

COMMUNICATING JESUS TO A MODERN WORLD

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A. The Credibility of:

1. The Gospels

a. Accusations:

i. They were **myths** that developed over **time** and were collected by **editors**, not written by authors who **witnessed** the events.

(1) *They can't be myths that developed after the life of the eyewitnesses and Apostles.* The "gospel" of Jesus was extremely early (e.g. 1 Cor 15, Philippians 2:5-11), accepted by Paul, a contemporary of Jesus. The eyewitnesses were still alive (1 Cor 15:6).

(2) The gospels, according to literary critics, are cohesive pieces, not a patchwork quilt.

(3) Luke carefully investigated the witnesses (Lk 1:1-4), John claims to have been an eyewitness (Jn 20:30; 1 John 1:1-4). They could be liars but their lives and literature seem to point to their credibility.

ii. They are filled with inaccuracy and contradictions. This depends on your perspective. Evidence is filtered through the lens of presuppositions. Because I believe, I weigh the evidence differently. But certainly there are no insurmountable difficulties.

iii. They can't be true because they speak of the miraculous. This is quickly waning because people in a post-scientific age are open to the possibility of God being a part of our world.

2. The Resurrection

a. The theories which try to explain away the bodily resurrection simply cannot account for all the historical data (See handout).

b. Historical Evidence

i. The testimony is credible, sufficient in number and agrees at significant points. Most of the Apostles, in fact, died for this very testimony.

- ii. The Jews did not have an idea of individual resurrection within space and time, nor does this come out of any known Greco-Roman myths. Thus there is no precedent for this kind of a story.
- iii. The radical transformation of Peter, Thomas, Paul and James demands some kind of explanation.
- iv. The sacraments of The Lord's Supper and Baptism are impossible without the bodily resurrection.
- v. Every Jewish revolt died with its leader. Thus there must be some explanation for the very existence of the church.

2. Jesus as a teacher

B. Practical suggestions for communicating Jesus

- 1. Start with the Resurrection
- 2. Story
 - a. His (gospels) – There is a shift in the thumb prints on people's bibles.
 - i. The stories of Jesus are still wildly popular
 - ii. The current media (Time, Newsweek and U.S. News and World Report [April 1996]), as well as movies that feature Jesus.
 - b. Yours (testimony) – Justified through Acts 20, the sermon to Christians.
- 3. Use Aesthetics – Music, Art, media, literature/poetry,