

The Reliability of the Gospels

#4: Are the Gospels Historically and Morally Reliable?

Dr. Michael J. Kruger

I. Historical Attacks: The Gospels Contradict Themselves

A. Why is this an Important issue?

B. How do We Handle Apparent Contradictions?

- 1.. Trust that there is an Answer
2. Do not apply modern standards of historiography to the Bible
 - a. Paraphrase quotations
 - b. Non-Chronological narratives
 - c. Selective Reports
 - d. Round Numbers
3. Engage in Careful and Detailed Study of the Text
4. Seek out help from available resources

II. Philosophical Attacks: The Gospels Includes Miracles

A. Some claim that they cannot believe the Bible because it includes miraculous accounts like people rising from the dead

B. But this objection only works if one can prove miracles are impossible

1. On a theistic worldview (where God exists) miracles are very plausible. Thus, objecting to miracles quickly morphs into an objection to God's existence.
2. The argument against miracles quickly turns circular

“Unfortunately we know the experience against [miracles] to be uniform only if we know that all the reports of them are false. And we can know all the reports to be false only if we know already that miracles have never occurred. In fact, we are arguing in a circle.” --C.S. Lewis (*Miracles*).

III. Moral Attacks: The Gospels Contains Morally Offensive Claims

A. Modern people have begun to attack the Bible on moral grounds

- It is “wrong” for God to send people to hell
- It is “wrong” for God to wipe out the world with a flood (Jesus affirmed this story)
- It is “wrong” to insist that marriage should only be between a man and woman

B. But Where Does the Critic Get These Moral Norms?

1. If the Bible is wrong then it is not meeting some higher, absolute standard. Where does this standard come from? And how does the non-Christian know it?
2. If the non-Christian backs off and says that it is not really wrong, but he just finds these things *personally* offensive, then this is not an argument against the Bible’s truth.
3. **Ironically, the non-Christian need the Bible to have a basis for morality, and then turns around and attacks the Bible on the basis of morality.