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Who Wrote the Gospels? Michael Licona vs. Bart Ehrman - Part 2

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Risen Jesus - Mike Licona

Did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write the gospels that bear their names? The texts themselves do not name them as the authors and were published and circulated anonymously. In fact, the earliest record of names being associated with the gospel books comes from Irenaeus in 185 AD, over 100 years after Jesus lived. Dr. Bart Ehrman contends that we do not know who wrote these texts and that the names attributed to them must certainly be false, given that the uneducated, Aramaic-speaking, rural disciples would not have the rigorous education required to produce such Greek literary works. Michael Licona disagrees, taking on Ehrman's contentions and providing a positive case for the traditional authorship of the gospels in this episode of the Risen Jesus Podcast.

Transcript

Hi, this is Dr. Kurt Juris. Today's episode is a debate between Dr. Michael Licona and Dr. Bart Ehrman, held at the 2025 Sound Faith Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Licona makes the case that the traditional authorship ascribed to the four gospels is accurately based on external evidence from six sources dating from 15 to 100 years after Jesus' death.

As well as evidence found within the texts themselves. Dr. Ehrman disagrees, challenging this external evidence and arguing that the traditionally named authors will act the education to produce these Greek literary works. Welcome to the Risen Jesus Podcast, and thanks for listening.

Alright, we are going to transition into cross-examination at this time. We're going to rearrange the stage a bit for this segment. While we do that, I want you thinking about a question that you might have for the opponents up here, and that'll be at the last one.

Dr. Licona, you have 10 minutes to question Dr. Ehrman. Alright, thanks, Bart. So, alright.

I want to know what you think about the Wii Passengers. How about those? Do we pass it? Can you read this? Oh, okay. The Wii Passengers, yeah.

In the book racks, there are four passages where the author starts talking the first verse of the book. He talks about Wii. He's come on suddenly, and they end suddenly.

He never says, then I join Paul. It's on so-and-so. It's just all of a sudden, you know, Wii.

Scholars belong to many of these. In my book on forgery and count forgery, I show that the use of first-person pronouns in narratives is often used by people who wanted you to think that they would be offered. I will say that whether you agree with that or not, there are a million examples.

A million examples where people all of a sudden say Wii or I in order to do so you think that this is an eyewitness. Whether you think that or not does a much matter. The author, whoever says Wii, does not identify himself.

All we would know is that he was a follower of Paul, according to the narrative. The argument Michael used that it's Luke. I'm sure it means the common argument.

It must have had a gentile. Luke was a known to be a gentile. Luke was a gentile companion of Paul.

Luke said one book to be a physician. Therefore he must have an education. That is the normal argument.

And it's flawed at every point. Everyone in a while. Okay.

Yeah, thanks. Yeah, I read the book on that. Every single example you provided were either suit or paper fee.

But none of them were historiography. And as Craig Keener says, in his commentary on acts, he said he looked through. And there wasn't a single example in historiography that he could find where an author did invent himself and put himself in the text as like Wii for that reason.

So here's a question for you related to this. You don't like Matthew because he doesn't refer to himself in the first person. You say it's really strange.

You also don't like Luke when he does refer to himself in the third person or the first person. So when they don't refer to himself in the first person, it's suspicious to you. When they do refer to himself in the first person, it's also suspicious to you.

So my question to you would be what would not be suspicious to you? I believe everything you say. That's suspicious at all. I actually like both Matthew and Luke.

I really like Matthew and Luke. And this question, I'm just interested to know what happened. I don't have anything against Matthew for talking with the third person.

I'm saying read Matthew 9-9 and ask yourself, is this the author? Just do it. Go home and read

Matthew 9-9. This sounds like an off-box.

Secondly, Luke does not name himself. Matthew talks about Matthew for the third person. Whoever wrote Luke three times and four times in a different book he wrote, refers to himself as Glee.

He can actually call. That's it. Did you know that Plutart never names himself within the forty-eighties and biographies? Yes.

I know. My thank you, Rotho. I haven't studied it.

I know he did. But if he didn't, he would bother me. There are actually reasons for thinking about them, by the way.

Because there are other references to it. I mean external people who are saying the new wrote him. Not a hundred years later.

The first is two hundred years later. I don't know if it exists sooner. It's almost a thousand years later.

So why are you singing? I have not an expert on Plutart there. But I can tell you that Christopher Kelly was the foremost authority in the world. Plutart says he doesn't build single classes.

Do you know Plutart? Why not? That's there. So then there's Salist as well. I know.

I remember that this old list. I understand. My point is we don't have evidence they wrote it.

We're not talking about these all theirself. I'm not saying there's not evidence or we might not see my turn to ask questions. So I'm not saying that I don't have evidence.

I'm saying I don't know what that evidence is. But obviously the classes do. Unless you want to have evidence.

We have the evidence or Matthew Martin John. Well I can't do it. Why don't we see? Because you are listening.

And in fact, what you said was, the fact that they're attributed to 100 years later doesn't matter because we have other authors who are attributed to 100 years later, and I'm asking, how do you know those authors for the book? Because some scholar says, okay fine. All right. What I showed is that Pappy's knows of the gospel mark and Justin knows of all four.

He may not call that by Matthew Mark Luke and John who doesn't tribute the one to Peter, in my opinion. I mean, we can talk about that. I'd love to talk about that.

Yeah, I do too. Now, why do you think it's rewarding? All right. I've got four and a half minutes.

Why do you think he's relying on the gospel? Because he calls it the memoir theater. Yeah. And I don't know if you read the scholarship on this.

The Thornton Road Book, the Rose Garden Book, arguing that in fact he must go talk about Martin. What he's overlooking, there are two things he's overlooking. One is that the only debate of agreements between Justin and any of the passion narratives involve sentences that are found only in the gospel theater, including the way that the unusual words for throwing lots.

It's found only in the gospel theater. And Justin, when he's talking about the gospel, when he calls the memoirs of Peter. And the reason we can't say that you must be talking about Mark, because he has bone therapies in the book, is for the reason you know.

We have only a fragment of the gospel theater. We don't have any portion of the gospel theater from Jesus' ministry. We have no idea what was in that earlier Mark.

So you're saying, I think, well, I'm sitting there, right? No, I'm not speculating at all. I'm saying you can't say possible. Your argument is positive.

You're saying it's not in the gospel theater. And I'm saying, how do you know? Okay. So I looked at the Greek of casting lots in Justin as well as in the gospel Mark and in the gospel of Peter.

And I disagree with no hope from the others. I think it's closer to what you look at in the gospel of Mark. Mike, how can you say that? Because I don't think the Greek is the same.

It's the same Greek words that are in Peter, but not in Mark. The Greek, the Greek that Justin is quoting. By the way, when you, the Greek that Justin is quoting there, it's talking about casting lots.

It's not even in the same place where he's talking about the memoirs of Peter. It's in a totally different book. It's in the first apology, not the dialogue.

So he's not even relating it to the memoirs. It shows that he knows the gospel theater. The Greek is closer to Mark than in his Peter.

There's more words there related to casting lots for Jesus' clothing. More words closer to the gospel Mark than the gospel. You know, all of you out there are three filmmakers are available, unfortunately.

It's a joke. You know, well, and then maybe Mark can tell us all the scholars that have agreed will offer. We are not, you know, adding scholars up here.

If I have to add scholars here, you know, that's not how you already can't name anything. Who brings it to offer? Yeah, except you. Well, I have to admit, I do not go through and memorize every author who talks with him as one.

Look, I don't have to. Okay, thanks. Let me get on to my next question.

Um, why pick the crepe? Why would the Christians? Why would authors agree with some of you make it true? Well, wouldn't. Mark just said, but I'm saying, okay, but let's put it this way. Hillhopper has not been able to.

He's not been able to persuade many scholars. And there's going to be a right force. When you look at his arguments, they are wrong.

That completely disagree. But if you really, I mean, if you. The only thing to do is to actually look at the evidence and not to count up the scholars and say this now.

Look at the evidence and it's clear to say these words do not occur in Mark. And just don't look at Mark. Okay, I've got one minute left, but I'll give her because it would take long.

Oh, it would be nice. Okay, let's do it again. So why would the, why would the Christians that were content on boosting their authority in the gospels pick two relatively minor figures like Mark and Luke who were not eyewitnesses instead of more obviously marketable names like Peter, James, Thomas, Mary, those who had walked when Jesus knew him.

As we do see in the later apocryphal gospels, it's like your proposal that you gave, the reason they came up with these names at the end of the second century is because they're competing with these other gospels and they have gospel, Peter, gospel, gospel, gospel Mary. These are all apostles. Everyone in the gospels written by certificate of what gospel is written by people who are either apostles or walk closely with Jesus.

So if you're trying to compete with them, why are you making it in the gospel according to Mark and Luke? So neither of them knew Jesus. Neither of them followed Jesus. We are out of time.

Would you like to answer that? I am going to answer the question though because it's a very important question. And people often say that marginal or minor figures. I don't know, you know, we don't know who was a minor figure at the age.

I said relatively. About time for us. They're both mentioned by Paul.

And the reason is the reason that you're totally in himself gives. It's that the gospels are named after two disciples and the followers are the two most important apostles, Peter and Paul. Mark could then be here, Luke could then be in Paul so you get the entire apostolic witness, two people who accompanied Jesus and two closest disciples, two closest disciples to the major apostles.

That's right. Tertolian says. All right.

Dr. Herman, you have 10 minutes to ask questions of Dr. Lacona. I'm ready. Okay.

So I'm going to give you 30 extra seconds. So we had to get the single attribution. You get a single voice saying this person wrote it for an anonymous book.

Now, you know this a little bar less. Marvis is a people, you know, it's a very important book in early Christianity. It's actually, it's actually found in Codex Landianicus in one of the books of the New Testament, The Epistle of Marvis.

Scholars today are unifying that fairly good of Marvis. He's written around 135. To your knowledge, was it ever called anything but the Epistle of Marvis? No.

Okay. It's anonymous. But it's always been called the Epistle of Marvis.

And how about the second clement? The second clement is, this is one of the books of the New Testament in Codex Alex and Drianos, Alex and Rhyme. It's by the unanimous view. A book that was written about 100 years after clementing the published had died.

Are you aware of it? Ever been called something other than second clement? No. Right. These are books that were anonymous, that were circulated to the hunt that much later were called by an author.

And yet, they were written by that author. So I don't know what the evidence is, that it's different from Matthew and John. When they're first named by Irenaeus.

Because the Gospel of Marvis and second clement appeared on UCS on his list of either doubtful or spurious. Whereas the Gospels would never want any of the lists that were questioned by the Old Church of which were over. You see, this is around the year 300.

I'm talking about earlier years. Yeah. And ever since, and even you see this, it's a part of what? And you said they were included.

What manuscript? Well, I was just included in Codex Irenaeus and for each second. One year? 367. Later than you see this? Yeah.

Okay. So they're still calling it that? Yeah. You see these calls with that? Is there any significance with that? The hell is that for hundreds of years? It was never called anything different.

It's the same thing as Matthew. That's right. It's called something a hundred years later.

And then it just continues to be called that. But you would agree that in these two cases, if I can give you the entire list of ones that are like this. You think, well, that doesn't mean that they were written by that person.

That's right. But you do think that about Matthew? Well, because they didn't have, you know, all this external testimony that's said. Yes, they do.

And it was written by Art Barnabas? Yes. They called it. But yes, they talk about it.

They're calling it that. You know, they called it the Gospel of Peter too. I mean, that's the way... That's right.

Then called Bishop Serape and called it the Gospel of Peter. But he didn't believe it was written by Peter, right? That's right. Well, they called it Peter.

But the same... You're saying Matthew must be written by Matthew because they called it Matthew all the time. They called it Peter all the time. They called the Civilian Nations.

Ignition in the entire time. They called Barnabas Barnabas. What they call it later does not determine who the author is.

Right. But when you do have all these different sources from all these different geographic regions and they're unanimous about it. That's the same with Barnabas.

They're unanimous about it. But Barnabas was listening, spurious. That's right.

It was written by Barnabas. And the Gospel of Square, they were spurious. Can you give us... One camel out, one commentator that says that it wasn't written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

No. You can't give me any of the names that Barnabas, that Barnabas was not called. You're talking about titles now.

Who did they think wrote that? You said that for hundreds of years until everybody was sent through by Matthew and that's evidence for you. But when the same thing applies to other books that you don't think the author actually wrote, you say, no, that's not evidence. Because in the fourth century they recognized that they weren't written by that person.

And so it's not a good argument to say that they started to be named a hundred years later and then they continued to be named that. Of course they were, though. I also think they called them.

Okay. I've got lots of other questions. So, God, okay.

Do you know of any instance in the ancient world where somebody had someone else write a narrative for them that they dictated to them or they told them the substance of what it would be? Not by a secretary, but if we go with Clement of Rome and the mandatory fragment, well, that would be two that talk about for John and Mark. I'm asking if we have evidence of anybody outside of this Christian evidence and you're citing it. Anybody actually doing that writing a book in someone else's name? All right.

So what you're asking for, and you're saying, bracketing the evidence that I have. No, I'm not asking about the Christian evidence. I'm saying in the ancient world, do you ever have any

instance of this happening? Clement of Alexandria, in meritorium fragments, is yes with Mark and John.

That's evidence. Okay. I want evidence in this ever.

You said this. You said this is actually what would happen. So I want to know when did it happen and apart from these things that we said, I'm usually okay.

So give me one instance. Mark and Mark and John. I mean, I think that this is, to me, I'm arguing about Mark and John.

I want other evidence. Mark, it's a comment to me for them to have done this seems so intuitively obvious. Right.

This is so what it will happen. So if it seems obvious, it seems so. If this scene is virtually certain.

So how often did it ever happen? Well, if it's so obvious. How many people you said were talking about? How many people were the son of God and that follows who were illiterate at the time? I mean, why would you don't have, you don't have a guy named Simon. He's a laborer.

He says, you know, I've got this dream of writing a memoir for the slide. To read weeks and maybe our secretary. How about I promised John? Well, he was a traveling.

Who had followers? Yeah. Something wrote a book. It was about a hundred and some years later.

Yes. And he didn't have somebody else writing for him. That's right.

I'm asking, where is the evidence that this happened? You say it's obvious that it happened or certain it happened? I want to know. Did it ever happen? Except in the two cases you think it did it. That's right.

Well, because there's testimony that it did. What you're saying is, right in these two cases. Well, but right.

So you're saying, can you give me one? I said, I'll give you two. And you say, well, forgive the, can you give me any other than the two that you've mentioned? Yeah. I don't like them.

Because they're in the first time they go against my view. I found out if they're dragging those two. That's on there.

I know that you think there's two important. I want to never mind. I'll go out there.

I'll listen to that later. So, um, how much time did it happen? I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Oh my god. You can have five. Okay.

So, um, all right. Um, where do you think Matthew got his education? Oh, I don't think he was a highly educated person. Okay.

Um, tell me how do you think he, how do you imagine him? So you don't really think he wrote the gospel. You think somebody else wrote the gospel. I think that they collaborated with it.

Okay. Who was that other person? I know I do. Who would he have been associated with? Well, if I don't know who that other person is, I don't know.

Do Matthew have positions? Do Matthew ever leave your room? I have no idea after, after he's out preaching the gospel. Yeah. Okay.

Um, all right. So let's talk about Matthew Midmore. You suggested that, uh, he might be a tax collector because he mentions money a lot.

Yeah. For the internal evidence, that's consistent with the written by a tax collector. That just taxes more than any other gospel.

More than the other gospel. Yeah. So more likely he was a tax collector than the other gospel.

Because tax collectors are talking about money. Oh, well, I'll just say it, he mentions taxes more than any others. And that is consistent with him being a tax collector.

The book of Revelation mentions money, taxes, uh, paying taxes wrong, taxes gold, far more than Matthew does. Uh, Revelation is about half the size of Matthew. Uh, but it mentions gold, for example, five times as often.

Does that mean that Revelation is written by a tax collector? No. Exactly. And so what's your point? My point is that there's not evidence that Matthew wrote Matthew.

It's because somebody mentions you money a lot, doesn't make them a tax collector. No, it's consistent with it. Does Paul mention tense herself? No.

Exactly. Okay. Um, do you think the pay piece is generally trustfully? Yes.

Yes. Once had, one passenger made me says that Judas, after he betrayed Jesus, he was so large that he became enormous. He was so enormous that his head, he could not walk down a narrow street.

His head would not even fit. He was so fat. Do you think that's a stroke bag? Um, that's, have you read Steven Carlson's O.U.P. Steven Carlson was my Ph.D. student.

I directed his dissertation. Did you read his photograph on papyrus? Cool. Well, I agree with him.

Do you? No. Tell me what he meant. Tell me what he meant.

Tell me what he meant. Tell me what he meant. Do you just accept it? Okay.

You can go down the aisle. So as you know, he has supervised him for this. It's Dr. Fodder.

Pappius says that he thinks that Pappius refers to the portion of his head being big. Oh, by the way, he thinks now he thinks, now he thinks that Pappius may not have said any of that about Judas. But in his monograph, he says that he thinks Pappius probably has a broken up hyperbolic kind of way.

They're just the way. But the other part he thinks comes from a polynerus of Laodicea at the end of the fourth century because of the tradition where he goes from. He talks about that and he says, and they say, and then it's going to fourth century folklore.

He's talking about a polynerus because we don't have the right to pay these. We only have rotations. All right.

We are on time unless you want to take the extra 90 seconds. I'll just make a comment for 20 seconds, which is that we don't actually have pay pieces of writing. We have quotations for your authors.

And what Mike is saying is that this quotation for later author is not totally correct for representing pay pieces. So if he thinks that about this passage, why doesn't he think it's a powerful one that he wants to trust? Because if you see this, not a polynerus of Laodicea, there's a quote from the others. Do you think you see these correct, correct, and it quotes Pappius? Do you remember what Pappius said about Pappius? About the grapes.

I have no problem with Jesus saying that. No, but grapes talking. So can he talk in parallel? I'm saying why.

He's always struggling. Of course he could. He doesn't talk about grapes talking.

He made it to be picked instead of the others. But by the point is what we see this as about Pappius. He says, Pappius even is a man with very small intelligence.

And why does he say that though? Because he doesn't like his view. That's exactly right. He doesn't like his millet as a view of the millennium.

He's an idiot. Well, that's why. I think it tells more about the Pappius if you see he is there and the credibility.

All right, gentlemen, we are over time. Thank you. We have a heading into second rebuttal period.

We're going to transition here. All right. Second rebuttal period.

Dr. Lycone, you have five minutes. This is so much fun. All right.

So Mark talks about in his first rebuttal. He was talking about anonymous. The gospels were anonymous.

He says, what's important here is the evidence. I agree. You know, what is the evidence? And I did provide evidence for it.

The external evidence and the internal evidence which is consistent with the unanimous external evidence for the gospels. He says, give me an example of a book with the title according to, well, I did with, according to Nea Meyer. And he says, yeah, but you give it to me where you have that.

We know it in the title. Well, I don't know why he's even saying that because he said they didn't have titles. And a lot of ancient biographies didn't have titles.

And they didn't. None of them is far. Like I said, within that 150 year, on each side of Jesus, we got nearly, we got about 90, maybe a little more, extant biographies written by people.

Plutarch wrote 48 of those. Suetonius 12 of those. And of those, none of them contains the author's name in there.

In fact, if we look at just the problem, only one of them contain the author's name. And that's the, the passing of paragrittis by Lucian Samsana written in the middle of the second century. And I'm not just cherry picking the years of 150 years on each side.

If you want to expand that further, the next one is the life of Elias in the Historia Augusta written at the end of the fourth century. So, I mean, this was just a standard practice. I don't know why this should be a problem.

He says, well, what about Ignatius? You know, some of those were believed at first to be written by Ignatius. And now some of those letters, nobody believes Ignatius wrote them. And he says, so later testimonies, not evidence.

Well, yeah, I agree with that. But I didn't, based on just the law, just later testimony in that sense. I'm looking at the whole thing.

I'm looking at papis in the beginning of the second century. I disagree with them. The papis is writing in 135.

I think it was earlier, maybe around 110. That's not big deal anyway, whether it's 110 or 135. You see, he does mention papius in his chronicon, which was written probably before.

So, please, he has more history and places in the same time that would be there around the first

decade of the second century. About papis, he said, Mike said papius was wrong about Matthew. No, I didn't.

And I never said he said anything about Matthew, except that he said Matthew wrote something in Hebrew or Arabic about the sayings of Jesus. And I said, he was, I don't think he was referring to the gospel of Matthew that we have. So, I'm not saying that papius was wrong there.

I didn't mention him as evidence for the gospel of Matthew because I don't think he was referring to our gospel of Matthew. I do think that Justin has Matthew in mind because I said he is appealing to material content that is exclusive to Matthew 16 times. And in four of those occasions, he refers to it as the memoirs of the apostles.

And half of those, he's quoting verbatim from the Greek gospel of Matthew as it would be in our Greek New Testament. So, let's see, I answered that one. So, yeah, I think I answered all of this.

Thank you. Okay, thanks. Mike is an excellent, an excellent debater.

And you can tell he's very, he can be very persuasive. I'm not frustrated. The external evidence is very important to Mike because he names the number of people in the 2nd century who claim that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Matthew, John.

Once somebody says that, everybody says that. That means they're not independent witnesses. Once the tradition starts, that's what everybody calls these.

Just as they call, but the whistle bar, that's part of us. Also Peter, Peter, the very, very student, tutorial, they call it tutorial. They name something once and that's what everybody calls it.

So, these are not independent witnesses. They do not start with any of these. Okay, these mentions two of our gospels.

One is Matthew and everything he says about it does not apply to our Matthew as Mike admits. The other is Mark. He says a number of things about Mark being the secretary of Peter that shows that that time we have witnesses.

One witness who thinks that the Gospel of Mark is written by Peter. We don't know if it's our Gospel. We don't know because he doesn't say he doesn't know our Matthew as Mike admits.

He doesn't know our Mark. So, later, the later evidence that Mike is appealing to, the first time Matthew Mark Luca John, or called Matthew Mark Luca John, is 100 years after they've been in circulation. The internal evidence that Mike cites, you should pay very careful attention to.

He says, for example, that in the Gospel of Mark, Peter is center stage. Therefore, it's Peter's voice. The Gospel of John seems to have a lot of intimate detail.

Therefore, it's by the love to sign the John. One thing to point out about that is that if you have a

narrative that gives detailed description about a particular person, that does not mean that the person is the author or that the person has given all of the information. If you don't believe me, read a good novel.

I just finished reading David Copperfield for the fifth time and there's a lot of detailed evidence about what David Copperfield said and did during his life and he did not write the book. The fact that somebody is the main character is irrelevant. As to whether the blood disciple was John.

John, chapter 21, which Mike noted, ends with a statement that says that this figure, the one Jesus loved, it says that he has testified and we know that his testimony is true. Chapter 21 verse 25, he said it, we believe it. Does that make the blood disciple the author? In fact, this author is differentiating himself from the blood disciple.

He said it, we believe it. If one of you says tonight says, no, Mike made this argument that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John actually wrote the gospels and we believe it. Does that mean that you are like you're differentiating yourself from like John 21, 25? Clearly differentiates the author from John.

All right. I'm yourself. We will take the questions.

All right. We have two segments left here, closing statements, and then we're going to get into Q&A. So again, if you have a question for the debaters, I encourage you to be thinking about that.

We're going to start with closing statements, Dr. Lycona. Well, pertaining to that verse at the end of John's gospel, let me read the whole verse. This is the disciple who is very witness about these things and who has written these things.

And we know that his testimony is true. It's third person. Throughout tonight's debate, I've argued that the traditional authorship with the four gospels is probably correct based on two buckets of evidence, external and internal.

In closing, I want to ask one simple question. When the early Christians said these books were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were they probably right or probably wrong? First, the external evidence. Within about 15 to 100 years after the last gospel, we hear from six early sources.

They write from different regions. They write for different reasons. They sometimes disagree on other issues.

Yet on this question of authorship, they are unanimous. Arts reply that all these sources got it wrong. But notice what's missing.

Any competing ancient claims of authorship. If Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not the authors, who were? And why have they left no trace in the record? Surely the real attributions of

at least one of them would have survived, since it's fairly likely the first readers of each gospel knew who wrote it. To overturn a unanimous, geographically diverse tradition, we need more.

It marks false, false assertions and speculations. Asserting such and such happen without providing any supporting evidence is easy to do. It's much harder to explain the actual, unanimous memory that spans Judea, Asia Minor, Egypt, Rome, and Gaul with no surviving descent.

Second, the internal evidence. The traditional attributions make sense of what we find in the texts. A former tax collector named Matthew is exactly the sort of person who would care about taxes and money.

However, our relatively minor figure, like Mark, is a strange choice if the Church were inventing names for credibility. Why not go straight to Peter as the apocryphal gospel flater? Features like these don't prove the traditional authorship, but they certainly fit comfortably with it. So consider the two options before us this evening.

On one side, we have early, geographically diverse, unanimous testimony, plus internal features that make the traditional attributions a natural fit. On the other side, we have hypothetical reconstructions that require us to believe that Christians from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, somehow converged on the same four wrong names and did so without any ancient source ever saying, by the way, we got those books wrong. Historians rarely get certainty.

And I'm not claiming certainty here. Rome, for reasonable doubt, exists. What I am claiming is that if we approach the authorship of the gospels, the same way we approach the authorship of other ancient literature, may hold up quite well, often better than many of their peers that we accept without pause.

Just treat early Christian testimony the way you treat other ancient testimony, not with blind trust, but also not by putting your finger on the scale to make it more difficult for the gospels. It's called the Parity Principle, which ensures fairness by treating similar cases in a similar way. It's a principle of consistency.

If you do that, I think you'll find that the traditional authorship of the gospels is the most reasonable conclusion. And this matters. For if the gospels go back to the traditional authors, we are nearer to the events than many skeptics like Bartlett.

We are listening to people in a position to know what Jesus said and did. Speaking for myself, before preparing for this debate, I was already convinced that the authorship of Mark and Wood. But for me, the jury was out for Matthew and John.

I don't have to hold the traditional authorship of the gospels where I teach at Houston Christian University, or to be a member of any of the academic societies to which I belong. So I felt no

pressure to adopt the traditional authorship of Matthew and John. I ended up doing so because I believe that's where the evidence best fits.

I surprised myself from the opposite of you. If you remain unconvinced, I hope at least that you can see that the traditional authorship of the gospels is a respectable position. Thank you.

Mike and I actually agree on my number of things. I think the thing we agree on the most is that we hope that you exhibit the evidence. We also agree that we need to treat the gospels the way we treat every other book from the ancient world.

It is true that starting at 185, from that point on, everybody called the gospels Matthew Mark Wood and John. I'm not objecting to that point. It's absolutely true.

It's true. What were they called before that? Why weren't they identified in the first 100 years? Why doesn't Justin ever name Matthew Mark Wood or John? If he's referring to the gospel Mark, why doesn't he call that Mark? The fact that you have universal testimony after somebody started naming them is not evidence for what they called them before that. It's somewhat deceptive to claim, as other scholars have done, that because these gospels are identified everywhere and every time the same way, it's impossible to imagine how that could happen unless they go back to the same root at the time they were written.

In other words, if you've got authors in Europe and in North Africa and in Israel and in Asia Minor, all saying that Matthew Mark Wood and John doesn't show that they actually must all be Matthew Mark. John, otherwise, how would everybody in all the different places come up with the same names? It's right and I'll have to go back to the same root. The two earliest mentions of Matthew Mark Wood and John, being written by Matthew Mark Wood and John, are Hirenius, who got his education in Rome, and the meretoric fragment that was written in Rome, and they both give the testimony at the same time into what 80s, 30 years after Justin does not seem to know the names of the gospels.

Something happened in Rome where the gospels were named and it went from there, like every other Christian belief, including, for example, the Nicene Cree. How does everybody say the same Nicene Cree? Because it started someplace hundreds of years later and spread everywhere. I actually want to close, not by disputing this point in that point, because these debates are very confusing because we're talking about this detail, that detail, and what Pinky said this and these events, Justin said this, and Peele offered German articles and things.

I want to, I want to close them to other points. One is, I really do have nothing at stake in this argument. It may seem like I do because I get passionate about everything.

I get passionate about whether there was a queue so much. I really do. I don't know why.

I don't care. But I get invested in things that I have researched. It would make no difference to my

life if Matthew Mark Wood and John, I wrote Matthew Mark Wood and John.

It would make a zero difference to my life. My personal life, my professional life, I could actually write a book on it and become famous, proving that Matthew Mark Wood and John wrote Matthew Mark Wood and John. If I wanted to improve my life, that's probably what I would do.

Instead of all the hate mail I get. But, I don't think so. I started out thinking so.

I had arguments very similar, and once Mike was about it, I considered them persuasive. And then I looked at the evidence carefully, and I decided otherwise. It was very difficult to change my mind about that and most other things I've changed my mind on.

When you're listening to a debate or involved in a debate, there are two approaches that people take. Some people really have an open mind and want to consider the evidence. Not whether somebody is more persuasive than a rhetorical or rhetoric.

Not if somebody is more likely than someone else. Not if it's what they've always been heard. They actually just want to look at the evidence.

What is the truth here? The views that I'm laying out that Matthew Mark Wood and John are not a weird view by a liberal professor at Chapel Hill. Okay, they are that. But they're not only that.

They're not a weird view. These are views that I learned in graduate school attending a Christian theological seminar. These are the views of all my professors there.

They became the views of most of my friends there who became pastors from there. These are not non-Christian views. These are views that are taught throughout this country at virtually every college and university that has critical approaches to the Bible.

But also in seminaries and divinity schools. Why? Because the evidence is so strong. The other way to approach a debate like this is to try and find reasons to hold on to the belief you already have.

If you go to a debate and you want one side to win, they're going to win. If you want to affirm what you already think because it's dangerous to start thinking something else, well, you will stick with your beliefs. If you spend years studying something and you come to the very same views you have when you start, and that happens time after time again, about every topic of relevance, that it's always the same answer that you came in with, but now you're convinced.

Are you really looking at the evidence? Do you want to look at the evidence? I don't think Matthew Markwood and John could write. If they couldn't write, they couldn't write God. We are going to head into Q&A.

If you have some questions for the debaters, I have a couple of things for you. First off, you see

there's two microphones. If you have a question for Dr. Erman, I want you to come to this particular microphone that I'm pointing at.

If you have a question for Dr. Lykona, I want you to come to this particular microphone. That's the first thing. The second thing is, I want you all to look at my face and how close the microphone is to my face.

This is what I want you to do when you speak at the microphone. If the microphone doesn't catch you, we're not going to hear you. The last thing is, please, we love that you're here.

But keep your questions brief so that the debaters, we can hear from them, and from, again, their unique insights and expertise. If you drone on and on, we love you, but I'm going to cut you off. Are we good? All right.

Let's start with a question for Dr. Erman. Good evening. Is this on? Okay.

Thank you both so much for coming here. I really appreciate it. The first convey that I can ever mention, so it was very entertaining.

You said at the end of John, you referenced the, that they say we, right? Is it, is it not possible that that could be the scribe or scribes that could be assisting John in charting out writing out the gospel that he knows, but cannot write himself? Is this, yeah. When it comes to history, nothing is impossible. The only question is, do we, did that kind of thing ever happen? Where somebody else wrote an narrative for somebody who was dictating into the different language.

And so if that did happen, then yes, that would be impossible. Let's go to Dr. LaCoga. Yeah.

Thank you. Both can't share if you want. In your book on the resurrection, you talk about theory has to be the least at Hock.

So in your view, which would be the least at Hock, that the titles go back to the original authors as all the early attestation says, or that someone wrote made up the titles that had advanced power to make everyone agree around the, around the male world, know whatever, challenge this or offer alternative names and no manuscripts or grad different names. So you talk about which of those is more at Hock in terms of historical criteria. Good question, Michael.

So I know, I agree with Mark. I have to agree with, I'm sorry, I have to agree with Bart that I don't think the titles were in the originals, because I think that that was just common. Oh, okay.

Well, yeah, I would, then I think Mark's view is more at Hock. Dr. I wanted to ask about churches from 1622. If educated man like Paul relied on a secretary, could you not argue that less or educated versus would be even more likely to write through an assistant? What would you say? It's an excellent question.

It comes up all of a sudden, Paul's writing this letter, and I'm sure he's the writer of this letter for you. That's why Paul was writing this letter. We know a lot about secretaries in the ancient world because we have lots of references to them.

And what they did is they took dictation and that's a tertiary student. Tertius is writing that when Paul's dictating. So, Roman's false letter.

Tertius is writing it down. That's precisely not what we're talking about with Matthew and John. In those cases, we're talking about somebody translating something into a different language and turning it into a rhetorically effective prose.

I looked everywhere for that, and it doesn't exist in the ancient world. So, it's not like Tertius. Tertius is taking dictation.

My talking with these people are actually composing narratives. We don't have any evidence of that ever happened. But we do wonder how much liberty the putative authors gave to those who helped them compose those documents.

If there's no analogy to something ever happening, then it's unlikely it'd ever happen. If we don't have any evidence of that kind of thing ever happening, then why would you think it happened in this case? Especially because no church father has that. No evidence mentions that.

Period. Thank you. Okay.

Pay piece of Peter. Thanks for having us. I'll talk to you in a minute.

Thank you. Yes. Some people are very glad to see me go.

My question is Mark. Mark is being written by Mark. He's the writing.

Peter is his translator. How come the Christology that Mark is so old if Peter is indeed the writing of Christ? And there's no mention in Mark of being born. Virgin.

There's no mention of what happened after the resurrection. Even Mary thinks he's out of his mind. He's not the son of God in the world of Mark.

Thank you. Thank you for asking that. Actually, I think Mark's Christology is every bit as high as John's.

And I know that might sound crazy to you, but what you have to do is you go back and you look at what the objective was behind writing ancient biography. The most common text quoted at the Plutarch is in his life of Alexander chapter one. And he says basic on paraphrasing him here now.

You're going to have to excuse me if I don't mention everything that all these a lot of big things that Alexander did because I'm writing a life biography, not a history. And he said, just as the

painters painted a portrait of someone, they focus on capturing their face, especially the eyes in order to capture the kind of person, the nature of this person. So will I now repeat the deeds and things that this person said to capture, to show you the essence of who the character from this person lives.

And so Plutarch's lives is going, they're trying to show you what kind of a person ethically in the character of this person is. And so when you come to Mark's Gospel, oh, by the way, and there's other texts as well, Plutarch wasn't making that up, that wasn't his objective, it was the objective behind others writing ancient biography. So when you come to the Gospel of Mark, how does it start off? As Isaiah the prophet said, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.

What was he talking about? So I'm talking about Jesus preparing the way for God. It's Mark using that for John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus. Who is the Lord? Mark chapter two, Jesus heals the paralytic and forgives the sins.

The Jewish leaders say, well, that's blasphemy. Why? Only God can do that. Chapter three, I think it's chapter three, he steals the store, which the Old Testament says, only God does.

Chapter four, he expells the demon and the Jewish leaders say, well, that's Satan casting out Satan, and then you've got Jesus saying, well, look, if you want to go and bind our brava strong man, you have to bind him first and then you can plunder his house of goods. And in doing that, he's saying by his exorcisms, he is actually binding Satan and now plunder his kingdom of goods. Well, what he would bind Satan? And then the next chapter, he's walking on water or erasing the dead, something the Old Testament says God does.

Chapter six, he walks on water, something only God does. He just goes on and on throughout the Gospel of Mark and you can see what Mark is doing. He is through Jesus' words and deeds.

He is revealing Jesus, who he is, his character. He is the uniquely defined son of God. It's every bit as high as what you find in John's Gospel.

It's just John's more explicit in the way he says it. Thanks for that question. Question for Dr. Dr. Herman.

I wanted to ask you this question. And then I was listening to this quoting Jesus. God podcast has it.

And it said, he would come up on the bottom side. Let it come down and ask you. Matthew, it looked written 50 years after Jesus died after he was crucified.

And they have the birth narrative, those two. And I'm just wondering, how did all that word of mouth get through those first 30 years and then match up with the narratives that were being passed along to when Matthew and Luke were filing written? You know, it's hard to imagine that

that started and continued to carry on that birth narrative. It was more something that happened after he was crucified and then they were looking back at what happened.

You know, I think the interesting thing is that Matthew looked at the only ones in the New Testament who had mentioned a virgin birth. That's one thing. So there's no evidence that Paul loves about it, for example.

Paul talks about Jesus' birth. All he says in relation to 4-4 is that he's blind of a woman. I can say anything about a virgin.

I'm not wondering what he meant. It's supposed to be more in some other way, I guess. But we don't have evidence that was known before Matthew and Luke.

And the other interesting thing is they tell different stories. It's not the same story. They're actually different stories.

And when they do overlap, they don't agree. So the usual idea, the usual thought is that it was later developed in Christianity that wasn't around before that. I think there's good evidence that Mark doesn't think of a virgin birth.

Mary comes to take Jesus out of the public eye because they think he's gone out of his mind. And so clearly she didn't think he was born of a virgin mark. So I don't think that it's an oral tradition.

He starts way back. I think it's something that rises later. Some people think it's because Matthew has this thing about Jesus having a fulfilled scripture.

For those I say that's 7-14. Other people think it's because of the tradition of pieces like another verse. Thank you both for such a great evening.

This is spectacular. So Dr. O'Conan, I have a question for you. It's actually a two part, but I promise they're connected here.

So you use two buckets of evidence, external and internal, that the authors or the gospel authors are probably Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. So using that same internal and external evidence that's used to demonstrate this, doesn't that also mean that the Quran is written by Muhammad or technically recited because he didn't write it himself. Others wrote it down.

So question number one is, if the threshold for what constitutes good evidence is simply that the text suggests that it was written by Muhammad, that's the internal part, and generations after some people believe that Muhammad dictated the Quran, that's the external part, doesn't that prove that the Quran is God inspired and 100% accurate just as tradition suggests. In relation to the gospels, you said it's intuitively obvious to believe this about the gospels. And so question two, is it even one way, is this situation different? And what was debated tonight, doesn't this fall under the apparently principle that you brought? Yeah, good question.

So what I said was, I think it's intuitively obvious that something that would be so probable is to be virtually certain is that at these disciples, at least Matthew and John, again, I don't think we do enough about Mark and Luke, but Matthew and John at least, I would agree with Mark, I think they wouldn't have had enough of the education to be able to do it themselves. But as these disciples were, and maybe none of them were educated enough, I'm fine with that saying that, as they started to die off and grow old, I think it's intuitively obvious that people would have been saying, you've got to get this stuff down the right, you can't take it to the grave with you. I mean, my Greek professor, Ron Sauer, who was F.F. Bruce's final doctoral student, he's actually geneed the entire New Testament and half of the Old Testament, he's got it handwriting and he's in his late 70s.

Don't you got to get, don't take this to the grave with you. Now, if it's, his notes on executing the New Testament, imagine when you've got eyewitnesses who walked with Jesus, and you get this and writing before you go, that's what I'm saying was intuitively obvious. Now, in terms of the Quran, yeah, you do have some external evidence, and you're writing about what we have with who wrote the Quran, it would be the Surah or Surah, which would be the first, like a stamp biography of Muhammad, and then you've got the Ahadith that would attribute that to Muhammad, and all of it are 200 plus years later.

But I don't think anyone would question that Muhammad was involved in the Quran, that's that's right. And I don't know about the internal evidence, I saw David Wood walk in a little while there he is right there. I mean, I would count to him on that, he's going to know a lot more about this than me, but I don't think he would question, no one I'm aware of question.

Well, I picked it back, Jay Smith, questions whether Muhammad ever existed, he's got an interesting argument. But the, in terms of Muhammad writing the Quran or being responsible for it, I mean, not actually right now, he dictated the traditions, that's right, and they wrote it down. I mean, I would still attribute that as him being the author of it.

So, you know, yeah, that's how I had to, I think the external evidence would be there for, for it being behind responsible for the Quran. All right. Thank you very much.

This question is obviously forgotten. And since I'm on this side, given the use of amendments is by Cicero, who's in Europe, finding the elder syndicate, the younger Marcus Grillius, more specifically Tacitus, mentioning tax collectors using them for their reports. Why do you find the possibility of Matthew and John using the meta lenses? This is so improbable.

I looked at every reference that you referred to, every author, and I looked at what he actually said about these people. Cicero was the closest one to somebody that's being used in order to actually write in somebody else's name. On several occasions Cicero asks the secretary of Cicero, I need to communicate with so and so I don't have time.

It's right in the letter, and you say this. And Cicero did it a couple of times, according to Cicero himself. The others we don't have evidence of something to write in for somebody else actually composing for somebody else.

The difference with T-row in this particular case is that we're talking about a very short form letter, into Roman letters that tend to be very short, and formulaic, where the beginnings and the answer basically is the same. And you'd have a paragraph in the middle that gives the content. And what's happening in these cases is that T-row is providing the content that Cicero has told him.

That is categorically different from writing a 28-chapter narrative that involves plot and characters and themes and emphases. It is absolutely not the same thing. So we don't have any evidence of what Michael's suggesting is intuitively obvious.

That doesn't answer the question with regard to acid. It's talking about Republicans specifically using them in Roman narratives. They're being sent to different language, different everything.

I'm sorry. I'm not familiar with the text you're talking about. At least send it to me.

But yes, I'd be happy to see it. I don't think that they're in taskways. There's any evidence of somebody composing prose narratives.

Hello. My question, at the end of your statement on your inclusion, you said, we're listening to some people who are actually sought. We're closer to the events than we're likely to invent.

Something along those lines, at least. And what I'm interested in is there are parts of the text where people are not there. So, for example, in Mark.

And he got, Mark, Jesus gets captured and then Peter and all the disciples flee. And Peter, of course, denies Jesus. And then right after that, he's talking to a pilot.

They're not there for them. So, there's some sort of verbal tradition that's happening in that between time. My question is, why is it more compelling when we know there has to be some type of verbal tradition over having to have these books written by these audiences? I'm not sure I'll follow you because before they were written now, all of it was verbal tradition, right? So, you know, just, if Mark is reporting, but Peter said, I mean, that's what he had been teaching, as it was said, then that is verbal tradition there that Mark has now put him down in writing.

So, now Peter would not have been there when Jesus was before a pilot. You know, we all, now we're just left to speculate. Was someone there, was one of the servants there, a pilot, later revealed that information? Don't know.

We can only speculate that Jesus later revealed that to them. We can only speculate. Just don't know.

We have to guess it. But it's all oral until it gets put right here. Thank you.

Hello. As one of your primary arguments tonight, you have started the authors of the gospels must have been able to read and write in Greek. Expressingly saying, quote, that is not true of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, end quote.

Get on your website. You currently declare, quote, there are compelling reasons for his thinking. Matthew wrote in Greek as well, end quote, going on to provide evidence in the big quote.

Mark was certainly composed in Greek. Matthew therefore had to use a Greek version of Mark. He commented in places in Greek.

As a consequence, he must have been writing in Greek as well. There's no other possible explanation for his verbatim alignments with Mark. So my question is, why should anyone believe your current things when you came down? You're right, you shouldn't.

But if you did choose to believe me, it'd be because I think maybe I wasn't clear when I was saying. When I say that Matthew wrote in Greek, I don't mean Matthew the tax collector. I mean the author of the gospel of Matthew wrote in Greek.

Matthew the tax collector could not have written in Greek. So this book gospel lets me evidence that this gospel was not written by that person. Sometimes you talk about Matthew as a person, sometimes as the gospel writer Matthew.

And so like everyone else, I call the author of Matthew. Matthew, but I don't need Matthew the tax collector who's an Arabic state and pass it to it. No education.

So when I say that Matthew wrote in Greek, what I mean is the author copied Mark in Greek. So that author Matthew wrote in Greek. Does that make sense of what I'm saying? I understand what you're saying, but it doesn't hold true to your assertion, considering the same, which I couldn't put in the same time to try to be expedient.

But you assert that it is indeed the Matthew. Is that what you traditionally ascribed to write in Matthew? No, I don't. Let's discuss about how it was the follower of Jesus.

And you know what would provide other references. No, I never do that. I never do that.

You may want to reread it. I do not think that the follower of Jesus wrote the gospel of Matthew. I call Matthew Matthew.

There's no point in my talking, Fred. So I call Matthew. And so when I say Matthew, come with Mark, I'm not referring to the tax collector.

I'm referring to the author of this book. I appreciate that. Anyone who can get out of the book do

that is great.

Thank you. Yes, please do. In fact, all of you can join my book.

Don't know about my book. You raise this money for charity. People have to pay any joint.

I post five times a week. 1,200 words, 1,400 words a day. They've been doing for 13 years.

People pay us all amount of joint. And every penny goes to deal with problems of hunger and homelessness. I don't.

I don't do that. We have $1,000,000 doing this. So please, I think I'll try.

It's a great, great blog. Mike, according to Poppy's Mark Stroke diligent, they do include everything that Peter told him about Jesus. Why then do you think Mark left out that Peter was, Peter's incident of walking on the water, even though he talks about Jesus walking on the water, the same page.

But he doesn't say anything about Peter doing it. He doesn't say anything about Peter cutting off the right ear of the slave to the high priest. Although the mark does talk about that incident and says that one of those standing nearby to his soul.

And why doesn't he include the Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom. There's so many things that we learned from the other gospels that happened to Peter that were big things. And here's Peter telling Mark that they're not in this gospel.

Well, he, Pappy says that Mark was writing down. He made it his, like you said, he made it his objective to write down everything he'd remember Peter saying. But as you know, you've got biographers and historians both were selective.

And I think he's speaking hyperbolicly there, of course. I mean, that seems to be a simple hyperbolic language. And although it would be nice if he had mentioned those other things that Peter was, and he still mentioned other things that Peter was involved in.

So, I mean, we could cherry pick and say, well, he's not in these things. And of course, the other gospels are written after Mark, I believe. And so they choose to include some of those things that they that are neglecting the body.

So, this should be a real quick, easy answer. Okay, so won't be terribly wrong. Based upon the criteria he gave today, as well as in other references.

What would be your views on the reliability and integrity of the Quran and the hadith? Me? Yes, I have no idea. I have a lot to do it. You wanted it to be quick.

Yeah. But I'm not a scholar of Islam. My scholarship is in really Christianity.

My scholarship ends from basically Jesus of the Constantine, a little bit further into the 4th century and the 4th century. And so I do not deal with Islam with the Quran. Thank you.

It seems to me that, well, the shortest I can phrase the question is, the synoptic problem. So it seems that in your internal evidence or your narrative of that it's intuitively obvious that if these people age, they would recite or give their stories to other individuals in the community, it seems that the fact that we have the word for word agreement between the synoptic gospels will, to me, it seems intuitively obvious that they would be coming to those aging elders of the early church, independently getting those stories independently. And so the likelihood of getting word for word agreement across different stories, especially at that time they had geographically dispersed.

Seems less likely. So I'd like to just have that. How does the synoptic problem fit into your internal evidence? How the authorship of these gospels happened? Okay.

Yeah. Thanks for asking that. So I don't see any really tension there.

I'd like to see the synoptic problem. I think Mark wrote first. I think Matthew and Luke used Mark as the primary source.

I think Mark probably holds two document hypothesis. In other words, he believes the queue. There was a queue of source and I agree with that.

Although I went back my life on that. My second choice would be Luke used Matthew as well. But I do.

I lean toward you for various reasons. So I don't say problem. Like I said in my opening statement, when I think Matthew, I do think that he had composed something in Aramaic, a saying source.

I don't think that that's queue. I think that maybe Matthew may have had a part in framing queue. But I don't know.

I think that he did write something about the sayings of Jesus in Aramaic. I think there's a good chance he wrote something, a gospel in Aramaic, or Hebrew that neither of them survived. So later on he decides to write something in Greek.

Mark has already written. Greek is not Matthew's main language. And he's got some people helping him.

And so what ends up happening, they just, you know, there's a little bit of a shortcut there. They're going to use Mark as the guide. And it's already translated in Greek.

So why not use that? And then they lightly edited and then they add 44% more to it. And that's Matthew's gospel. Luke says there were many who had part of written out there.

So what were the who were they written by? We don't know. But then he said he consulted the eyewitnesses and those who knew the eyewitnesses. And so he's getting different sources.

Why not consult Mark since Peter would have been behind that? Why not use queue? I mean, who knows if a queue may have been from some kind of a saying source put together that had been collected. And so why not do that if they knew that it came from a reliable source that would have been just another one of Luke's sources? So I don't see where that would be a problem with this. Thank you.

So we are running up on time here. So I'd say we have one question each left. Sir.

Hi, Dr. Herman. I do want to say this makes us follow you about my close doors as he does to your face, just in case you're wondering. We also do very much appreciate your book on Jesus' criticism and I have committed to my students as well as very useful.

If it's out there, you guys should buy it. So my question is we know that very early at least one of the time of your day is potentially also in Paul. There is this concern about pseudonymous writing, these false writings where we're trying to figure out what is changing.

We also know about the literacy rates that this was very rare. The people that are disputing the pseudonymous writings would have known this even better than we do, right? Because they were there on the ground. When they're having these debates about authenticity in which Gospels trustworthy, which is not, the fact that these are written in the wrong language and are highly sophisticated documents doesn't seem to be a point of contention to say, we've got to toss these out as well.

That would seem to be fairly low-thinking fruit for, you know, dis ingenuity. So why does that not come up as a problem when they're trying to disagree? What is the authentic Jesus tradition? Yeah, thank you. It's a great question.

And the reason is because these Gospels are already accepted in the churches. And so there's not a dispute about whether these Gospels are authoritative or not. I mean, clearly, you know, Mark had been circulation for a while.

Most churches probably only had, we say probably only had one Gospels or another. Like, Mars, again, probably the middle fourth, such as someone who looped, for example, no evidence he had the other Gospels. It's so hard for us to get our minds around this because, you know, we're so used to, you know, writing a book.

If Mike writes a book, you know, you get the same book throughout the country the same day. In the age of old man, he wasn't like that at all when he copied things by hand. And so some books are being used in various places, but these four Gospels are the earliest Gospels we have.

Luke does mention other Gospels, presumably there were others, but these are the four earliest. And they're the ones that were used most widely. And so people were not inclined to doubt these Gospels.

They were already seen as authoritative by the time there were discussions about authorship. And so there are no different views about these Gospels because these were the text made used, even before the name. And so it's a good question, but I think that that's why.

You wouldn't expect them to anybody to object. And, you know, Mike's right, we only have one evidence, a piece of evidence for this. But that's not somebody disputing.

Sorry, final question. Mike, thanks for your presentation. Bart's argument is that the traditional authors were not educated enough to compose the four canonical Gospels, but whoever did compose these works must have sources of some type, whether in early Les Prose document, like Hugh or Proto Matthew, oral tradition, or even perhaps in eyewitness.

Do you believe that his model's dependence upon sources takes the wind out of the sails of his model's explanatory power? That's a good question. It's kind of loaded. I mean, that's a real good question, Kurt.

I don't know the answer to that. Kurt, I don't understand it. I got you to the end.

Can you ask that last? Sure. So your model proposes that there are still sources nevertheless that the author could use to compose the document, right? That's also Mike's model. Mike's model is that the disciples were the sources of the amendments, right? So in that respect, both of your models are similar.

And so I think that thinks out the need for the, from your explanatory power, it's just as good as Mike's. So in this sense, it's the same model. Now, well, but, all right, so if I'm understanding Bart correctly, he's saying that these stories were circulated about Jesus, and he's going to think a lot of them were just tempted along the way, or they're very fake.

They've rooted in eyewitness testimony. Maybe they started off as something. They got amplified and changed along the way to the point where they're hardly recognizable.

And it's those stories that someone collected and put together. That's what you say. That's correct.

Mike, I got to say no. Of all of the people I know who are really chemical, you do it so politely. No, it's a jam, man.

It doesn't take anything to make it tough up all the time. So, okay, did I misrepresent you? No, actually, that's what I think. So, okay, so I think I understand.

So, the issue is that it's not, the model is basically the same. My question is, what makes you think that it's Matthew Biden? What makes you think it's John Biden? My point, we're not talking about in here. What we're talking about here is not about whether the gospel traditions are reliable, or whether they're all traditions.

The question is, why Matthew? What makes you think Matthew? And if it's because people have to use later status, Matthew, that's not the answer. Well, if you'd like, I can debate you tomorrow night on Sunday. Ladies and gentlemen, give it up for your ladies.

Thanks for joining us today. If you'd like to learn more about the work and ministry of Dr. Mike Lacona, visit RisenJesus.com, where you can find authentic answers to genuine questions about the reliability of the gospels and the resurrection of Jesus. Be sure to subscribe to this podcast, visit Dr. Lacona's YouTube channel, or consider becoming a monthly supporter.

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