

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE? Part 4

“The Witness of the Gospel Writers”

INTRO: Series ... Goal ... I believe ... Today ... Encourage people to look for reasonable evidence instead of absolute proof. I am bringing witnesses to the stand to give reliable testimony we can trust the Bible. So far, the testimony of the Author Himself, claims of the Bible the OT and NT writers themselves, and Jesus’ view of OT Scripture. The greatest witness ... ALL trustworthy witnesses. Today focus on the writers of the Gospels as reliable witnesses.

- I. IMPORTANCE of the Gospels** – The Gospels and Acts deal with the central issue: the story of Jesus and the birth of Christianity (Luke-Acts) – essential they be reliable eyewitnesses. They all tell us the same story of the person and work of Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:25-27; Jn. 5:39-40; Acts 13:26-27; Rev. 19:10). Four books written by 4 different authors who all knew one another and all tell the same story. Since none (nor other NT writers) mentioned AD 70 destruction, all must have written prior (45-late 60s).
- II. CREDIBILITY of the Gospel writers.** They were eyewitnesses giving first-hand testimony (Lk. 1:1-3; 24:48; Acts 1:1-3, 8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:39; 13:31; Jn. 1:14; 15:27; 19:35; 21:24; 1 Jn. 1:1-3; 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:16). That’s Matthew, Mark? (Peter), Luke? (Paul), John, Paul! The New Testament provides testimony of those who knew eyewitnesses (Mark, Luke). Believing in the reliability of the Gospels (life of Jesus) is essential to trusting in reliability of all the Bible. The Gospels were included in canon because of their reliability, not to gain reliability. The Gospels are credible because inspired and reliable eyewitnesses wrote them (not just because they are “in the Bible”). Jesus’ death and resurrection occurred 32-33 A.D. Most likely the New Testament was written between 47 & 70 A.D. History establishes Jerusalem’s defeat and the Temple’s destruction in 70 A.D. by the Romans in first Jewish-Roman War (66-73AD), as predicted by Jesus in Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24; Mk. 11). Yet, no New Testament writer makes mention of this epic event, leading to the conclusion that the New Testament writings were done prior to 70 A.D. There simply was not enough time (maybe 35 years) for myths about Christ to be created and propagated. Myths cannot be developed and history cannot be changed until all the eyewitnesses are dead (80-90 years). Besides, the multitudes of eyewitnesses who were alive when the New Testament books began to be circulated would have challenged any fabrication about the life of Christ. 11 of 12 disciples who were eyewitnesses of Christ’s Life, Death, Burial, and Resurrection – Eventually executed. Why would they die for a lie? How died? C. Colson quote ...

Objectors argue that using the Bible as the source for the life of Jesus is circular reasoning (using the Bible to prove the Bible). “NOT SO!” Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul all completed their inspired writings, as stand-alone works, years before they were collected and compiled into a single volume in a Latin translation by Jerome around 400 AD, known as the Vulgate, which included the 39 OT books and 27 NT books. The books of Scripture are reliable, not only because they are “in the Bible”, but because those who wrote it were/are reliable witnesses. They all wrote reliable eyewitness accounts prior to AD. 70 and long before the Bible was put together and collection of 66 books.

Video by A. Stanley “Prepared” Series (2014) Part 2 “Reliable Witness” (7:32, 11:27, 16:50-37:18)

I believe the Gospels are credible, not only because they are “in the Bible,” but also because they were written by reliable eyewitnesses who died for what they saw and heard and in WHOM they believed.

CONC: “Why believe the Gospel writers?”

1. They are reliable eyewitnesses to life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.
2. They were promised divine inspiration (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:12-13).
3. They were willing to die for what they saw, heard, and believed!

The writers of the Gospels, plus Peter, James, and Paul are trustworthy and powerful witnesses – or they are only pitiful fools who died for a myth. You decide!