

## Session 2

June 11, 2023



This is not an “evangelism program”. It will not teach you to argue someone into faith. *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* Romans 10:17

This session is not about proving the Scriptures to be the inspired word of God, but to answer the logical question: “Are the Gospels credible historical documents?”

Who wrote the Gospels?                      Why?

Matthew – disciple of Jesus

Mark – companion of Peter (and Paul)

Luke – companion of Paul

John – disciple of Jesus

If these are not the authors, then why not choose more prominent people (Peter, Mary, James) as some rejected writings did?

The Gospels are biographies, but not “modern biographies”

Ex: Not much of Jesus’ early life

The Gospels have a theological agenda.

Does this undermine their historical credibility?

Video: Eyewitness Evidence

What stuck out to you in the video?

What sounded like things you have said or heard?

Luke 1:1-4

I Corinthians 15:3-8

Deuteronomy 19:15

## Oral Tradition – memorized

Cultural safeguards (Islam today)

*How does the culture of Oral Tradition compare to “playing telephone”?*

## Contradictions between the Gospels?

Most apparent contradictions are easily resolved

The Gospels give different perspectives

*If all details matched exactly, we would suspect “collusion”*

For further study: *Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties* Gleason Archer

*When Critics Ask* Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe

Compared to  
other ancient texts →

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time Span between original & copy	Number of Manuscripts
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643
New Testament	A.D. 50-70 A.D.	ca. 150 A.D.	less than 100 years	5600

## “Earmarks of Credibility”

- Based on eye-witness testimony
- Written not long after the events
- Reliably transmitted
- Contain embarrassing accounts
- Confirmed by other evidence (documents and archaeology)

*How do the Gospels stand under these Historic tests?*

For next time:

If someone tells you of an event,

what corroborating evidence helps you believe what they say? Another person’s testimony? Written proof? A picture?

*What other evidence exists that supports the Gospel accounts of Jesus?*