** with **hired servants**, so he was likely somewhat **wealthy** (Mk. 1:20-21)

###### He likely had an opportunity for **education**

###### Capernaum was only a few miles from the Greek cities of **Tiberias** and **Sepphoris**

###### As a **successful merchant**, it is not at all unreasonable to believe that he had some knowledge of the **Greek language** and **basic** **literacy** in order to conduct business (Graieg, 6-7)

###### John’s Greek is **simpler** than other NT books

###### Furthermore, it is certainly possible that **John learned Greek** later in life to help him preach and teach Gentiles in Ephesus

##### The expression **“uneducated and untrained men”** (Acts 4:13) need not refer to anything other than a **lack of formal rabbinic training**

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “**Elementary education** for boys until at least the age of twelve was **widely practised** in Israel in Jesus’ day, so texts like Acts 4:13 cannot mean that the disciples had no competence in reading, writing and memorization (but more likely that they had **not gone on to study for the rabbinate**).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 57)

###### How could the Jewish leaders **have known** from their oral interactions with Peter and John, that they could not **read and write**?

*Greg Strawbridge*: “The confounding of the Jewish court by ‘**uneducated** [*agrammatoi*] and **untrained** [*idiotes*]’ [men] was not due to **reading** Peter and John’s cursive handwriting or examining their Greek composition skills, it was upon **hearing** their confident, Spirit-filled declarations which were themselves in response to the instantaneous miracle of healing the lame….” (Bold emphasis added, “I, Tertius,” 6)

##### The Gospel writers could have **learned Greek** to enable them to carry out the Great Commission (like some do today)

###### Preachers among us (e.g. Dennis Allen, Gary Fisher, David Thomley, Allen Dvorak, *et. al.*) have done that very thing today

##### Furthermore, non-Greek speakers could have used an **amanuensis**

###### Although Paul could **speak Greek** to some extent (Acts 21:37), some of his letters show that he used **scribes** (Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11)

###### Objection: There is **no evidence** that ancient scribes did anything more than **copy down** what their authors dictated

*Bart Ehrman*: “Virtually all of the problems with what I’ve been calling forgeries can be solved if **secretaries** were heavily involved in the **composition** of the early Christian writings. Despite the popularity of this theory, I am going to argue, once again, that it simply **does not have credible evidence** to back it up.” (Bold emphasis added, *Forged*, 49)

###### Response: There is at least some evidence that some ancient scribes **did more** than just **copy down dictation**

*Armin D. Baum*: “Some ancient correspondents employed **secretaries** who **composed** their letters and did so in **their own style** (Philostratus of Lemnos, *De Epistulis etc*.). Some ancient historians **authorized language assistants to improve the Greek style** of their books (Jos., *Ap*. 1.50). In classical Greece, litigants who had to appear in court allowed **professional logographers**, on the basis of prior consultation , to **compose their defense speeches** which they then learned by heart and recited on trial as their own (cf. Plut., *Garr*. 5 = *Mor*. 504*c etc*.), in Rome, political leaders employed **ghost writers** for their letters, their speeches, and their proclamations (Suet., *Dom*. 20 *etc*.). I am not aware of any ancient complaints that this practice was **deceptive**.” (Bold emphasis added, “Forgery And Counterforgery,” 430)

*Armin D. Baum*: “In all cases an **authorial attribution** was regarded as **correct** and **nondeceptive** if either **content** **and** **wording** or just the **content** of a particular text could be **traced back to the author** whose name it carried.” (Bold emphasis added, “Content And Form,” 381)

##### Finally, Jesus repeatedly promised His apostles that they would be **inspired** and **guided** by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 10:18-19; Mk. 13:11; Lk. 12:11-12; 21:12-14; Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15)

###### Obviously, skeptics and unbelievers will **reject this point** because of their **anti-supernatural bias**, but this promise does have **multiple attestation** in the Gospels

###### The book of Acts reports that:

Peter and the apostles **spoke other languages** on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)

If the Holy Spirit could enable men to **speak** in foreign languages, He could inspire “illiterate men” to **write** in foreign languages

Peter **spoke** after being **filled** with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8)

The apostles **spoke** after being **filled** with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31)

Stephen was **full of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 6:5), and his enemies were not able to resist “the **wisdom** and the **Spirit** by which he spoke” (Acts 6:8-10)

###### So, the promise of **inspiration** is a factor that believers should remember when objections like this one are raised

### **Forgery Was Prevalent In The First Century**

#### Explanation:

##### Literary forgeries were **plentiful** in antiquity

###### All scholars agree

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “**Literary forgery** was a **common phenomenon** in the ancient world. We know this because ancient authors themselves talk about it, a lot. Discussions of forgery can be found in the writings of some of the best-known authors from antiquity. Among the Greeks and Romans you can find references to and discussions of forgery in such far-flung authors as Herodotus, Cicero, Quintillian, Martial, Suetonius, Galen, Plutarch, Philastratus, and Diogenes Laertius. Among Christian authors there are discussions in the writings of such well-known figures as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Rufinus, and Agustine.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Interrupted*, 52)

##### Many of these were written by **“Christians”**

##### The ancients **condemned** forged literature

##### Forgery was **condemned** in **books** that were **forged**

###### *The Apostolic Constitutions*

##### Forgery was **unacceptable**

##### Paul warned the Thessalonians about **spurious letters** (2 Th. 2:1-2)

#### Evaluation:

##### There were **many forgeries** between the second and fourth centuries in Christian history\*\*\*

##### Some of them were believed to be **genuine**

###### *The Apocalypse of Peter*

##### They were written by **Gentiles**, in a Greco-Roman setting where such practices were **common**

##### *Ben Witherington*: “Thus while it is true that often forgers **throw people off their trail by warning about forgery** **in their own forged documents**, in fact, there were **plenty of genuine warnings** of this sort by authors like **Galen**, who were really upset with people writing documents in their own name. Galen even published a list of his authentic writings to make clear what was a forgery. As it turns out, many ancients were **very concerned** about the **dangers of forgery**, and **Paul** was one of them.” (Review of Forged, 5)

##### They were written by people who by both first century and later Orthodox standards shouldn’t be called **“Christians”**

###### Gnostics, Docetists, Marcionites, etc.

##### Bart Ehrman engages in **“guilt by association”**: lots of forgeries later therefore must have been earlier

##### Sometimes there was the **intent to deceive**

##### Sometimes there was **no intent to deceive**

###### *The Wisdom of Solomon* makes clear it was **not by Solomon** but stood in the **tradition** of his wisdom

###### ***Ben Witherington:*** *“…I agree with Bart’s critique of liberal scholars who want to claim such practices were* ***mere recognized literary practices****,* ***not attempts at deceit****, whatever genre of literature we might be discussing.* I think there is a **very limited scope** of types of ancient documents of this sort that were **not attempts to deceive**. There does not, for example, appear to have been any literary convention warranting **pseudepigraphical personal letters** in antiquity..” (Bold emphasis added, Review of Forged, 6)

##### The OT’s teaching about the **importance of truth** would make it unlikely that **sincere Jewish Christians** would have knowingly engaged in **“forgery”** (cf. Ex. 18:21; Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 12:24; 1 Ki. 2:4; 3:6; 2 Ki. 20:3; Pr. 15:1-2; 51:6; 86:11; 145:18; Pr. 3:3; 12:17; 23:23)

##### Jesus’ teaching and the apostles’ teaching about **the importance of truth** would have **precluded the practice of forgery** on the part of sincere followers of Jesus (Jn. 3:19-21; 8:31-32, 40, 44-46; 14:6, 17; 16:13; 17:17, 19; 18:37; Acts 5:3-4; 26:25; Col. 3:9; Jas. 3:14)

##### The commitment of the Gospel writers to **truth** is implied by:

###### **Embarrassing** statements (e.g. Mk. 6:5; 8:33)

###### **“Hard”** sayings (e.g. Mt. 10:23; Lk. 14:26; Mk. 13:32; Mt. 7:11)

###### **“Missing”** statements

There is nothing from Jesus that clearly addressed:

**Gentile converts** and the **law of Moses**

The **Trinity**

His **humanity** and **deity**

*William Mounce*: “The **simplest explanation** is that the gospel writers were **intent on being honest** and weren’t willing to **change** or **omit** a verse just because it was **embarrassing** or **difficult**, nor were they willing to **make one up** to solve a current church dilemma.” (Bold emphasis added, *Why I Trust the Bible*, 36)

##### The early Christians were **aware** of the possibility of forgery, and they recognized and utilized methods of **avoiding forged documents**

###### Analysis of **writing style** (Eusebius, “Church History,” 7:25:6-27, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:309-311)

###### **Excommunication** of forgers (Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 17, ANF, 1885, 3:677)

##### There were **authentication difficulties**

###### **Many accounts** of Jesus’ life (Lk. 1:1-4)

###### False **brethren** (Gal. 2:4)

###### False **apostles** (2 Cor. 11:13)

###### **Spurious** letters (2 Th. 2:1-2)

##### Authorship could be **confirmed** by:

###### The **handwriting** of author

**Amanuensis** (Rom. 16:22)

**Signature** (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Th. 3:17)

###### The **carrier** of the letter (2 Cor. 7:5-10, 14; Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-9; 1 Th. 3:1-3, 6)

###### The **content** of the letter (1 Th. 1:5; 2:1-11; 3:1-5; 4:1-2; 2 Th. 2:5; 3:7-9; 2 Cor. 10:1; 12:12)

###### Spiritual **Gifts** (1 Cor. 12:10)

###### **Networking** (1 Cor. 1:11)

##### Finally, the post-apostolic church **rejected forgery**

###### *Caius, Presbyter of Rome*: “There are also in circulation one [epistle, ksk] to the **Laodiceans**, and another to the **Alexandrians**, **forged** under the name of Paul, and addressed against the heresy of Marcion; and there are also **several others** which **cannot be received** into the Catholic Church, for it is not suitable for gall to be mingled with honey.” (Bold emphasis added, “Fragments of Caius,” ANF, 1886, 5:603)

###### *Eusebius quoting Serapion of Antioch*: “3 ‘For we, brethren, **receive** both **Peter** and the **other apostles** as Christ; but we **reject** **intelligently** the **writings falsely ascribed to them**, knowing that such were **not handed down** to us.” (Bold emphasis added, “The Church History of Eusebius,” NPNF 1890, 2.1:258)

###### *William Mounce*: “There also was a letter called **3 Corinthians**, which was actually **accepted by some as canonical**. It was written by a second-century bishop in Asia out of ‘love for the apostle.’ When the author confessed that his work was a **forgery**, his actions were **condemned**. He was **removed** from office, and his forgery was **rejected**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Why I Trust the Bible*, 28)

###### *Tertullian*: “But if the **writings** **which wrongly go under Paul’s name**, claim Thecla’s example as a licence [sic] for women’s teaching and baptizing, let them know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing, as if he were augmenting Paul’s fame from his own store, after being **convicted**, and **confessing** that he had done it from love of Paul, was **removed** from his office.” (Bold emphasis added, “On Baptism,” 17, ANF, 1885, 3:677)

##### Although I have not read his book, E. Randolph Richards argues in *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* that there is evidence that ancient scribes did much more than just **“take dictation”** (Bold emphasis added, Greg Strawbridge, “I, Tertius Who Write Tis: Answering Bart Ehrman’s *Forged,”* 4)

##### Greg Strawbridge cites several NT passages as evidence to support the thesis that Paul and Peter were **assisted** in writing their epistles (Rom. 16:21-23; 1 Cor. 1:1; 16:19-22; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal 1:1-2; 6:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 4:20-22; Col 4:10-14, 17-18; 1 Th. 1:1; 2 Th. 1:1; 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:21; Tit. 3:15; Phile. 1-2, 23-24; cf. 2 Jn. 12-13; 3 Jn. 13)**[[16]](#footnote-17)**

### **The Gospel Accounts Of The Resurrection Are Contradictory**

#### Explanation:

##### When the Gospel accounts of the resurrection are **studied carefully**, they raise a number of **significant questions**?

###### Did Jesus partake of a **Passover meal**?

Yes (Mt. 26:18 // Mk. 14:13 // Lk. 22:8)

No (Lk. 22:15-18)

###### On what **day** was the Passover observed?

Thursday (Mt. 26:18 // Mk. 14:13 // Lk. 22:8)

Friday (Jn. 18:28)

###### Who **carried** the cross?

Jesus (Jn. 19:17)

Simon of Cyrene (Mt. 27:32 // Mk. 15:21 // Lk. 23:26)

###### What did the **superscription** really say?

“THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Mt. 27:37)

“THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Mk. 15:26)

“THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Lk. 23:38)

“JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Jn. 19:19)

###### When was Jesus **raised**?

After “three **days** and three **nights**” (Mt. 12:40)

“**After** three days” (Mt. 27:63 // Mk. 8:31)

“**On** the third day” (Acts 10:40)

###### How did **Judas die**?

He **hanged** himself (Mt. 27:5)

He fell and **burst open** (Acts 1:18)

###### How **many women** came to the tomb?

**One** (Jn. 20:21)

**Two** (Mt. 28:1)

**Three** (Mk. 16:1)

###### When did the women **visit the tomb**?

At **dawn** (Mt. 28:1)

When the sun had **risen** (Mk. 16:2)

**Very early** in the morning (Lk. 24:1)

While it was **still dark** (Jn. 20:1)

###### How **many angels** were at the tomb?

**One** (Mt. 28:2; Mk. 16:5)

**Two** (Lk. 24:4; Jn. 20:12)

###### *Etc*.

##### Obviously, the four canonical Gospels give different and **contradictory answers** to these questions

##### Therefore, the Gospel accounts of the resurrection **cannot be trusted**

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “[T]he sources [regarding Jesus’ resurrection] are **hopelessly contradictory**, as we can see by doing a detailed comparison of the accounts in the Gospels.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Jesus*, 2000, 90)

#### Evaluation:

##### It is true that the accounts of the resurrection are **different** and they present **difficulties**, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they are **contradictory**

##### When different eyewitnesses report an event, there are always **differences**, **apparent contradictions** and sometimes even **real contradictions** in their accounts

###### *J. Warner Wallace*: “Unless you’ve worked a lot with **eyewitnesses** and have become familiar with the nature of **apparent contradictions** in eyewitness accounts, it’s easy to assume people are **lying** (or are **mistaken**) simply because they **don’t agree on every detail** or have **ignored some facts** in favor of others. If nothing else, we must remember **an eyewitness account can be reliable despite apparent contradictions**. While we might complain about two differing accounts, we would be even **more suspicious** if there were absolutely **no peculiarities or differences**. If this were the case with the Gospels, I bet we would argue they were the result of **some elaborate collusion**. As we examine the gospel accounts, we need to give the writers the same benefit of the doubt we would give other eyewitnesses. Human eyewitnesses produce human eyewitness accounts; they are often **idiosyncratic** and **personal**, but **reliable**, nonetheless.” (*Cold-Case Christianity*, 118-119)

##### However, **discrepancies** in eyewitness testimony regarding **peripheral details** do not necessarily **undermine** the **general reliability** of that testimony

###### *Brant Pitre*: “Just because ancient Roman historians **disagree** about whether Nero himself **openly set the city on fire** (Suetonius) or had it **done secretly** (Dio Cassius) or was **not at all to blame** (Tacitus), it doesn’t mean that **Rome didn’t go up in flames**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus*, 241, n. 28)

###### *Michael Licona*: “The sinking of the *Titanic* is a good example. Many eyewitnesses claimed that the ship **broke in two** just prior to sinking, while other eye-witnesses claimed it **went down intact**. Investigations by both American and British governments immediately after the maritime disaster concluded that the ship went down intact. However, when the *Titanic* was found and examined in 1985, the team concluded that the ship had indeed split apart and that this had occurred prior to it sinking.” (*The Resurrection Of Jesus*, 67)

## *Specific Objections To The Traditional Authorship Of Each Gospel*

### Objections To Matthew:

#### **It Is Highly Unlikely That An Apostle (Matthew) Would “Borrow” From A Non-Apostle (Mark)**

##### Explanation:

###### Most scholars today believe that the “Gospel According To Matthew” used the “Gospel According To Mark” as a **source**

###### Why would an apostle (Matthew) **use a work** from someone who was not an apostle (Mark)?

##### Evaluation:

###### While it is a minority view, some scholars do not believe in **“Markan Priority**”

*William Smith*: “The testimony of the early Church is unanimous that **Matthew wrote *first*** among the evangelists. Irenæus relates that Matthew wrote his Gospel while **Peter** and **Paul** were preaching, and founding the Church at **Rome**, *after* A.D. 61. It was published *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.—*Alford*.” (Bold emphasis added, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, Thomas Nelson, 1986, n.p.)

###### If Mark’s Gospel is based on the **testimony of Peter**, as some early Church Fathers claim, there is nothing remotely **implausible** about Matthew using it as a **source**.

###### There are plenty of examples from antiquity of **eyewitnesses relying on other people’s accounts** instead of their own memory

*Brant Pitre*: “[H]istory gives us other examples of **eyewitnesses** **who relied on other people’s testimony** when composing biographies of their own teachers. For example, when writing his account of the death of Socrates, the ancient Greek writer **Xenophon** (who was a disciple of Socrates) used the ‘reports’ (Greek *exēngeile*) of another disciple named **Hermogenes** (see Xenophon, *Apology*, 1.2, 10). The reason was that **Xenophon was not present** at the trial and death of Socrates, whereas Hermogenes was. In the same way, it is entirely possible that **the apostle Matthew could have relied on the Gospel of Mark’s record of Peter’s testimony**, especially for any events at which **Matthew himself was not present**—such as the early days of Jesus’s ministry (see Matthew 3-8) or the events of Jesus’s passion and death, which Matthew did not witness because he had fled the scene (see Matthew 26-28).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus*, 29)

#### **The First Gospel Speaks Of Matthew In The Third Person**

##### Explanation:

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “Matthew’s Gospel is written completely in the **third** **person**, about what **‘they’** – Jesus and the disciples – were doing, never about what **‘we’** – Jesus and the rest of us – were doing. Even when this Gospel narrates the event of Matthew being called to become a disciple, it talks about **‘him,’** not about **‘me.’** Read the account for yourself (Matthew 9:9). There’s not a thing in it that would make you suspect the author is talking about himself.” (Bold emphasis added, NPR Interview, 3/12/10)

###### Mt 9:9: 9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named **Matthew** sitting at the tax office. And He said to **him**, “Follow Me.” So **he** arose and followed Him.

##### Evaluation:

###### This is a **very old objection**

*Augustine of Hippo* (~AD 400): “4 **Faustus** thinks himself **wonderfully** **clever** in proving that **Matthew** was **not the writer of this Gospel**, because, when speaking of his own election, he says not, He saw **me**, and said to **me**, Follow **me**; but, He saw **him**, and said to **him**, Follow me. This must have been said either in **ignorance** or from a **design to mislead**. Faustus can hardly be so ignorant as not to have read or heard that narrators, when speaking of themselves, **often use a construction as if speaking of another**. It is more probable that Faustus wished to **bewilder** those more ignorant than himself, in the hope of getting hold on not a few unacquainted with these things.” (Bold emphasis added, *Reply to Faustus The Manichaeans*, 17:1:4, NPNF, 1887, 1.4, 235-236)

###### Augustine’s reply to Faustus was **correct**

*Xenophon* (c. 430-354 BC): “[4] There was a man in the army named **Xenophon**, an Athenian, who was neither general nor captain nor private, but had accompanied the expedition because Proxenus, an old friend of **his**, had sent **him** at **his** home an invitation to go with him; Proxenus had also promised **him** that, if **he** would go, he would make **him** a friend of Cyrus, whom he himself regarded, so he said, as worth more to **him** than was his native state.” (Bold emphasis added, *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*, 3:1:4)

*Xenophon* (c. 430-354 BC): “[15] Then **Xenophon**,67 an Athenian, seeing him from the Greek army, approached so as to meet him and asked if he had any orders to give; and Cyrus pulled up his horse and bade Xenophon tell everybody that the sacrificial victims and omens were all favourable.” (Bold emphasis added, *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*, 1:8:15)

“67 The author. **He always speaks of himself in the third person**.”

See also:

Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1:8:15; 2:5:40; 3:1:10, 47; *etc*.

Julius Caesar, *Commentaries*

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2:20:6; 3:8:7:(387)

Nicolaus, *History*

Dexippus, *Scythico*

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1:1:1; 4:104:4; 5:26:1

###### *Gleason L. Archer*: “The Greek historian **Xenophon**, in his *Anabasis*, characteristically refers to himself in **the third person**; likewise does **Julius Caesar** in his *Gallic Wars* and his *Civil Wars* as well. Yet no one questions that these were the genuine works of Xenophon and Caesar.” (Bold emphasis added, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, 112)

###### *Richard Bauckham*: “This is in accordance with the best and regular **historiographic practice**. When ancient historians referred to themselves within their narratives as **participating** in or **observing** the events they recount, they commonly referred to themselves in the **third person** by name, as Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Julius Caesar, or Josephus.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 393)

#### **“Matthew” Says Nothing About Jesus Being God, But In “John,” That Is Precisely Who He Is”**

##### Explanation:

###### *Bart Ehrman*: “In Matthew there is **not a word** about **Jesus being God**; in John, that is precisely who he is (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus Interrupted*, 47)

##### Evaluation:

###### “Matthew” does allude to the **deity** of Jesus

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **OT** | **Allusions** | **Matthew** |
| Isa. 7:14 | **Virgin Conceive** | 1:22-23 |
| **Immanuel = God With Us** |
| Isa. 9:6 | **Child Born** | Mt. 2:1-2 |
| Isa. 40:3-5 | **Voice In The Wilderness** | Mt. 3:1-3 |
| Mic. 5:2 | **From Everlasting** | Mt. 2:4-6 |
| Mal. 3:1 | **The Coming Lord** | Mt. 11:10-11 |
| Mal. 4:5-6 | **Preceded By Elijah** | Mt. 11:13-14 |
| Psa. 89:8-9 | **Stills The Seas** | Mt. 8:23-27 |
| 2 Chr. 7:14 | **Forgives Sin** | Mt. 9:2-6 |

#### **There Is An Anti-Jewish Quality To The “Gospel According To Matthew”**

##### Explanation:

###### Matthew (a Jew) would not have written an **anti-Jewish Gospel**

##### Evaluation:

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “If many scholars can agree that a Jew wrote this book in a situation of **tension** and **polemic** with non-Christian Judaism, then Matthew, already once **alienated** from his contemporaries by his **former profession**, surely could have done so.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the* Gospels, 223)

#### **The “Gospel According To Matthew” Is Theologically Incompatible With Other Jewish-Christian Sources**

##### Explanation:

##### Evaluation:

###### The “Gospel According To Matthew,” especially the Sermon On The Mount, is quite compatible with the epistle of **James**

###### Not all Jewish Christianity was **monolithic** in its beliefs (*Jesus and the* Gospels, 223)

#### **The Author Of The “Gospel According To Matthew” May Refer To Himself As A “Scribe,” Not A Tax Collector (Mt. 13:52)**

##### Explanation:

###### Mt. 13:52: 52 Then He said to them, “Therefore every **scribe** instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a **householder** who brings out of his treasure *things* **new** and **old**.”

##### Evaluation:

###### It is not at all clear that Mt. 13:52 is the **author’s self-reference**, but even if it were, it would be quite natural for a former tax collector to use his **writing skills** as a **scribe** (Blomberg, *Jesus and the* Gospels, 223)

###### **“Possibility”** is not **“probability,”** and definitely not **“certainty”**

#### **It Is Highly Improbable That Matthew Would Have Lived Long Enough To Write The “Gospel According To Matthew”** ~**AD** **85**

##### Explanation:

###### Major Premise: Certain things in Matthew’s Gospel could only have been **written after AD 70** (e.g. predictions of and allusions to Jerusalem’s destruction)

###### Minor Premise: The historical Matthew would have **died before AD 70**

###### Conclusion: Therefore, Matthew **could not have written** the Gospel attributed to him

##### Evaluation:

###### The First Gospel could have been **written much earlier**

See the discussion [below](#_The_Date_Of) about **the date** of the “Gospel According To Matthew”

###### We do not know **when Matthew died** or **how old he was** (Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 223)

### Objections To Mark:

#### **The “Gospel According To Mark” Makes Geographical Blunders**

##### *The Gerasene Problem* (Mt. 8:28-34 // Mk. 5:1-17 // Lk. 8:26-37)

###### Explanation:

The Synoptic Gospels **differ in their identification** of the site, and there are **textual variants** in the Greek MSS

Matthew: **“Gadarenes”** (Mt. 8:28)

**“Gadarenes”** is the adjective for **Gadara**, which was closer to the Sea of Galilee

**“Gergesenes”** (KJV; NKJV; YLT)

Mark: **“Gerasenes”** (Mk. 5:1)

**“Gerasenes”** is the adjective for **Gerassa**, modern-day Jerash

**“Gadarenes”** (KJV; NKJV; YLT)

Luke: **“Gerasenes”** (Lk. 8:26)

**“Gerasenes”** is the adjective for **Gerassa**, modern-day Jerash

**“Gadarenes”** (KJV; NKJV; YLT)

This shows that the author of “The Gospel According To Mark” did not know his **geography** very well

###### Evaluation:

The **textual variants** in the Greek MSS appear to indicate that there are some **copyist errors** in the manuscript tradition

The city would have had an Aramaic original, either **KRS** or **GRS**

The Aramaic name of **Gergasa** was **Khersa**, which would be written as **KRS** in Aramaic

Modern-day **Kursi**, in Arabic

**Kursi** fits the scene of Mark 5 well: there is **a cliff** close to the sea, **cave tombs** have been found within 2 miles, and there is an **ancient church** located there

If Mark originally wrote **“Gergasenes,”** the accidental dropping of the second **“g”** would produce **“Gerasenes”**

It would have been easier for later scribes to identify the city as the more well-known **Gerasa** than the more obscure **Gergassa**

Origen (~AD 200) identified the site as **Gergesa** (“Commentary on John 6.24,” ANF, 1897, 9:370)

Also, this area could have been known by **different names**: **“Gadarenes”** (Matthew) and/or **“Gerasenes”** (Mark & Luke)

“The place where the Gospel incident occurred may have been referred to sometimes as the country of the **Gergasenes**, a purely local name; or of the **Gadarenes**, from the nearest city; or the **Gerasenes**, from the most important city of the district.” (*Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, 308)

##### *Jesus’ Journey To Bethsaida* (Mt. 14:22 // Mk. 6:45ff // Jn. 6:15ff)

###### Explanation:

Jesus and His disciples get in a boat and head toward **Bethsaida** on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 6:45), but they land on the shore of **Gennesaret** which is on the west side of the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 6:53)

###### Evaluation:

There was a **STORM** that blew them off course. That’s part of the point of the story!

##### *Jesus’ Journey From Tyre to the Sea of Galilee By Way Of Sidon* (Mk. 7:31)

###### Explanation:

A journey from **Tyre** south to the **Sea of Galilee** by way of **Sidon** (to the north) makes no sense

*Adam Winn*: “Many interpreters have noted this **awkward route** as evidence that Mark was **unfamiliar** with the **geography** of Palestine and Galilee. . . It seems difficult to believe that a person **living** in Galilee, who is **educated** enough to produce a gospel such as Mark, would be **unfamiliar** with the geographical relationship between **Tyre** and **Sidon**.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel*, 2008, 85-86)

###### Evaluation:

Nothing in Mark’s wording suggests that Jesus is making **a direct journey**, or trying to get from point A to point B **as fast as possible**

Perhaps Jesus had **some unknown reason** to go from Tyre to Sidon before going to Galilee

There is a **mountain range** (Mt. Meron) in the way

There was also the need for access to **drinking** **water**[[17]](#footnote-18)

##### *Jesus’ Journey To The Region Of Dalmanutha* (Mk. 8:10)

###### Explanation:

Dalmanutha is **not mentioned** anywhere else in extant literature

###### Evaluation:

This is an **argument from silence**, especially since so little first-century literature has survived

##### *Jesus’ Journey To Judea And Across The Jordan* (Mk. 10:1)

###### Explanation:

###### Evaluation:

This is a very general statement of a **“region”**

This could be a reference to **Jesus’ itinerary**: (1) the region of Judea, (2) across the Jordan (Holding, “The Authorship of Mark’s Gospel,” 6)

#### **The “Gospel According To Mark” Makes Cultural Blunders**

##### **The Hand-washing Tradition** (Mk. 7:3-4)

###### Explanation:

While **handwashing** was required of the **priests**, it was not a **general practice** among the Jews

Therefore, the writer has made a **mistake**

###### Evaluation:

This objection has already been **addressed** in more detail [above](#_Evaluation:)

Although the Torah only prescribes **handwashing for priests**, by the first century, the Pharisees were plausibly encouraging people to **keep the ritual purity** of the priesthood

Bart Ehrman has **admitted** that this objection made in *Jesus Interrupted* was **a mistake**

#### **The Author Of The “Gospel According To Mark” Could Not Have Been Jewish**

##### Explanation:

###### The author could not have been Jewish because of the **Latinisms**, a lack of **Jewish coloring**, the explanation of **Hebrew terms and customs**, and **confused** **geography**

##### Evaluation:

###### The **Gentile coloring** of this Gospel suggests that it was written primarily for a **Gentile audience**; but this does not prove that its author was **non-Jewish**

#### **The Author Of The “Gospel According To Mark” Could Not Have Been Mark**

##### Explanation:

###### The author could not have been Mark, the companion of Paul, because this Gospel shows **no contact with Pauline theology**

##### Evaluation:

###### The **cross** was a **centerpiece** of Paul’s theology (1 Cor. 2:2)

#### **The “Gospel According To Mark” Could Not Have Come From Peter**

##### Explanation:

###### It is unlikely that this Gospel was a written record of **Peter’s preaching** since it treats the disciples, including Peter, in such a **disparaging way** (cf. Mk. 2:15-18, 23-24; 6:35-37; 7:1-2, 5; 8:4, 14-21, 33; 9:17-18, 31-32; 10:13-16, 46-48; 14:37-42, 50)

###### This Gospel could not have come from **any single, primary witness** of the life of Christ because of the **complex history** **of tradition** that source, form, and redaction critics have demonstrated for the Gospel

##### Evaluation:

###### It is **arguable** that no one but **Peter** could have **authorized** such a **negative treatment** of the disciples and himself

###### Dependence on Peter does not preclude Mark’s use of other **oral** **and written sources**, nor does it preclude **editing** by Peter to impose his own **stylistic imprint** on the Second Gospel (Blomberg, *Jesus and the* Gospels, 199-200)

### Objections To Luke:

#### **There Are Alternate Proposals For The “We” Sections In Acts** (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)

##### Explanation:

###### The use of **“we”** could indicate no more than Luke’s use of **a prior source** like a diary

###### This “we” language is merely an **artificial literary device** (Blomberg, *Jesus and the* Gospels, 250)

###### Vernon Robbins argued that they belong to **a “sea voyage” genre**

##### Evaluation:

###### *Craig Blomberg*: “[T]he **suggested parallels** to this convention in other ancient literature have **not proved convincing**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Jesus and the* Gospels, 250)

###### If the author of Acts were trying to **pass himself off** as one of Paul’s companions, why did he include himself in **only part** of the narrative rather than all of it?

The “we” sections appear **sporadically** (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) and **not in places** where a fabricator might be expected to place them [e.g. Pentecost] (Acts 2)

#### **The Portrait Of Paul In Acts Seems Dissimilar To That In Paul’s Letters**

##### Explanation:

| **Paul In Acts** | **Paul In The Pauline Epistles** |
| --- | --- |
| Flexible & willing to compromise (Acts 16:3; 21:26) | Inflexible & unwilling to compromise (Gal. 1:8; 2:3) |
| Apostleship rarely mentioned | Apostleship mentioned often |
| Benevolent collection mentioned once (Acts 24:17) | Benevolent collection mentioned repeatedly |
| No mention of Paul’s letters | Paul is a letter-writer[[18]](#footnote-19) |
| Paul performs many miracles (Acts 13:9-11; 14:3, 8-10; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 20:9-10; 28:8-9) | Paul performed the signs of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12) |
| Paul’s sermons sound little like his epistles (Acts 14 & 17) |  |
| Paul is an outstanding orator (Acts. 22:22; 23:1ff) | Paul is feeble in speech (2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6) |
| Jewish customs observed (Acts 21) | Mosaic law replaced by the Gospel (Gal. 3) |
| Conflict with Jewish & Gentile leaders | Conflict with Christians |
| Paul’s apostleship is mentioned twice (Acts 14:4, 14) | Paul’s apostleship is mentioned many times (Gal. 1:1) |
| Justification by faith not mentioned in Paul’s sermons & speeches | Justification by faith emphasized (Romans; Galatians; Ephesians) |
| Paul’s Roman citizenship is mentioned (Acts 22:25-29) | Paul’s Roman citizenship is not mentioned |
| Paul is proud of his Pharisaic piety (Acts 16:3; 21:18-26; 26:5) | Paul is free in Christ (1 Cor. 9:10-19; Gal. 2:5, 11) |
| Paul has close ties with the Jerusalem apostles (Acts 9:10-19, 23-30) | Paul emphasizes his independence from the apostles (Gal. 1:1, 17, 19; 2:6) |

##### Evaluation:

###### **Apparent** dissimilarity is not necessarily **real** dissimilarity[[19]](#footnote-20)

###### *I. Howard Marshall*: “The **differences** between Luke’s portrait of Paul and the picture we get from Paul’s own writings are basically due to the **different interests** of the two writers. **Luke** is principally concerned with the **evangelistic mission** of Paul and with **his relations** to the Jewish Christians, while **Paul’s letters** reflect his concern for **problems within the new churches** and for the **freedom of the Gentiles** from Judaistic and syncretistic perversions of the gospel.” (Bold emphasis added, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, 45, n. 45)

###### If the author of Acts were trying to **pass himself off** as one of Paul’s companions, we would expect him to **cite** or **mention** some of Paul’s letters and/or **more closely correlate** his account with the biographical and theological details in Paul’s letters (*The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1508)

#### **Luke’s Theology Contradicts Paul’s Theology**

##### Explanation:

###### Paul **adheres to the law** in Acts (Acts 16:1-3; 21:18-26)

###### But Paul **rejects the law** in his epistles (Rom. 2:23-27; 3:20-21, 27-28; 4:13-16; 6:14; 7:1-7; 8:3; 9:30-33; 10:4-5; Gal. 2:16-21; 3:1-5, 10-13, 17-24; 4:21-31; 5:4, 18; 6:13-15; Eph. 2:14-18; Phil. 3:8-9; Col. 2:13-17)

##### Evaluation:

###### Paul’s **preaching** in Antioch of Pisidia is in **perfect harmony** with his **teaching** in his epistles

Acts 13:39: 39 and by Him everyone who **believes** is **justified** from all things from which you **could not be justified** by the **law of Moses**.

###### Paul’s **farewell address** to the Ephesian elders sounds a lot like his **teaching** in his epistles (cf. Acts 20:21, 24-25, 28-35)

###### For a more thorough discussion of this objection see Kevin Kay, “Reconciling Acts & Galatians” (2018 SITS Conference, [www.sitsconference.com](http://www.sitsconference.com))

#### **Luke’s History Contradicts Paul’s History**

##### Explanation:

###### Paul makes **five visits** to Jerusalem in Acts

1st Visit: **The Post-Conversion Visit** (Acts 9:26-30; 22:17-18)

2nd Visit: **The Famine Relief Visit** (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25)

3rd Visit: **The Jerusalem Conference Visit** (Acts 15:4ff)

4th Visit: **The Jewish Feast Visit**, after The Second Missionary Journey (Acts 18:21-22)

5th Visit: **The Collection Visit**, after The Third Missionary Journey (Acts 21:15, 17)

###### Paul mentions only **two visits** to Jerusalem in his epistles

 1st Visit: After **3 Years** (Gal. 1:18-19)

2nd Visit: After **14 Years** (Gal. 2:1-10)

##### Evaluation:

###### For a more thorough discussion of this objection see Kevin Kay, “Reconciling Acts & Galatians” (2018 SITS Conference, [www.sitsconference.com](http://www.sitsconference.com))

### Objections To John:

#### **It Is Highly Unlikely That A Lowly Fisherman (Mt. 4:21-22) Would Have Known The Jewish High Priest (Jn. 18:15-16)**

##### Explanation:

##### Evaluation:

###### Sometimes **truth** really is **stranger** than **fiction**

###### If the beloved disciple is **John** the son of Zebedee, he may have known the high priest because:

John may have been from a **priestly family**

John may have **supplied fish** to the high priest (See Leon Morris, “John,” NICNT, 666, n. 37)

###### While the phrase “known to the high priest” could mean **“well known,”** it doesn’t necessarily mean that. It could mean that John was little more than a **“nodding acquaintance”**

#### **John Could Not Have Lived Long Enough To Write The Fourth Gospel**

##### Explanation:

##### Evaluation:

###### External evidence indicates that **John lived well into old age** – into the reign of Trajan [Emperor 98-117] (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:23:4, NPNF, 2.1:150)

#### **John Was Illiterate** (Acts 4:13)

##### Explanation:

##### Evaluation:

###### The expression **“uneducated and untrained men”** (Acts 4:13) need not refer to anything other than a **lack of formal rabbinic training**

*Craig Blomberg*: “**Elementary education** for boys until at least the age of twelve was **widely practised** in Israel in Jesus’ day, so texts like Acts 4:13 cannot mean that the disciples had **no competence** in **reading**, **writing** and **memorization** (but more likely that they had **not gone on to study for the rabbinate**).” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 57)

*Brant Pitre*: “[T]he first-century Greek writer Epictetus actually speaks about a man **‘writing in an illiterate way’** (Greek *graphein* *agrammatōs*) (*Discourses*, 2.9.10)!” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus*, 37)

How could the Jewish leaders **have known** from their oral interactions with Peter and John, that they could not **read and write**?

###### John’s father, Zebedee, was wealthy enough to have **“hired servants,”** so he was a man of **some financial means** (Mk. 1:19-20)

###### If Zebedee **sold fish to Gentile customers**, then some knowledge of **Greek** would have been necessary to conduct business

###### John was a **fisherman** who became one of Jesus’ **apostles**

###### John preached to **Gentiles**

###### If John’s Gospel was written toward the **end of his life**, then he could have had time to **study** and **learn** Greek which would have enabled him to **preach** to Gentiles

###### He also could have used a **secretary** (cf. Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Phile. 19)

#### **John Would Not Have Said “We Know That His Testimony Is True”** (Jn. 21:24)

##### Explanation:

##### Evaluation:

###### Ancient authors commonly referred to themselves in **the third person**

###### Ancient authors often referred to themselves using the word **“we”** (3 Jn. 12) (Jones)

###### Paul certainly declared the **veracity** of his testimony (Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20). Why not John?

#### **The Teachings Of Jesus In The “Gospel According To John” Are Radically Different From The Teachings Of Jesus In The Synoptic Gospels** (Jn. 21:24) (Mendez & Ehrman)

##### Explanation:

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” **Jesus claims to be** **divine**; but in the Synoptic Gospels, there is **no claim to divinity**

He claims to be a **pre-existent being** (Jn. 8:58) who was **sent** into the world by God (Jn. 3:17; 4:34; 5:23-24, 30, 38; 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57; 7:28-29; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-45, 49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 8, 18, 23, 25; 20:21), **came** from God (Jn. 6:33-35; 8:14, 20, 42; 16:28; 17:8), and would **return** to God (Jn. 7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 28; 20:17)

He claims to be a **divine being** (Jn. 5:17; 8:24, 58; 10:30; 17:21)

He claims to **do divine things** (Jn. 5:27; 6:33)

He claims to have **divine prerogatives** (Jn. 5:22-23; 6:39, 44, 57; 15:26

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” **Jesus promises mutual indwelling** (Jn. 15:4); but in the Synoptic Gospels, there is **no such promise**

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” **Jesus promises eternal life here and now** (Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47, 54; 10:27-28); but in the Synoptic Gospels, **eternal life is promised in the hereafter** (Mt. 19:29 // Mk. 10:29-30 // Lk. 18:30

Note: The Fourth Gospel also describes eternal life as **future** (Jn. 6:27)

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” **Jesus promises divine glory to humans** [?] (Jn. 17:22); but in the Synoptic Gospels, there is **no such promise**

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” **Jesus implies deification for humans** (Jn. 10:34-36) [?]; but in the Synoptic Gospels, there is **no such teaching**

Note: Jesus **does not promise deification** for humans

###### In the “Gospel According To John,” the **narratives are different** from the narratives in the Synoptics

##### Evaluation:

###### In the Synoptics, Jesus **implicitly claims Divinity**

He **forgave** sins (Mk. 2:5-12; Lk. 5:20-26; 7:47-50)

He **knew the hearts** of men (Lk. 5:22; cf. 1 Ki. 8:39)

He will **judge** all men (Mt. 25:31-46)

He accepted **worship** (Mt. 2:1-2, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52)

###### OT passages talking about **YHWH** are **applied** to **Jesus**

| **Jehovah** | **Title or Act** | **Jesus** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ex. 3:14  | **“I Am”** | Jn. 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5-6  |
| Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1  | **The Coming Lord** | Mt. 3:1-3; 11:10-11; Mk. 1:1-7; Lk. 1:76; Jn. 3:28  |
| Mal. 3:1, 6 | **Messenger To Prepare Way** | Mk. 1:1-3 |
| Mal. 4:5-6  | **Preceded By Elijah** | Mt. 11:13-14; 17:10-13; Lk. 1:16-17  |
| Psa. 90:2; 93:1-2 | **From Everlasting** | Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:4-6 |
| Isa. 6:1-5, 10 | **Isaiah Saw His Glory** | Jn. 12:37-41 |
| Isa. 43:10-13; 45:21-22 | **Only Savior** | Jn. 4:42 |
| Zech. 12:1, 10 | **Look On Me** | Jn. 19:33-37 |
| Psa. 89:8-9 | **Stills The Seas** | Mt. 8:23-27 |
| Ex. 20:8-11 | **Lord Of Sabbath** | Mk. 2:27-28 |
| Psa. 23:1; Ezek. 34 | **Shepherd** | Jn. 10:11 |

# **WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?**

## There are several **Common Sense Principles** to guide us in dating any document

### A document must be dated within **the lifetime** of its author

#### If the **“traditional authors”** of the Gospels were the **actual authors**, then the Gospels must have been written **within their lifetimes** which probably requires dates within the **first century**

### A document must be dated sometime after the **latest historical event** to which it refers (unless a future event is being prophesied)

#### Example: The Acts of the Apostles must have been written sometime after Festus’ appointment as procurator [55-59] (Acts 24:27) and **Paul’s two-year imprisonment in Rome** [60-62] (Acts 28:30-31)

#### Example: 1 & 2 Corinthians must have been written sometime after **Paul’s work in Corinth** [49-50] (Acts 18:1-18)

### A document cannot be later in date than its **earliest extant copy**

#### Example: The Gospel of John had to be written before the **John Rylands Fragment** was copied (Early 2nd century)

### A document must be dated before **the earliest references to it** in other documents

#### Example: **Matthew** must have been written before Clement quoted from it in 1 Clement (~AD 96)

##### See [Appendix C](#AppendixC)

### A document must be dated before the **stage of development** of Christian doctrine and practice that it presupposes (F. F. Bruce, “On Dating The New Testament”)

#### Note: This is a **precarious criterion** that has caused many scholars to **reject the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles**.

##### They argue that the Pastoral Epistles presuppose a system of **church government and organization** that developed after Paul’s lifetime

##### But there is abundant early evidence of an **identical system of church government** (cf. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17-18; Phil. 1:1; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1, 5)

## The **standard dating schemes** for the Gospels date them **after AD 70**

### Explanation:

#### References to **Jerusalem’s destruction** suggest a **post-AD 70 date** for the Synoptic Gospels

##### Major Premise: The Synoptic Gospels refer to the **destruction of Jerusalem** in AD 70

###### Jesus alludes to **Jerusalem’s destruction** in some of His **parables**

The Parable of the **Landowner** (Mt. 21:33ff, 40-45 // Mk. 12:1ff, 9-12 // Lk. 20:9ff, 15-18)

The Parable of the **Marriage Feast** (Mt. 22:1ff, 7)

###### Jesus’ **lament** over Jerusalem (Mt. 23:36-39; Lk. 13:34-35)

###### Jesus’ **triumphal entry** (Lk. 19:41-44)

###### Jesus allegedly **predicts** the destruction of Jerusalem in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:1ff, 15-28 // Mk. 13:1ff, 14-23 // Lk. 21:5ff, 20-24)

##### Minor Premise: Predictive prophecy is **impossible**

##### Conclusion: Therefore, the Gospels must have been **written after** the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70

#### Certain statements in the Gospels (e.g. Mt. 18:15; 28:19) point to **later theological development**

#### The phrase **“to this day”** (Mt. 27:8; 28:15) point to a **late date**

#### Matthew reflects a **Judaism** after AD 70

##### His emphasis on the **Pharisees**

###### Major Premise: Matthew focuses on the **Pharisees**

###### Minor Premise: The Pharisees wielded the **most power** in Judaism **after AD 70**

###### Conclusion: Matthew must have been **written after AD 70**

##### His references to **“their”** synagogue (Mt. 12:9; 13:54) points to a **break** between Judaism and Christianity which occurred after AD 70

##### References to Jesus as the **“Teacher”** points to a post-AD 70 date (Mt. 8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36; etc.)

#### Christians expected **Jesus to come back soon**; therefore, there was no need for any written records of Jesus’ life until the apostles passed away (~AD 70)

#### It is generally believed that **Mark’s Gospel** was written first;[[20]](#footnote-21) then sometime later **Matthew** and **Luke** used it as a source. Finally, **John’s Gospel** was written near the end of the first century

### Evaluation:

#### The **“standard dating”** of the Gospels is largely based upon the **anti-supernatural bias** that predictive prophecy is impossible

##### This is a **philosophical** argument, not a **historical** argument

##### If Jesus’ “prophecies” of Jerusalem’s destruction were **put in His mouth** after the fact, as skeptics argue, why are they **not more specific** and/or **more accurate**?

###### The Parable of the Marriage Feast says that **the city would be burned** (Mt. 22:7)

But the **temple** was **burned**, not the **city**

Furthermore, this was a **parable**, not necessarily a precise prophecy in all of its details

###### In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus told His disciples to pray that Jerusalem’s destruction would not happen in **winter** (Mt. 24:20 // Mk 13:18)

But Titus destroyed Jerusalem in **July-August** (*The Mishnah*, Taanith, 4.6)

If this “prophecy” was **made up** and placed on Jesus’ tongue, why is this little detail **included**?

###### Jesus’ warning to **flee to the mountains** (Mt. 24:16 // Mk. 13:12 // Lk. 21:21) **does not fit the picture** after the destruction of Jerusalem

By AD 68, Jerusalem was **isolated**, and there were Romans and hostile Sicarii (Jewish terrorists) in the **mountains**

At that point, people **fled into Jerusalem**, and to forts like **Masada** and **Herodian**, not from Jerusalem and into the mountains (Holding, “The Authorship of Matthew’s Gospel,” 6)

And Christians fled to **Pella** (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29:7:7-8; *Church History*, 3:5:3)

*Epiphanius*: “The Nazoraean sect exists in Beroea…**Pella**, and in Bashan…That is where the sect began, when all the disciples were **living in Pella** after they **moved from Jerusalem**, since Christ told them to **leave Jerusalem** and withdraw because it was about to be **besieged**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Panarion* 29:7:7-8)

And Pella is **lower in elevation** than Jerusalem

##### Since both the OT and Jesus emphasized the importance of **“truth,”**[[21]](#footnote-22) is it reasonable to believe that the Gospel writers would have **put words** (i.e. prophecies) **in Jesus’ mouth**?

##### Finally, a **prediction** of Jerusalem’s destruction would not necessarily require **supernatural activity**

###### Josephus reports that **Jesus, the son of Ananus**, made such a prediction four years before the Roman-Jewish war began (“The Wars of the Jews,” 6:5:3:300-301, *The Works of Josephus*, 742)

###### I believe that Jesus **prophesied** the destruction of Jerusalem in ~AD 30 or 33, about 40 years before the event

###### But if the destruction of Jerusalem was merely **predicted** four years before the event, as Josephus reports, that demonstrates that the references and allusions to Jerusalem’s destruction in the Gospels would not **require a post-** **AD** **70 date** for those documents

#### If the skeptics’ anti-supernatural bias is rejected, there is **no compelling reason** to date the Gospels **later** rather than **earlier**

#### There are good reasons to believe that the Gospel of Matthew was **written before the temple was destroyed**

##### Would there be a good reason to mention Jesus’ teaching concerning **temple activity**  (Mt. 5:23-24; 12:5-7; 23:16-22) after the temple had been destroyed?

#### There are no statements in the Gospels that demand **later theological development**

##### Mt. 18:15 is similar in thought to **Lev. 19:17**

##### Mt. 28:18-20 reflects several OT passages that prophecy **future blessings for the Gentiles** (cf. Isa. 11:10; 42:1, 6; 49:6; 60:3, 5, 11, 16; 61:6, 9; 62:2; 66:12, 19; Jer. 16:19-21; Amos 9:12; Mal. 1:11)

##### There are **early allusions** to the **Trinity** in Paul’s epistles (1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14)

#### The phrase **“to/until this day”** (Mt. 27:8; 28:15) does not necessarily demand a **lengthy elapse of time** (cf. Josh. 6:25; 22:3; 23:8-9)

#### How **many times** must a document mention the **Pharisees** to indicate a pre-AD 70 date versus a post-AD 70 date?

##### This argument can be **turned around** on those who make it

###### The Sadducees are mentioned **7 times** in Matthew and **7 times** in the rest of the NT

###### Since the Sadducees **lost power** after AD 70, Matthew’s treatment of Judaism reflects a time **before AD** **70** (Holding, “The Authorship of Matthew’s Gospel,” 9)

#### **“Their” synagogue** (Mt. 12:9; 13:54) could suggest **provenance**, not any kind of a **break** between Judaism and Christianity (cf. Mt. 4:23; 9:35)

##### There was plenty of tension between **Jesus** and the **Pharisees**

##### The book of Acts describes plenty of **Jewish-Christian tension** (Acts 13:42-48; 14:1-5)

#### Very little material from first-century Judaism is extant to indicate whether the title **“Teacher”** was used, or not, before AD 70 (Holding, “The Authorship of Matthew’s Gospel,” 10)

## There are **good reasons** to believe that the Gospels were **written relatively early**, rather than late

### The Date Of “Matthew”:

#### **“Matthew”** is quoted or alluded to by **Ignatius** (~AD 110) and by **Clement** (~AD 96), so it could not have been written much later than ~ AD 90

##### See [Appendix C](#AppendixC)

#### **Irenaeus** reported that “Matthew” was written while **Peter** and **Paul** were preaching in **Rome** (~AD 60-67) (“Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:1:1, ANF, 1885, 1:414)

#### If the “Gospel According To Matthew” was written **after AD** **70**, it records teaching from Jesus which would have been **irrelevant** and **impossible** **to obey** after the temple was destroyed

##### Leave your **gift at the altar** (Mt. 5:23-26)

##### The priests in the temple **“profaning”** the Sabbath (Mt. 12:5-7)

##### Paying the **temple tax** (Mt. 17:24-27)

###### After the temple was destroyed, the temple tax was redirected to support the **temple of Jupiter Capitolinus** (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 7:6:6:[218]; Dio Cassius*, History*, 66:7:2)

###### *Robert Gundry*: “The distinctive passage [Mat.] 17:24-27 teaches that Jewish Christians should not contribute to their fellow Jews rejection of the gospel by refusing to pay the Temple tax. This exhortation not only shows Matthew’s concern to win Jews. It specifically **favors a date of writing before AD 70**; for after the destruction of God’s temple in Jerusalem the Romans shifted the tax to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome (Josephus J.W. 7.6.6 §218; Dio Cassius 65.7; Suetonius Dom. 12), and m. Šeqal. 8.8 says that **the laws concerning ‘the Shekel dues … apply only such time as the Temple stands.’** Surely Matthew does not include this passage to support upkeep of a pagan temple, for then the argument implies that the disciples are sons of the pagan god! Nor can we suppose that Matthew is urging Jewish Christians to support the school of pharisaical rabbis that formed in jam yet during the aftermath of the Jewish rebellion, for he excoriates the Pharisees throughout his Gospel. The argument from 17:24-27 for an early date gains further cogency from the evidence that Matthew himself composed the passage.” (Bold emphasis added, *A Survey of the New Testament*, 1994, 606, quoted by Danny Zacharias)

##### Swearing by **the temple and the altar** (Mt. 23:16-22)

### The Date Of “Mark”:

#### More than one “Church Father” claimed that **Mark** was written in **Rome**[[22]](#footnote-23)

##### Eusebius cites a tradition that **Peter** went to Rome in the **AD** **40’s** under Claudius to deal with the heretic Simon Magus (*Ecclesiastical History*, 2:14:1-6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:115)

##### Claudius **expelled** the Jews from Rome in **AD** **49** (cf. Acts 18:1-2)

##### This decree would have **ended** in **AD** **54** when Claudius died

##### Since Paul’s letter to the Romans (AD 56) **does not mention Peter or Mark** in the greetings section (Rom. 16:3-16), they almost certainly were **not in Rome** at that time

###### Either they had not yet **arrived**

###### They had **departed**

#### **Irenaeus**, the bishop of Lyon, France (~AD 180), reports that Mark was written after the **“departure”** of Peter and Paul from Rome (“Irenæus against Heresies,” 3:1:1, ANF, 1885, 1:414)

##### “Scholars are divided over whether Irenaeus meant that Mark wrote after Peter and Paul **left** Rome or after they **died**. But in either case, that would place the writing of Mark perhaps in **the early 60s**. Later church fathers place the writing **during the life of Peter**. If, as most scholars believe, the Gospel of Mark was used, at least in some form, by Luke in the writing of his Gospel, the date of Mark could be pushed back to the 50s, since the earliest date for Luke is around A.D. 60.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1464)

#### **Jerome** reports that Mark “died in the **eighth year** of Nero [AD 62] and was buried at Alexandria” (Bold emphasis added, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” *NPNF*, 1892, 2.3:364)

#### If Jerome’s report is correct and **Mark** wrote the Second Gospel, it must have been written sometime **before AD** **62**

#### Mark’s reference to **Alexander** and **Rufus**, the sons of Simon of Cyrene (Mk. 15:21) might suggest an **early date** for this Gospel

##### Why mention these two unless they were **alive** and **known** to the church in Rome? (cf. Rom. 16:13)

##### But the **later** Mark is dated, the more **doubtful** this becomes (Holding, “The Authorship of Mark’s Gospel, 10)

### The Date Of “Luke”:

#### “The Gospel According To Luke” and “Acts Of The Apostles” were written by the **same person**, and the gospel was written **before** Acts (See [above](#_He_was_also))

#### Acts concludes with **Paul’s two-year imprisonment in Rome** [~AD 60-62] (Acts 28:30-31)

##### Note: Church tradition reports that Paul was **released** from his Roman imprisonment (~AD 62), only to be **re-imprisoned** and **executed** a few years later[[23]](#footnote-24)

#### It is very reasonable to conclude that Acts was **written shortly thereafter**

##### It **does not mention** several **significant events** in first-century history:

###### The **destruction** of Jerusalem (AD 70)

###### The **Jewish-Roman war** (AD 66-73 AD)

###### Nero’s **persecution** of Christians in Rome (AD 64)

###### The **deteriorating relations** between **Romans** & **Jews**

###### The **deteriorating relations** between **Romans** & **Christians**

The Romans are **presented** **positively** in the Gospels (cf. Mt. 8:5-13 // Lk. 7:1-10; Mt. 27:54 // Mk. 15:39 // Lk. 23:47)

The Romans are **presented** **positively** in the book of Acts (cf. Acts 21:28; 27:3

This changed with **Nero’s persecution** of Christians (AD 64)

###### The **death of Paul** (AD 64 [Early] or AD 65-67 [Late])

**Beheaded** by Nero[[24]](#footnote-25)

###### The **death of Peter** (AD 64-65)

**Crucified** by Nero[[25]](#footnote-26)

###### The **death of James** (AD 62)

**Stoned** to death by the Jewish Sanhedrin[[26]](#footnote-27)

###### The **outcome** of Paul’s trial before Caesar [Nero] (Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 528)

Paul **appealed** to Caesar (Acts 25:10-11)

But the book of Acts ends by mentioning **Paul’s two-year imprisonment in Rome** (Acts 28:30-31) with no mention of his **trial** before Caesar or its result

If the book of Acts was **written after that event**, why does the writer **say nothing** about it?

##### Since none of the aforementioned events, are **reported** in the book of Acts, it appears very probable that Acts was **written before these events occurred**

##### This means **Luke was written earlier**, and if Matthew and Luke were dependent on Mark, as many scholars believe, then **Mark was written still earlier**

##### Objection: This is an **argument from silence**, and arguments from silence are **notoriously unreliable**

###### Neither Herodotus nor Thucydides mention **Rome** or **the Romans** despite the fact that the Roman Republic was a major world power at the time

###### Thucydides did not mention **Socrates**

###### Pliny the Younger in his letters to Tacitus mentions the eruption of **Vesuvius** but does not mention the destruction of **Pompeii**

###### Marco Polo does not mention **The Great Wall Of China**

###### Ulysses S. Grant does not mention **The Emancipation Proclamation**

###### Grafton’s Chronicle mentions the reign of King John but never mentions the **Magna Charta**

###### Eusebius does not mention the death of Constantine’s son **Chrispa** and his wife **Fausta** (Answering BAD Atheist Arguments)

##### Response: While arguments from silence can be **unreliable**, they are not always. We must consider the **probability** that an event **would be mentioned** in Acts if that event had occurred

###### The **fulfillment of prophecy** is repeatedly mentioned throughout Scripture

In the OT:

**The curse on whoever rebuilt** **Jericho**

Prophecy (Josh. 6:26)

Fulfillment (1 Ki. 16:34)

**Josiah’s desecration of the altar in Bethel**

Prophecy (1 Ki. 13:1-2)

Fulfillment (2 Ki. 23:15-18)

**The Deportations & Captivities of the Jews**

Prophecies (Lev. 26:33; Dt. 4:27; 28:64-68)

Fulfillment (2 Ki. 17:3-41; 18:9-12; 25:1-21; 2 Chr. 36:15-21)

**The Return of the Jews to the Promised Land**

Prophecies (Lev. 26:40-45; Dt. 30:1-10)

Fulfillment (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-3:13)

**The decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple**

Prophecy (Isa. 44:28-45:6)

Fulfillment (2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13, 17; 6:3, 14)

*Etc*.

In the Gospels:

**Jesus’** **resurrection**

|  |
| --- |
| **Jesus’ Predictions Of Death** |
|  | **Mt.** | **Mk.** | **Lk.** |
| Caesarea Philippi | 16:21-26 | 8:31-37 | 9:22-25 |
| Galilee | 17:39-40 | 9:30-32 | 9:43-45 |
| Road to Jerusalem | 20:17-19 | 10:32-34 | 18:31-34 |
| Earlier hints: Mt. 12:39-40; 16:4; Jn. 2:19; 3:14; 6:51 |

Prophecy (Jn. 2:19)

Fulfillment (Jn. 2:21-22; Mt. 27-28; Mk. 15-16; Lk. 23-24; Jn. 19-20)

**The scattering of the disciples**

Prophecy (Mt. 26:31 // Mk. 14:27; cf. Zech. 13:7)

Fulfillment (Mt. 26:56 // Mk. 14:50)

**Peter’s denial of Jesus**

Prophecy (Mt. 26:34// Mk. 14:30 // Lk. 22:34 // Jn. 13:38)

Fulfillment (Mt. 26:69ff // Mk. 14:66ff // Lk. 22:55ff // Jn. 18:15ff)

*Etc*.

In the book of Acts:

**The famine in the days of Claudius**

Prophecy (Acts 11:28)

Fulfillment (Acts 11:28)

**Paul’s seizure in Jerusalem**

Prophecy (Acts 21:10-11)

Fulfillment (Acts 21:30-33)

*Etc*.

###### If Acts were **written after the destruction of Jerusalem**, why wouldn’t **the fulfillment** of Jesus’ prophecy **be mentioned**? (Mt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 17; 21)

*Brant Pitre*: “Isn’t it strange that Luke would go out of his way to emphasize that **the prophecy of a little-known Christian prophet named Agabus had been fulfilled** in the days of the emperor Claudius (the 40s AD) but **fail to mention that Jesus’s prophecy of the destruction of the Temple had been fulfilled in AD 70**? Why doesn’t he say that Jesus’s word ‘took place in the days of the emperor Titus’? I’ll give you one explanation: perhaps Luke does not mention the fulfillment of Jesus’s prophecy because it had *not yet taken place*.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence for Christ,*  92-93)

###### Other **persecutions** are mentioned in the book of Acts

**Philippi** (Acts 16)

**Ephesus** (Acts 19)

###### If Acts was written **after Nero’s persecution** (AD 64), why is this not mentioned

###### The **deaths** of other prominent Christians are mentioned in the book of Acts

**Stephen** (Acts 7)

**James** (Acts 12:1-2)

###### If Acts were written after the deaths of **James** (Jesus’ brother), **Peter**, & **Paul**, why wouldn’t this be mentioned?

##### Several individuals are **not identified** in the Synoptic Gospels, perhaps to protect them from **persecution**. This might be an indication that the Synoptics were written **earlier** rather than **later**

###### The man who **cut off the ear** of the high priest’s servant (Mt. 26:51 // Mk. 14:47 // Lk. 22:50)

The “Gospel According To John,” written much later, when the possibility of retribution was much less, identifies this man and the servant as **Peter** and **Malchus**, respectively (Jn. 18:10)

###### The **young man** who flees from Gethsemane (Mk. 14:51-52)

###### The man who supplies **the donkey** for Jesus’ Triumphal Entry (Mk. 11:1-7)

###### The man who provided **the place** for Jesus and His apostles to observe the Passover (Mt. 26:17-19 // Mk. 14:12-16 // Lk. 22:7-13)

###### The woman who **anointed** Jesus (Mt. 26:6-13 // Mk. 14:3-9)

The “Gospel According To John,” written much later, when the possibility of retribution was much less, identifies this woman as **Mary** (Jn. 12:2-8)

##### The prominence and authority of **the Sadducees** in Acts (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6-8) reflects a **pre-AD** **70 date**, before the collapse of their political cooperation with Rome

##### The prominence of **“God-fearers”** in the synagogues (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26) may point to a pre- AD 70 date, after which there were few Gentile inquirers and converts to Judaism

##### “Acts” records some **primitive subject matter**

###### The Jew/Gentile controversy

##### “Luke” – “Acts” utilizes **primitive theological terminology**

###### Jesus is:

“The **Christ**” (Acts 2:36; 9:22; 10:36; 17:3; 18:5, 28; 19:4; etc.)

“His [God’s] **Servant**” (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30)

“The **Son of Man**” (Lk. 9:58; 22:48)

###### Christians as “**disciples**” (Acts 11:26)

###### Jewish nation as “**the people**” (Acts 4:10, 27; 6:12; 12:4; 17:5; 21:28, 30, 39)

###### Sunday as “the **first day** of the week” (Lk. 24:1; Acts 20:7)

##### Luke mentions **insignificant cultural details** of an early, Julio-Claudian period

##### Described areas of controversy presume that **the temple** was still standing

##### Christian **terminology** used in Acts reflects an earlier period (Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 528)

#### Paul wrote 1 Timothy ~ AD 64-68, and he appears to **quote from Luke’s Gospel** (1 Tim. 5:18 & Lk. 10:7), calling it **“Scripture”**; so, Luke must have been **written sometime earlier**

##### 1 Tim. 5:18: “*axios ho ergates ho misthos autos*”

##### Lk. 10:7: “*axios gar ho ergates ho misthos autos*”

#### If Acts were written shortly after **Paul’s two-year imprisonment in Rome** (AD 60-62), then **Luke** must have been **written sometime before that** (cf. Acts 1:1-3 & Lk. 1:1-4)

#### Paul writes 1 Corinthians (~AD 55), and he alludes to and/or quotes **earlier teaching** from the Gospels, especially Luke; so, Luke must have been written sometime earlier

##### He alludes to Jesus’ teaching on **divorce** (1 Cor. 11:10-11 & Mt. 5:31-32; 19:1-12; Mk. 10:1-12; Lk. 16:18)

##### He alludes to Jesus’ teaching on **financial support** for preachers (1 Cor. 9:14 & Lk. 10:7; Mt. 10:10)

##### He appears to quote from Luke’s Gospel concerning the **Lord’s Supper** (1 Cor. 11:24-25 & Lk. 22:19)

###### *Mark Taylor*: “Paul’s rendition of the received tradition is **closest to Luke’s account** (Luke 22:17-20; cf. also Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24).” (Bold emphasis added, “1 Corinthians,” NAC, 28:271)

**“Do this in remembrance of Me”** (1 Cor. 11:24 & Lk. 22:19)

Jesus body is **“for you”** (1 Cor. 11:24 & Lk. 22:19)

The **“cup”** is the **“new covenant”** (1 Cor. 11:25 & Lk. 22:20)

###### Some of the Church Fathers associate **Luke’s Gospel with Paul** (See The Muratorian Fragment; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3:1:1; Origen, quoted in Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:25:4)

##### Critics agree that **Paul wrote** 1 Corinthians **~** **AD** **55**

#### Paul **reiterates** what he had **already taught** the Corinthians concerning the Lord’s Supper when he labored among them (~AD 49-50 [Early] or ~ AD 50-52 [Late]; so, Luke must have been **written sometime earlier**

##### The **Gallio Stone** dates to AD 51 (Hans Conzelmann, “1 Corinthians,” *Hermenia*, 13)

#### If **Matthew** and **Luke** were **dependent** on **Mark**, as most scholars believe, then Mark must have been **written sometime earlier**

### The Date Of “John”:

#### *Craig Blomberg*: “The strongest early church tradition does not date John until the **90s**, though a minority placed his Gospel in the **60s** as well.” ([*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*](https://ref.ly/logosres/hstrclrlblgspls?ref=Page.p+26&off=719&ctx=later+than+ad+62.%EF%BB%BF6+~The+strongest+early+). Second Edition, 2007, 26)

#### Arguments For An Early Date:

##### “Matthew” and “John” were **prior** to Luke and Mark (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 4:5)

##### There is no reference to **Jerusalem’s destruction**

##### There is no dependence on the **Synoptic Gospels**

##### John uses the term **“disciples”** rather than “apostles”

##### John says, “there **is** in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda….” (Jn. 5:2)

###### John frequently uses the Greek **present tense** to refer to something in the **past** (Carson & Moo, 264)

##### **Andrew** helped convince John to write his Gospel, but Andrew was crucified in **Patress** (Nov. 30, AD 69) (Muratorian Canon, 13-16)

##### The theology in John’s prologue (Jn. 1:1-18) reflects the **Christ hymns** (Phil. 2:3-11; Col. 1:15-20; Rom. 9:5) in the 50s AD

#### Arguments For A Late Date:

##### “John” was written **after** the Synoptic Gospels (Irenaeus, Muratorian Canon, Clement, Pitre, *The Case For Jesus*, 49)

##### “John” was written **after** his exile and **after** he wrote Revelation (Monarchian Prologue, AD 200)

###### External evidence also indicates that **John lived well into old age** – into the reign of Trajan [Emperor AD 98-117] (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:23:4, NPNF, 2.1:150)

##### Tradition that it was written during the reign of **Domitian** (AD 81-96)

##### Tradition that John lived into the reign of **Trajan** (AD 98-117)

###### Irenaeus (“Against Heresies,” 2.22.5; 3.3.4)

###### Eusebius (“Church History,” 3.23.3-4)

###### Jerome (“Lives of Illustrious Men,” 9)

##### Order of writing: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (Early church view)

##### No mention of **“scribes”**

##### No reference to **Jerusalem’s destruction**

##### Christians being **“put out of the synagogue”** (Jn. 9:22; 12:42; 16:2)

###### Note: This has been repeatedly challenged

##### No mention of **Sadducees**, whose influence declined after AD 70

##### **High Christology** fits a later date (Jn. 1:1-18; 5:18; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28)

#### Objection: Most scholars date John in the **AD** **80’s or 90’s**, which was **after the destruction of Jerusalem** in AD 70, but it **does not mention** the destruction of Jerusalem

##### Reply: John’s gospel **does not record a prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction**, so mentioning that event was not germane to John’s purpose

## Why were the Gospels **not written earlier**?

### The early Christians thought that Jesus was going to **return in the near future** [?]

#### While first-century Christians believed that Jesus **could** return soon, and some in Thessalonica **stopped working** because they evidently believed that He **would** return soon (cf. 1 Th. 4:11; 2 Th. 3:8, 10-12), Paul did not necessarily **believe** that

#### Although some passages might suggest that **he did**, others suggest the exact **opposite**

| **Second Coming Imminent** | **Second Coming Not Imminent** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 Th. 4:15, 17 | 1 Th. 5:1-2, 10; 2 Th. 2:1-3; (cf. Mt. 24:42-44; Lk. 12:35-40) |
| 1 Cor. 15:50-52; 16:22 | 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:12-14, 16-19; 2 Cor. 4:10-14; 5:1-9 |
| Phil. 3:20-21; 4:5 | Phil. 1:20-26; 2:17-18; 3:7-10 |
| Rom. 13:11 |  |
| 1 Tim. 6:14 | 2 Tim. 4:6-8 |
| Tit. 2:11-13 |  |

### The apostles and others were busy fulfilling the **Great Commission** – preaching and establishing churches

### The eyewitnesses were **still living**

### Writing an account of Jesus’ life required **painstaking research** which took **time** (cf. Lk. 1:1-4)

## But **a need** for the Gospels was created when:

### The **eyewitnesses** began to **die**

#### Peter explains that he wrote so that Christians could have a **permanent record** of his teaching after his death (2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2)

### **Multiple churches** were established all over the Roman empire and beyond

#### Written documents that were distributed widely could **inform** and **instruct** more people than a limited number of inspired men

## However, even if the **Synoptic Gospels** were written **later** (~AD 70s & 80s), this does not **undermine their reliability**

### *William Mounce*: “[I]n the context of ancient literature, the **time gap** between the life of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels is **incredibly short**.” (Bold emphasis added, *Why I Trust the Bible*, 27)

### *Craig Blomberg*: “Whether written **thirty**, **forty**, or **fifty** years after Jesus’s death, the Gospels were produced **well within the lifetimes** of some who were **eyewitnesses** of Jesus’s ministry. By **ancient standards** this was a **short period of time** between **the** **life** of a famous individual and **the appearance of biographies** about him.” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 17)

### By comparison, the biographies of **Alexander the Great** (356-323 BC) were written **much later**

#### *Craig Blomberg*: “The **oldest existing biographies** of Alexander are by **Diodorus** in the **first century BC**, **Quintus Curtius** in the **first century AD**, and **Plutarch** and **Arrian** (the two best works), who wrote in the **early second century AD**, more than **four centuries** after Alexander’s death. They, in turn, refer to various earlier **written sources**, sometimes named, on which they relied, but **none of these still exists**, and we **know nothing else** about them. Yet, via the **standard canons of research**, and especially because Arrian regularly names **eyewitness sources**, historians of ancient Greece can assemble a **detailed summary of Alexander’s life** about which they remain **reasonably confident**; world civilization textbooks typically rely on these summaries without hesitation. That we have four biographies of Jesus within **thirty to sixty years** of his death is nothing short of astonishing by ancient standards. No other examples from antiquity have been preserved of **this abundance of information** from **multiple** **authors** in writings **so close** to the people and events being described. To reject *a priori* the New Testament Gospels as potential sources of excellent historical information about Jesus of Nazareth is to **impose a bias** on the study of history, which, if consistently applied elsewhere, would leave us completely **agnostic** about **anything** or **anyone** in the ancient world!” (Bold emphasis added, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 18-19)

Conclusion:

# **Who** Wrote The Gospels?

## I believe a compelling case can be made that the **traditional authors** of the Gospels are the **true authors** of the Gospels

# **When** Were The Gospels Written?

## I believe a compelling case can be made that the Gospels were written **early** rather than **later**

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[Appendix A](#_See_Appendix_A)

**The Manuscript Evidence: No Anonymous Gospels**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gospel Title** | **Earliest Greek Manuscript** | **Date** |
|  | Papyrus 1[[27]](#footnote-28) | 3rd century |
| Gospel according to Matthew | Papyrus 4 | 2nd century |
| Gospel according to Matthew | Papyrus 62 | 2nd century |
| According to Matthew | Codex Sinaiticus | 4th century |
| According to Matthew | Codex Vaticanus | 4th century |
| [Go]spel according to Mat[th]e[w] | Codex Washingtonianus | 4th-5th century |
| Gospel according to Matthew | Codex Alexandrinus | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Matthew | Codex Ephraemi | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Matthew [End] | Codex Bezae | 5th century |
| According to Mark | Codex Sinaiticus | 4th century |
| According to Mark | Codex Vaticanus | 4th century |
| Gospel according to Mark | Codex Washingtonianus | 4th-5th century |
| [Gosp]el according to Mark | Codex Alexandrinus | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Mar[k] [End] | Codex Ephraemi | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Mark | Codex Bezae | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Luke | Papyrus 75 | 2nd-3rd century |
| According to Luke | Codex Sinaiticus | 4th century |
| According to Luke | Codex Vaticanus | 4th century |
| Gospel according to Luke | Codex Washingtonianus | 4th-5th century |
| Gospel according to Luke | Codex Alexandrinus | 5th century |
| Gospel according to Luke | Codex Bezae | 5th century |
| Gospel according to [J]ohn | Papyrus 66 | Late 2nd century |
| Gospel according to John | Papyrus 75 | 2nd-3rd century |
| According to John | Codex Sinaiticus | 4th century |
| According to John | Codex Vaticanus | 4th century |
| According to John [End] | Codex Washingtonianus | 4th-5th century |
| Gospel according to John [End] | Codex Alexandrinus | 5th century |
| Gospel according to John | Codex Bezae | 5th century |
| Brant Pitre, *The Case for Jesus*, 16 |

[Appendix B](#_See_Appendix_B)

**Quotes Or Allusions From The Apostolic “Memoirs”**

| **Gospels** | **Justin Martyr’s Original Source** | **English Source** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Jn. 3:3 | *First Apology*, 61:4 | ANF 1:183 |
| Lk. 22:10 | *First Apology*, 66 | ANF 1:185 |
| Mt. 11:27 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 100 | ANF 1:249 |
| Mt. 16:21 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 100 | ANF 1:249 |
| Lk. 1:35, 38 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 100 | ANF 1:249 |
| Lk. 18:18 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 101 | ANF 1:249 |
| Mt. 27:42 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 101 | ANF 1:249 |
| Mt. 27:14 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 102 | ANF 1:250 |
| Mk. 15:3-5 |
| Jn. 19:8-10 |
| Mt. 3:17 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 103 | ANF 1:251 |
| Mt. 4:9-10 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 103 | ANF 1:251 |
| Lk. 22:42, 44 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 103 | ANF 1:251 |
| Mt. 27:35 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 104 | ANF 1:251 |
| Mk. 15:24 |
| Lk. 23:34 |
| Jn. 1:14 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 105 | ANF 1:251 |
| Mt. 1:18-25 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 105 | ANF 1:251 |
| Lk. 1:26-38 |
| Lk. 23:34 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 105 | ANF 1:251 |
| Mt. 5:20 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 105 | ANF 1:252 |
| Mt. 26:30 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 106 | ANF 1:252 |
| Mk. 14:26 |
| Mk. 3:16-17 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 106 | ANF 1:252 |
| Mt. 2:1-12 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 106 | ANF 1:252 |
| Mt. 12:38 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 107 | ANF 1:252 |
| Mt. 12:39-41 | *Dialogue With Trypho*, 107 | ANF 1:252 |

[Appendix C](#_See_Appendix_C)

**Quotations From The Gospels In The Apostolic Fathers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Apostolic Fathers** | **Gospels** | **ANF** | **LAFE** |
| 1 Clement 13:2 | Mt. 6:12-15; 7:2; Lk. 6:36-38 | 1:8 | 1:29 |
| 1 Clement 15:2 | Mt. 15:8; Mk. 7:6; cf. Isa. 29:13 | 1:9 | 1:33 |
| 1 Clement 24:5 | Lk. 8:5 | 1:11 | 1:53 |
| 1 Clement 46:8 | Mt. 18:6, 26:24; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2. | 1:18 | 1:89 |
| 2 Clement 2:4 | Mt. 9:13; Mk. 2:17 | 9:251 | 1:131 |
| 2 Clement 3:2 | Mt. 10:32 | 9:252 | 1:133 |
| 2 Clement 4:1-2 | Mt. 7:21 | 9:252 | 1:133 |
| 2 Clement 5:2 | Mt. 10:16; Lk. 10:3 | 9:252 | 1:135 |
| 2 Clement 6:1 | Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13 | 9:252 | 1:137 |
| 2 Clement 6:2 | Mt. 16:26; Mk. 8:36; Lk. 9:25 | 9:252 | 1:137 |
| 2 Clement 7:6 | Mk. 9:48; cf. Isa. 66:24 | 9:253 | 1:139 |
| 2 Clement 8:5 | Lk. 16:10-12 | 9:253 | 1:141 |
| 2 Clement 9:11 | Mt. 12:50; Mk. 3:35; Lk. 8:21 | 9:253 | 1:143 |
| 2 Clement 13 4 | Lk. 6:32, 35 | 9:254 | 1:149 |
| 2 Clement 14:1 | Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46; Jer. 7:11 | 9:254 | 1:151 |
| Ignatius to Ephesians 14:2 | Mt. 12:33 | 1:55 | 1:189 |
| Ignatius to Ephesians 19:2 | Mt. 2:1-2, 7, 9-10 | 1:57 | 1:193 |
| Ignatius to Smyrnaeans 3:2 | Lk. 24:39 | 1:87 | 1:255 |
| Ignatius to Smyrnaeans 6:1 | Mt. 19:21 | 1:88 | 1:259 |
| Polycarp to Philippians 2:3 | Mt. 7:1-2; Lk. 6:36-38; Mt. 5:3, 10; Lk. 6:20; Mt. 6:12, 14 | 1:33 | 1:285 |
| Polycarp to Philippians 6:2 | Mt. 6:12-14 [?] | 1:34 | 1:291 |
| Polycarp to Philippians 7:2 | Mt. 6:13; 26:41; Mk. 14:38 | 1:34 | 1:293 |
| Didache 1:2 | Mt. 22:37, 39; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18. | 7:377 | 1:309 |
| Didache 3:7 | Mt. 5:5 | 7:378 | 1:315 |
| Didache 7:1 | Mt. 28:19 | 7:379 | 1:319 |
| Didache 8:2 | Mt. 6:9-13; Lk. 11:2-4 | 7:379 | 1:321 |
| Didache 9:5 | Mt. 7:6 | 7:380 | 1:323 |
| Didache 13:1-2 | Mt. 10:10; cf. Lk. 10:7 | 7:381 | 1:329 |
| Didache 16:1 | Cf. Lk. 12:35; Mt. 24:42 | 7:382 | 1:333 |
| Epistle of Barnabas 4:14 | Mt. 20:16; 22:14 | 1:139 | 1:353 |
| Epistle of Barnabas 5:9 | Mt. 9:13; Mk. 2:17; Lk. 5:32 | 1:139 | 1:357 |
| ANF = *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* |
| LAFE = *Lake’s* *Apostolic Fathers in English* |

[Appendix D](#_See_Appendix_D)

**NT Quotations In Early Patristic Writers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Writer** | **Gospels** | **Acts** | **Pauline Epistles** | **General Epistles** | **Revelation** | **Totals** |
| Justin Martyr | 268 | 10 | 43 | 6 (266 Allusions) | 3 | 330 |
| Irenaeus | 1,038 | 194 | 499 | 23 | 65 | 1,819 |
| Clement of Alexandria | 1,017 | 44 | 1,127 | 207 | 11 | 2,406 |
| Origen | 9,231 | 349 | 7,778 | 399 | 165 | 17,922 |
| Tertullian | 3,822 | 502 | 2,609 | 120 | 205 | 7,258 |
| Hippolytus | 734 | 42 | 387 | 27 | 188 | 1,378 |
| Eusebius | 3,268 | 211 | 1,592 | 88 | 27 | 5,176 |
| Totals | 19,368 | 1,352 | 14,035 | 870 | 664 | 36,289 |
| Norman Geisler & William Nix, *From God To Us: How We Got Our Bible*, 138 |

[Appendix E](#_See_Appendix_E)

**NT Passages Identified As “Scripture”**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Writer** | **Work** | **ANF** | **Scripture** | **Gospel** |
| Ignatius | Epistle to the Magnesians, 12 | 1:64 | “For says [the Scripture]” | Lk. 18:13 |
| Ignatius | Epistle to the Antiochians, 4 | 1:110 | “says [the Scripture]” | Jn. 1:14; Mt. 1:1 |
| Ignatius | Epistle to the Philippians, 2 | 1:116 | “saith [the Scripture]” | Jn. 1:18 |
| Irenaeus | Against Heresies, 2:30:2 | 1:403 | “That expression of Scripture” | Mt. 7:7 |
| Clement | The Instructor, 1:3 | 2:211 | “as the Scripture says” | Mt. 15:14; Jn. 1:14 |
| Clement | The Instructor, 1:5 | 2:215 | “since Scripture” | Jn. 1:29, 36 |
| Clement | The Instructor, 1:7 | 2:224 | “also the Scripture says” | Jn. 1:17, 3 |
| Clement | The Instructor, 1:9 | 2:228 | “again, the Scripture admonishes” | Mt. 23:37 |
| Clement | The Stromata, 2:5 | 2:352 | “says the Scripture” | Mt. 11:28-30; Jn. 8:32-36 |
| Clement | Fragments | 2:579 | “The Scripture called the ‘Gospel by Mark’” |  |
| Tertullian | Against Marcion, 4:39 | 3:416 | “this Gospel Scripture” | Lk. 21:7, 33 |
| Tertullian | On the Flesh of Christ, 24 | 3:541 | “in the Scripture” | Jn. 1:13 |
| Tertullian | On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 18 | 3:558 | “even the Scripture informs us” | Jn. 2:21 |
| Tertullian | Against Praxeas, 17 | 3:613 | “the Scripture likewise says” | Jn. 17:6 |
| Tertullian | Against Praxeas, 22 | 3:617 | “the Scripture narrative goes” | Jn. 8:26-27 |
| Tertullian | On Baptism, 20 | 3:679 | “saith (the Scripture)” | Mt. 3:6, 40, 45 |
| Tertullian | On Prayer, 26 | 3:690 | “says *Scripture”* | Mt. 25:38 |
| Tertullian | Elucidations, I | 4:101 | “canonical Scripture” | Jn. 8:1-11 |
| Origen | Against Celsus, 1:Preface | 4:395 | “what the Scripture adds” | Mt. 27:17-18 |
| Origen | Against Celsus, 2:45 | 4:448 | “to which the Scripture adds” | Jn. 21:18-19 |
| Origen | Against Celsus, 8:19 | 4:646 | “in other parts of holy Scripture” | Jn. 2:19, 21 |
| Hippolytus | Canons of the Church of Alexandria | 5:257 | “relying on Holy Scripture” | Lk. 1:43 |
| Origen | Commentary on John 6:2 | 9:351 | “as the Scripture teaches” | Jn. 8:39 |
| Origen | Commentary on Matthew 10:15 | 9:423 | “from the Scripture” | Mt. 18:16 |
| Chysostom | Homily VII, NPNF 1.12:35 |  | “the Scripture saith” | Jn. 19:9 |
| Chrysostom | Homily VII, NPNF 1.13:214 |  | “for Scripture says” | Jn. 13:12 |

Appendix F

**The Apostolic Fathers and Early Writings**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Dates AD** | **Places Of Ministry** | **Writings** | **Notable Facts** |
| **Clement Of Rome** | ~30-~100 | Rome | *I Clement* | Considered The Fourth Pope By Roman Catholic Church. |
| Is Perhaps Mentioned In Php. 4:3. |
| Was Martyred Under Domitian. |
| His Letter Stresses Apostolic Succession. |
| **Ignatius** | d. 117 | Antioch In Syria | *To The Ephesians* |  |
| *To The Magnesians* | His Letters Were Written En Route To Martyrdom In Rome—A Fate He Joyfully Espoused. |
| *To The Trallians* |
| *To The Romans* | Was The First To Distinguish Between Bishops And Elders. |
| *To The Philadelphians* | Opposed Gnostic Heresies. |
| *To The Smyrnaeans* | Was Martyred Under Trajan. |
| *To Polycarp* |  |
| **Hermas** | Late 1st-Early 2nd Century | Rome | *The Shepherd* | Was A Contemporary Of Clement. |
| Wrote Of Visions And Parables. |
| Was Perhaps A Former Slave. |
| Was Probably Jewish. |
| **Barnabas Of Alexandria** | Late 1st-Early 2nd Century | Alexandria | *Epistle Of Barnabas* | Was Probably An Alexandrian Jew. |
| Was Familiar With Allegorical Methods Of Philo. |
| **Papias** | ~60–~130 | Hierapolis | *Exposition Of The Oracles Of Our Lord* | Was An Acquaintance Of The Apostle John. |
| Held A Premillennial View Of Eschatology. |
| Claimed Mark’s Gospel Was Based On Peter’s Words. |
| Said That Matthew’s Gospel Was Originally Written In Aramaic. |
| **Polycarp** | ~69–160 | Smyrna | *Epistle To The Philippians* | Was An Acquaintance Of The Apostle John. |
| Compiled And Preserved The Epistles Of Ignatius. |
| Is Said To Have Confronted Marcion As “The Firstborn Of Satan.” |
| Was Martyred Under Antoninus Pius. |
| **Unknown Author** | Early 2nd Century | Syria | *Didache* | Early Manual Of Church Practice. |
| Contrasts Way Of Life And Way Of Death. |
| Gives Instruction For Fasting, Baptism, Lord’s Supper. |
| Tells How To Recognize False Prophets. |
| Considered By Some For Inclusion In New Testament Canon. |
| Robert C. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, 13 |

Appendix G

**The Second-Century Apologists**

| **Name** | **Dates** | **Places Of Ministry** | **Representative Writings (\* = Lost)** | **Notable Facts** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quadratus** | Early 2nd Century | Athens | *Apology\** | Was Bishop Of Athens. |
| His Apology Was Addressed To Emperor Hadrian. |
| Contrasts Christianity With Jewish And Pagan Worship. |
| **Aristides** | Early 2nd Century | Athens | *Apology\** | His Apology Was Addressed To Emperor Hadrian. |
| Shows Strong Pauline Influence. |
| **Justin Martyr** | ~100–165 | PalestineEphesusRome | *First Apology**Second Apology**Dialogue With Trypho The Jew**Against Heresies\***Against Marcion\** | Was Trained In Philosophy. |
| Was An Itinerant Lay Teacher. |
| Personally Opposed Marcion. |
| Developed Concept Of Logos Spermaticos. |
| Argued For Christianity On The Basis Of Prophecy, Miracles, And Ethics. |
| Was Beheaded In Rome. |
| **Tatian** | 110–172 | AssyriaSyriaRome | *Diatessaron**To The Greeks* | Was A Pupil Of Justin.  |
| Argued Temporal Priority Of Christianity Over Other Religions. |
| Produced First Harmony Of The Gospels. |
| Later Fell Into Gnosticism. |
| His Followers Were Called Encratites. |
| **Athenagoras** | 2nd Century | Athens | *Apology On The Resurrection Of The Dead* | Was A Platonist. |
| Wrote In Classical Style. |
| **Theophilus** | D.181 | Antioch | *To Autolycus* | Was A Severe Polemicist Against Pagan Philosophers. |
| Was Bishop Of Antioch. |
| **Melito** | D.190 | Sardis | *On The Passion**Other Surviving Fragments* | Was Bishop Of Sardis. |
| Supported Quarto-decimans. |
| Produced First Christian List Of The Books Of The Old Testament. |
| **Hegesippus** | 2nd Century | SyriaGreeceRome | *Memorials\** | Was A Converted Jew. |
| Collected Information On Early History Of The Church To Prove Its Purity And Apostolicity. |
| Blamed All Heresies On Judaism. |
| **Unknown Author** | Late 2nd Century | Unknown | *Epistle To Diognetus* | Never Mentioned In Other Ancient Or Medieval Literature. |
| Deals With Superiority Of Christianity To Paganism And Centrality Of Christian Charity.. |
| Responds To Argument That Christianity Was A Relative Newcomer On The Religious Scene |
| *Robert C. Walton, Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, 14 |

Appendix H

**The Third-Century Apologists**

| **Name** | **Dates** | **Places Of Ministry** | **Representative Writings (\* = Lost)** | **Notable Facts** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Irenaeus** | Late 2nd Century | SmyrnaGaul | *Against Heresies**On The Unity Of The Godhead And The Origin Of Evil* | Studied Under Polycarp. |
| Was A Missionary And Apologist. |
| Strong Opponent Of Gnosticism. |
| Had Premillennial Views. |
| Was Bishop Of Lyons, Where He Was Allegedly Martyred. |
| Promoted The Rule Of Faith. |
| **Clement** | ~150–~215 | AlexandriaAntiochJerusalem | *Exhortation To The Greeks**The Pedagogue**Stromata* | Was Trained In Philosophy. |
| Was Converted As An Adult. |
| Emphasized Logos. |
| Approached Scripture Allegorically. |
| Wrote Oldest Extant Christian Hymn, *Shepherd Of Pender Youth*. |
| **Tertullian** | ~160–~220 | Carthage | *Prescription Of Heretics**Against Marcion**Against Praxeus* | Was A Son Of A Roman Army Officer. |
| Was Trained In Law. |
| Was Converted In Middle Age. |
| Joined Montanists C.200. |
| Laid Important Groundwork For Doctrine Of The Trinity. |
| **Julius Africanus** | ~160–~240 | Palestine | *Chronography* | Studied Under Origen. |
| His Historical Research Covered Period From Creation To Ad 221. |
| **Hippolytus** | ~170–~236 | Rome | *Philosophumena Numerous Lost Commentaries* | Studied Under Irenaeus.  |
| Opposed Contemporary Bishops Of Rome. |
| Used Allegorical Method Of Interpretation. |
| Died In Exile In Sardinia. |
| **Origen** | ~185–~254 | AlexandriaCaesarea | *HexaplaAgainst CelsusDe Principiis* | His Father Leonidas Was Martyred In 202.  |
| Studied Under Clement. |
| Succeeded Clement As Catechist In 203. |
| Was A Notable Advocate Of Allegorical Interpretation Of Scripture. |
| Taught Subordination Of The Son To The Father. |
| Was Extremely Ascetic. |
| Was Exiled By His Enemies In The Church. |
| Died After Torture At The Hands Of The Romans. |
| **Minucius Felix** | Early 3rd Century | North Africa | *Octavius* | Wrote Dialogue Between Christian Octavius And Pagan Caecilius. |
| Content Similar To Tertullian’s Apology. |
| **Cyprian** | ~200–258 | Carthage | *Unity Of The Church De Lapsis* | Was Trained In Rhetoric. |
| Was Converted In 245. |
| Was Bishop Of Carthage From 248 Until His Death. |
| Was Influenced By Tertullian. |
| Emphasized Authority Of The Episcopate. |
| Took Moderate Stand Against Those Who Faltered Under Persecution, Opposing The Strict View Of Novatian. |
| Was Martyred Under Valerian. |
| **Gregory Thaumaturgos** | ~213–270 | PalestineAsia Minor | *Declaration Of Faith**Eulogy On Origen* | Was Converted By And Studied Under Origen.  |
| Was Known As The Wonder-Worker. |
| Was Bishop Of Neo-Caesarea. |
| Robert C. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, 16 |

Appendix I

**Attributions In The Ante-Nicene Fathers**

| **Dates AD**[[28]](#footnote-29) | **Author** | **Location** | **Work** | **ANF** | **Attribution** | **Reference** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ~69-155 | Polycarp | Smyrna |  |  |  |  |
| Early 2nd cen. | Papias | Hierapolis |  |  |  |  |
| ~100/110-165 | Justin Martyr | Rome |  |  |  |  |
| ~135-~202 | Irenaeus | Lyons, France | Against Heresies 1:8:5 | 1:328 |  | Jn. 1:3-4 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 1:26:2 | 1:352 | “Gospel according to Matthew” |  |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:9:1 | 1:422 | “Matthew again says, and Luke likewise” | Mt. 3:3 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:9:1 | 1:423 | “Luke…says” | Lk. 1:6 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:10:4 | 1:425 | “does Luke say” | Lk. 2:22 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:12:12 | 1:435 | “Gospel according to Luke” |  |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:16:2 | 1:441 | [Matthew tells us of] | Mt. 1:20 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:10:5 | 1:426 | “Mark says” | Mk. 16:19 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:16:3 | 1:441 | “Mark also says” | Mk. 1:1 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 3:22:2 | 1:454 | “would John His disciple have said” | Jn. 4:6 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 5:18:2 | 1:454 | “John said” | Jn. 1:10, 14 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Against Heresies 5:21:2 | 1:549 | “saying as Luke relates” | Lk. 4:6-7 |
|  | Irenaeus |  | Fragments from Lost Writings 29 | 1:573 | “Gospel according to Matthew” |  |
| Late 2nd cen. | Theophilus | Antioch | Theophilis to Autolycus 2:22 | 2:103 | “John says” | Jn. 1:1 |
| ~30-~100 | Clement | Rome | The Instructor 1:6 | 2:219 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 6:54 |
|  | Clement |  | The Instructor 1:9 | 2:229 | “John says”[[29]](#footnote-30) | [Mt. 3:7; Lk. 3:7] |
|  | Clement |  | The Instructor 2:1 | 2:241 | “says Luke” | Lk. 24:42 |
|  | Clement |  | The Stromata 1:21 | 2:334 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 1:1, 17 |
|  | Clement |  | The Stromata 5:12 | 2:463 | “And John the apostle says” | Jn. 1:18 |
|  | Clement |  | Fragments | 2:573 | “Gospel according to Mark” |  |
|  | Clement |  | Fragments | 2:574 | “Gospel according to Mark” | Mk. 14:62 |
|  | Clement |  | Fragments | 2:574 | “Gospel according to John” |  |
|  | Clement |  | Fragments | 2:580 | “Gospel according to Mark” |  |
|  | Clement |  | Who is the Rich Man | 2:592 | “Gospel according to Mark” | Mk. 10:17-31 |
| ~155/160-225/250 | Tertullian | Carthage | Against Marcion 4:7 | 3:352 | “for says (St. Luke)” | Lk. 4:32 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Marcion 4:34 | 3:405 | “For in the Gospel of Matthew” | Mt. 5:32 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Marcion 4:35 | 3:408 | “in the Gospel of John” | Jn. 4:12, 20 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Marcion 4:40 | 3:418 | “in the Gospel of Matthew” | Mt. 27:3-10 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Praxeas 12 | 3:607 | “according to John (who says)” | Jn. 1:1, 3 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Praxeas 15 | 3:610 | “a certain emphatic saying by John” | Jn. 1:18 |
|  | Tertullian |  | Against Praxeas 26 | 3:622 | “when John says” | Jn. 1:14 |
|  | Tertullian |  | On Prayer 1 | 3:681 | “says John” | Jn. 3:31-32 |
| 185-254 | Origen | Alexandria | Origen de Princiis 1:1:1 | 4:242 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 4:24 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 2:9:4 | 4:281 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 17:25 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 2:6:7 | 4:284 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 1:35 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 2:7:1 | 4:284 | “Gospel according to John | Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 2:9:4 | 4:291 | “as in his Gospel John indicates…saying” | Jn. 1:1 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 3:5:4 | 4:342 | “Gospel according to John”[[30]](#footnote-31) | [Mt. 24:21] |
|  | Origen |  | Origen de Princiis 4:1:12 | 4:361 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 2:6 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 1:34 | 4:411 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 2:2, 7, 9-10; 2:10 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 1:38 | 4:412 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 2:13-19 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 1:51 | 4:419 | “Gospel according to John | Jn. 7:42 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 1:63 | 4:424 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 5:8 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 2:2 | 4:430 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 16:12-13 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 2:4 | 4:431 | “Nay, even one of the evangelists – Mark says” | Mk. 1:1-2 |
|  | Origen |  | Against Celsus 2:16 | 4:438 | “in the Gospel of John” | Jn. 10:18 |
|  | Origen |  | Against Celsus 2:62 | 4:456 | “in the Gospel of Luke” | Lk. 24:15, 31 |
|  | Origen |  | Against Celsus 2:70 | 4:460 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 28:1-2 |
|  | Origen |  | Against Celsus 2:70 | 4:460 | “Matthew adds” | Mt. 28:9 |
|  | Origen |  | Against Celsus 5:12 | 4:548 | “by that John who wrote the Gospel” | Jn. 1:26-27 |
|  | Origen |  | Origen against Celsus 6:59 | 4:600 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:9; 16:33 |
| fl. 222-245 | Hippolytus | Palestine | Refutation of all Heretics 7:18 | 5:112 | “Gospel according to Mark” |  |
|  | Hippolytus |  | Extant Works & Fragments | 5:175 | “even as he (John) hath said” | Jn. 1:14 |
|  | Hippolytus |  | Extant Works & Fragments | 5:252 | “For what says Matthew” | Mt. 25:31-34 |
| fl. 248-258 | Cyprian | Carthage | Treatises of Cyprian 1:3 | 5:509 | “in the Gospel, too, according to John” | Jn . 1:11-12 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:10 | 5:510 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 17:5 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:12 | 5:511 | “in that according to Matthew” | Mt. 1:20-21 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:12 | 5:511 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 3:11 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:13 | 5:511 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 11:28-30 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:18 | 5:512 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 5:39-40, 45-47 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 1:22 | 5:514 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 6:35, 53; 7:37-38 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:1 | 5:516 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 17:3-5 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:3 | 5:516 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:1-5 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:6 | 5:518 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 1:23 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:6 | 5:518 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:1; 20:27-29 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:6 | 5:518 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 10:34-38 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian | 5:519 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 1:41-43 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian | 5:519 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 1:35 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:7 | 5:519 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 8:12 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian | 5:520 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 1:30-33 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:19 | 5:523 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 3:28-29 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:19 | 5:524 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:26-27 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:28 | 5:527 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 8:29 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 2:29 | 5:527 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 2:1-2 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:1 | 5:531 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:6-7, 42; 6:20-21; 13:45-46 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:1 | 5:532 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 11:40-41 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:1 | 5:532 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 14:12-14 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:3 | 5:533 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:23-24 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:4 | 5:533 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 3:27 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:5 | 5:534 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:5 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:5 | 5:534 | “according to Luke” | Lk. 9:48; Lk. 14:11 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:5 | 5:534 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 23:6-8 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:5 | 5:534 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 13:16-17 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:6 | 5:534 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:4 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:6 | 5:534 | “according to John” | Jn. 16:33 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:8 | 5:535 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:21-22 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:11 | 5:535 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 6:31-34 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:13 | 5:537 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:22; 12:36-37 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:16 | 5:538 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 12:25 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:18 | 5:539 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 10:37-38 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:19 | 5:539 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 6:38 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:19 | 5:539 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 14:6; 10:9 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:18 | 5:541 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 6:37 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:21 | 5:541 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 21:17 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:24 | 5:542 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 3:5-6; 6:53 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:26 | 5:542 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 3:10; 7:22-23; 5:16 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:27 | 5:542 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 5:14 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:28 | 5:542 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 12:32 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:28 | 5:542 | “according to Mark” | Mk. 3:28-29 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:31 | 5:543 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 3:18-19 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:32 | 5:543 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 19:11-12 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:32 | 5:544 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 5:22-23 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:40 | 5:545 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 6:2-4 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:42 | 5:545 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 14:31; 17:20 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:42 | 5:545 | “according to Mark” | Mk. 11:24; 9:22 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:39 | 5:545 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 13:14-15 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:50 | 5:546 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 7:6 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:50 | 5:546 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 6:32 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:51 | 5:547 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 17:7-10 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:51 | 5:547 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 17:21 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:58 | 5:548 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 17:24 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:60 | 5:550 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 4:32, 34 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:61 | 5:550 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 9:25; 12:20 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:79 | 5:552 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:8 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:80 | 5:553 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 19:11; 13:27 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:86 | 5:553 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 12:30 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:87 | 5:553 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 10:16; 5:13 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:96 | 5:554 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 5:19; 7:24-27 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:116 | 5:556 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 7:47 |
|  | Cyprian |  | Treatises of Cyprian 3:119 | 5:556 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 11:28-30 |
|  | Caius |  | Fragments of Caius | 5:603 | “The third book of the Gospel, that according to Luke” |  |
| fl. 235-258 | Novatian | Rome | The Trinity | 5:619 | “For John says” | Jn. 1:14 |
|  | Novatian |  | The Trinity | 5:626 | “For if John says” | Jn. 1:3 |
|  | Novatian |  | The Trinity | 5:635 | “what is told in the Gospel of Luke” | Lk. 1:35 |
|  |  |  | A Treatise on Re-baptism | 5:672 | “Gospel according to John” |  |
|  | Anonymous |  | A Treatise on Re-baptism | 5:675 | “in the Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 12:50 |
|  | Anonymous |  | A Treatise on Re-baptism | 5:675 | “Also according to Mark” | Mk. 10:38 |
|  | Anonymous |  | A Treatise on Re-baptism | 5:675 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 12:50 |
| d. ~264 | Dionysius | Alexandria | Extant Fragments | 6:83 | “the Gospel which bears the title *according to John*” |  |
|  | Dionysius |  | Epistle to Bishop Basilides | 6:94 | “as Matthew has said” | Mt. 28:1 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Epistle to Bishop Basilides | 6:94 | “as John writes” | Jn. 20:1 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Epistle to Bishop Basilides | 6:94 | “as Luke puts it” | Lk. 24:1 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Epistle to Bishop Basilides | 6:94 | “as Mark tells us” | Mk. 16:2 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Epistle to Bishop Basilides | 6:95 | “And Luke says” | Lk. 23:56; 24:1-2 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Exegetical Fragments | 6:115 | “For I Mark makes mention” | Mk. 14:36 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Exegetical Fragments | 6:115 | “for Luke tells us” | Lk. 22:42 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Exegetical Fragments | 6:117 | “for Luke tells us” | Lk. 22:42 |
|  | Dionysius |  | Exegetical Fragments | 6:117 | “for Mark makes mention” | Mk. 14:36 |
| ~160-~240 | Julius Africanus | Various places | Extant Writings | 6:126 | “But Luke on the other hand says” | Lk. 3:23 |
|  | Peter |  | Fragments from Peter | 6:283 | “Gospel according to Matthew”[[31]](#footnote-32) | [Lk. 22:48] |
| fl. 312-328 | Alexander | Alexandria | Epistles on the Arian Heresy I | 6:292 | “the same John says” | Jn. 1:1-3 |
|  | Alexander |  | Epistles on the Arian Heresy II | 6:297 | “Who that hears John saying” | Jn. 1:3-4, 18 |
| d. ~304 | Victorinus | Petovium | On the Creation of the World | 7:342 | “John the evangelist thus says” | Jn. 1:1-3 |
|  | Victorinus |  | Commentary on the Apocalypse | 7:348 | “But Luke said” | Lk. 1:5 |
|  |  |  | Teaching of the Twelve Apostles | 7:373 | “in the Gospel of John” |  |
| 185-254 | Origen | Alexandria | Commentary on John | 9:303 | “For John speaks…and says” | Jn. 21:25 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:304 | “as Mark says” | Mk. 1:1 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:307 | “This is what John suggested when he said” | Jn. 1:3-4 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:352 | “John’s earlier testimony” | Jn. 1:16, 30 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:362 | “This is what the Baptist says in Matthew” | Mt. 3:8 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:363 | “Mark writes” | Mk. 1:3 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:364 | “is said by Matthew” | Mt. 3:7 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:366 | “Mark again says” | Mk. 1:6-7 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:366 | “And Luke says” | Lk. 3:16 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:367 | “Gospel according to Matthew” |  |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:368 | “John records” | Jn. 1:27 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:376 | “we learn this from Matthew who writes” | Mt. 3:13 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:381 | “Mark writes” | Mk. 1:21 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:382 | “Then Luke gives” | Lk. 4:21 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:386 | “Matthew says” | Mt. 4:13-17 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:386 | “Luke’s report” | Lk. 4:32-32 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:390 | “by John’s saying” | Jn. 6:51 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:391 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Jn. 2: |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:396 | “but Matthew says” | Mt. 21:12 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:396 | “In the Gospel of John” | Jn. 2:13-17 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:398 | “in Matthew, Mark, and Luke” | Mt. 14:17; Mk. 6:38; Lk. 9:13 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:396 | “For John says” | Jn. 2:16 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:398 | “Matthew says” | Mt. 21:1 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:398 | “Mark and Luke say” | Mk. 11:1-7; Lk. 19:29-35 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:402 | “Gospel according to Matthew and Mark” | Mt. 26:61; Mk. 14:58 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on John | 9:402 | “as Mark says” | Mk. 14:60 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:412 | “Gospel according to Matthew” |  |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:414 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:35, 40 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:424 | “And Mark says” | Mk. 6:1 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:424 | “as Mark wrote” |  |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:432 | “John alone says” | Jn. 6:9 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:432 | “in Matthew, Mark, and Luke” | Mt. 14:17; Mk. 6:38; Lk. 9:13 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:432 | “in the Gospel of John” | Jn. 6:9 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:432 | “but say in John” | Jn. 6:9 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:433 | “but Luke” | Lk. 9:14 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:437 | “Matthew of necessity wrote” | Mt. 15:1-2 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:440 | “according to Mark” | Mk. 7:19 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:444 | “Mark says” | Mk. 7:24 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:445 | “according to Mark” | Mk. 7:24 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:448 | “For Luke also wrote” | Lk. 9:14 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:448 | “Mark says” | Mk. 6:39 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:448 | “in John who wrote” | Jn. 6:10 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:449 | “according to John” | Jn. 6:13 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:456 | “in the Gospel of John” | Jn. 20:22 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:457 | “in the Gospel of Matthew” | Mt. 7:14 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:459 | “Gospel according to Matthew” | Mt. 16:15-16, 20 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:459 | “Mark says” | Mk. 8:30 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:463 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 1:38 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:464 | “that which is said in John” | Jn. 19:17-18 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:464 | “according to John” | Jn. 19:17-18 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:464 | “according to Matthew and Mark and Luke” | Mt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:466 | “Luke says” | Lk. 9:28 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:471 | “but Luke” | Lk. 9:33 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:464 | “that which is said in John” | Jn. 19:17-18 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:466 | “Luke says” | Lk. 9:28 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:469 | “according to Matthew and Mark” | Mt. 17:1; Mk. 9:2 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:470 | “according to Luke” | Lk. 9:30-31 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:470 | “according to Mark” | Mk. 9:3 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:471 | “but Luke” | Lk. 9:33 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:472 | “according to John” | Jn. 8:44; 14:6 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:474 | “we find it thus said in Matthew” | Mt. 24:37-39 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:486 | “as Matthew and Mark have said” | Mt. 18:2; Mk. 9:36 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:486 | “According to Luke” | Lk. 9:46 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:487 | “Gospel according to John” | Jn. 17:21, 23 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:502 | “Gospel according to Luke” | Lk. 19:12-27 |
|  | Origen |  | Commentary on Matthew | 9:502 | “the parable according to Matthew” | Mt. 25:14, 30 |

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1. I am largely following the approach of Dr. Timothy McGrew in this section. See his YouTube video, “Who Wrote The Gospels.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *Tertullian*: “Marcion, on the other hand, you must know, ascribes no author to his Gospel, as if it could not be allowed him to affix a title to that from which it was no crime (in his eyes) to subvert the very body. And here I might now make a stand, and contend that a work ought not to be recognised, which holds not its head erect, which exhibits no consistency, which gives no promise of credibility from the fulness of its title and the just profession of its author.” (*The Five Books Against Marcion*, 4:2, ANF, 1885, 3:347) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Dates taken primarily from *Who’s Who In Church History*. Different sources supply slightly different dates. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Justin mistakenly attributes some quotations to the wrong author (See ANF, 1:175, n. 2; 180, n. 3; 181, n. 2; 200, n. 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. See “The Development of the Canon of the New Testament” for more patristic quotations or allusions to the New Testament (<http://www.ntcanon.org/table.shtml> ) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The tradition that Matthew wrote a Gospel in the Hebrew language is repeated in Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 1:26:2; 3:1:1), Pantaenus (via Eusebius, “Church History,” 5:10:3), Hippolytus (*De Duodecim Apostolis* via Jerome “Lives of Illustrious Men,” 36:2), and Origen (via Eusebius, “Church History,” 6:25:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Since the writers of the four NT Gospels are not named in the respective texts, internal evidence cannot identify the original authors, but it can indirectly support the external evidence for authorship if it is consistent with and not contradictory to that evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. “Support for identifying Bartholomew with Nathanael includes:
 • John 1 records Philip introducing Nathanael to Jesus and portrays the two as friends. Philip and Bartholomew’s
 names appear next to one another in the Synoptic Gospels’ lists of apostles, suggesting an affiliation.
 • Because patronyms like Bartholomew were more commonly used as surnames, this view suggests the
 disciple’s full name is Nathanael Bartholomew.
“If Bartholomew is not Nathanael, we have no other biblical information regarding Bartholomew.” (*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. *Mike Licona*: “There were many biographies written in antiquity. Plutarch was one of the most prolific biographers of that time, writing more than 60 biographies of which we still have 50. It is of importance to observe that Plutarch’s name is absent from all of his extant biographies, which are therefore anonymous like the four Gospels in the New Testament. Yet, modern historians are quite certain Plutarch wrote them. Most classical authors did not include their name. But the manuscript traditions pertaining to the authorship of Plutarch’s biographies are clear. Moreover, the Lamprias catalogue from the fourth century attributes them to Plutarch. Does this provide us with unimpeachable evidence that Plutarch wrote the biographies attributed to him? No. Is it reasonable to believe that Plutarch wrote them? You bet. The same may be said concerning the four Gospels in the New Testament. The traditions concerning the traditional authorship of the Gospels begin within 30 years of the final of the four to be written and continues without debate for centuries. Thus, Ehrman’s argument from the anonymity of the autographs of the four Gospels carries little if any weight.” (“Review,” 14) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. *Mike Licona*: “The actual first mention is quite a bit earlier. Papias was an early leader in the Christian Church who wrote five volumes titled the Expositions of the Saying of the Lord. These volumes have perished. But bits of texts from them have been preserved in the writings of other early Christians. Scholars debate when Papias wrote. Most place his Expositions around AD 120. But some scholars opt for a date a few decades earlier (c. AD 95-110). There is also debate concerning how closely Papias was related to the apostles. Irenaeus (c. AD 180) says he knew the apostle John and Eusebius (c. AD 325) says he knew someone who knew the apostle John. In either case, Papias is very close to the time of the apostles. He is the first to inform us that Matthew was one of the twelve disciples, the tax-collector. Mark wrote his Gospel based on what he had received from the apostle Peter. And John’s Gospel was penned by John the apostle who had leaned on Jesus during the Last Supper. The traditional authorship of Luke is first mentioned by Justin Martyr (Dialogues 103:19; c. AD 150).” (“Review,” 10-11) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Bart Ehrman’s statement is misleading because the titles attached to the Gospels are only in two forms: “The Gospel According To….” or “According to….” and all the titles in the Greek MSS attribute the Gospels to one of the “traditional authors.” That means that there are not a “wide variety of (different) titles” as Dr. Ehrman claims. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. This statement is just flat out wrong! In Paul’s earliest and undisputed letters, he mentions several things about Jesus: (1) He was prophesied by the OT (Rom. 1:1-2); (2) He was of the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16); (3) He was of the seed of David (Rom. 1:3); (4) He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4); (5) He had brothers (1 Cor. 9:5); (6) He had twelve apostles (1 Cor. 15:5, 7); (7) He preached to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23); (8) He taught that divorce is sinful (1 Cor. 7:10-11); (9) He taught that preachers should live of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:14; cf. Lk. 10:7); 10) He lived a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21); (11) He is “Lord” (Rom. 7:25); (12) He is “God” (Rom. 9:5); (13) He was the Creator of all things (1 Cor. 8:6); (14) He instituted the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:16, 21; 11:23-25); (15) He was betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23); (16) He was crucified (1 Cor. 2:2, 8); (17) He was killed by the Jews (1 Th. 2:14-15); (18) He died for the ungodly to save them from sin (Rom. 3:25; 5:6-8; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4); (19) He was buried (1 Cor. 15:4); (20) He was raised from dead (Rom. 1:4; 4:24; 6:3-4, 9; 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1); (21) He rose the third day (1 Cor. 15:4); (22) He appeared to many after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:5-8); (23) He ascended into heaven (Rom. 8:34); (24) He will return in the Second Coming (1 Cor. 1:7-8; 4:5; 1 Th. 1:10; 3:13; 4:14-17; 5:2, 23); (25) He will judge all men (Rom. 2:16; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See Clement of Alexandria, “Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus,” *ANF*, 1885, 2:573; Eusebius, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 6:14:6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:261; Jerome, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 8, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:364. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. See Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” 3:3:1, ANF, 1:414; Eusebius, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 5:8:2-4, NPNF, 1890, 2:1:222 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. See Septuagint Online, <https://www.kalvesmaki.com/LXX/NTChart.htm> . [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Most of these passages list Paul’s companions, but they do not indicate if they assisted Paul in writing these various letters or if they did, to what extent. However, a few of these passages indicate that Paul and Peter used scribes (cf. Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Th. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. See Dr. Timothy McGrew’s YouTube video, “04a Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels (Matthew & Mark). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Paul is a letter-writer (Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Cor. 7:8; Col. 4:16; 1 Th. 5:27; 2 Th. 2:2, 15; 3:14, 17). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. For a more thorough discussion of the alleged discrepancies between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles, see Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary*, 430-438. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. For a brief list of reasons supporting Markan Priority, see Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament*, 30-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. See Ex. 18:21; Josh. 24:14; 1 Sam. 12:24; 1 Ki. 2:4; 3:6; 2 Ki. 20:3; Pr. 15:1-2; 51:6; 86:11; 145:18; Pr. 3:3; 12:17; 23:23; Jn. 3:19-21; 8:31-32, 40, 44-46; 14:6, 17; 16:13; 17:17, 19; 18:37; Acts 5:3-4; 26:25; Col. 3:9; Jas. 3:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Clement of Alexandria, “Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus,” ANF, 1885, 2:573; Eusebius, “The Church History of Eusebius,” 6:14:6, NPNF, 1890, 2.1:261; Jerome, “Lives of Illustrious Men,” Chapter 8, NPNF, 1892, 2.3:364) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. 1 Clement 5:5-7, The Apostolic Fathers: English Translations, 35; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 2:22:7, NPNF, 2.1:124; Muratorian Fragment, 38-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. 1 Clement 5:5-7 (ANF, 1:6); Ignatius, *Epistle to the Tarsians*, 3 (ANF, 1:107); Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 15 (ANF, 3:648); Eusebius, *Church History*, 2:25:5-8 (NPNF, 2.1:129-130); 3:1:2, (NPNF, 2.1:132). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. 1 Clement 5:4 (ANF, 1:6); Ignatius, *Epistle to the Tarsians*, 3 (ANF, 1:107); Eusebius, *Church History*, 2:25:5-8 (NPNF, 2.1:129-130); 3:1:2, (NPNF, 2.1:132). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20:9:1:(200) (The Works of Josephus, 537); Eusebius, *Church History*, 2:23:1-3, 11-18 (NPNF, 2.1:125-127). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. P1 does not have a title at the beginning of the manuscript. Brant Pitre does not include this manuscript in his chart or mention this papyrus as a possible exception to the other manuscript evidence. However, P1 is only a fragment containing Mt. 1:1-9, 12, 14-20. It is not necessarily an exception to the rule because a title might have been supplied at the end of the manuscript as was the case with some other manuscripts, or an external tag might have been attached to the scroll. Simon Gathercole supplies more detailed information about the initial and ending titles in the extant Greek MSS. (*The Titles of the Gospels in the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* , 63, 65-68, 72-76) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Dates taken from *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Introduction And Biographical Information*. Dates will differ slightly in different sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. This is obviously an incorrect attribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. This is obviously an incorrect attribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. The attribution is incorrect. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)