

Are the gospels accurate? It's another great question. When people ask me that question they often want to know, 'How do we know that what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote in the Gospels is what Jesus really said, or things Jesus really did?'. - Dr. Ed Gravely

(I) TWO MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

(A) Things that are unverifiable – The Gospels are filled with things that simply cannot be verified.

(1) John records a private _____ (1) that Jesus had with one of his apostles

(a) There is no _____ (2) verification that can be made for something like that (*i.e. there were no witnesses to the conversation*).

(B) Things that are verifiable – The Gospels are filled with all kind of things that are verifiable.

(1) The Gospel writers go out of their way to include:

(a) _____ (3) references

(b) _____ (4) markers

(c) Naming of _____ (5)

(d) Geographical locations

(2) They do this to give themselves _____ (6) credibility, or in other words, things that we can check.

** Note: All of these types of references when checked have been historically proven to be 100% accurate.*

(II) SO WHAT DO WE DO WITH PLACES WHERE THE GOSPELS CAN'T BE VERIFIED EXTERNALLY?

There are two things we need to do in these cases:

(A) _____ (7) the Gospel record.

** If we discounted all the references that skeptics cite as problems, or differences between the four Gospels, we would still be left with Gospel texts that are extremely clear that Jesus:*

- (1) Is God who _____ (8) a man
- (2) That He lived on the Earth.
- (3) Taught about the _____ (9) of God.
- (4) He died on the cross (a death for sin)
- (5) He rose from the dead and _____ (10) into heaven.

** Note: In those places where the Gospels apparently contradict one another, Christians have been producing _____ (11) and explanations since about _____ (12). However, don't miss the point. The Gospels are UNANIMOUS in what they teach about who Jesus was, His message, how we can be saved, His death, His burial, and His resurrection.*

(B) External Confirmation/Historical Records

We have, apart from the four Gospels, external confirmation of what is contained in the four Gospels.

- (1) Jewish scholars: claiming that Jesus was a crazy man who claimed to be a _____ (13) who was the deceiver of the people. – Josephus (37-100 A.D.)
- (2) Roman scholars: describe early Christian beliefs in a Messiah and God as being subversive and contrary to the _____ (14) – Tacitus (37-100 A.D.)
- (3) Greek scholars: describe Jesus and list him among of some of the religious teachers and describe him as being _____ (15) – Lucian (125-180 A.D.)

** Note: Even though these accounts are _____, (16) it doesn't discount the fact that they _____ (17) that what the Gospel writers claimed was Jesus' teaching is exactly what the Jewish, Roman, and Greek scholars knew Jesus' teaching to be. They didn't believe it was true, but it confirms that what is contained in the Gospels is an early record of the things Jesus actually said and did, not something fabricated at a later date and time.*

(III) SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

(A) It means that the Bible that you have in front of you (Matthew, Mark, Luke and

John) really is an _____ (18) record of the things Jesus said and did, and can be fairly well confirmed.

(IV) TAKE A LOOK AT THE THINGS THAT JESUS TALKED ABOUT...

- (A) Being God in the _____ (19)
- (B) Being _____ (20) by the Father
- (C) Doing the will of the _____ (21)
- (D) Hell for those who _____ (22) the Son
- (E) Our sinfulness and our need of a _____ (23)
- (F) He promised that He was offering Himself as the ransom for many.

V. TAKE A LOOK AT THE THINGS THAT JESUS DID...

- (A) He died on the cross – Not for His own sin; He died for _____ (24) sin and our expectation was the _____ (25) of God.
- (B) He was resurrected – God raised Christ from the dead to give us the _____ (26) of new life for those who would believe in Him.
- (C) He ascended into Heaven He ascended into heaven and sent his church on a _____ (27).

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Knowing that the Gospels are accurate, what are some things we can verify as we study them?

2. What are some of the main similarities all four Gospels contain?

3. Understanding the Gospels give an account of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, how should we respond to this?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Holman Christian Standard Bible

"Harmony of the Gospels" – Steven Cox & Kendell Easley

"Jesus: The Greatest Life of All" – Charles Swindoll

"Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels" – Mark L. Strauss



1. Conversation
2. External
3. Geographical
4. Chronological
5. Politicians
6. Historical
7. Examine
8. Became
9. Kingdom
10. Ascended
11. Harmonies
12. 50 A.D.
13. Messiah
14. Roman Government
15. Foolish
16. Negative
17. Confirm
18. Accurate
19. Flesh
20. Sent
21. Father
22. Reject
23. Savior
24. Our
25. Judgment
26. Promise
27. Mission