

The Gospel of King Jesus
Sunday AM Class: The Reliability of the Gospels

“The Gospel stories are no more historic than the Genesis accounts are scientific. They are filled with exaggerations, miracles, and admitted propaganda.”

—Dan Barker, *Losing Faith in Faith*, p. 377-378

I. The Gospels Claim to Be History

Luke 1:1-4

John 20:30-31

What sources could Luke have used?

What about the “telephone” argument?

1. The gospel accounts were _____ preached, not passed on in private.
2. The gospel accounts were _____, not simply spoken.
3. The gospel accounts were passed on by _____ lines of preaching, not just one.
4. The apostles were present to _____ any mistakes in the message.

II. Are the Gospels Legends?

1. The gospel accounts were written too _____ to be legends (1 Corinthians 15:3-7).
2. The early Christians carefully distinguished the words of Christ from their _____ words (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
3. The early Christians did not _____ words of Jesus to address the issues we know we controversial.

III. Secular Sources Confirm Many Details in Gospels

"I am now convinced that the Jesus story is just a myth. Here's why: 1) There is no external historical confirmation for the New Testament stories. 2) The New Testament stories are internally contradictory. 3) There are natural explanations for the origin of the Jesus legend. 4) The miracle reports make the story unhistorical." - Dan Barker, *Losing Faith in Faith*, p. 359-360

Tacitus (AD 117-138)

"Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the population. Chrestus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Pontius Pilatus." *Annals* 15.44

Pliny the Younger (AD 61-112)

"But they maintained that their guilt or error had amounted only to this: they had been in the habit of meeting on an appointed day before daybreak and singing a hymn to Christ as if to a God." *Epistles* 10:96:7

Josephus (AD 37-97)

"Ananias assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James." *Antiquities* 20.9

Babylonian Talmud (AD 135)

"It has been taught: on the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery.'" *Sanhedrin* 43a

Based on these secular sources we know that:

- Jesus existed
- Jesus claimed to be the _____
- Jesus performed amazing _____
- Jesus had followers called _____
- Jesus was _____ by crucifixion by Pilate
- Jesus' followers worshipped Him as _____