



# Risen Jesus Ministries

*501c3 Since 2007*

# Mission Statement

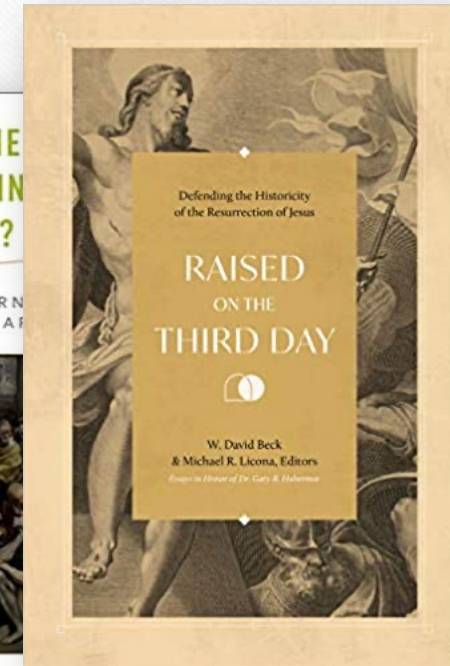
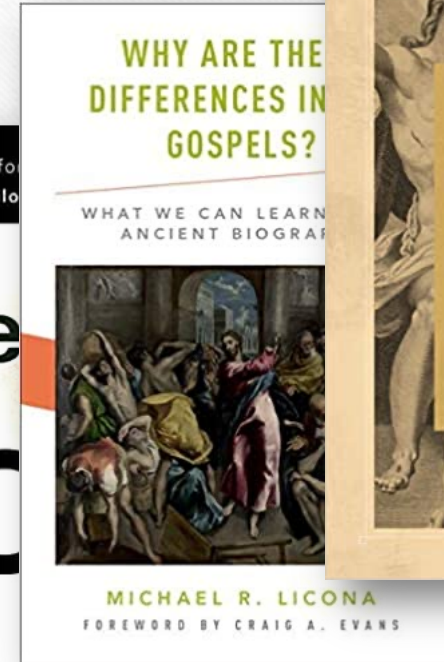
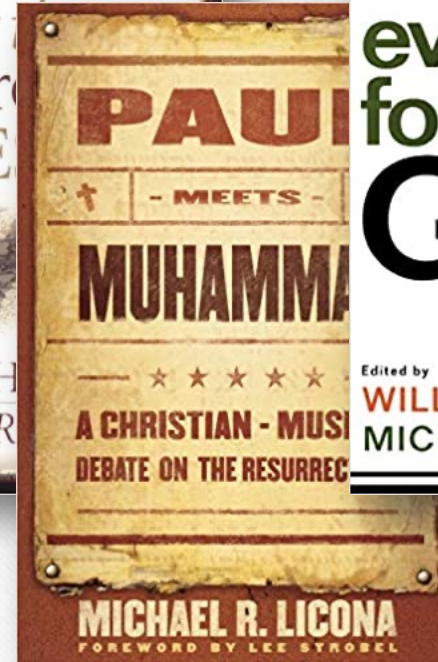
To present & defend the message &  
teachings of Jesus for those who doubt

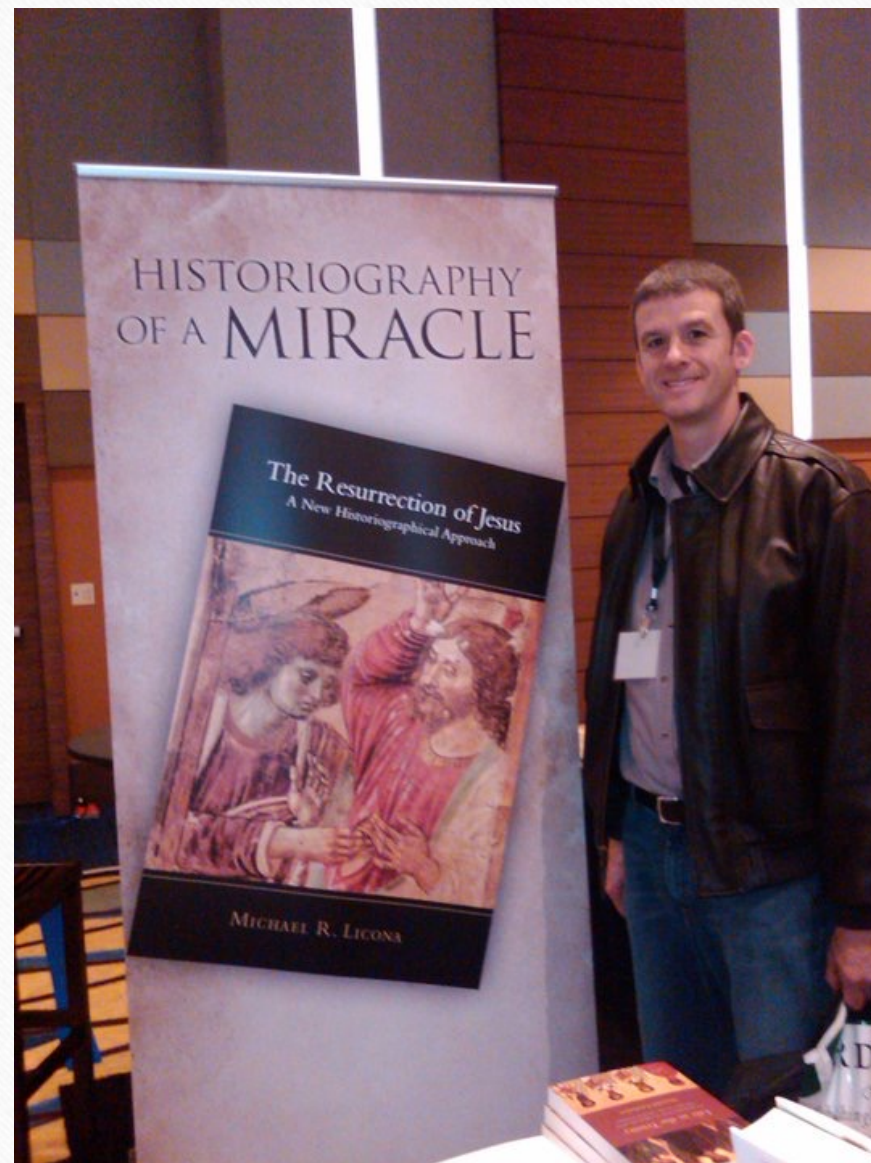
# 3 Pillars





# 1. Research/Writing





## ← Comments



**matthedges1464** 1 day ago

I read Mike Licona's book. It changed me from an atheist to a follower in Christ

👍 23 🗨️ REPLY

▲ Hide 5 replies



**Mountain Warrior** 1 day ago

Praise God! Welcome to the Kingdom!

👍 4 🗨️ REPLY



**dave likesbacon** 1 day ago

What exactly change your opinion to make you change from being an atheist to a Christian?

I try to debate with atheist and I can never seem  
[Read more](#)

👍 🗨️ REPLY



**Michael L** 1 day ago

Dave likesbacon did you even listen to the stream? Look in the description of this video for the books.

👍 🗨️ REPLY



**Mike Licona** 13 hours ago

I'm very happy to read that, matthedges1464!

👍 1 🗨️ REPLY

## ← Comments



**Mike Licona** 13 hours ago

I'm very happy to read that, matthedges1464!

👍 1 🗨️ REPLY



**matthedges1464** 8 hours ago

Mike Licona- yeah, your book was great. Thank you very much for writing it. (I am talking about your book The Resurrection of Jesus) when i read the book i was blown away by the amount of evidence supporting Christianity. I didnt want to convert to Christianity, but the evidence was extremely strong, and at that point it would have been foolish of me to have held on to my atheism. Christ is risen!

[Show less](#)

👍 3 🗨️ REPLY



**martythemoslem not ever** 2 days ago

The evidence that he died was when the soldiers came to him and finding that he had passed away thrust a spear into his side to make sure he had no chance of survival. Immediately blood and water came from the

👍 20 🗨️ REPLY

▼ View 6 replies





“I am so thankful for what you have done here Mr. Licon. I am crying right now as I write these words, and I'm a guy; I don't usually cry. It's been 22 years of searching for an answer, praying for some form of insight, hoping that my mind would one day be at peace. It is finally at peace. . . . Now the very differences that caused me so much worry and doubt are turning into markers of authenticity. I can finally trust these accounts again. . . . [Y]our work is crucial for young adults to know as they enter college! What happened to me can be avoided. Please don't stop doing what you do.”

A whiteboard on a silver stand is centered in the frame. The background is a deep red, vertically pleated curtain. The whiteboard has a black border and a small black eraser at the top center. The text "NEW BOOK" is written in a black, serif, all-caps font in the center of the whiteboard.

NEW BOOK



## 2. Speaking/Debating









# Speaking Engagements

---

- Cancelled (COVID)
- Cancelled (COVID)
- Rescheduled (COVID)
- Cancelled (COVID)
- Rescheduled (COVID)
- Cancelled (COVID)

# THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS





Over 500 Videos Produced

Videos Produced YTD in 2022

*60*



# 3. Global Reach



# 2021

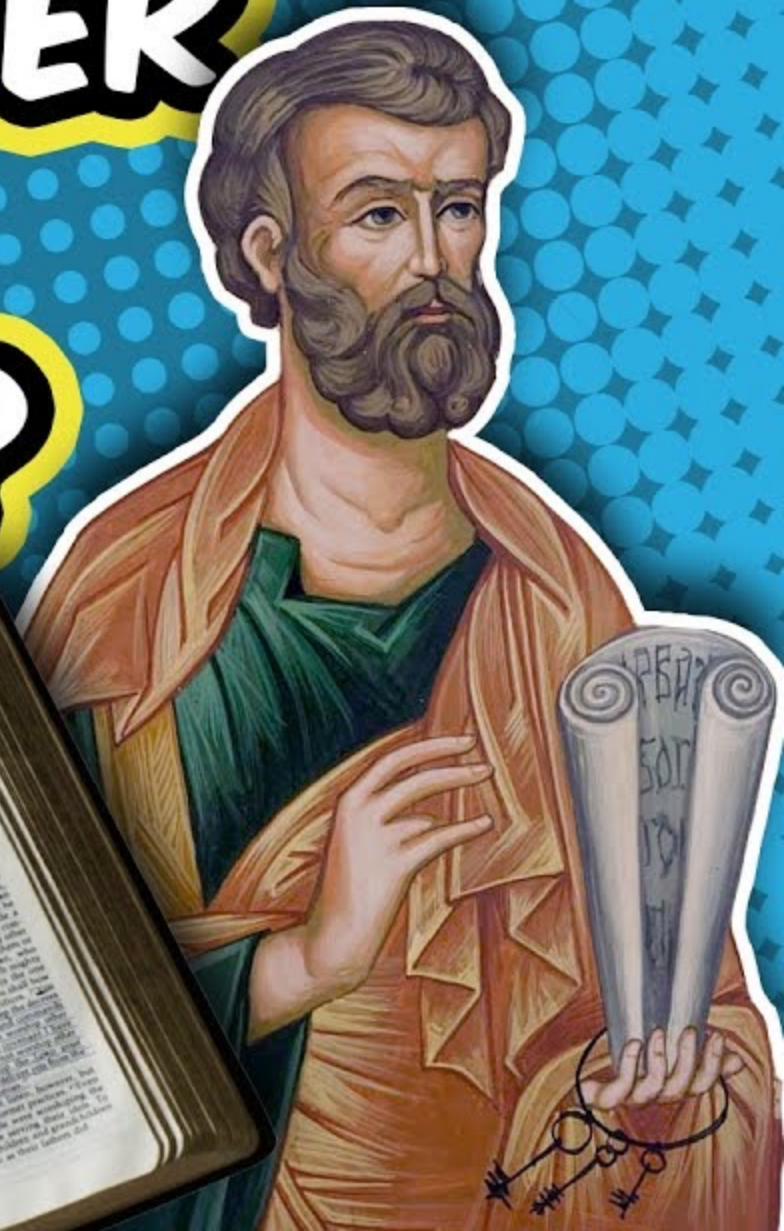
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- Views: 895,000
- Viewing Time: Over 182,500 hours!
- Top Videos: Debates
- Top Age Group: 25-34 years old
- Platform: 63% viewed on mobile phone

# APOCRYPHA



# WAS PETER MARK'S SOURCE?





# ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS





**6 REASONS  
WHY THE  
GOSPELS  
ARE RELIABLE**



# RISEN JESUS

P O D C A S T



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Mike Licona en Español

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PARA ESCÉPTICOS Y PENSADORES: Respuestas auténticas s...

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Para aquellos que piensan profundamente acerca de cuán importante es una cosmovisión y a veces han experimentan dudas. Cerrando la brecha entre erudito y laico, este canal proporciona respuestas auténticas a las preguntas más importantes acerca de Jesús. Mike Licona es profesor asociado de teología en la Universidad Bautista de Houston y presidente de Risen Jesus, Inc.... [#MikeLicona](#)

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Uploads

▶ PLAY ALL



¡Este es el aspecto más crucial del cristianismo!

123 views • 4 weeks ago



¿Se puede responder a las teorías alternativas más...

104 views • 1 month ago



¿Por qué no necesitas los evangelios para llegar a la...

83 views • 1 month ago



¿Qué puede decirnos Plutarco sobre los...

69 views • 1 month ago



¿Qué podemos aprender de las diferencias entre los...

83 views • 1 month ago



¿Podemos confiar en los autores de los Evangelios si...

72 views • 1 month ago



# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Mike Licona, Ph.D.*



“Truly I say to you that this very night, before  
a rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

*Matthew 26:34*

“Truly I say to you that this very night, before  
a rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

*Matthew 26:34*

“I tell you, Peter, a rooster will not crow today until  
you deny that you know me three times.”

*Luke 22:34*

“Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

*Matthew 26:34*

“I tell you, Peter, a rooster will not crow today until you deny that you know me three times.”

*Luke 22:34*

“Truly, truly I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.”

*John 13:38*

“Truly I say to you, that today, this very night,  
before a rooster crows twice,  
you will deny me three times.”

*Mark 14:30*

“As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.’ And he went out onto the porch, and a rooster crowed. The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, ‘This is one of them!’ But again he denied it. . . .

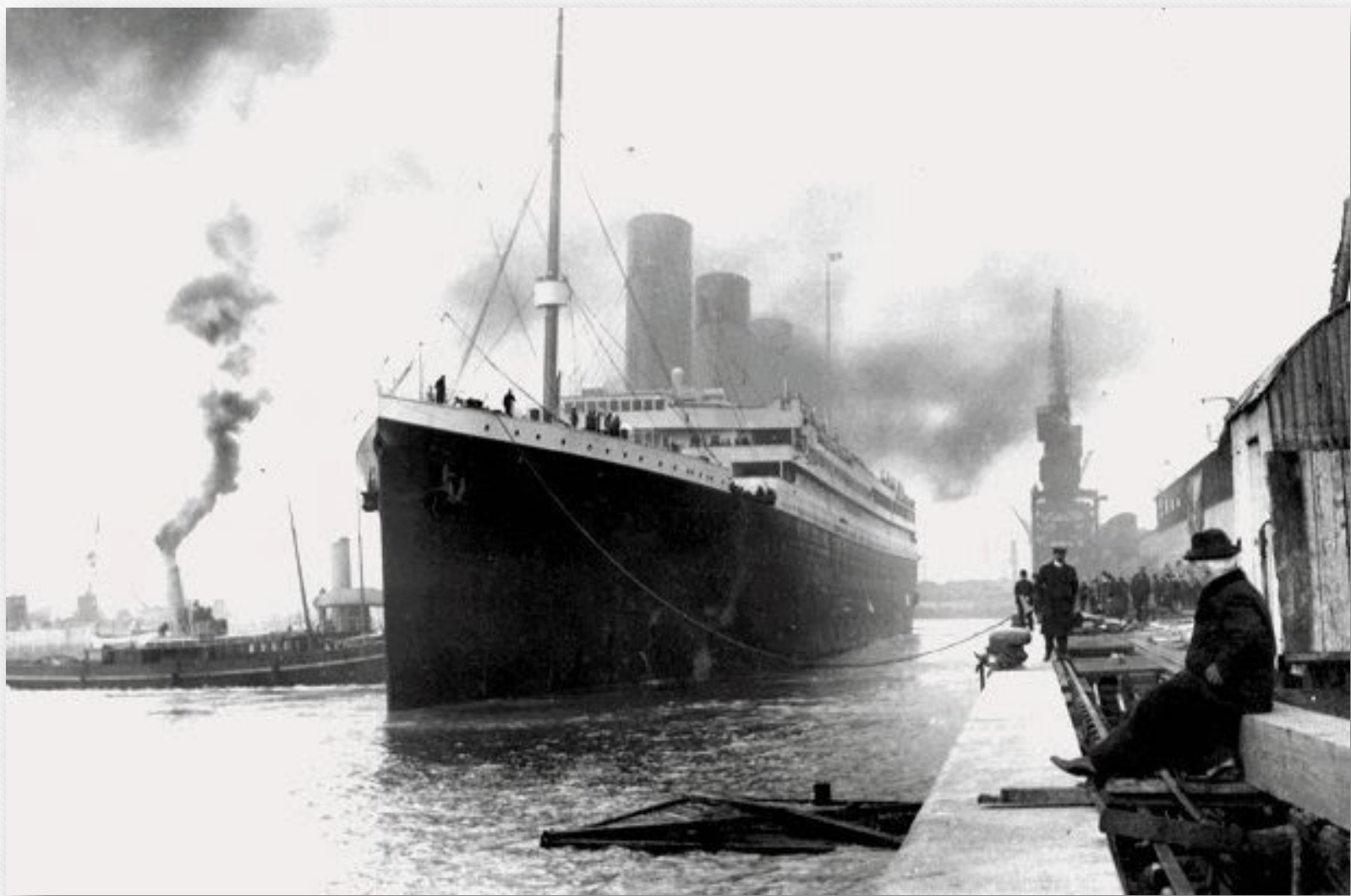
“And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, ‘Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.’ But he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about!’ Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, ‘Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he began to weep.”

*Mark 14:66-72*









Awareness of Gospel Differences  
is Old News – *Very Old!*



**Origen**

Written c. AD 218-245

“I do not condemn them [i.e., the authors of the Gospels] if they even sometimes dealt freely with things which to the eye of history happened differently, and changed them so as to serve the mystical aims they had in view; so as to speak of a thing which happened in a certain place, as if it had happened in another . . .

“or of what took place at a certain time, as if it had taken place at another time, and to introduce into what was spoken in a certain way some changes of their own. They proposed to speak the truth where it was possible both materially and spiritually, and where this was not possible it was their intention to prefer the spiritual to the material. The spiritual truth was often preserved, as one might say, in the material falsehood.”

“[Gospel differences are] a great proof of their truth. For if they accurately agreed in all things, including time, place, and wording, no enemies would believe them but would rather suppose that they came together by some human agreement to write what they did.”



**John Chrysostom**  
c. AD 390

# 3 Standard Approaches

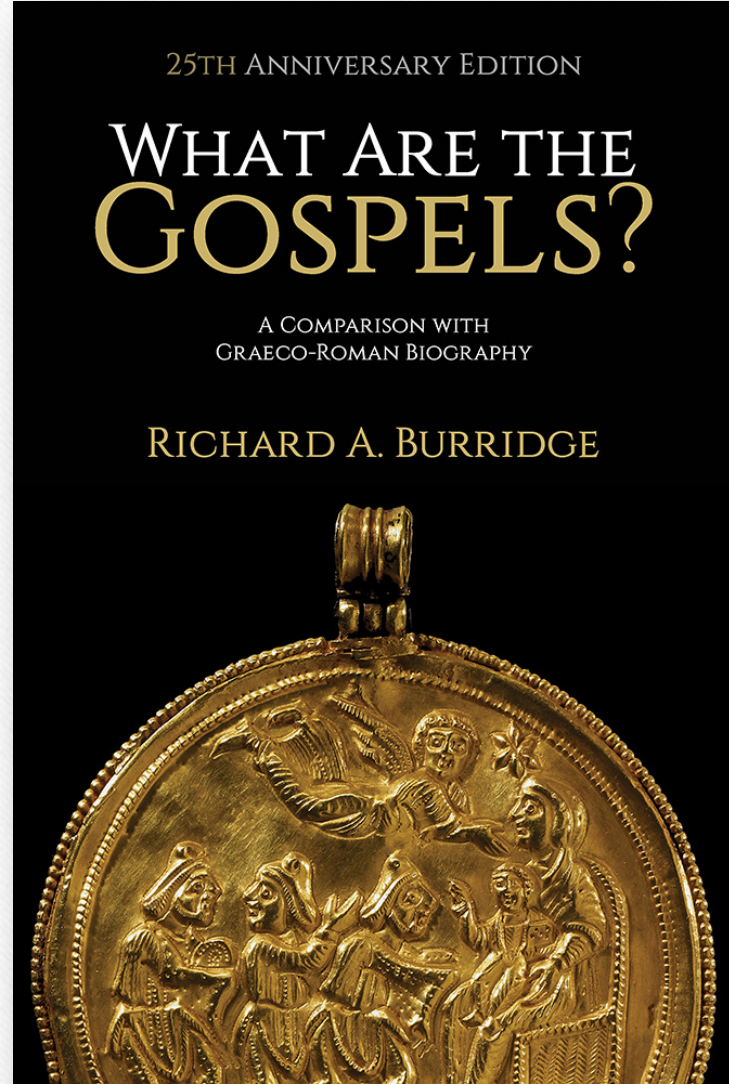
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to Gospel Differences











# Plutarch

*b. c. AD 40 - d. after AD 120*



# WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM  
ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY



MICHAEL R. LICONA

FOREWORD BY CRAIG A. EVANS

“an exemplary crossover of classical  
and New Testament studies”





“the most important book I've ever read on the literary techniques of the Evangelists.”

“an accomplished piece  
of work which it is  
a pleasure to commend.”





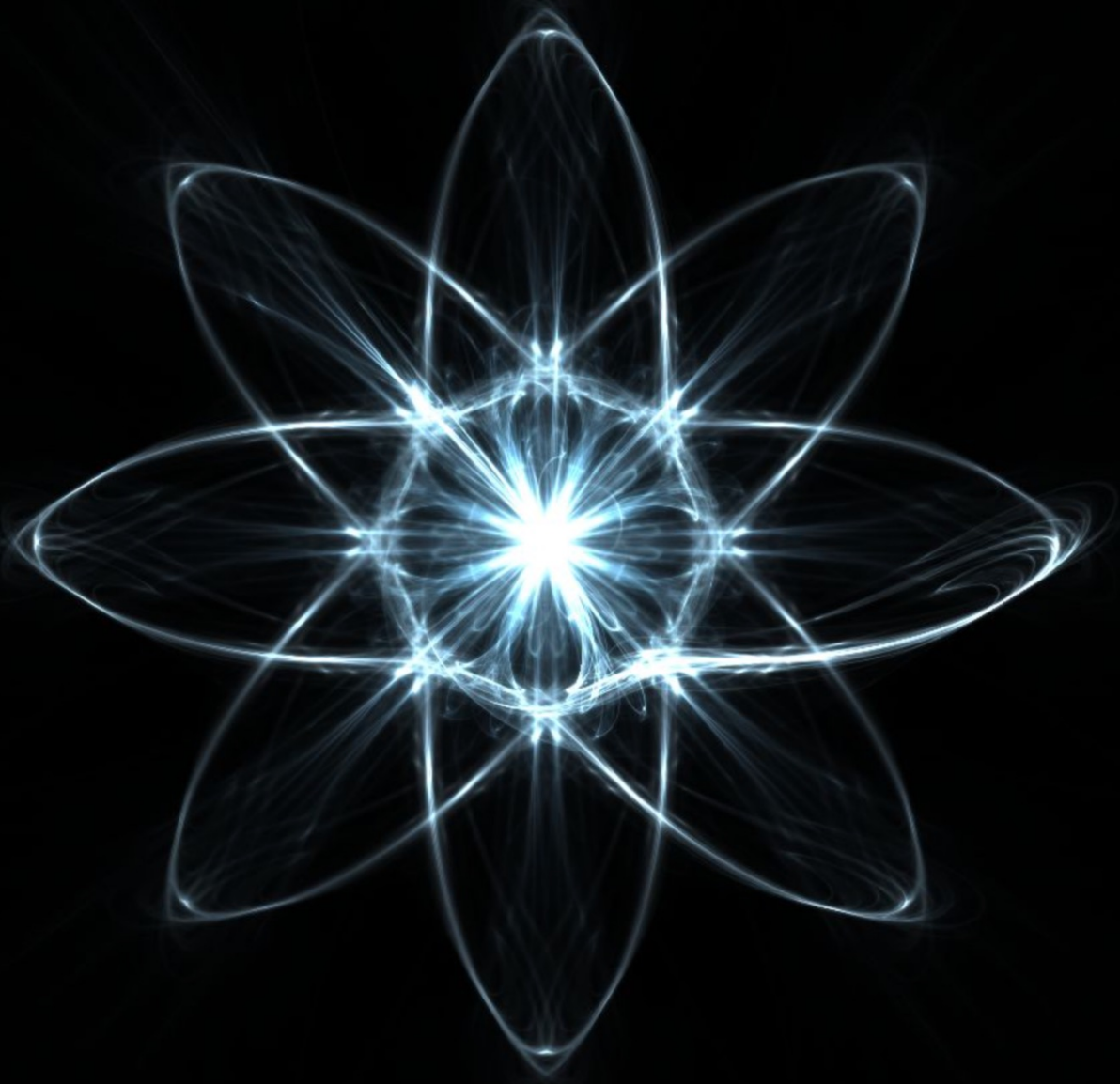


**Less Technical Version?**

## 3 Key Benefits

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# Summary

- The Gospels sometimes report details that are at odds with one another.
- Early Church leaders did not approach Gospel differences in the same way.
- Modern Christians do not approach Gospel differences in the same way.

- Errors in minor details do not undermine the general reliability of a report. (*Christianity is true b/c Jesus rose!*)
- I will be proposing a different approach to Gospel differences that sheds light on why the differences exist.

- Do the differences truly amount to contradictions?
- Could a divinely inspired text include contradictions?
- If God inspired the authors of the Bible, how did he do it?
- Did God dictate the text to the authors word-for-word?  
Or did he give them the ideas and allow them to communicate them according to their own abilities? Or did God inspire Scripture by another way?
- Did God care if the Gospels included a few inaccurate details that are of little-to-no significance?

For Further Thought

Were you aware of differences in the Gospels  
before now?

(If so, describe a time when you became aware of  
a difference between the Gospels and your  
thoughts about it at that time.)

Do differences in the Gospels trouble you?

(If so, why?  
If not, why not?)

Is there a particular Gospel difference that especially troubles you?

Have you witnessed someone trying to resolve  
a difference in the Gospels that went too far?

(If so, what impression  
did that leave on you?)



# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 2*



The image shows a presentation slide with a light brown, textured background. A large white rectangle is centered on the slide, containing a smaller light gray rectangle. The word "Recap" is written in a black serif font in the center of the gray rectangle. Two dark brown horizontal bars are positioned on the left and right sides of the white rectangle, overlapping its edges. The entire slide is framed by a thin green border.

Recap

# Introduction

*Week 1*



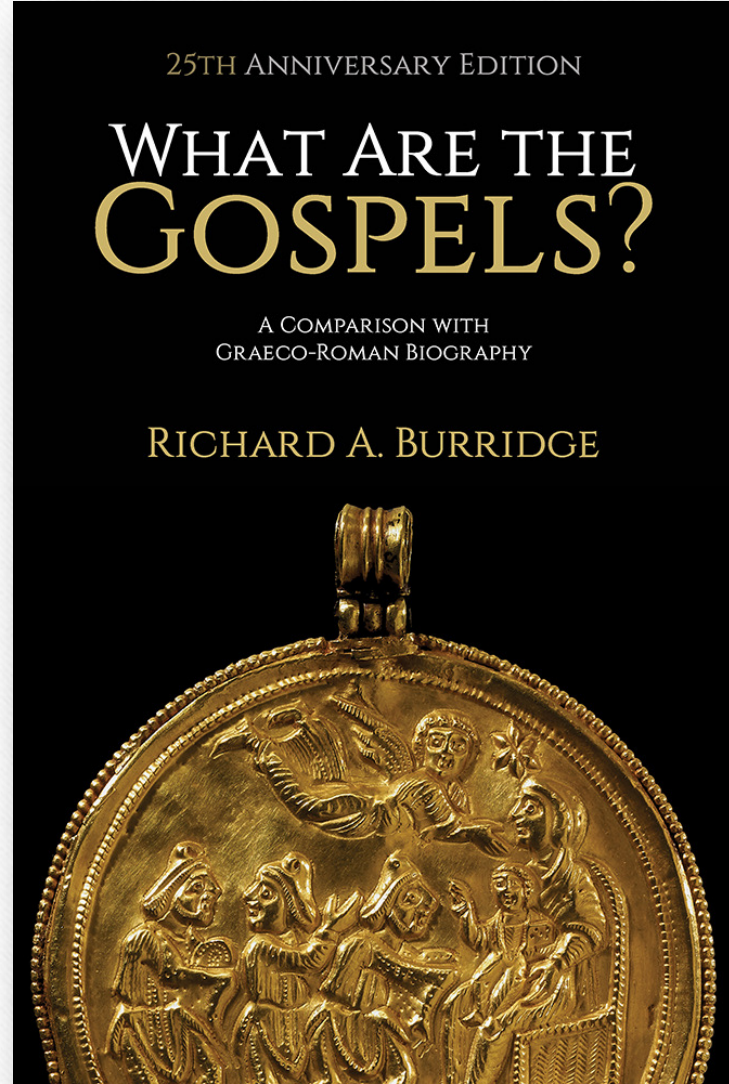


CHRISTIANITY is *TRUE*  
because **JESUS ROSE!**

Awareness of  
*GOSPEL DIFFERENCES*  
is **VERY OLD NEWS.**

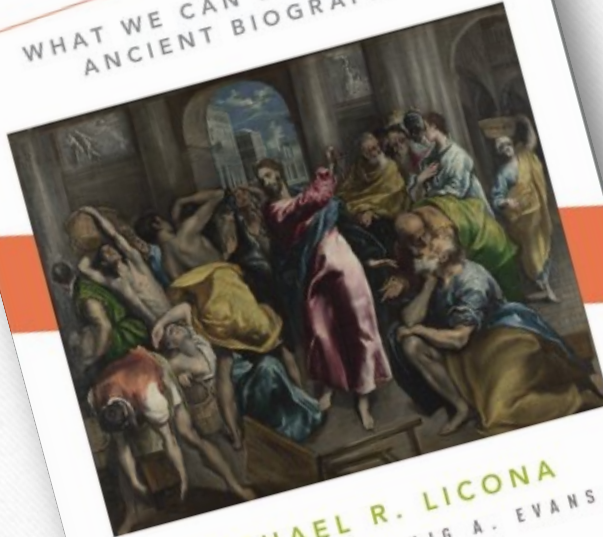






# WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM  
ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY



MICHAEL R. LICONA  
FOREWORD BY CRAIG A. EVANS

# Normal Variation in Reporting & the Use of Sources

Week 2



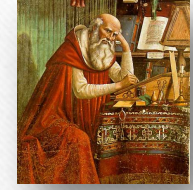








**Español**



**AD 30**  
**ARAMAIC**

**MARK**  
**AD 50-70**  
**+20-40**  
**GREEK**

**MATTHEW**  
**AD 55-75**  
**+25-50**  
**GREEK**

**LUKE**  
**AD 55-75**  
**+25-50**  
**GREEK**

**JOHN**  
**AD 90-95**  
**+60-65**  
**GREEK**

# 1. Verbal Agreement

### Matt 12:41-42

"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."

### Luke 11:31-32

"The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

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“Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruit worthy (sg) of repentance. And do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. And now the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

*Matthew 3:7-10*

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Luke 3:7-9

“Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the (pl)  
coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruit worthy (sg)  
of repentance. And do not think to say to yourselves,  
‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you  
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Luke 3:7-9

begin

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Luke 3:7-9

even

## Which seems more probable?

---

- a) Matthew and Luke take independent testimony being recalled decades later and translated it to Greek resulting in the virtual verbatim reports.
- b) Matthew and Luke are either drawing on the same source or one of them used the other as a source?

## 2. Puzzling Verbal Agreement

“A voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord!  
Make his paths straight!’”

*Matthew 3:3*

*Mark 1:3*

*Luke 3:4*

## Isaiah 40:3

---

“Make his paths straight.” (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

## Isaiah 40:3

---

“Make his paths straight.” (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

“Make straight the paths of our God.” (Greek – LXX)

## Isaiah 40:3

---

“Make his paths straight.” (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

“Make straight the paths of our God.” (Greek – LXX)

“Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Hebrew)

### 3. Parenthetical Comments

“when you see the abomination of desolation  
standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand),  
then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

*Mark 13:14*

“when you see the abomination of desolation  
standing where he ought not to be (**let the reader understand**),  
then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

*Mark 13:14*

“when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

*Mark 13:14*

“when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

*Matthew 24:15-16*

# Synoptic Problem



*syn* = with

*opsis* = view

*synopsis* = view together

## [Matt. 14.13-21]

and taking the  
loaves and the two fish  
looked up to heaven,  
blessed, and broke  
gave the loaves  
the disciples, and the  
disciples gave them to the crowds.  
and they all ate and were  
satisfied.

and they took up  
five baskets full of the broken  
pieces left over.  
and those who ate  
were about five thousand men,  
besides women and children.

36 (no. 98, p. 89)

When he saw the crowds, he had  
compassion for them, because they  
were harassed and helpless, like sheep  
without a shepherd.

## [Mark 6.32-44]

<sup>40</sup>So they sat down  
in groups, by hundreds and by  
fifties. <sup>41</sup>And taking the  
five loaves and the two fish  
he looked up to heaven,  
and blessed, and broke  
the loaves, and gave them  
to the disciples  
to set before the people; and he  
divided the two fish among them all.  
<sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were  
satisfied.

<sup>43</sup>And they took up  
twelve baskets full of broken  
pieces and of the fish.  
<sup>44</sup>And those who ate the  
loaves were five thousand men.

## [Luke 9.10b-17]

they did so, and made them all sit  
down.

<sup>16</sup>And taking the  
five loaves and the two fish  
he looked up to heaven,  
and blessed and broke  
them, and gave them  
to the disciples  
to set before the crowd.

<sup>17</sup>And all ate and were  
satisfied.

And they took up what was left  
over, twelve baskets of broken  
pieces.

(no. 158 9.18-21 p. 149)

cp. v. 14

## [John 6.1-15]

in the place; so the men sat  
down, in number about five  
thousand. <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the  
loaves,

and when he had given thanks,  
he distributed them

to those who were seated; so  
also the fish, as much as they wan-  
ted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten

their fill, he told his disciples,  
“Gather up the fragments  
left over, that nothing may be lost.”

<sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and  
filled twelve baskets with frag-  
ments from the five barley loaves,  
left by those who had  
eaten. cp. v. 10

<sup>14</sup>When the people saw the  
sign which he had done, they said,  
“This is indeed the prophet  
who is to come into the world!”

<sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were  
about to come and take him by  
force to make him king,  
Jesus withdrew again to the moun-  
tain by himself.



Why is this important?

Observing how the Evangelists use their sources  
may provide insights pertaining to  
why there are differences in the Gospels.

The divine inspiration of the Gospels includes the evangelists' use of sources.



# Summary

The Gospels sometimes report events with the normal variation present when multiple eyewitnesses report the same event.

3 observations that suggest a relationship exists between Matthew, Mark, and Luke:

1. Verbal Agreement
2. Puzzling Verbal Agreement
3. Parenthetical Comments

Determining the nature of the relationship is a puzzling matter called the **Synoptic Problem**.

The divine inspiration of the Gospels  
includes the evangelists' use of sources.

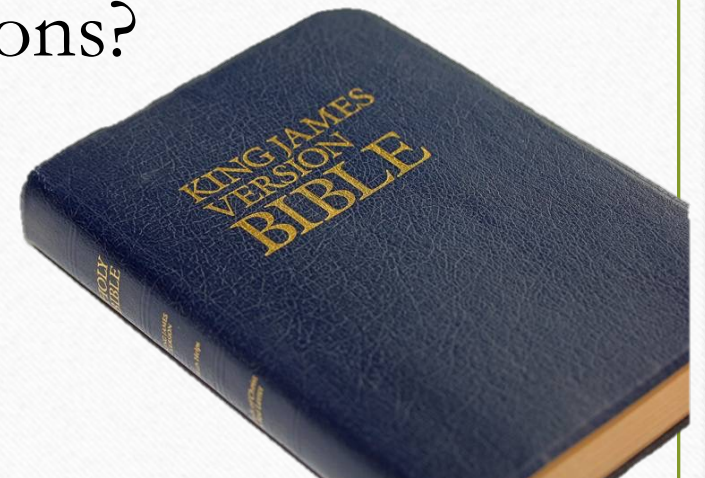
For Further Thought

Before today, were you aware that  
there is a literary relationship between  
the Synoptic Gospels?  
If not, how did you view them?

The authors of the Gospels often quote from the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX), which many times differs in its wording from the corresponding Hebrew text. Is one more divinely inspired than the other? Are both equally inspired? How does this phenomenon inform your view of the divine inspiration of Scripture?

In some of today's Christian communities, there are disputes over English translations (e.g., "the KJV is the only legitimate English translation").

When you consider that the LXX often differs from the Hebrew text, what implications might this have pertaining to modern English translations?





# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 3*



The slide features a light brown wood-grain background. A large white rectangle is centered, containing a smaller light gray rectangle. The word "Recap" is centered in the gray rectangle. Two dark brown horizontal bars are positioned on the left and right sides of the white rectangle, each with two small dark brown dots. The entire design is framed by a thin green border.

Recap

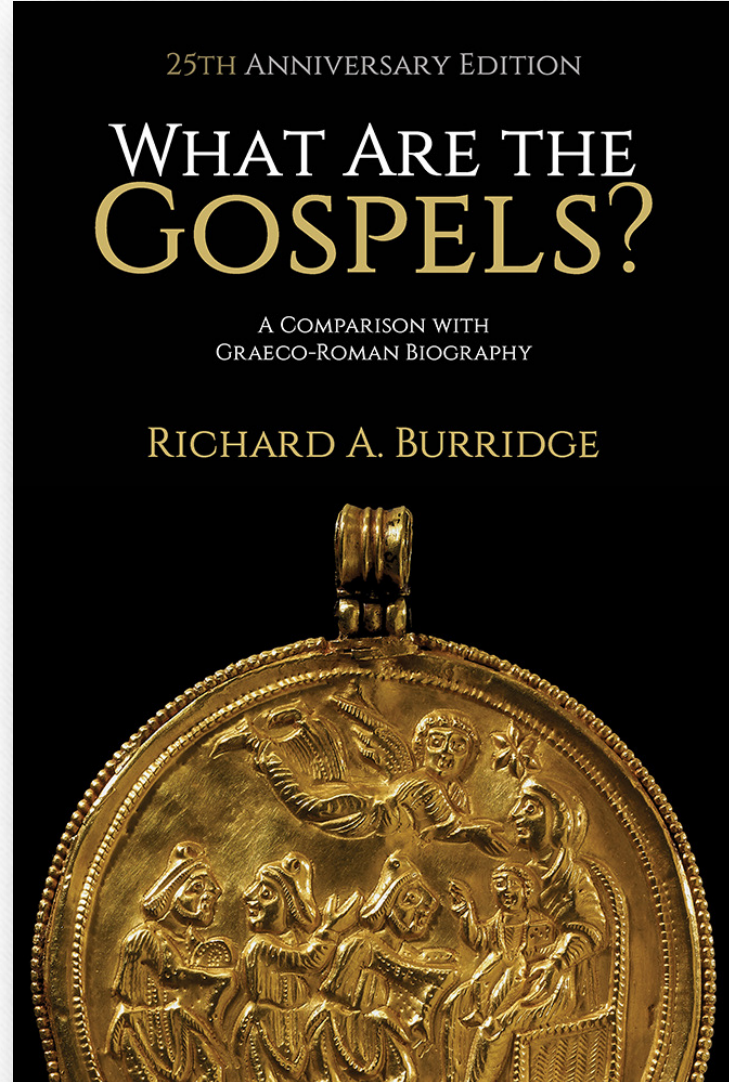


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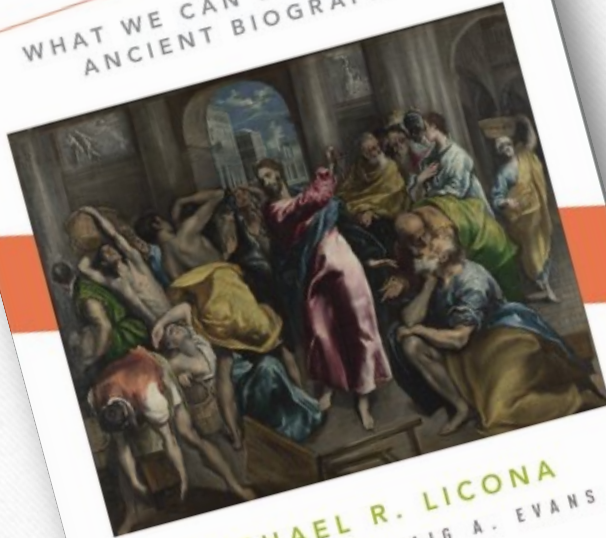






# WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS?

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM  
ANCIENT BIOGRAPHY



MICHAEL R. LICONA  
FOREWORD BY CRAIG A. EVANS

# Normal Variation in Reporting & the Use of Sources

Week 2



*synopsis* = view together

*Synoptic Gospels* = Matthew, Mark, Luke

## [Matt. 14.13-21]

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loaves,

and when he had given thanks,  
he distributed them

to those who were seated; so  
also the fish, as much as they wan-  
ted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had eaten

their fill, he told his disciples,  
“Gather up the fragments  
left over, that nothing may be lost.”

<sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and  
filled twelve baskets with frag-  
ments from the five barley loaves,  
left by those who had  
eaten. cp. v. 10

<sup>14</sup>When the people saw the  
sign which he had done, they said,  
“This is indeed the prophet  
who is to come into the world!”

<sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were  
about to come and take him by  
force to make him king,  
Jesus withdrew again to the moun-  
tain by himself.

# Relationship Between Synoptic Gospels

3 Observations

# 1. Verbal Agreement

---



## 2. Puzzling Verbal Agreement (e.g., Isaiah 40:3)

---

“Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Hebrew)

“Make straight the paths of our God.” (Greek – LXX)

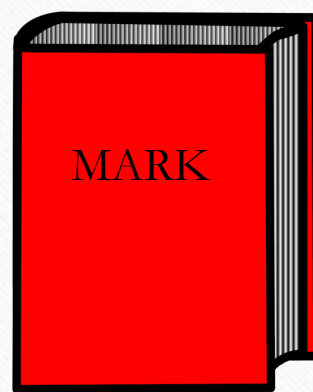
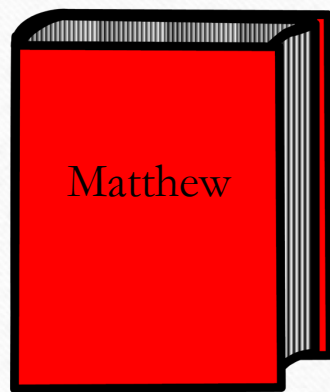
“Make his paths straight.” (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

### 3. Parenthetical Comments

---

“when you see the abomination of desolation . . .  
(let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea  
flee to the mountains.”

*Mark 13:14 / Matthew 24:15-16*



# Synoptic Problem



# Which Gospel Came First?

*Week 3*



# Matthean Priority

---

2 Main Arguments

# 1. *Several Church Fathers*

**Irenaeus:** Matthew, Mark/Luke, John

**Clement of Alexandria:** Matthew/Luke, Mark, John

**Tertullian:** John/Matthew, Mark/-Luke

**Origen:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

**Jerome:** Matthew (first), John (last)

**Anti-Marcionite Prologue:** Matthew/Mark, Luke, John

**Augustine:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

# Hebrew Gospel of Matthew

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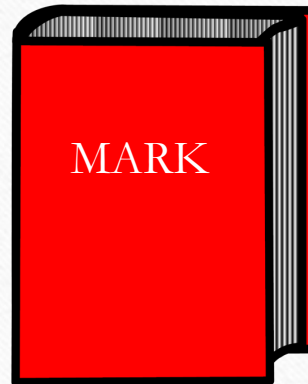
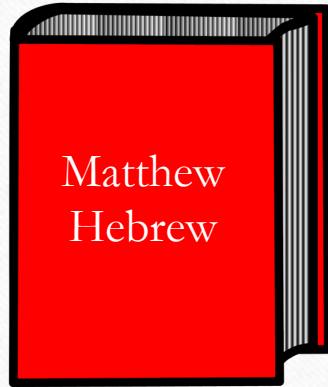
- Papias (c. AD 100-130)
- Irenaeus (AD 174-189)
- Clement of Alexandria (AD 198-203)
- Hippolytus (AD 200-235)
- Origen (AD 244-249)
- Eusebius (AD 324)
- Ephrem the Syrian (AD 330-373)
- Jerome (AD 383)
- Chrysostom (AD 390)
- Augustine (AD 400-405)

## ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΝ

**1:1** Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

**2** Ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, **3** Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φαρὲς καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, Φαρὲς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρῶμ, Ἑσρῶμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ, **4** Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών, **5** Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, Βόες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί, **6** Ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα.

Δαυὶδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου, **7** Σολομών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀσάφ, **8** Ἀσάφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν, **9** Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωαθάμ, Ἰωαθάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχάζ, Ἀχάζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐζεκίαν, **10** Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμώς. Ἀμώς δὲ





Apostle John

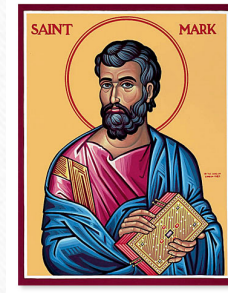


Papias





Apostle Peter



Mark

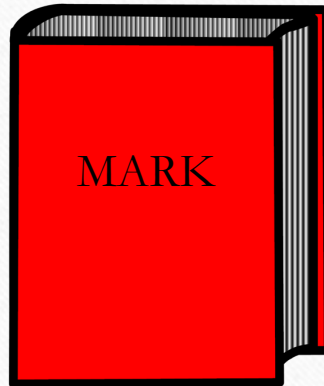
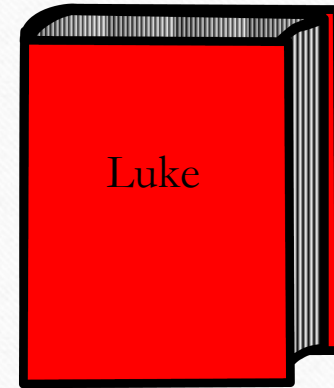
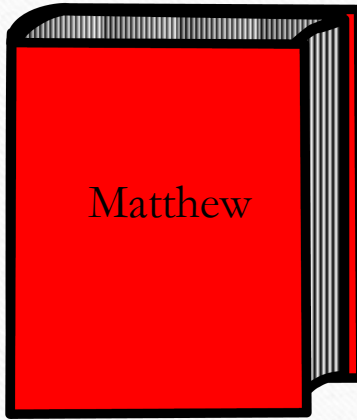


Apostle John



Papias

## *2. Redundancies in Mark*



(*Matt 8:16*) “that evening”

(*Luke 4:40*) “as the sun was setting”

(*Mark 1:32*) “that evening at sundown”

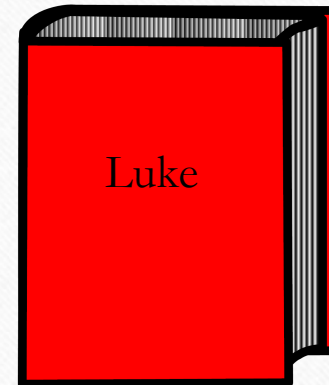
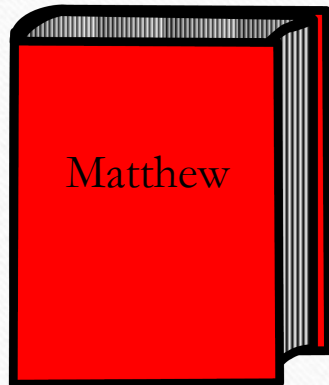
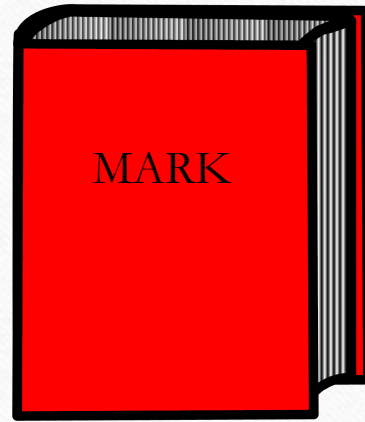
213 / 17 (8%)

Mark is often redundant

# Markan Priority

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Gottlob Storr, 1786



Mark as “Middle Term”

Matthew 9:9	Mark 2:14	Luke 5:27
<p><u>And passing by</u> from there,  Jesus <u>saw</u>  a man  <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>,  called Matthew,  <u>And he says to him</u>,  “<u>Follow me.</u>”  And  <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>	<p><u>And passing by</u>  he <u>saw</u>  Levi son of Alphaeus  <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>,    <u>And he says to him</u>,  “<u>Follow me.</u>”  And  <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>	<p>And  he beheld  a tax-collector named Levi  <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>,    And he said <u>to him</u>,  “<u>Follow me.</u>”  And having left everything  <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>

Matthew 9:9	Mark 2:14	Luke 5:27
<p><u>And passing by</u> from there, Jesus <u>saw</u> a man <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>, called Matthew, <u>And he says to him</u>, “<u>Follow me.</u>” <u>And</u> <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>	<p><u>And passing by</u> he <u>saw</u> Levi son of Alphaeus <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>, <u>And he says to him</u>, “<u>Follow me.</u>” <u>And</u> <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>	<p>And he beheld a tax-collector named Levi <u>sitting at the tax booth</u>,  And he said <u>to him</u>, “<u>Follow me.</u>” And having left everything <u>having arisen, he followed him.</u></p>

1. Peter's confession that Jesus is Messiah
2. Jesus predicts death & resurrection
3. Jesus teaches on discipleship
4. Transfiguration
5. Coming of Elijah (*not in Luke*)
6. Jesus heals demon possessed boy
7. Jesus' predicts death again
8. Jesus' thoughts on paying Temple tax (*only in Matthew*)
9. Who is the greatest?
10. Anonymous exorcist (*not in Matthew*)
11. Dealing with one's sin (*Luke locates elsewhere*)



# Mark's Crude Style

“And immediately, the Spirit *drove out* him into the wilderness.” (Mark 1:12)

“And immediately, the Spirit *drove out* him into the wilderness.” (Mark 1:12)

“Then Jesus was *led up* by the Spirit into the wilderness.” (Matt. 4:1)

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“Then Jesus was *led up* by the Spirit into the wilderness.” (Matt. 4:1)

“Then Jesus . . . was *led* by the Spirit in the wilderness.” (Luke 4:1)

“nothing is hidden except that it be revealed.”  
(Mark 4:22)

“nothing is hidden except that it be revealed.”  
(Mark 4:22)

“nothing is hidden that will not be revealed.”  
(Matt 10:26 / Luke 8:17; 12:2)





Awkward Content Unique to Mark

Jesus heals a man who's deaf & dumb (7:32-37)

Jesus heals a blind man (8:22-25)

Mark includes problematic content  
that's absent from Matthew & Luke

“Have you never read what David did when he was in need and was hungry; he and those with him, how he entered the house of God when Abiathar was priest and he ate the bread of Presence, which is not lawful except for the priests to eat and he also gave it to those with him?

*Mark 2:25-26*

Ahimelech was priest  
Abiathar was son of Ahimelech

*1 Samuel 21:1-6; 22:20*

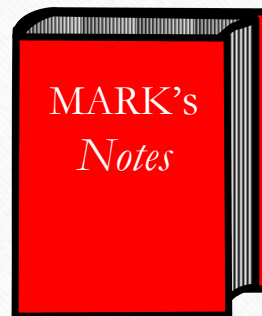
# Challenges

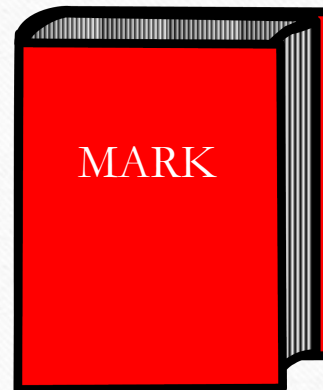
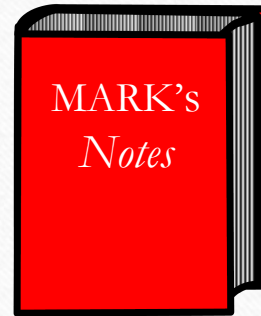
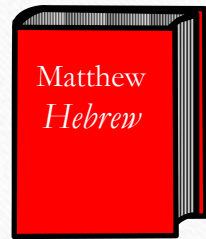
To Markan Priority

1. Nearly unanimous opinion of church fathers

2. Mark is not always the Middle Term

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
AAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAA
AAAAA	AAAAA	AAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAAAAAA	AAAAA
AAAA	AAAA	AAAA
AAAAAAAAAA	AAAAAAA	AAAAAAA
AAAAAAA	AAAAAAA	AAAAAAA
AAA	AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA	AAA
AAAAAAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAAAAAA





“In the Synoptic Problem  
one has, without doubt,  
one of the most fascinating  
literary puzzles in world history.”





# Gospel of John

“Jesus said all of these things in parables to the crowds. And he did not speak to them without a parable, so that what was spoken by the prophet may be fulfilled, saying, ‘I will open my mouth in parables. I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.’”

*(Matt. 13:34-35; cf. Mark 4:33-34)*

# “I AM” Statements in John

---

- “*I am* the bread of life”
- “*I am* the light of the world”
- “Before Abraham was, *I am*”
- “*I am* the door for the sheep”
- “*I am* the good shepherd”
- “*I am* the resurrection & the life”
- “*I am* the way the truth & the life”
- “*I am* the true vine”

“I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.”

*John 14:6*

“All things have been handed over [to me] by my Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and to whomever the Son desires to reveal him.”

*Matthew 11:27-30; cf. Luke 10:22*

“All things have been handed over [to me] by my Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and to whomever the Son desires to reveal him.”

*Matthew 11:27-30; cf. Luke 10:22*

No one comes to the Father except through me.

*John 14:6*

*Ipsissima verba* = the very words

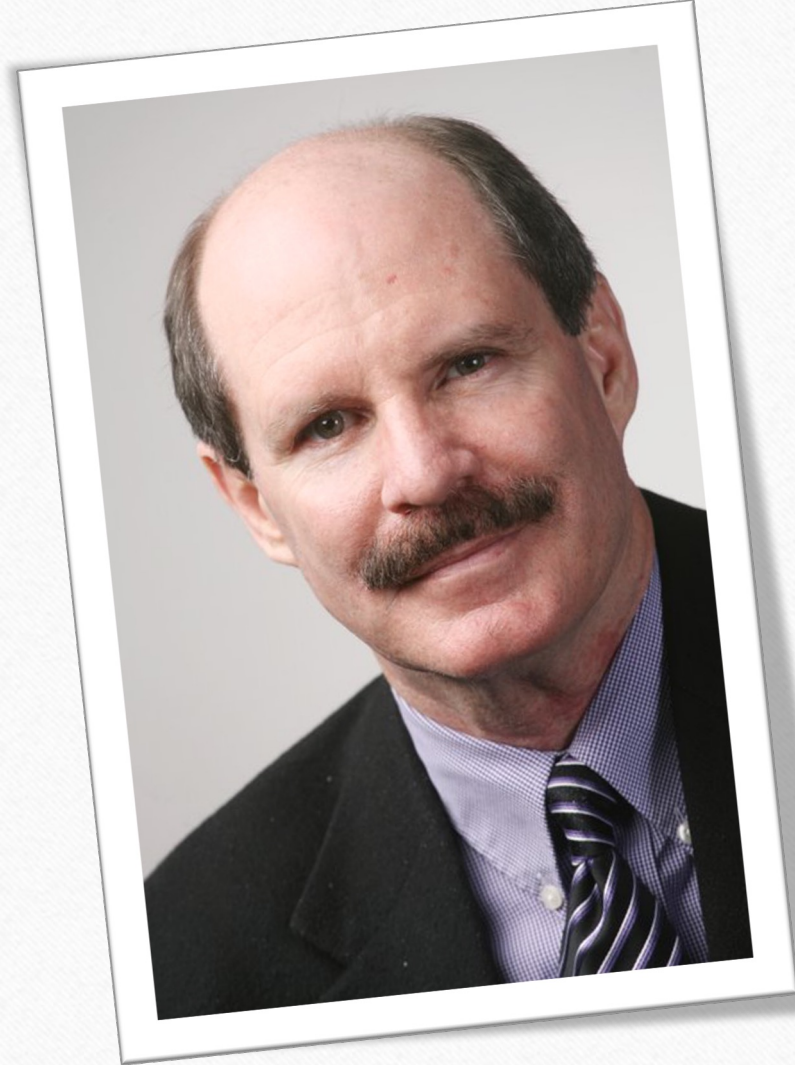
*Ipsissima vox* = the very voice/meaning

# “spiritual Gospel”

*Clement of Alexandria* (AD 198-203)

*Origen* (AD 244-249)

“theological paraphrase”





“an expanded paraphrase”

“a translation of the freest kind”

“a transposition into another key”

“I feel about John like  
I feel about my wife;  
I love her very much,  
but I wouldn’t claim  
to understand her.”





Why is this important?

Because a literary relationship exists between the Gospels, normal variation is very often not the best explanation for the difference. Positing such could lead one down a wrong road.

# Nature of Divine Inspiration

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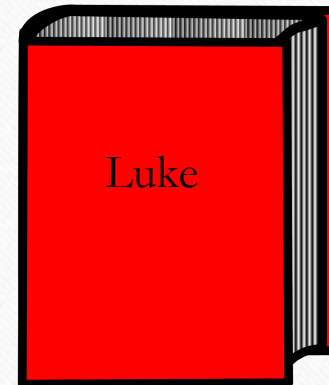
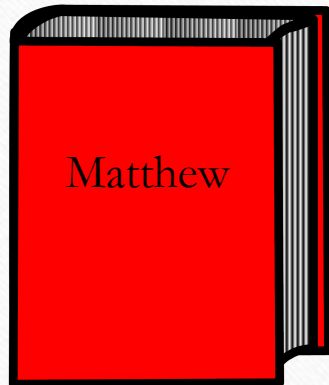
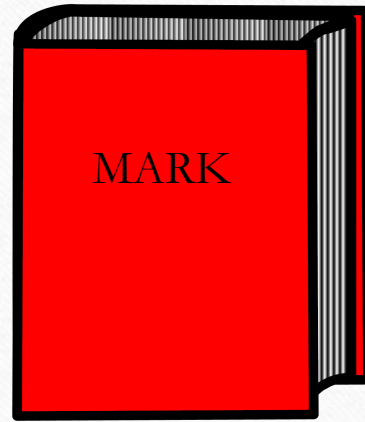
- sometimes involved the author using sources
- did not involve dictation
- process includes a human element

## Principle #1

Our view of Scripture should be consistent  
with what we observe in Scripture.

Observing how Matthew & Luke use Mark  
will assist us in discovering  
how many of the differences  
in the Gospels were introduced.

# Summary



Gospel of John differs from Synoptic Gospels  
*Theological Paraphrase*

Harmonizing should *not* be the default approach  
toward resolving Gospel differences.

Some may need to recalibrate their understanding  
of “divine inspiration.”

For Further Thought

What are your thoughts about a  
Hebrew Gospel of Matthew?

Does it bother you that the early Church fathers  
were not always in agreement?

Can you think of some reasons why Matthew & Luke would have used Mark as the primary source behind their Gospels?



# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 4*



The image shows a presentation slide with a light brown, textured background. A large white rectangle is centered on the slide, containing a smaller light gray rectangle. The word "Recap" is written in a black serif font in the center of the gray rectangle. Two dark brown horizontal bars are positioned on the left and right sides of the white rectangle, overlapping its edges. The entire slide is framed by a thin green border.

Recap



CHRISTIANITY is *TRUE*  
because **JESUS ROSE!**

Awareness of  
*GOSPEL DIFFERENCES*  
is **VERY OLD NEWS.**





# Normal Variation in Reporting & the Use of Sources

Week 2



# Relationship Between Synoptic Gospels

3 Observations

# 1. Verbal Agreement

---



## 2. Puzzling Verbal Agreement (e.g., Isaiah 40:3)

---

“Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” (Hebrew)

“Make straight the paths of our God.” (Greek – LXX)

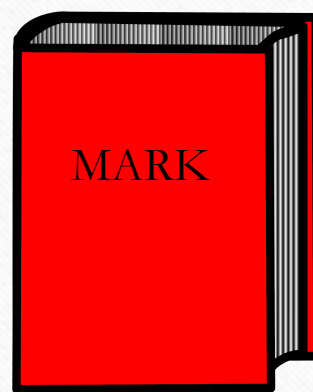
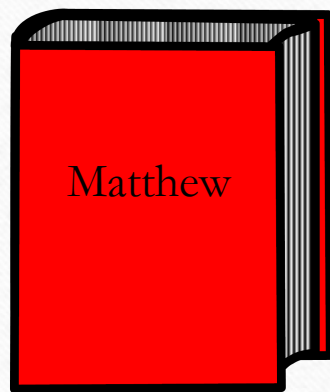
“Make his paths straight.” (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

### 3. Parenthetical Comments

---

“when you see the abomination of desolation . . .  
(let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea  
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*Mark 13:14 / Matthew 24:15-16*



# Synoptic Problem



# Nature of Divine Inspiration

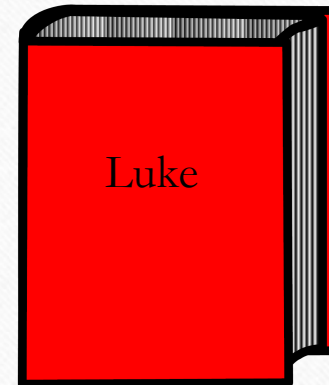
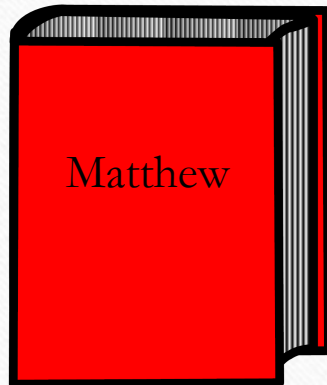
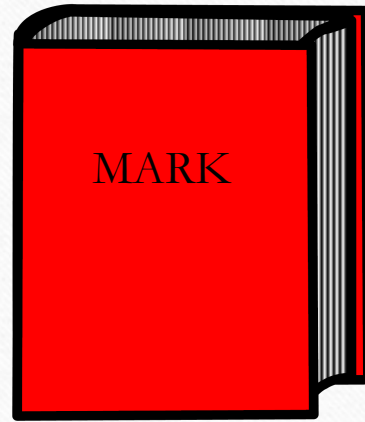
---

- sometimes involved the author using sources
- did not involve dictation
- process includes a human element

# Which Gospel was Written First?

*Week 3*





# Evidence Mark Written First

---

1. Mark is “Middle Term”
2. Mark’s crude style
3. Mark’s unique awkward content
4. Mark’s problematic content absent from Matthew & Luke

# Gospel of John

---

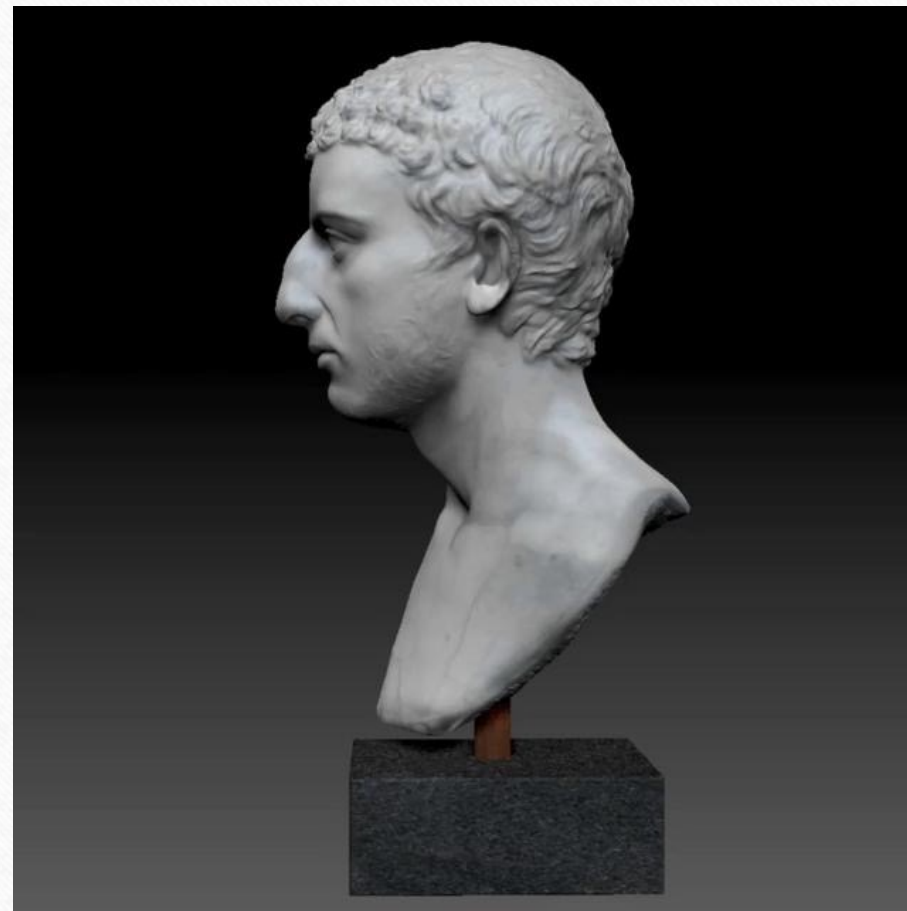
Less commitment than Synoptics to reporting with precision  
Theological Paraphrase

# The Gospels as Biography

*Week 4*



Philo



Josephus

Main Character = biographee

## Avg Length: 10,000-25,000 words

---

- Philo, *Abraham*: ~13,000
- Philo, *Joseph*: ~13,000
- Philo, *Moses*: ~31,000
- Josephus, *Life*: ~89,000
- Matthew: 18,346
- Mark: 11,304
- Luke: 19,482
- John: 15,635

Little-to-no interest in childhood

# Gospels are Biographies

---

- Focus on the life of Jesus
- Avoid allegory
- Fall within the average length of a biography
- Little-to-no time spent on Jesus' childhood

# Gospels as Biographies

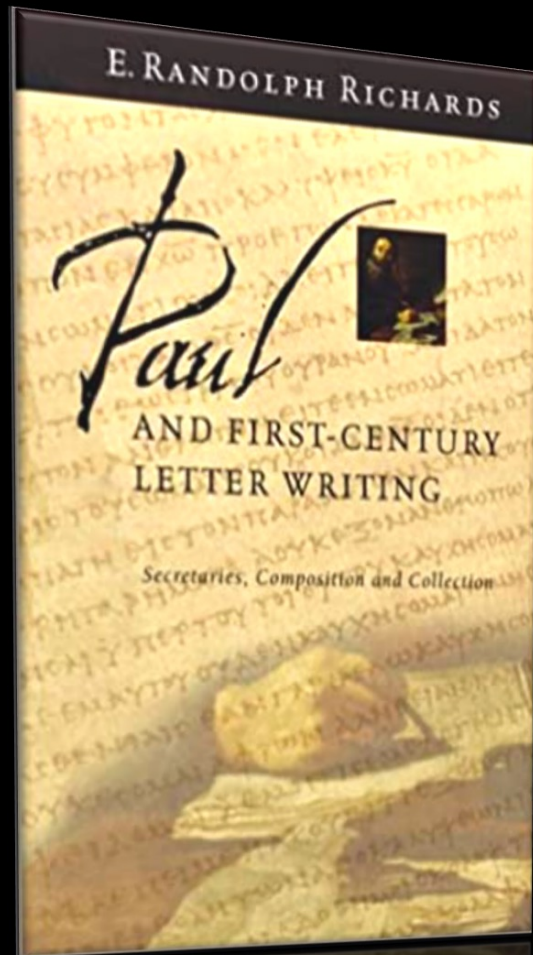
## Objections

“The Gospels are *sui generis* (lit. ‘of its own kind’).”



“As Jews, Gospel Authors Not Acquainted  
with Greco-Roman Biography”





“Your services to me are past all reckoning—  
at home, in the forum, in the City, in my province,  
in private as in public affairs,  
in my literary pursuits and performances.”

*Cicero*

“Pompey is staying with me as I write these words . . .  
When he expresses a desire to hear something of mine,  
I tell that, without you, I am altogether dumb.”

*Cicero*

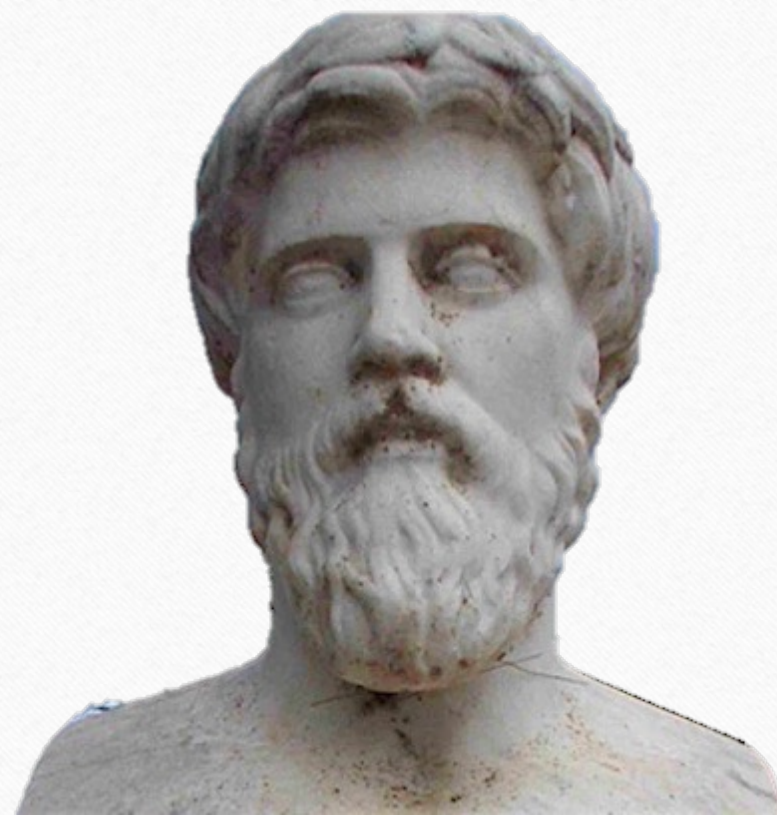
“I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.”

*Paul* (1 Cor., Col., 2 Thess.)

“I, Tertius, who wrote this letter greet you in the Lord.”

Romans 16:22

# Plutarch



“For it is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the description of their great contests.” (Plut. *Alex.* 1.2– 3)







**Nicholas Boylston (18<sup>th</sup> c.)**  
**Merchant who imported**  
**Portrait by**  
**John Singleton Copley**

# Divinity of Jesus in Mark?

## *Mark 1*

John the Baptist is the prophet who prepares the way for God (Isa. 40:3), who is Jesus.

## *Mark 2*

Jesus forgives the sins of the paralytic.

### *Mark 3*

Jesus says his exorcisms demonstrate  
he has bound Satan and is plundering his kingdom.

## *Mark 4*

Jesus calms the wind, something God does  
(Pss. 89, 107; Eccles 8)

## *Mark 5*

Jesus raises someone from the dead,  
something only God does (Eccles 8).

Others raised the dead, but through prayer to God  
while Jesus did it on his own authority.

## *Mark 6*

Jesus walks on water,  
something only God can do (Job 9:8).



Why is this important?

Because the Gospels are God's Word, we want to understand them as their authors intended.

Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature can assist us in understanding them as their authors intended. In the process, we may observe some things that previously eluded us (e.g., Christology in Mark) .

# Summary

The Gospels are ancient biographies of Jesus.

Ancient biographies displayed little interest  
in the biographee's pre-adult life.

Secretaries probably played a robust role  
in the composition of the Gospels.

Ancient biographies were, in a sense, literary portraits of the biographee.

Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
sheds additional light on some passages.



For Further Thought

Do you think the analogy of a portrait is appropriate for ancient biographies, including the Gospels?



Does it surprise you that so few biographies  
in antiquity were written by Jews?



Have you previously considered the possibility of biblical authors using secretaries? What are your thoughts now about the roles of a secretary in the composition of a Gospel?

What is the most interesting item  
you learned today?

# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 5*

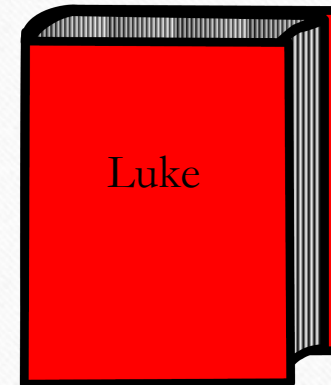
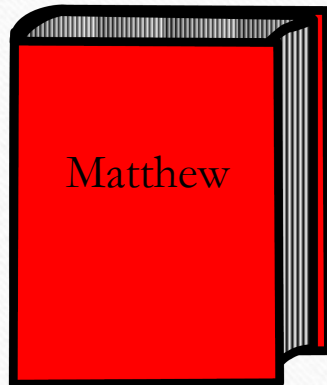
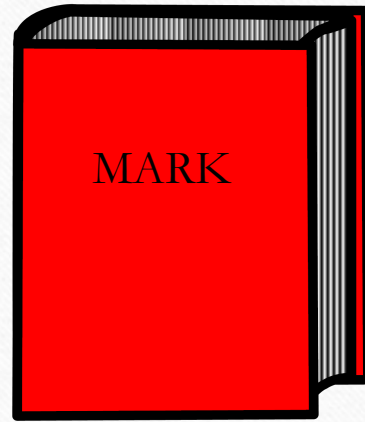


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Recap



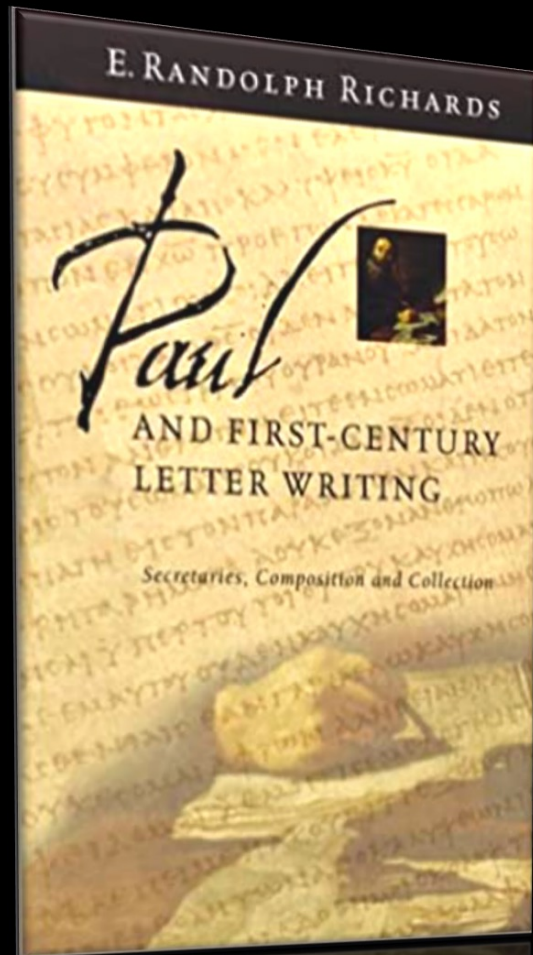
CHRISTIANITY is *TRUE*  
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# Gospels are Biographies

---

- Focus on the life of Jesus
- Avoid allegory
- Fall within the average length of a biography
- Little-to-no time spent on Jesus' childhood





Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
can shed additional light on biblical texts  
that previously eluded us.

# Nature of Divine Inspiration

---

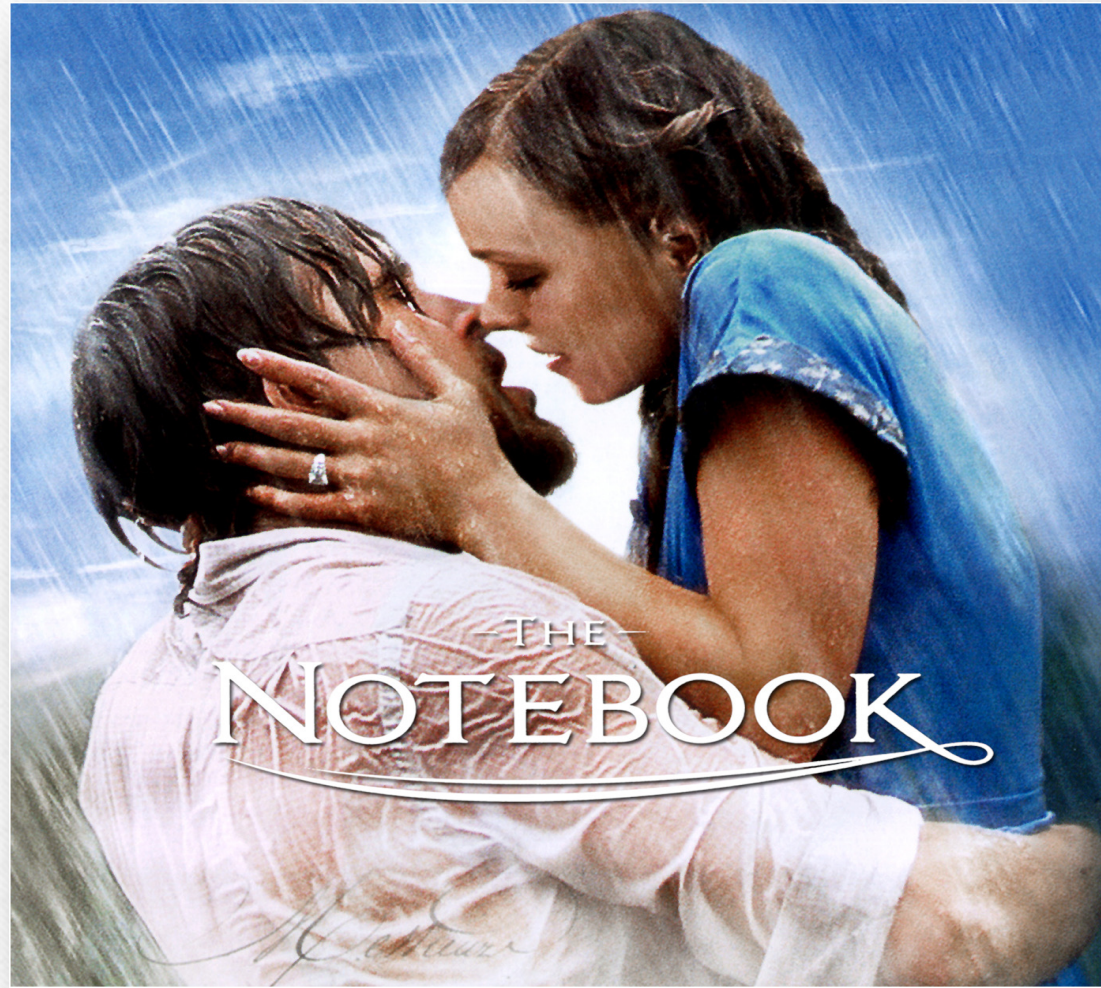
- sometimes involved the author using sources
- did not involve dictation
- process includes a human element of imperfection
- sometimes involved the use of a secretary

# Truth-Telling in Ancient Biography

*Week 5*



Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature provides insights pertaining to the degree of accuracy we can expect in them.











“By its very nature, a narrative biography must take certain liberties with the story it shares. Please do not expect camera-like accuracy. That is not the intent of this book, and to meet such a standard, it would have to be a twenty-two-year-long video, most of which would bore even my mother to tears. . . .

“The words I have in quotations are rough approximations. A few of the conversations represent multiple meetings condensed into one. In some instances, stories are displaced in the timeline to fit the topical categorization. In other instances, people who were present in the conversation were left out of the narrative for the sake of clarity. All of these devices are normal for narrative biographies . . . . Please read accordingly.”



Sallust (1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.)

“As a sheep, he was led to slaughter,  
and as a lamb is silent before its shearer,  
so he did not open his mouth.”

*Acts 8:32 quoting Isaiah 53:7*

# Arrest

---

“Have you come out with swords and clubs as against an insurrectionist? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me; but this hour and the authority of darkness are yours.”

*Luke 22:52b-53*

# Before the Sanhedrin

---

“If I tell you, you will never believe;  
and if I ask you a question, you will never answer.  
But from now on the Son of Man will be seated  
at the right hand of the power of God.”

*Luke 22:67b-69*

# Before Pilate

---

“You have said it.”

*Luke 23:3c*

## *En route to Golgatha*

---

“Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that did not give birth, and the breasts that did not feed.’ Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, ‘FALL ON US,’ AND TO THE HILLS, ‘COVER US’....

## *En route to Golgotha*

---

“For if they are doing these things when the tree is green,  
what will happen when it is dry?”

*Luke 23:28b-31*

# On the cross

---

“Father, forgive them. For they do not know what they are doing.”

*Luke 23:43*

“Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

*Luke 23:43*

“Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.”

*Luke 23:46a*







Why is this important?

Reading the Gospels through the proper lens  
provides a more accurate view of  
what their authors intended to communicate  
and that we may otherwise miss.

(e.g., deity of Jesus in Mark, Matthew's genealogy and  
location of Sermon on the Mount)



We must be careful not to impose standards  
of accuracy on the Gospels that  
were not valued in that era.

Even in view of the liberties taken by the evangelists, we can still trust what they wrote.

---

- Historians have tools.
- There were limits.
- **Guy** vs. **Girl** version

## Principle #1

Our view of Scripture should be consistent  
with what we observe in Scripture.

# Summary

Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature provides insights pertaining to the degree of accuracy we should expect in the Gospels (e.g., Matthew's genealogy, Sermon on the Mount location)

The Gospels are literary portraits of Jesus.  
This is what divinely inspired Scripture looks like.



For Further Thought

What is the most interesting thing  
you learned today?

Are you troubled by the knowledge that the authors of the Gospels took some minor liberties with the details? Why or why not?

What are the advantages of the girl version of a story?

What are the advantages of the guy version of a story?

# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 6*

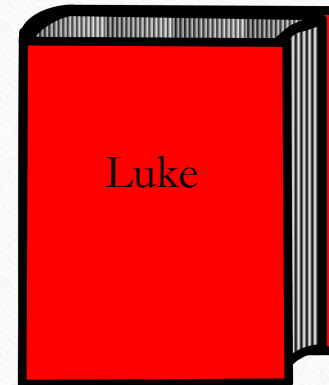
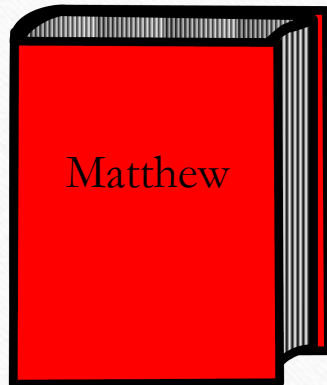
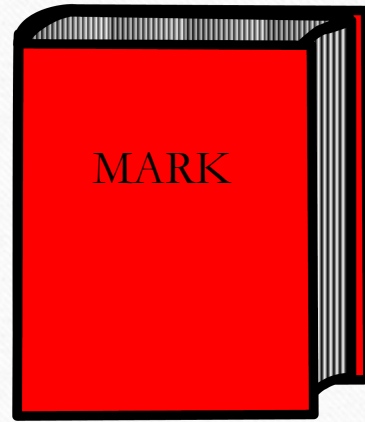


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Recap



CHRISTIANITY is *TRUE*  
because **JESUS ROSE!**



# Nature of Divine Inspiration

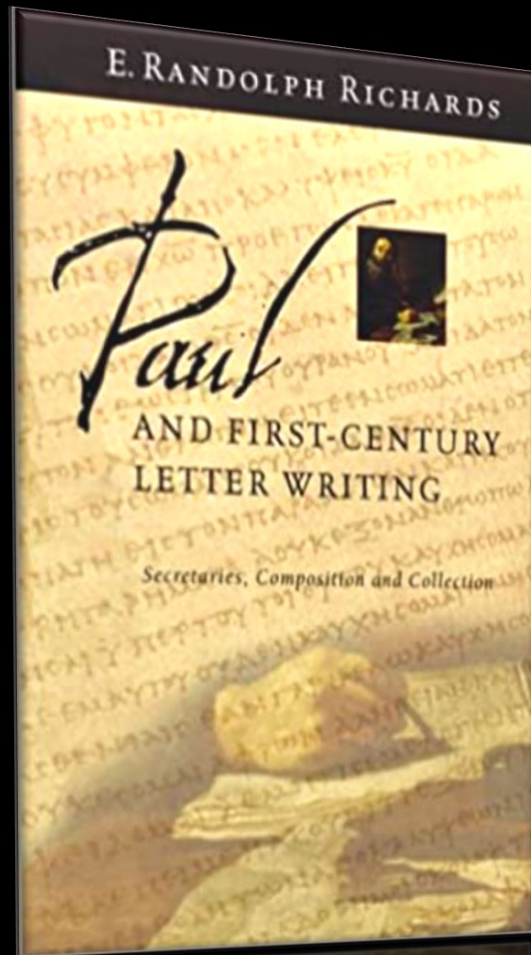
---

- sometimes involved the author using sources
- did not involve dictation
- process includes a human element of imperfection

# Gospels are Biographies

---

- Focus on the life of Jesus
- Avoid allegory
- Fall within the average length of a biography
- Little-to-no time spent on Jesus' childhood





Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
can shed additional light on biblical texts  
that previously eluded us.  
(e.g., deity of Jesus in Mark)

Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
provides insights pertaining to the degree of accuracy  
we should expect in the Gospels  
(e.g., Matthew's genealogy, Sermon on the Mount location)

The Gospels are literary portraits of Jesus.  
This is what divinely inspired Scripture looks like.

# Compositional Textbooks

*Week 6*



If you can read this,  
**THANK A TEACHER**

*progymnasmata*

Theon (Greek)

Quintilian (Latin)

“Paraphrase consists of changing the form of expression while keeping the thoughts. . . .

There are four main kinds: variation in syntax, by addition, by subtraction, and by substitution, plus combinations of these.”

*Theon*



“Oh, cursed city!”  
(*Life of Cato Minor*)

“Oh, miserable city!”  
(*Life of Pompey*)



“There are other ways of varying the content along the lines discussed in the chapter on **narration**; for example, recasting an assertion as a question, a question as a potentiality, and similarly other forms of expression that we mentioned.”

*Theon*

“since we are accustomed to setting out the facts sometimes as making a straightforward statement and sometimes as doing something more than making a factual statement, and sometimes in the form of questions, and sometimes as things we seek to learn about, and sometimes as things about which we are in doubt, . . .

“and sometimes as making a command, sometimes expressing a wish, and sometimes swearing to something, sometimes addressing the participants, sometimes advancing suppositions, sometimes using dialogue, it is possible to produce varied narrations in all these ways.”

*Theon*

“and sometimes as making a command, sometimes expressing a wish, and sometimes swearing to something, sometimes addressing the participants, sometimes advancing suppositions, sometimes using dialogue, it is possible to produce *varied* narrations in all these ways.”

*Theon*

## Ποικίλλω

to vary, change, embellish, adorn,  
to bring forth in various colors,  
to tell with art and elegance.

“If we wish to use a **dialogue form**, we shall suppose some people talking with each other about what has been done, and one teaching, the other learning, about the occurrences.”

*Theon*

“Training in exercises is absolutely useful, not only for those who are going to be orators, but also if anyone wants to be a poet or historian, or if he wants to acquire facility with some other form of writing. These things are, in effect, the foundation of every form of writing.”

*Theon*

“There is nothing to prevent what is imagined from being expressed equally well in all these ways. There is evidence of this in paraphrase by a poet of his own thoughts elsewhere or paraphrase by another poet and in the orators and historians, and, in brief, **all ancient writers seem to have used paraphrase** in the best possible way, rephrasing not only their own writings but those of each other.”

*Theon, 62*

“Brutus will wait for this shriveled skin.”  
(Plut., *Life of Caesar*)

“Brutus will wait for this shriveled skin.”  
(Plut., *Life of Caesar*)

“What? Does it not occur to you that  
Brutus intends to wait for this flesh?”  
(Plut., *Life of Brutus*)

“How can we compare the kingdom of God, or with what parable may we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard.”  
(Mark 4:30-31)

“How can we compare the kingdom of God, or with what parable may we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard.”  
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“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what will I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard.”  
(Luke 13:18-19)

“How can we compare the kingdom of God, or with what parable may we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard.”  
(Mark 4:30-31)

“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what will I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard.”  
(Luke 13:18-19)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard.”  
(Matthew 13:31)

# Parable of the Sower

---

- Mark: 30, 60, 100
- Matthew: 100, 60, 30
- Luke: 100



# Jesus Heals Withered Hand

## Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

---

In all 3 Gospels, this story comes immediately after the story of Jesus' disciples picking grain on the Sabbath. So, differences are not present because different occasions are being described.

## Luke 6:6-11 (cf. Mark 3:1-6)

---

<sup>6</sup> On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. <sup>7</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. <sup>8</sup> But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand . . .

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"Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there. . . . <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" <sup>10</sup> And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. <sup>11</sup> But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

## Matthew 12:9-14

---

<sup>9</sup> He went on from there and entered their synagogue.

<sup>10</sup> And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"-- so that they might accuse him. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? . . ."

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Matthew (21)	Mark (12)	Luke (20)
3 Servants (Beat, Kill, Stone)	1 Servant (Beat, Send Away)	1 Servant (Beat, Send Away)

Matthew (21)	Mark (12)	Luke (20)
3 Servants (Beat, Kill, Stone)	1 Servant (Beat, Send Away)	1 Servant (Beat, Send Away)
-	1 Servant (Struck Head, Treat Shamefully)	1 Servant (Beat, Treat Shamefully, Send Away)

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Son (Kill)	Son (Kill, Cast Out)	Son (Cast Out, Kill)

# Mark 12:9

“What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

## Mark 12:9

“What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

## Matt. 21:40-41

“So, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

“Elaboration [*exergasia*] is language that adds what is lacking in thought and expression.’ What is ‘lacking’ can be supplied by making clear what is obscure; by filling gaps in the language or content; by saying some things more strongly, or more believably, or more vividly, or more truly, . . .

“or more wordily—each word repeating the same thing--, or more legally, or more beautifully, or more appropriately, or more opportunely, or making the subject pleasanter, or using a better arrangement or a style more ornate.”

*Theon*

# Jesus on Discipleship

# Jesus on Discipleship

---

Luke 14:26

- “If someone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

# Jesus on Discipleship

---

## Luke 14:26

- “If someone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

## Matthew 10:37

- “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and the one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

# Jesus on Trial

“**I am**. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (Mark)

“**I am**. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (Mark)

“**You have said so**. Only I say to you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew)

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“**You have said so**. Only I say to you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew)

“**If I told you, you would never believe. And if I asked you, you would never answer.** But from now on, the Son of Man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God.” And they all said, “Are you, therefore, the Son of God?” And he answered, “**You say that I am.**” (Luke)



Why is this important?

Theon claims that the techniques taught in the compositional textbooks were used by all writers.

Therefore, we should anticipate that the Gospel authors used them. Moreover, we can actually observe several instances where it appears they did.

In these instances, the use of such techniques is the most plausible explanation for why the differences are present.

Divine inspiration allowed the Gospel authors to make minor changes, such as changing a statement to a question and creating a short dialogue.

# Summary

Students in their mid-teens learned techniques for writing using compositional textbooks.

Theon asserted that the techniques learned in the compositional textbooks are the foundation for every form of literature and that all ancient writers—poets, orators, and historians alike—used these techniques for paraphrasing their own writings and those of others.

We observed a few examples in the Greco-Roman literature  
& in the Gospels where the use of one or more  
compositional devices were likely responsible  
for creating differences.



For Further Thought

Do you think changing details amounts to deceit?  
If so, why? If not, why not?

Are you being deceptive when you do something similar?  
If not, why not?

To what extent would an author need to go  
before the change becomes deceit?

What is the most interesting thing you learned today?

# Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?

*Week 7*

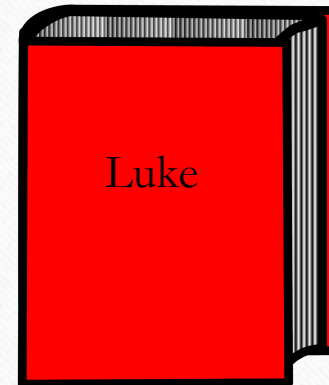
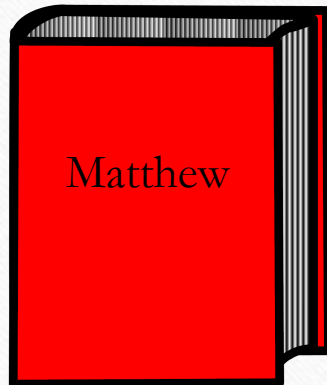
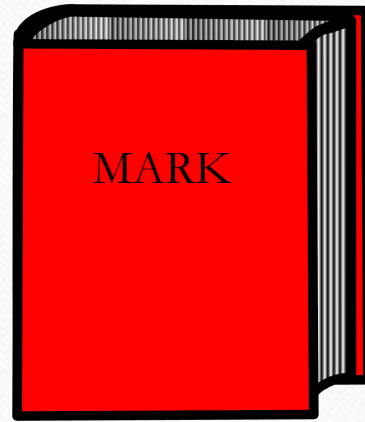


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Recap



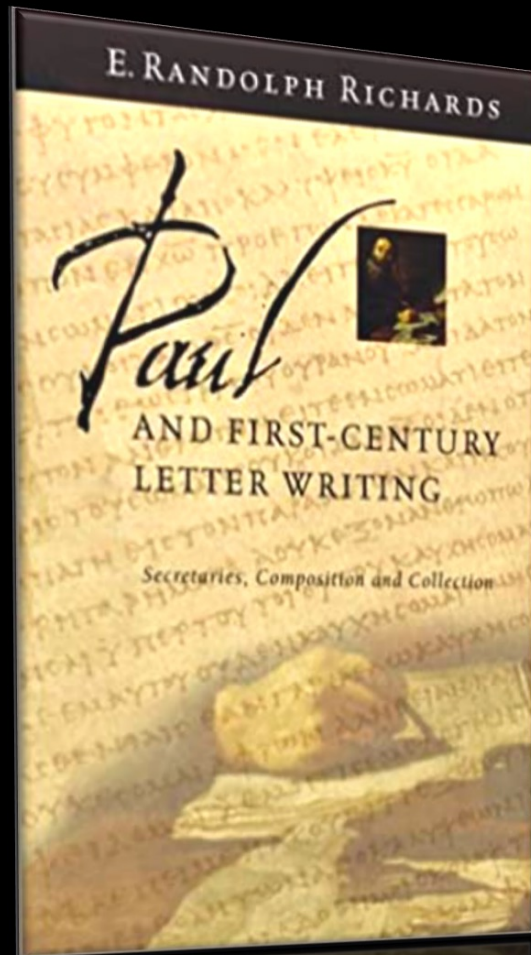
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# Gospels are Biographies

---

- Focus on the life of Jesus
- Avoid allegory
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Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
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Reading the Gospels in view of their biographical nature  
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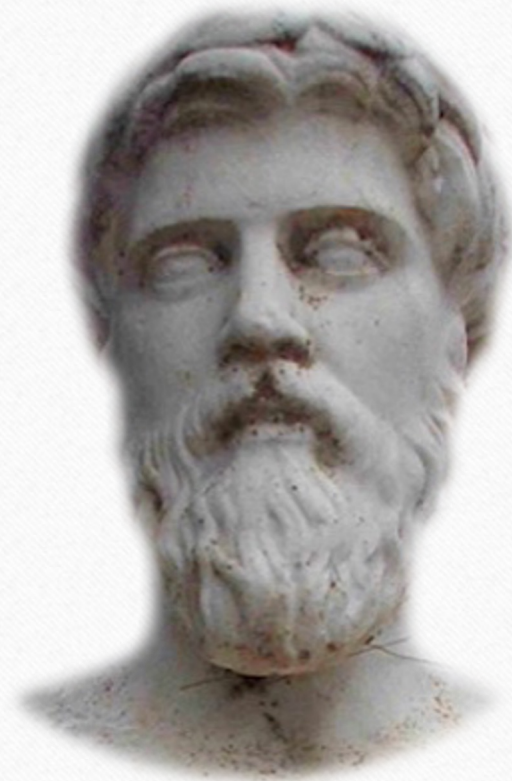
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# Plutarch & More Compositional Devices

*Week 7*



# Plutarch



Compression: An author knowingly portrays  
an event as though it had occurred over  
a shorter period of time.

Displacement: An author knowingly removes an event from its original context and places it in another.

Transferral: An author knowingly attributes words or deeds to a person that he knew belonged to another.

Conflation: An author combines elements from two or more events or people and narrates them as one.

Simplification: An author omits or alters details that may complicate the overall narrative or does so merely to abbreviate and communicate the main ideas.

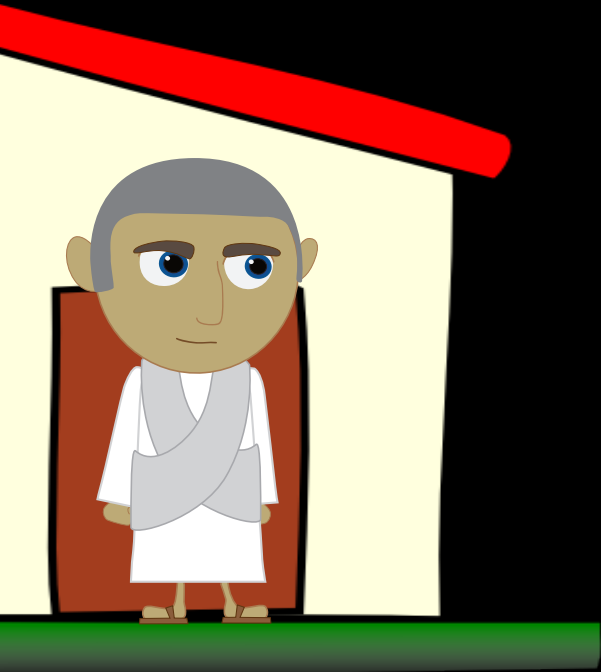
Literary Spotlighting: An author only mentions the person(s) in focus while being aware that others were present.

A conceptual image featuring a bright spotlight beam originating from the upper left corner and casting a wide, soft pool of light onto a dark, flat surface at the bottom. The background is entirely black, emphasizing the light source and its effect.

# Literary Spotlighting

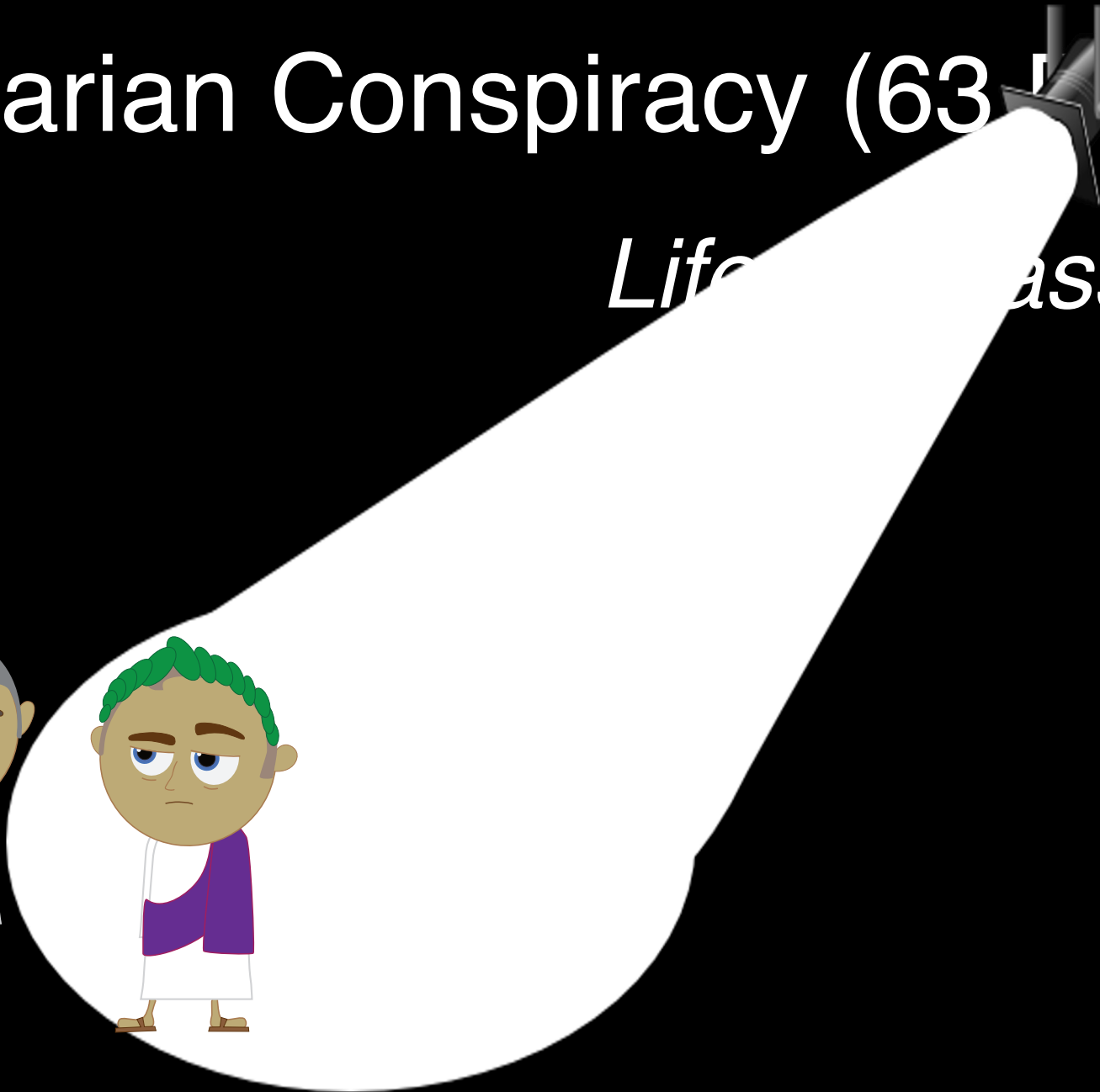
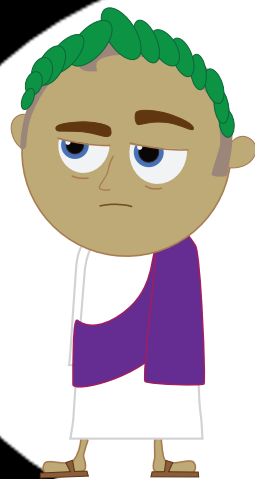
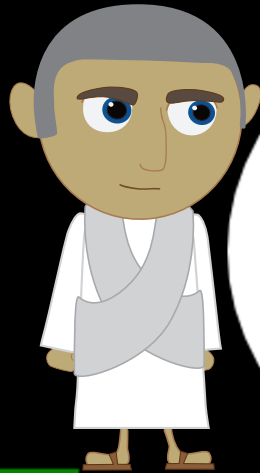
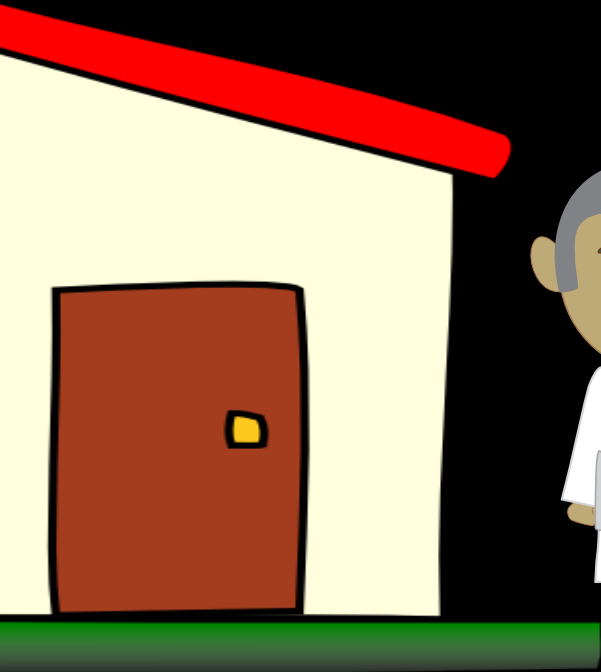
# Catilinarian Conspiracy (63 BC)

*Life of Cicero*

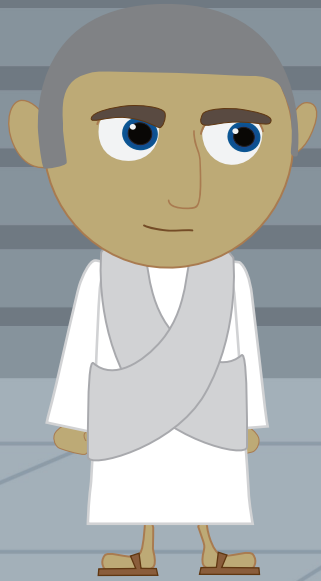


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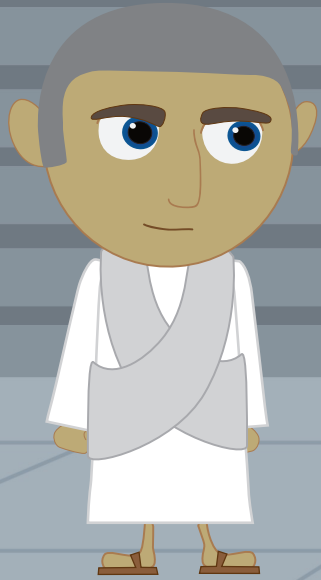
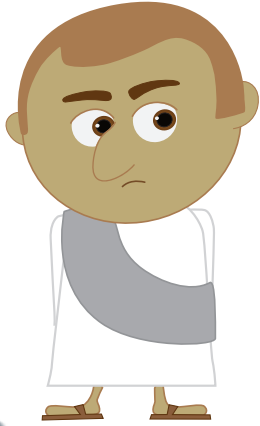
*Life of Cicero*



# *Cicero & Caesar*



*Cato*



# How Many Angels?



# How Many Women?

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# Who Ran to the Tomb?

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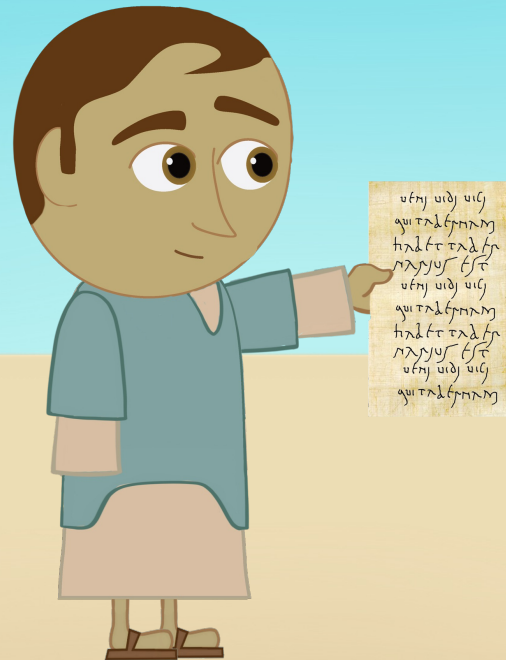


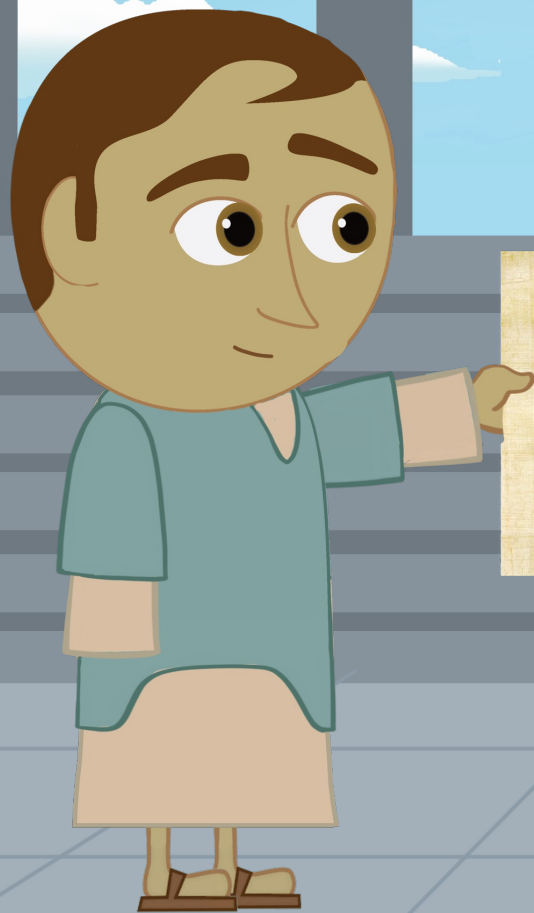
**TRANSFERAL**

# Pompey Defends Plancus

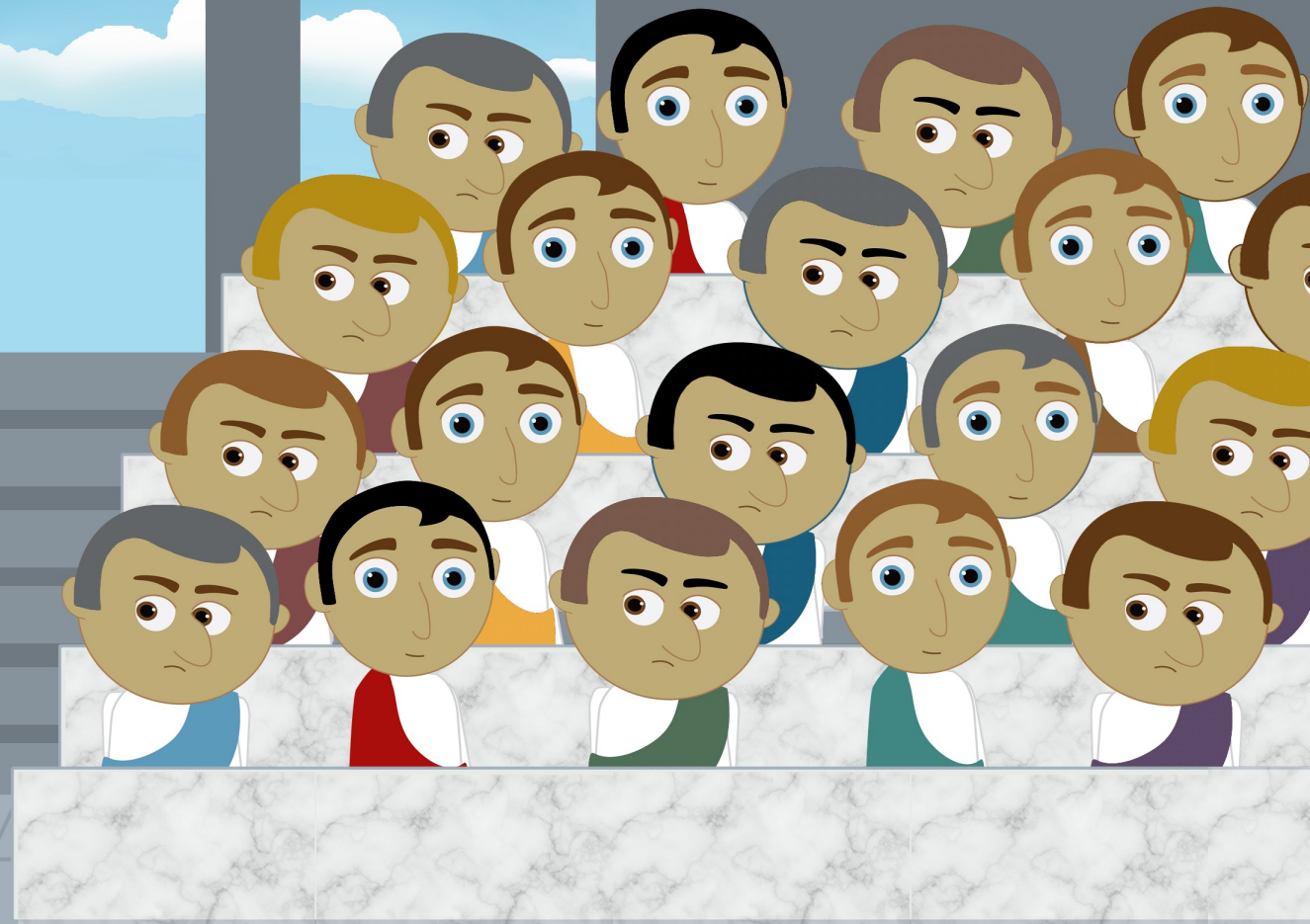


# Cato





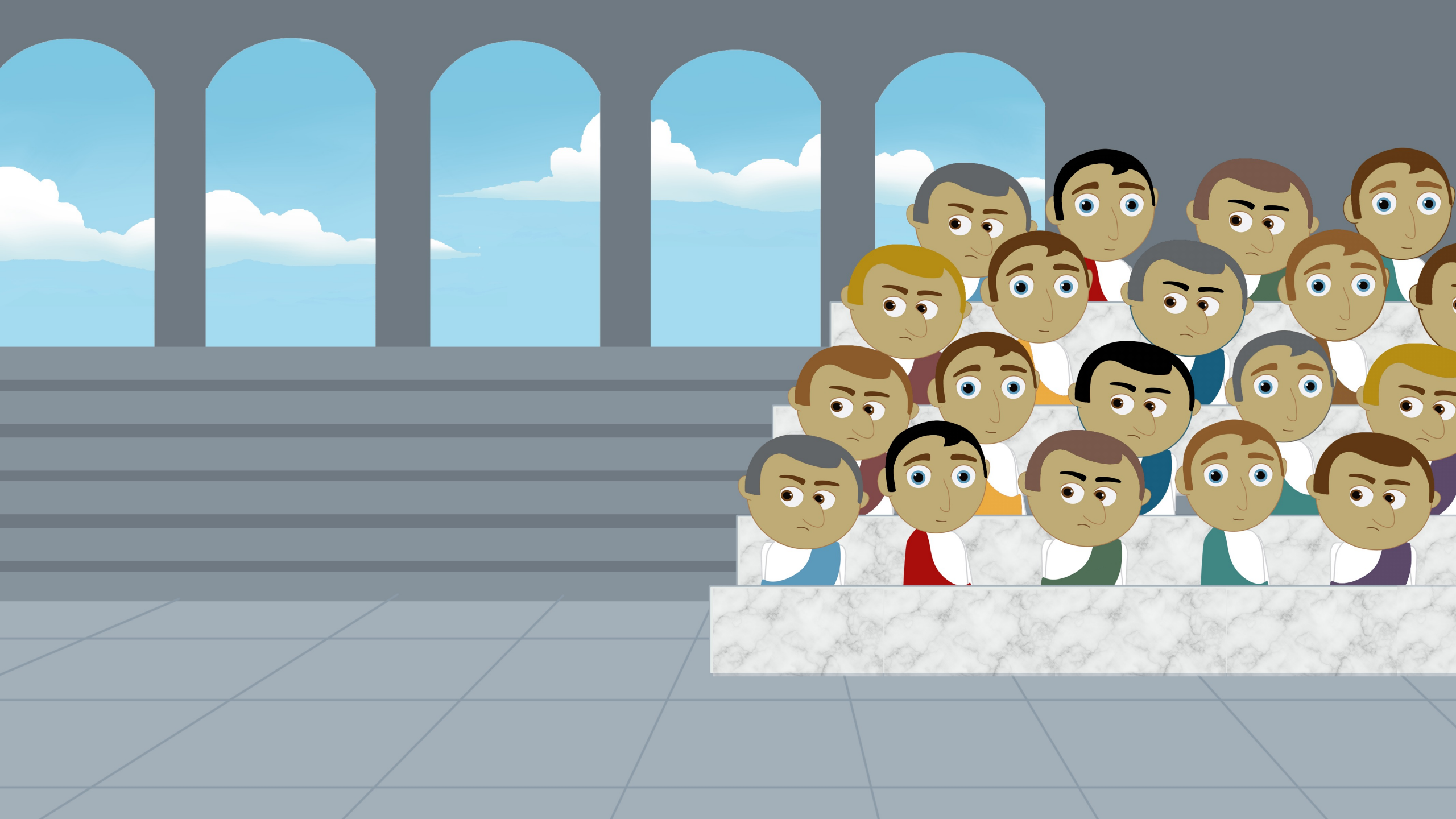
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սէոյ սւծյ սւծյ  
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սէոյ սւծյ սւծյ  
գաւ տաճերոս



# Pompey



אֲנִי מְבַרְכֶּם  
בְּשֵׁם ה' חַי וְקַי  
וְעַתָּה בְּרִי  
אֲנִי מְבַרְכֶּם  
בְּשֵׁם ה' חַי וְקַי  
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וְעַתָּה בְּרִי



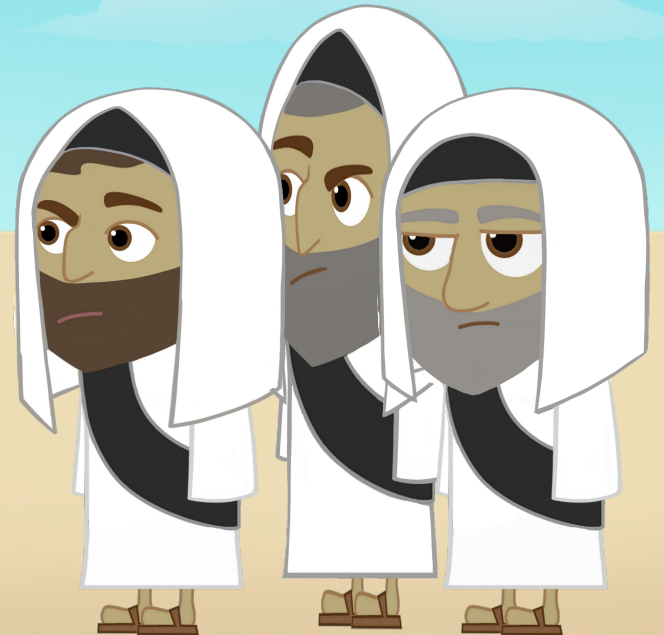
# Jesus Heals A Centurion's Servant



# Luke



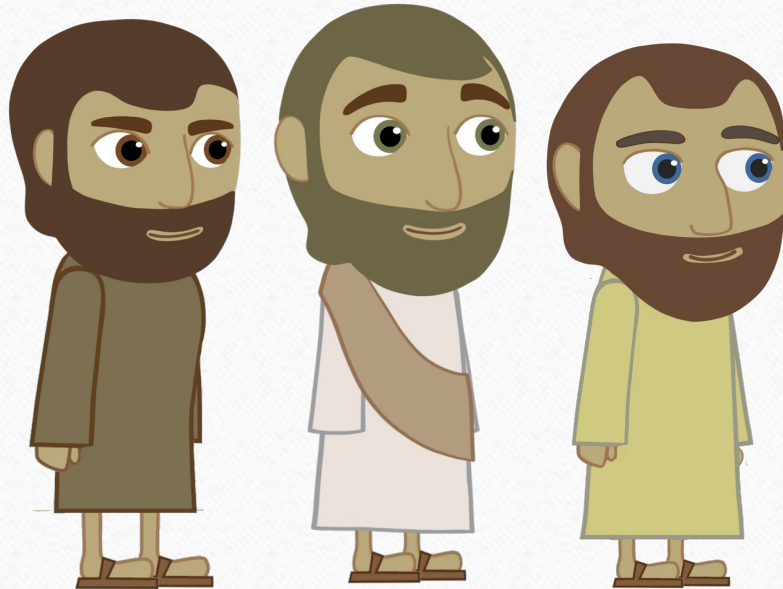
# Luke



# Matthew



Mark

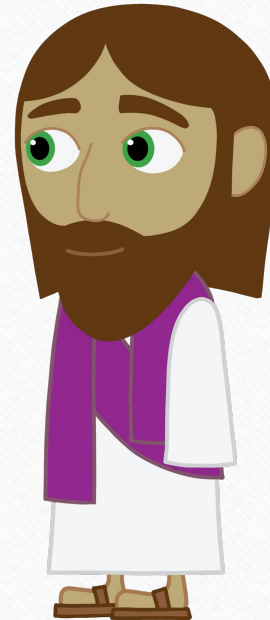


What were you  
arguing  
about?



Matthew

Which of us is the  
greatest?



# Baptism

“You are my beloved Son. In you I am well-pleased.” *(Mark; Luke)*

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.” *(Matthew)*

# Baptism

“You are my beloved Son. In you I am well-pleased.” (*Mark; Luke*)

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.” (*Matthew*)



Why is this important?

Some have mistakenly identified Gospel differences as “errors” when the differences are actually intentional and result from the author’s use of one or more compositional devices.

When a compositional device is responsible for a difference, attempting to harmonize the difference will take one down the wrong path and yield an incorrect understanding of why the difference is present.



# Summary

Plutarch is regarded as the *greatest biographer*  
in antiquity.

With Plutarch, we can assess how  
the *same author*  
using the *same sources*  
reported the *same event*  
in biographies of different people.

Plutarch never copies & pastes.

Plutarch never copies & pastes.

Plutarch intentionally reworks a narrative  
using a variety of compositional devices.

Since the Gospels are also ancient biographies,  
we should anticipate their authors using  
similar compositional devices.

Reading the Gospels in view of  
the compositional devices used by Plutarch  
yields wonderful fruit related to  
how many Gospel differences came into being.



For Further Thought

# On Staffs & Sandals

“Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts,  
no bag for your journey, nor two tunics  
nor sandals nor a staff”

*Matthew 10:9-10*

“And he said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey,  
no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money;  
and do not have two tunics.’”

*Luke 9:3*

“He charged them to take nothing for their journey except only a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.”

*Mark 6:8-9*

Matthew	Mark	Luke
Money	Money	Money
Bag	Bag	Bag
2 Tunics	2 Tunics	2 Tunics
Sandals	Sandals	
Staff	Staff	Staff

**Legion**

“And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat,  
immediately there met him out of the tombs  
a man with an unclean spirit.”

*Mark 5:2*

“When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons.”

*Luke 8:27a*

“And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs.”

*Matthew 8:28a*

# Blind Bartimaeus

“And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.”

*Mark 10:46*

“As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.”

*Luke 18:35*

“And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, ‘Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!’”

*Matthew 20:29-30*



Matthew 13:31-32	Mark 4:30-32	Luke 13:18-19
<p>He put another parable before them, saying:</p> <p>‘The kingdom of heaven is</p> <p><i>like a grain of mustard seed,</i></p> <p><b>which a person, taking it,</b></p> <p>sowed in his field;</p> <p>though it is <u>the smallest of all the seeds,</u></p> <p>When it has grown is</p> <p><u>the greatest of the vegetables,</u> and it becomes <b>a tree,</b></p> <p>so that <i>the birds of heaven</i> come and nest</p> <p><b>in its branches’.</b></p>	<p>And <u>he was saying,</u></p> <p>‘How shall we liken the kingdom of God, or in what parable shall we put it?</p> <p><i>Like a grain of mustard seed,</i></p> <p>which when</p> <p>it is sown upon the earth</p> <p>is <u>the smallest of all the seeds</u> on the earth</p> <p>and when it is sown, it grows and becomes</p> <p><u>the greatest of all the vegetables,</u> and it produces large branches,</p> <p>so that <i>the birds of heaven</i> are able to nest</p> <p>under its shade’.</p>	<p><u>He was saying,</u> therefore,</p> <p>‘What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I liken it?</p> <p>It is <i>like a grain of mustard seed,</i></p> <p><b>which a person, taking it,</b></p> <p>put in his own garden and</p> <p>it grew</p> <p>and it</p> <p>became <b>a tree,</b></p> <p>and <i>the birds of heaven</i> nested</p> <p><b>in its branches’.</b></p>

Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruit worthy (sg) of repentance. And do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. And now the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. – Matthew 3:7-10

Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruit worthy (pl) of repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. And even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. – Luke 3:7-9

## English Translations: Mark 1:38

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- “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.” (NASB)
- “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” (ESV)
- “Let us go elsewhere, into the surrounding villages, so that I can preach there too. For that is what I came out here to do.” (NET)

