

# Week 2

Eyewitness Testimony: *Case For Christ Ch.1-2*

# 4 Biographies of Christ

## — [ Characteristics of the Gospels

- Anonymous but testimonies of the early church name the authors.
- Each one has been written by eyewitnesses during the time of other eyewitnesses.
- Main focus is on the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ.

# The Gospel of Matthew

## — [ Authorization

- Written by Matthew (disciple, tax collector)
- References Money More than any other
- Familiar with Jewish Customs, History, Ideas etc.
- This Suggests that Matthew was written by a Palestinian Jew

# The Gospel of Matthew

## — [ Authorization Continued

- Matthew's Education and Occupation would imply his ability to write this literate work.
- Written in between 50 & 70 A.D.

# The Gospel of Mark

## — [ Authorization

- Just like the rest of the Gospels early church fathers unanimously name Mark as the interpreter of Peter and the author of this accurate Gospel
- Church Fathers include, but are not limited to:
  - Irenaeus, Tertullian, Papias, & Clement of Alexandria.

# The Gospel of Mark

— [ Authorization continued

— Written 60's A.D.

— Written to the Gentile.

# The Gospel of Luke

## — [ Authorization

- Luke is said to be written by Luke the physician who is said to be a disciple of the apostle Paul.
- Luke is also said to be the author of the book of Acts
- The writings from Justin Martyr to Tertullian, identify the author as Luke.
- This was idea was firmly in place by the third century A.D.

# The Gospel of John

## — [ Authorization

— Written between 85 - 95 A.D.

— Said to be written by John the Apostle

— 21:20 refers to “the Disciple whom Jesus Loved” meaning one of the 3 closest to Christ (Peter, James, John)

# The Gospel of John

## — [ Authorization Continued

- Couldn't have been Peter because 20:21 says that Peter looked back and saw the disciple whom Jesus Loved
- Couldn't have been James because he was Martyred to soon to author a gospel.
- Must have been John

# Ancient vs Modern Bio's

— [ What is different between then and now?

— 1. Then it wasn't as important to give equal amounts to each period of an individual's life.

— Authors then wrote most about what was deemed most important/significant.

— Today everything is included and quoted.

# Ancient vs Modern Bio's

## — [ The Difference continued

— 2. Then there was not the significance of writing in chronological order, or writing everything verbatim.

— Therefore, what makes the writings preserved and reliable is if the intended meaning of the person speaking was communicated.

# Ancient vs Modern Bio's

— [ The Purpose of recording history was to learn from the past. Thus, the content was centered around what was most educational/ important.

— *EXAMPLE: Encyclopedia*

# Q Factor (the Synoptic Problem)

— [ The idea is that the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, & Luke) were supposed to be a collection of the sayings of Jesus Christ.

— 2 Problems

- 1. The “Q” was said to be a document that these three gospels were based off of.
- 2. How Do we know that these gospels were preserved over time?

# Truth vs. Legend

- [ The Gospels were written within the lifetimes of various eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, including hostile eyewitnesses who would have served as a corrective if false teachings about Jesus were going around.
- [ The Gospels were written just a few decades after Jesus' ascension.

# Truth vs. Legend

— [ In comparison, the 2 earliest biographies of Alexander the Great were written by Arrian and Plutarch more than 400 years after his death, but history considers them generally reliable.

# Testing Eyewitness Evidence

— Honest accurate testimony will withstand scrutiny, while false, exaggerated, or misleading testimony will be exposed.

## — 1. The Intention Test

— Seeks to determine whether it was the stated or intended meaning of the Text.

— John 20:31 “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, Son of God, that by believing you may have life in His Name.”

# Testing Eyewitness

## — [ 2. The Ability Test

- Even if writers intended to reliably record history were they able to do so esp. after 30 years?
- In That day tradition, education, worship, in religious communities were all done by word of mouth. Memorization was emphasized in that day, and could be re told as one saw fit as long as certain important aspects weren't wrong

# Testing Eyewitness

## — [ 3. The Character Test

- was it in the character of these writers to be truthful?
- a level of integrity as any religion has ever known. They were even willing to die for these beliefs.

## — [ 4. The Consistency Test

- Are there really inconsistencies in the gospels?

# Test Eyewitness

— once you allow for paraphrase, abridgment, explanatory additions or selection or omission, then they are extremely consistent with each other by ancient standards.

## [ 5. The Bias Test

— Did the gospel writers have any biases that would have colored their work?

— Disciples had nothing to gain except criticism, ostracism, & martyrdom

# Test Eyewitness

## — [ 6. The Cover Up Test

- Trying to testify in a way to protect themselves or others by conveniently forgetting to mention details that are embarrassing or hard to explain
- There is plenty of embarrassing material about the disciples in the gospels & plenty of doctrines that would be difficult to explain.

# Test Eyewitness

## — [ 7. The Corroboration Test

- When gospels mention people, places, & events do they check out to be correct in cases in which they can be independently verified?
- Archaeology has repeatedly unearthed discoveries that have confirmed specific references in the gospels.

# Test Eyewitness

## — [ 8. The Adverse Witness Test

— Were others present who would have contradicted or corrected the gospels if they had been distorted or false?

— People didn't really argue the Point.