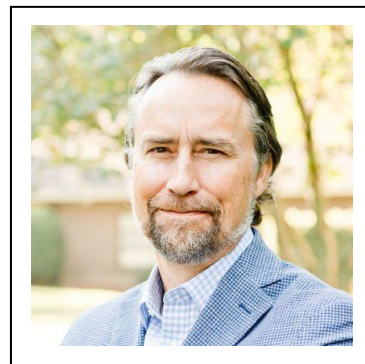


Lion and Lamb Apologetics' Ten Basic Facts about the New Testament Canon Every Christian Should Memorize

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Almost every couple of years it happens. Usually, it occurs around Christmas or Easter. And it is typically associated with a massive media blitz. I am referring to sensational claims, made by either scholars or laymen, that something definitively “new” has been discovered about the historical Jesus.



Examples of such claims abound in just the last number of years. The so-called *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* was “discovered” last year and purportedly taught Jesus had a wife. The *Gospel of Judas* was all the talk in 2006, as were told that the traditional Gospels may have not given the whole story. And, of course, we all remember the *Da Vinci Code* phenomenon in 2003 and after.

Our modern culture loves “new” things. They don’t want to hear the same old stories again and again—particularly when it comes to religion. They want something fresh and exciting. They want something different. This fascination with the “new” is why people feel they must reinvent church (or Christianity) for each generation. People like to believe they have discovered something that no one has ever discovered before.

While this regular pattern of sensational claims about Jesus is quite well-documented, there is another pattern that is also well-documented, namely Christians being *unprepared* to respond. As each new claim about Jesus is made, most believers in the pew find themselves inadequately equipped to provide an answer. For whatever set of reasons, the church has not adequately taught its members about the origins and reliability of the Scriptures.

Thus, it seems like the Christian church is having a hard time learning its lessons. Even though each new dramatic claim about Jesus sends shock waves through the church,

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there has been little done to inoculate congregations against this same thing happening in the future.

Of course, this problem cannot be solved by a blog article. It will require a revamping of the way many of us think about church. While many congregations are about fellowship and worship (and rightly so), we need more congregations that are also about *serious teaching*. We need to remember that the Great Commission charges us not only to reach people for Christ, but to be busy “teaching them” as well (Matt 28:20). And such teaching can prepare them to withstand these dramatic new claims about Jesus.

In an effort to make a small contribution to that cause, over the next few months I will offer a new blog series for lay people entitled, “Ten Basic Facts about the NT Canon Every Christian Should Memorize.” Since most of these new claims about Jesus involve the reliability of the New Testament documents themselves, I thought it would be useful to give people basic data points about the canon that they could memorize and use in future conversations and discussions.

These basic facts about the canon will not be able to address every possible issue. But, they at least will provide a starting point. And that is what most people need.

This series on the New Testament canon is designed to help Christians understand ten basic facts about its origins. It is designed for a lay-level audience and hopefully could prove helpful in a conversation one might have with a skeptical friend.

#1: [“The New Testament Books are the Earliest Christian Writings We Possess”](#)

#2: [“Apocryphal Writings are All Written in the Second Century or Later”](#)

#3: [“The New Testament Books Are Unique Because They Are Apostolic Books”](#)

#4: [“Some NT Writers Quote Other NT Writers as Scripture”](#)

#5: [“The Four Gospels are Well Established by the End of the Second Century”](#)

#6: [“At the End of the Second Century, the Muratorian Fragment lists 22 of our 27 NT books”](#)

#7: [“Early Christians Often Used Non-Canonical Writings”](#)

#8: [“The NT Canon Was Not Decided at Nicea—Nor Any Other Church Council”](#)

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#9: “Christians Did Disagree about the Canonicity of Some NT Books”

#10 “Early Christians Believed that Canonical Books were Self-Authenticating.”

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