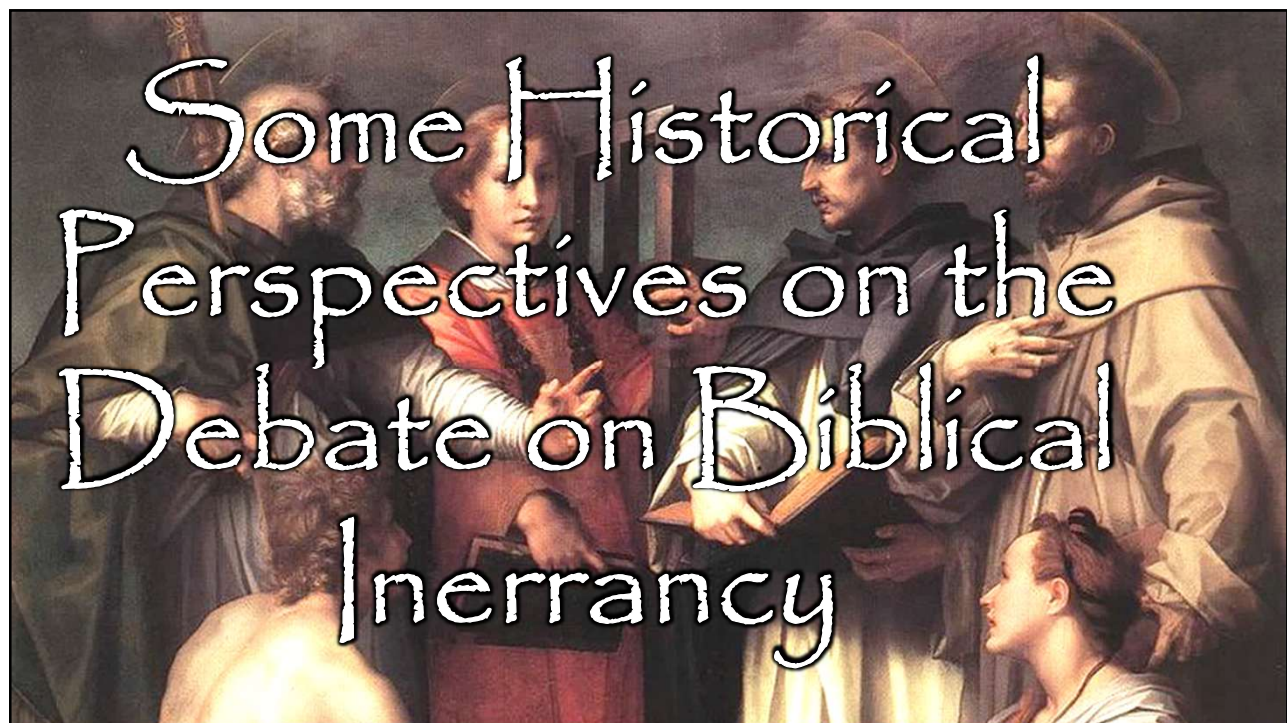
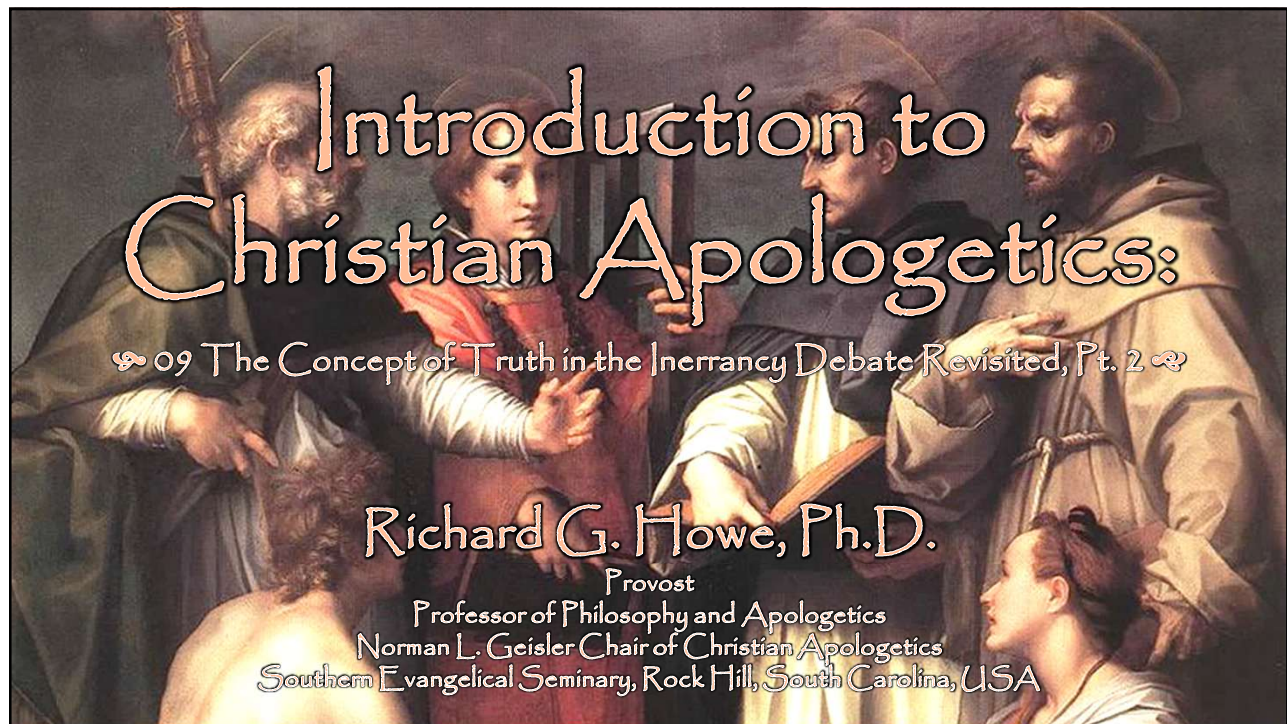
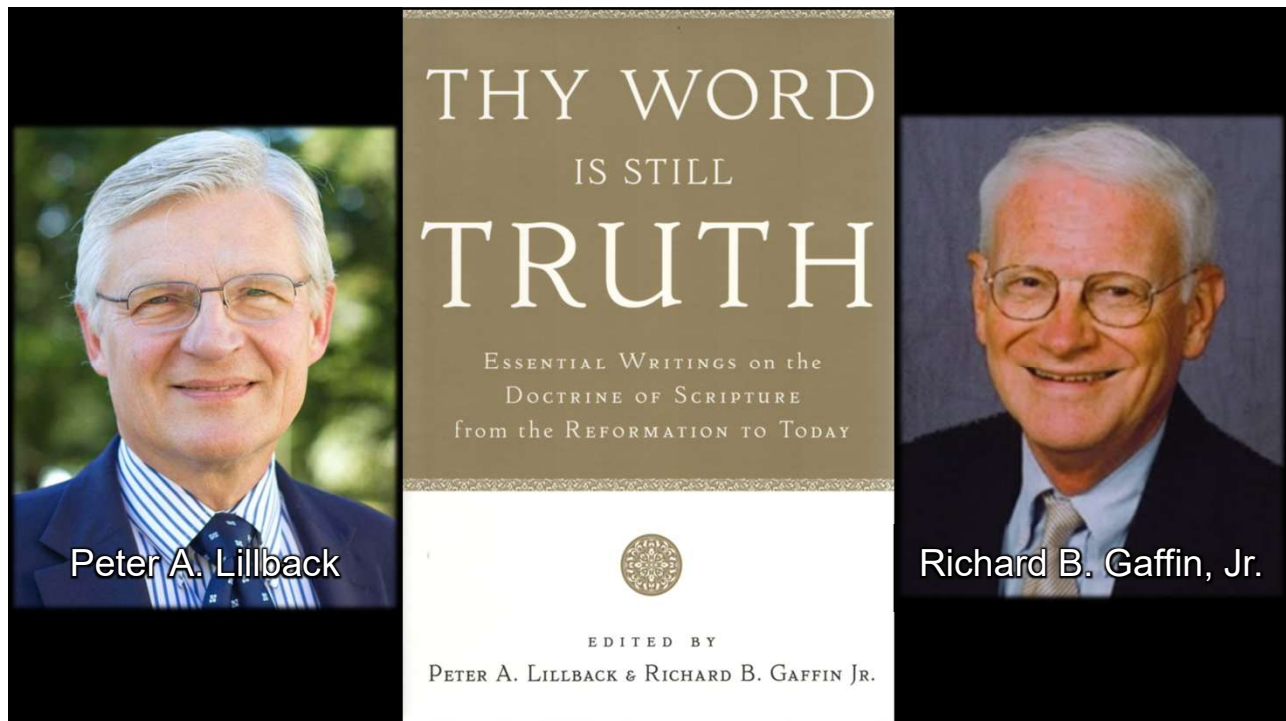




Inerrancy and Church History



Spurgeon and the Downgrade Controversy



Charles Haddon Spurgeon
(1834-1892)



"The ejected [due to the 1662 Act of Uniformity], who were in one sense alone the first Nonconformists, were mainly Presbyterians; some, however, were Independents, and a few Baptists. The Churches they established were all Calvinistic in their faith, and such they remained for at least that generation. It is a matter of veritable history, however, that such they did not all continue for any great length of time."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon
(1834-1892)

"Some of them, in the course of two or three generations, or even less, became either Arian or Socinian. This was eventually the case with nearly all the Presbyterians, and later on, with some of the Independents, and with many of the General Baptist Communities. By some means or other, first the ministers, and then the Churches, got on "the down grade," and in some cases, the descent was rapid, and in all, very disastrous."

[Robert Shindler with the unqualified endorsement of Charles Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel*, March 1887, http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/s_and_t/dg01.htm, accessed 11/29/30]

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Arianism was a Christological heresy that precipitated the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

Under the leadership of Athanasius, the Council of Nicaea affirmed that Jesus, the Son of God, was of the same substance (ὁμοούσια; homoousia; consubstantial) as the Father and, thus was fully God.

Arius maintained that Jesus, the Son of God, was of a similar substance (ὁμοιούσια; homoiousia) as the Father and, thus was not fully God.

Current day Jehovah's Witnesses are Arians.

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Socinianism was a heresy that denied the Trinity altogether.

The term 'Socinian' comes from Laelius (uncle; 1525-1562) and Faustus (nephew; 1539-1604) Socinus (It. Sozzini) who denied the Trinity by denying the deity of Christ and the deity of the Holy Spirit.

THE
RACOVIAN CATECHISM,
 WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,
 TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN:
 TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
 A SKETCH
 OF THE HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM
 IN POLAND AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRIES.

By **THOMAS REES, F.S.A.**

LONDON:
 PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND
 BROWN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1818.
 H A.

ful. This is to be not happy merely, but blessed in the highest degree.

You have explained to me what things are necessary to be known concerning the attributes of God, in order to salvation : state, in the next place, what those are which you deem eminently conducive to the same end ?

The principal thing is to guard against falling into the common error, wherein it is maintained, with palpable contradiction, that there is in God only *one* essence, but that he has three persons⁴.

Prove to me that in the one essence of God, there is but one Person ?

This indeed may be seen from hence, that the essence of God is one, not in kind but in number. Wherefore it cannot, in any way, contain a plurality of persons, since a person is nothing else than an individual intelligent essence. Wherever, then, there exist three numerical persons, there must necessarily, in like manner, be reckoned three individual essences ; for in the same sense in which it is affirmed that there is one numerical essence, it must be held that there is also one numerical person.

⁴ Whether it be not necessary to salvation to know that God is one in person as well as in essence, may be easily ascertained from the testimony of our Lord, quoted a little further on, from John xvii. 3. And whether in maintaining that there is in the supreme God a plurality of persons, Christians do not involve themselves in the crime of polytheism, and consequently of idolatry, it behoves them again and again to consider. On this point, the observations of Crellius, in discussing this subject in his *Ethica Christiana*, may be consulted. *Vide lib. iii. cap. 2.*
—BEN. WISSOWATTUS.

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Who is this one divine Person?
The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
How do you prove this?

By most decisive testimonies of Scripture:—thus Jesus says (John xvii. 3) “This is life eternal, that they might know **THEE**, (the Father) **THE ONLY TRUE GOD**.” The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. viii. 6), “To us there is but **ONE GOD**, **THE FATHER**, of whom are all things:”—and again, in addressing the Ephesians (chap. iv. 6), he says, “There is—**ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL**; who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

How happens it, then, that Christians commonly maintain, that, with the Father,—the Son and the **HOLY SPIRIT** are persons in one and the same Deity?
In this they lamentably err—deducing their arguments from passages of Scripture ill understood.

What are the arguments by which they endeavour to support their opinion?

The principal are these: first, they affirm, that in the Scriptures, not only the Father, but the Son also, and the Holy Spirit, are severally called and shown to be God; and, since the same Scriptures assert that God is only one, they infer that these three compose that one God.

How can this argument be invalidated?

I will reply to this question, first, as it respects the Son, and afterwards as it relates to the Holy Spirit.

What answer do you make in respect to the Son?

The term God is employed in the Scriptures chiefly in two senses. The former of these is, when it designates

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Chap. I.] OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST. 55

import. And the sacred author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. i. ver. 5) shows from the words of the Psalmist (Psalm ii. 7), "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," that Christ was glorified by God, in order that he might be made a Priest, that is, the chief director of our religion and salvation,—in which office are comprised his supreme authority and dominion. He was, however, not merely the only begotten Son of God, but also a God, on account of the divine power and authority which he displayed even while he was yet mortal: much more may he be so denominated now that he has received all power in heaven and earth, and that all things, God himself alone excepted, have been put under his feet.—But of this you shall hear in its proper place.

But do you not acknowledge in Christ a divine, as well as a human nature or substance?

If by the terms divine nature or substance I am to understand the very essence of God, I do not acknowledge such a divine nature in Christ; for this were repugnant both to right reason and to the Holy Scriptures. But if, on the other hand, you intend by a divine nature the Holy Spirit which dwelt in Christ, united, by an indissoluble bond, to his human nature*, and

* It ought to be noticed here that in the opinion of the ancients, besides the Holy Spirit, which is the Power of God, being given to Christ without measure, the Wisdom of God also, as the Scriptures, indeed, intimate, or that divine energy and *energeia*, which seems to have been the Shechinah of the Hebrews, or the Logos of the first Christians, dwelt in the Messiah. So the great Grotius rightly remarks, in the Fifth Book of

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36 OF THE NATURE OF GOD. [Sect. III.]

God had honoured with the title of Gods, but rather greatly the superior of them all; and was on this very account God,—that the “Father had sanctified him, and sent him into the world:” which cause, and the whole of this reasoning of Christ, are accommodated to the latter, and not to the former signification of the term God.

What reply do you make respecting the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is never expressly called God in the Scriptures. Nor is it to be inferred that it is itself God, or a person of the Divinity, because in some places those things are attributed to it which belong to God: but this proceeds from a very different cause, as you shall hear in its proper place.

What is the second argument whereby it is attempted to be proved that these three persons are united in one Deity?

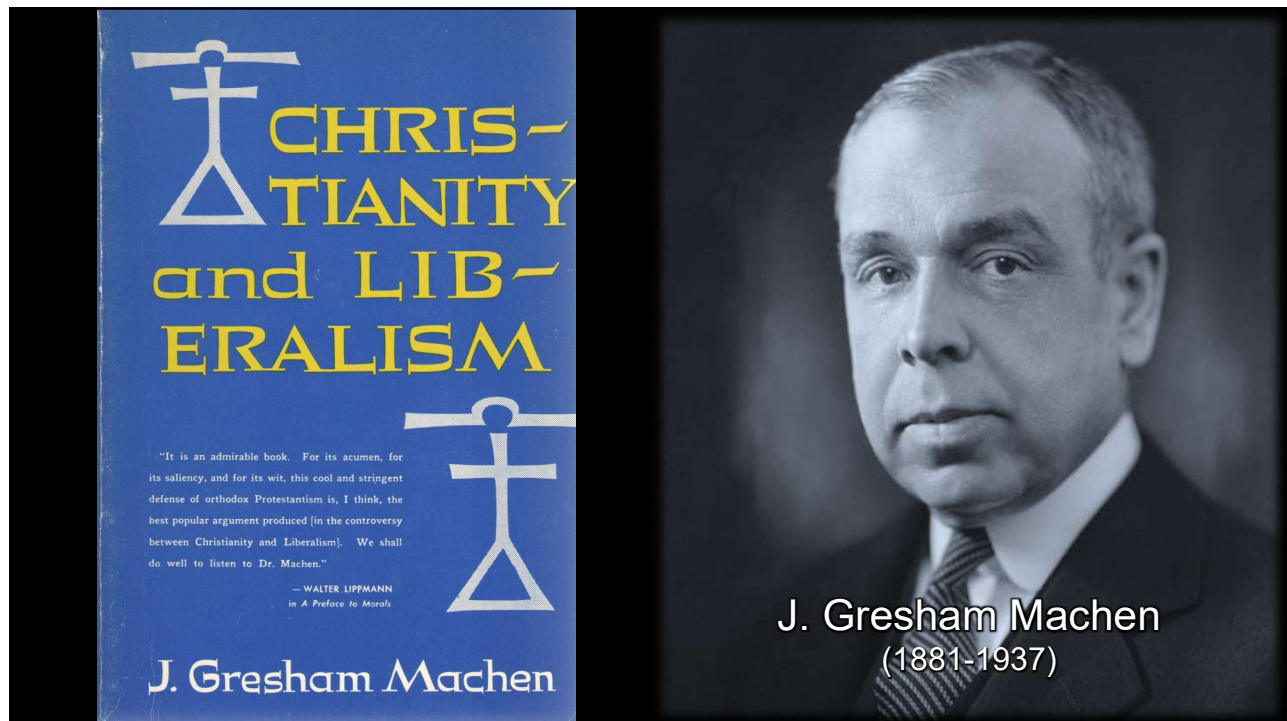
This argument is drawn from those passages of Scripture wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, on some account, joined together.

Which are those passages?

The first is the command of Jesus (Matthew xxviii. 19), to baptize “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The second is comprised in the address of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Corinth. xii. 4—6), “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” The third is found in the First Epistle of John, chap. v. 7, “There are three that bear

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Machen and Princeton Liberalism



J. Gresham Machen
(1881-1937)

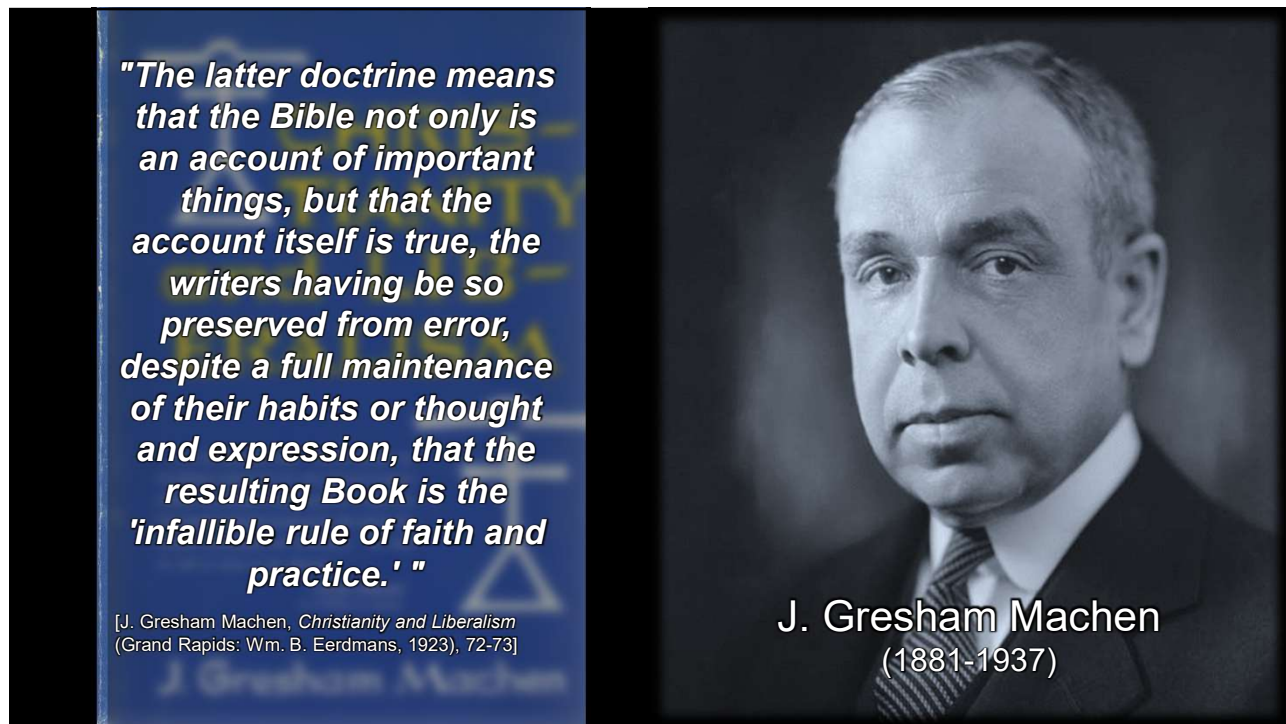
"The type of religion which rejoices in the pious sound of traditional phrases, regardless of their meanings, or shrinks from 'controversial' matters, will never stand amid the shocks of life. In the sphere of religion, as in other spheres, the things about which men are agreed are apt to be the things that are least worth holding; the really important things are the things about which men will fight."

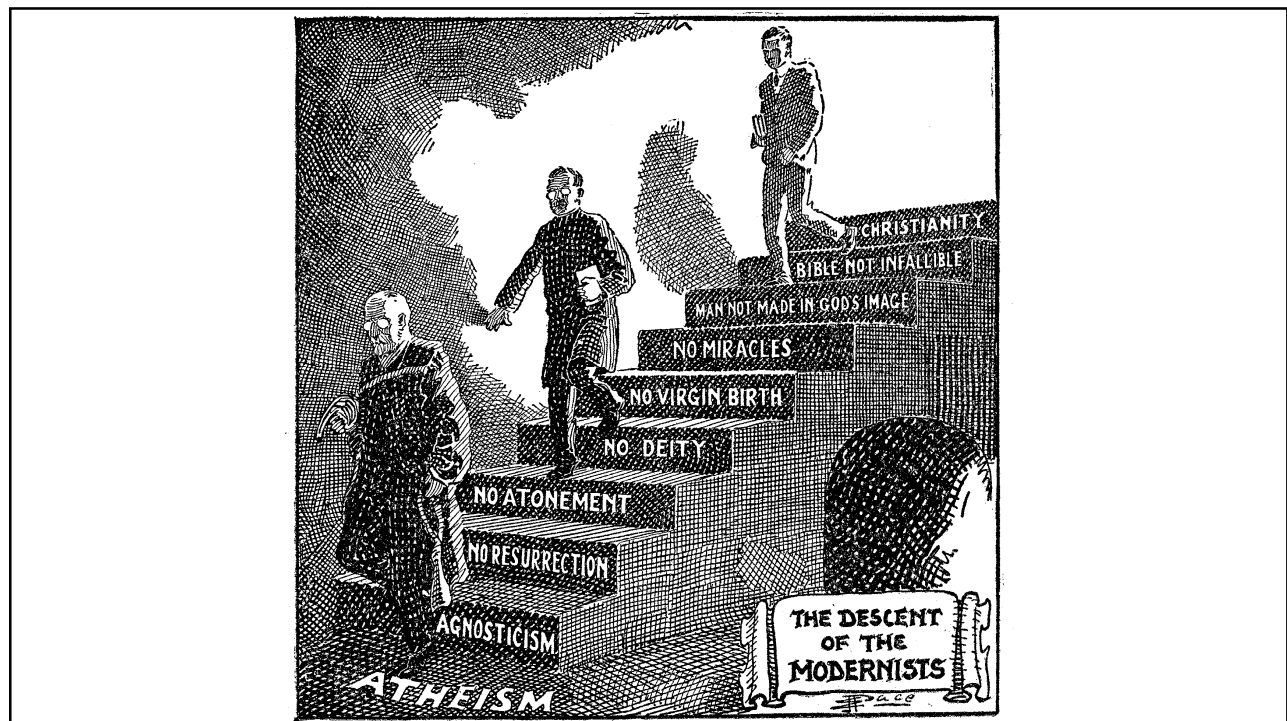
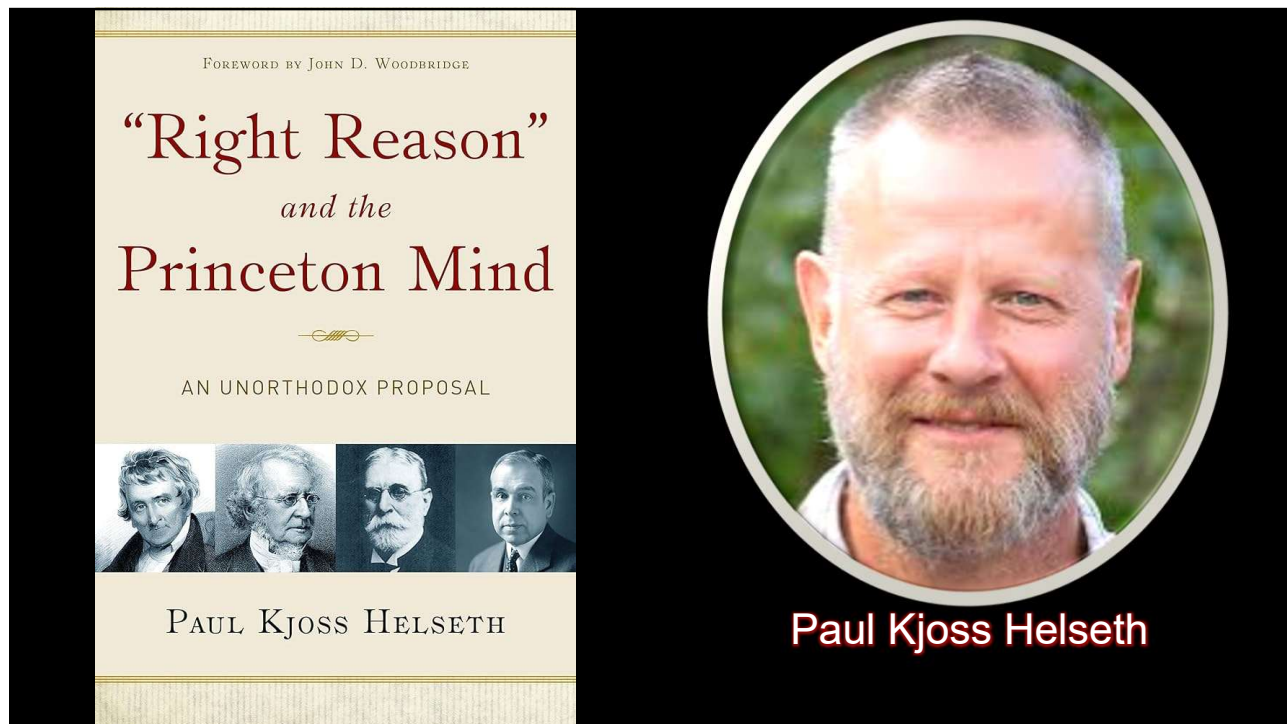
[J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1923), 1-2]

J. Gresham Machen
(1881-1937)

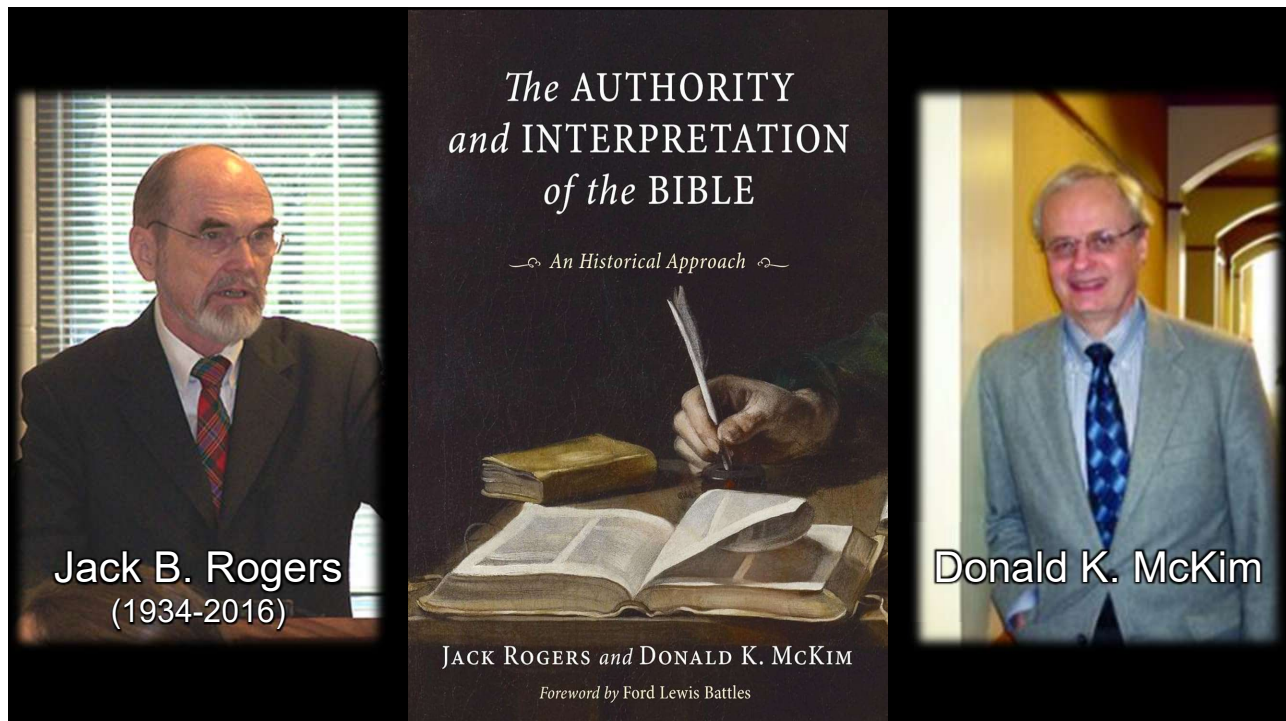
"The contents of the Bible, then, are unique. But another fact about the Bible is also important. The Bible might contain an account of a true revelation from God, and yet the account be full of error. Before the full authority of the Bible can be established, therefore, it is necessary to add to the Christian doctrine of revelation the Christian doctrine of inspiration."

J. Gresham Machen
(1881-1937)





Post WWII Evangelical Controversy



Jack B. Rogers
(1934-2016)

Donald K. McKim



Jack B. Rogers
(1934-2016)

*"The foundation of the doctrine of Scripture in the early church needs to be recovered. For early Christian teachers, Scripture was wholly authoritative **as a means of bringing people to salvation and guiding them in the life of faith.** ... The interpretation of the Bible was influenced by the understanding of **its saving purpose.** Scripture was not used as a sourcebook for science. Early theologians accepted God's accommodated style of communication. God, like a good father or mother, adopted the thought and speech of children in order to relate to them."*

[Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 458-459]



Donald K. McKim

Notice how Rogers and McKim describe the nature of biblical authority in functional terms.

For them, biblical authority resides in the Bible as a "means" and in terms of its "purpose."

They denigrate any characterization of biblical authority in terms of the Bible telling the truth as correspondence to reality.

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Notice also the strawman fallacy.

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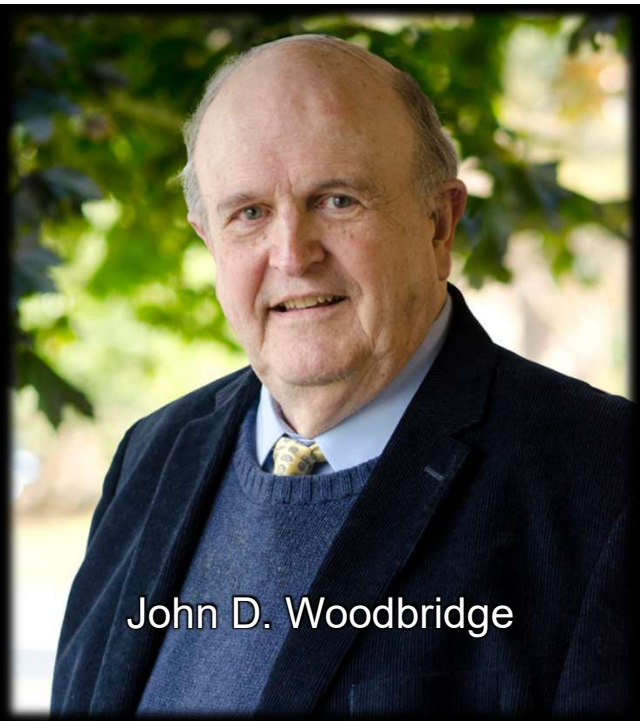
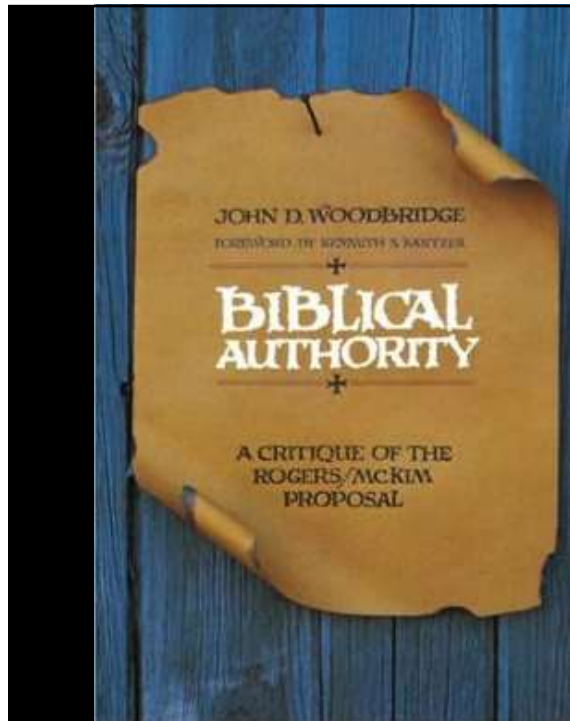
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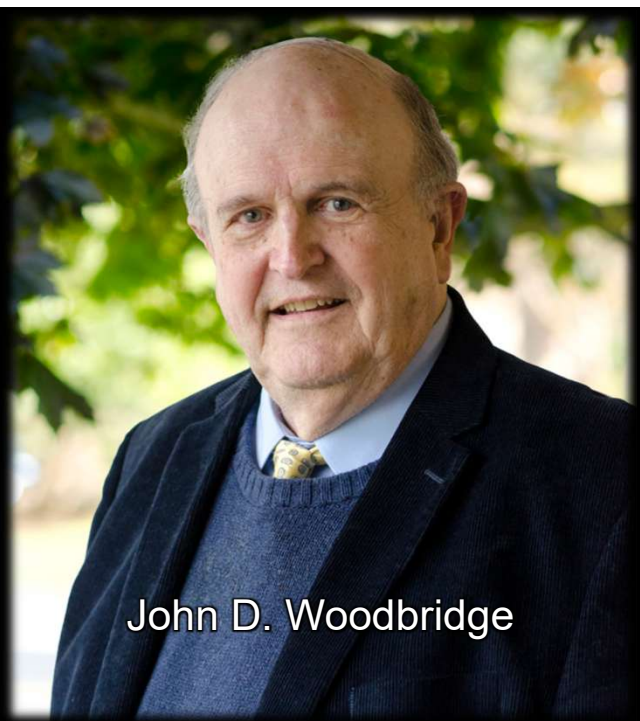
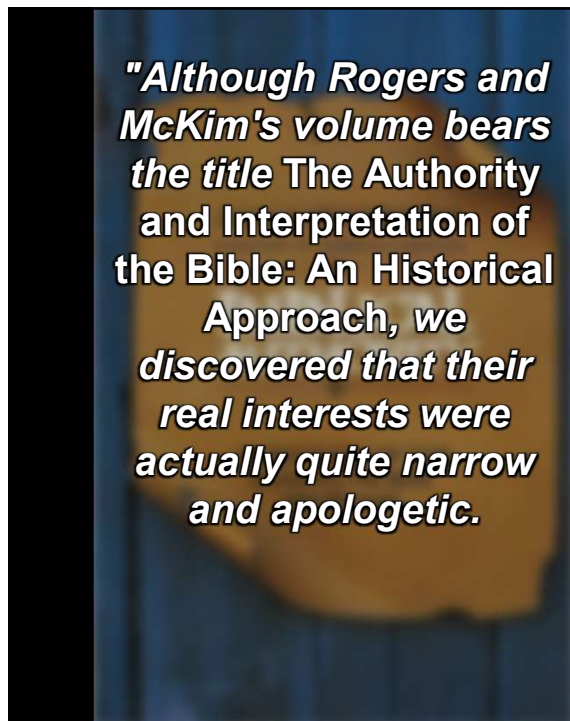
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Rogers and McKim fail to realize that a statement can correspond to reality in ways other than literally, including metaphorically, allegorically, and phenomenologically.

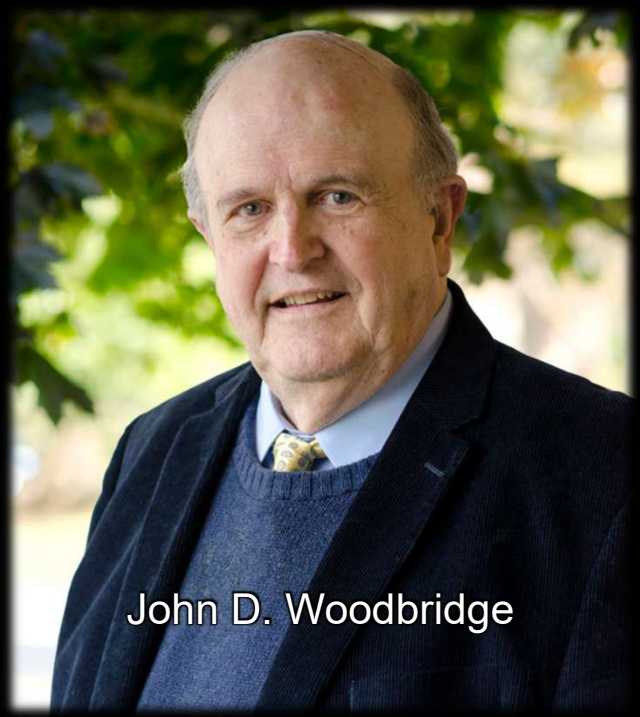


John D. Woodbridge



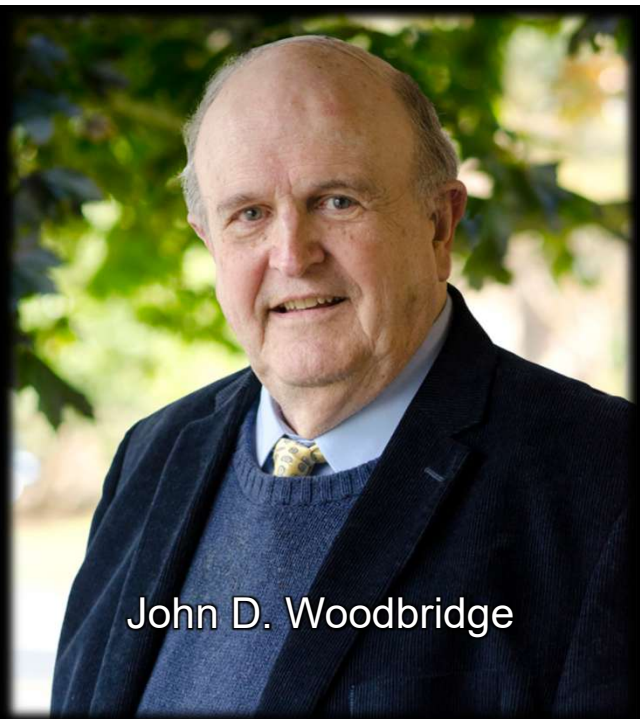
John D. Woodbridge

"They wanted to baptize as staunchly evangelical the hypothesis that the Bible is infallible for matters of faith and practice but subject to 'technical mistakes' in science, history, and the like. ...



John D. Woodbridge

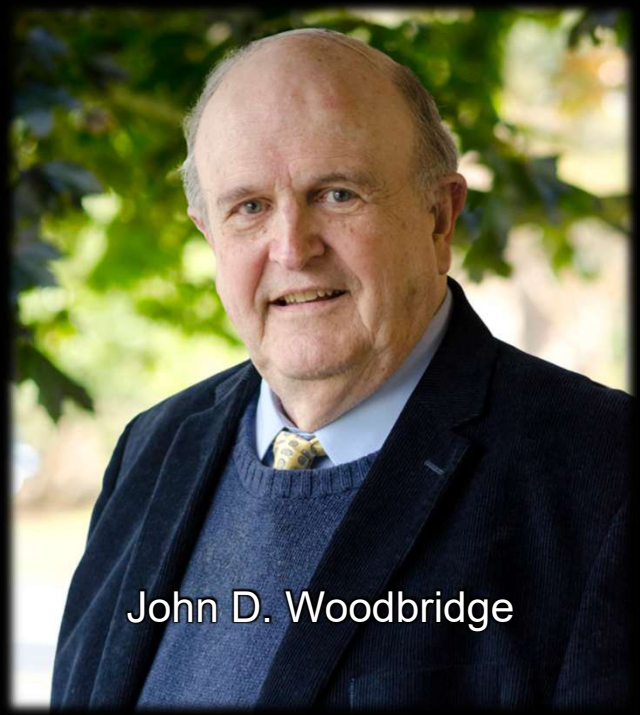
"The authors' description of the Bible creates for them the same kind of dilemma that neoorthodox scholars before them faced, namely, how to distinguish the infallible 'central saving message' from the errant 'difficult surrounding material.'



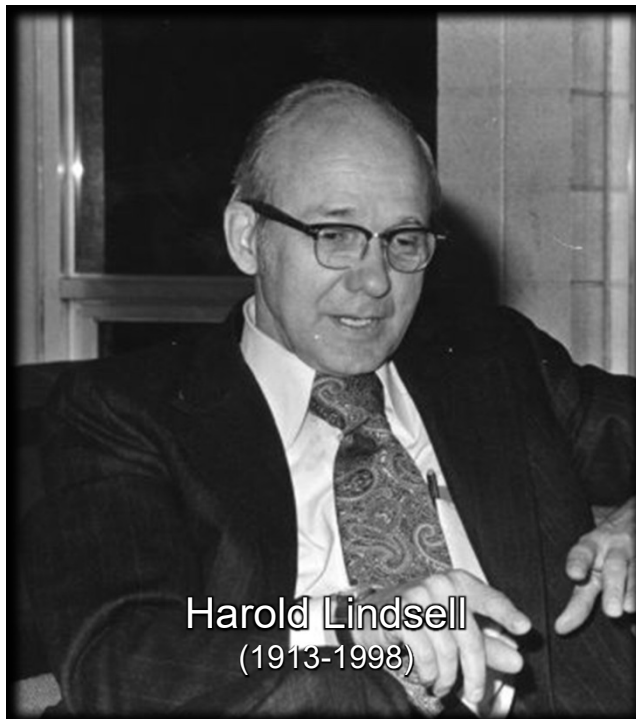
John D. Woodbridge

"This is a critical problem because Christianity is grounded in human history. Salvation truths are planted in the soil of the Bible's historical discourse about things that happened."

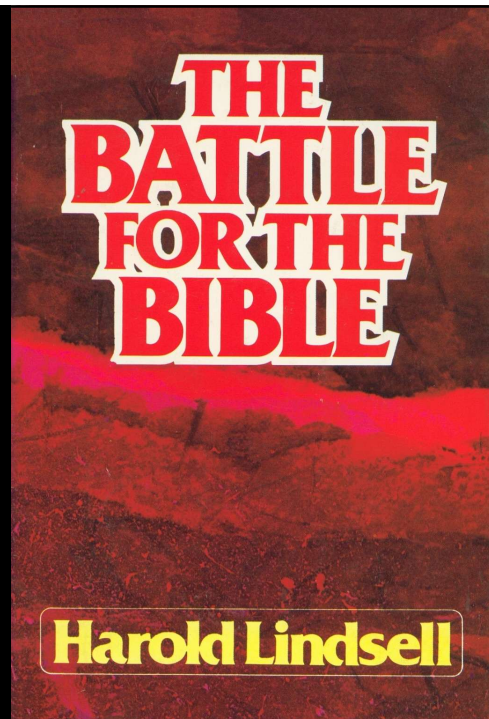
[John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers / McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 153, 154]

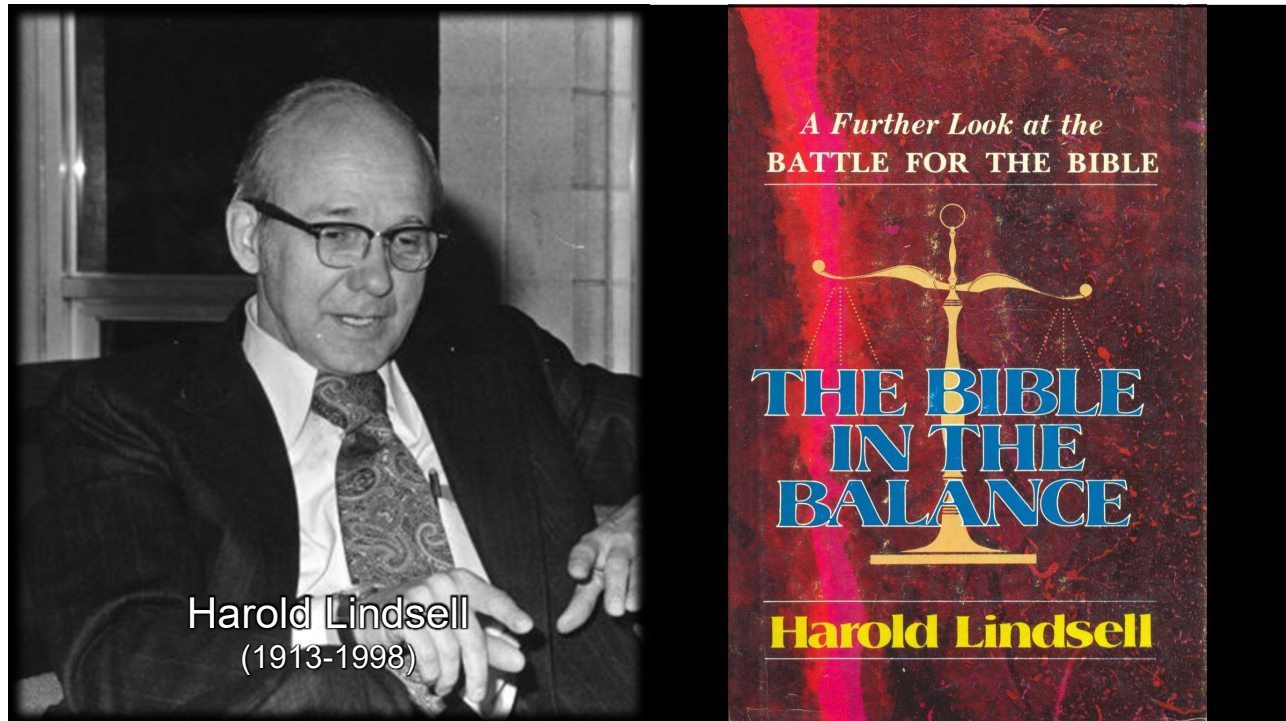


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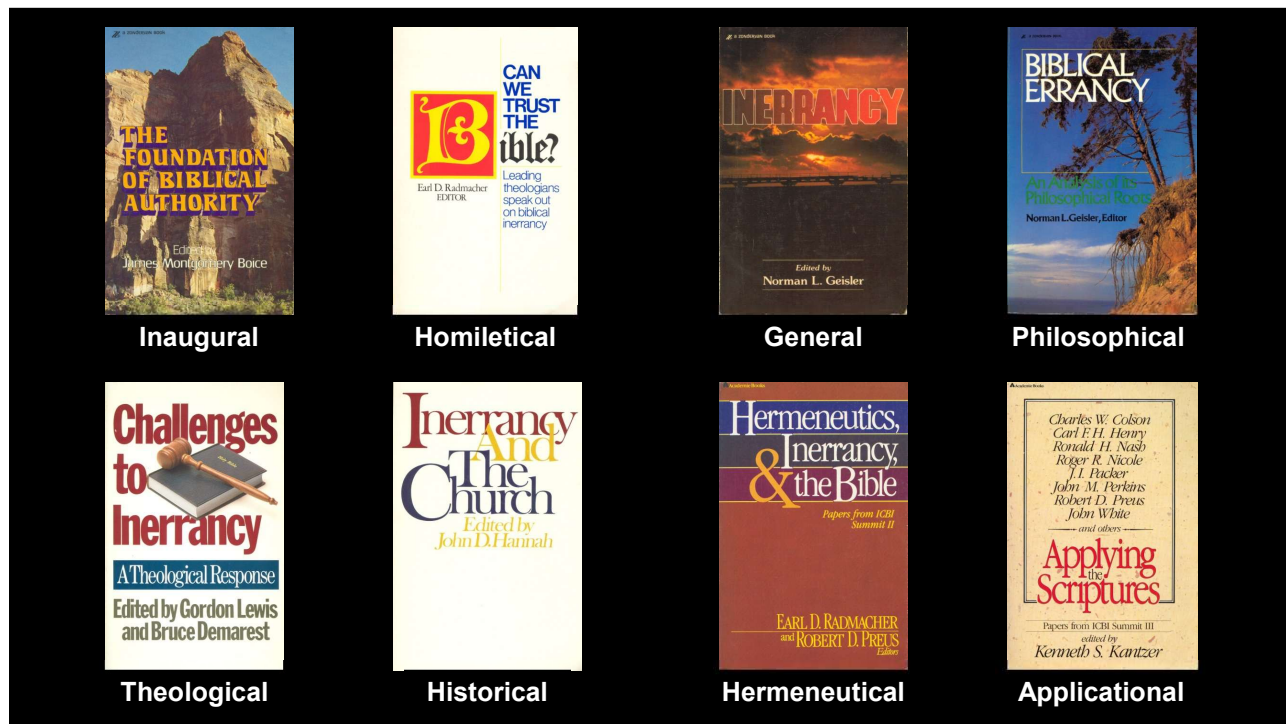


Harold Lindsell
(1913-1998)

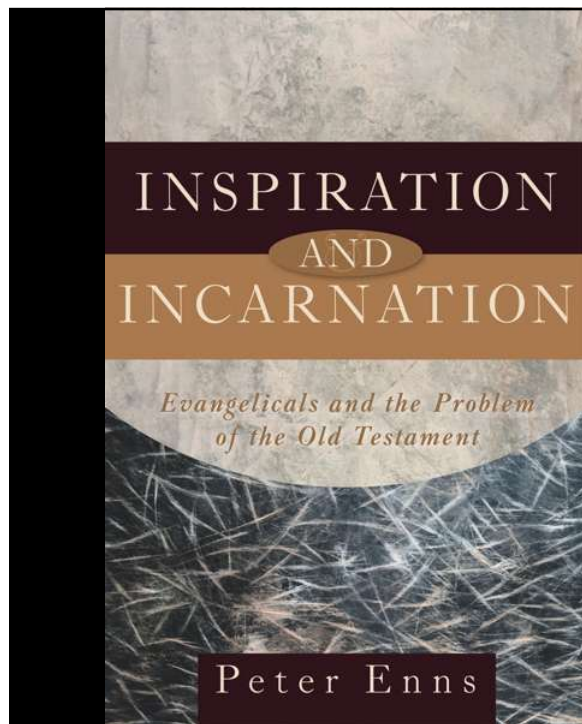




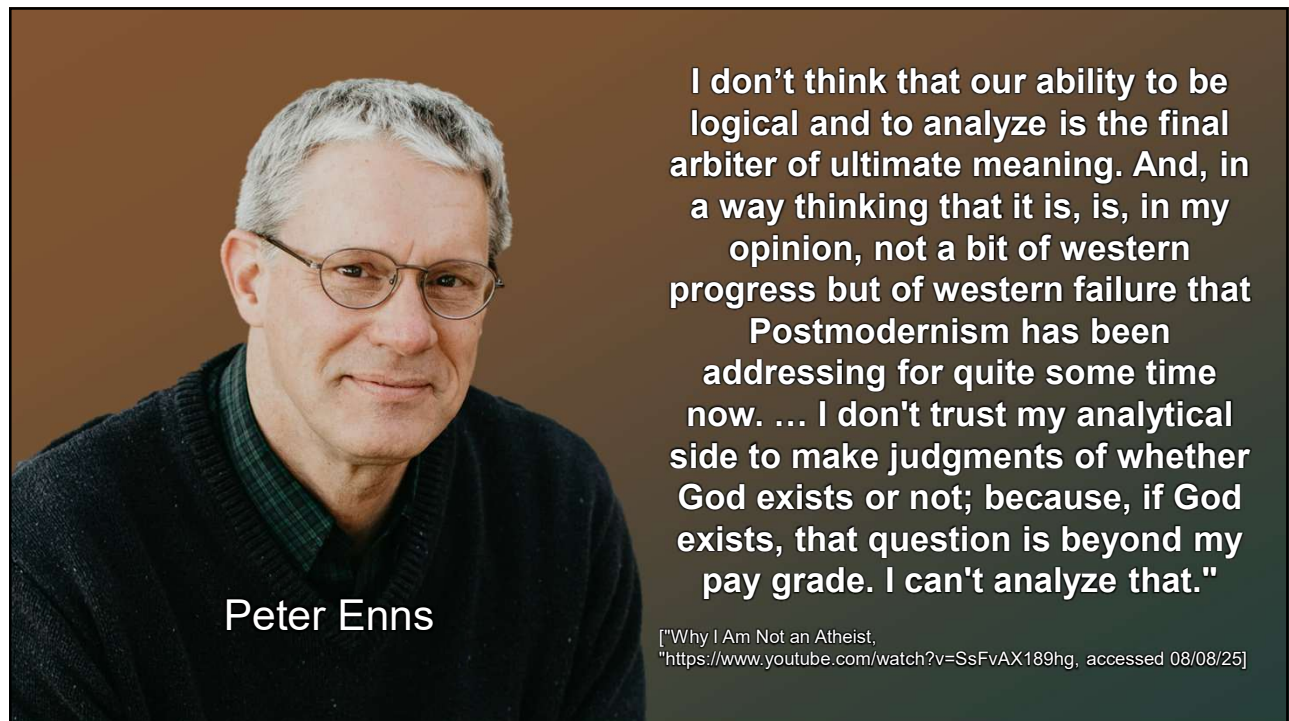
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the International
Council on Biblical
Inerrancy***



A Recent Evangelical Controversy



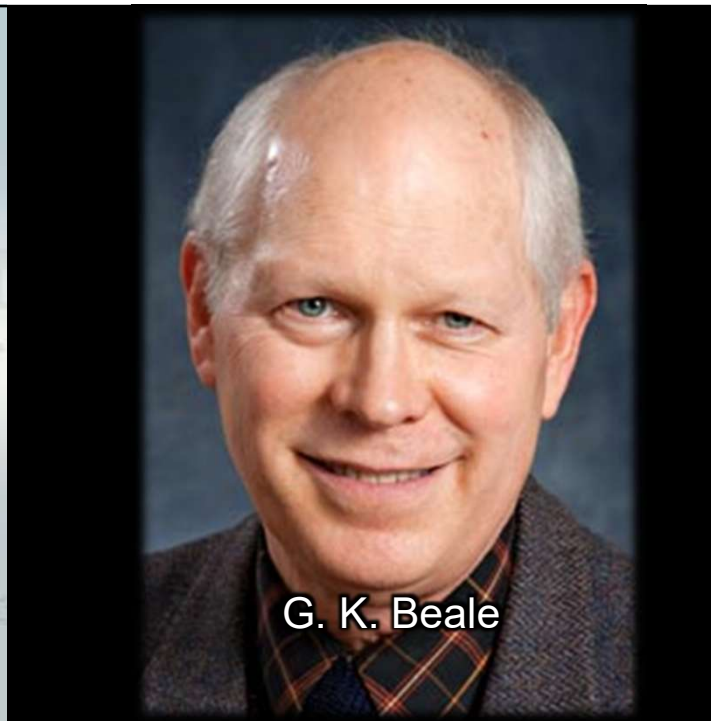
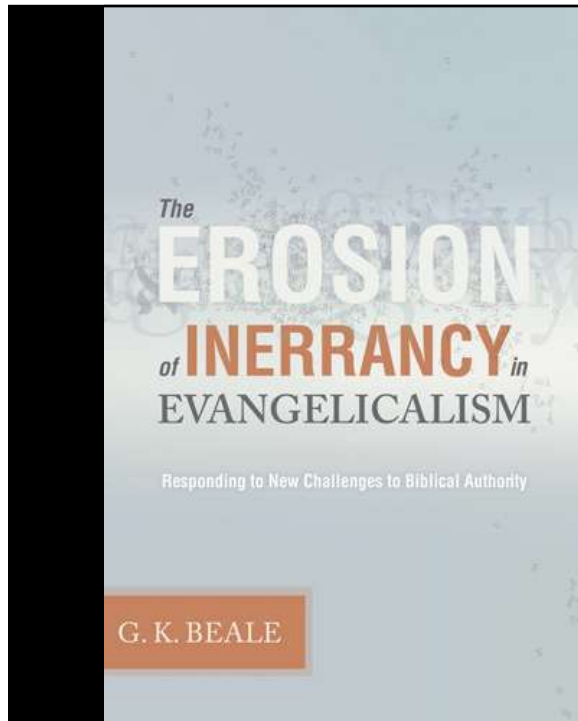
Peter Enns



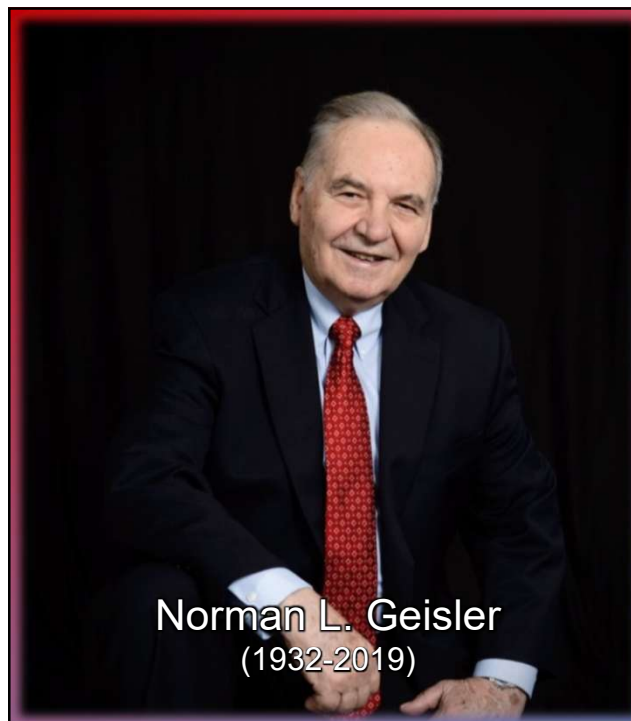
Peter Enns

I don't think that our ability to be logical and to analyze is the final arbiter of ultimate meaning. And, in a way thinking that it is, is, in my opinion, not a bit of western progress but of western failure that Postmodernism has been addressing for quite some time now. ... I don't trust my analytical side to make judgments of whether God exists or not; because, if God exists, that question is beyond my pay grade. I can't analyze that."

["Why I Am Not an Atheist,"
"<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsFvAX189hg>, accessed 08/08/25]



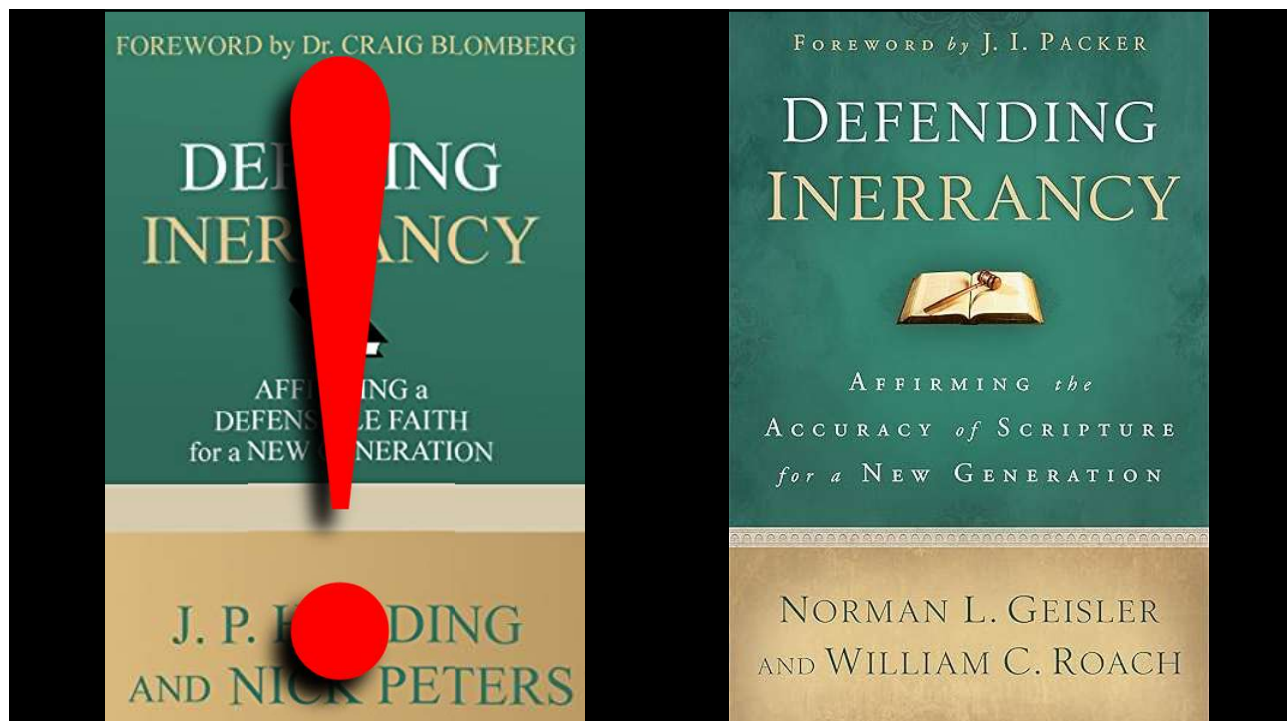
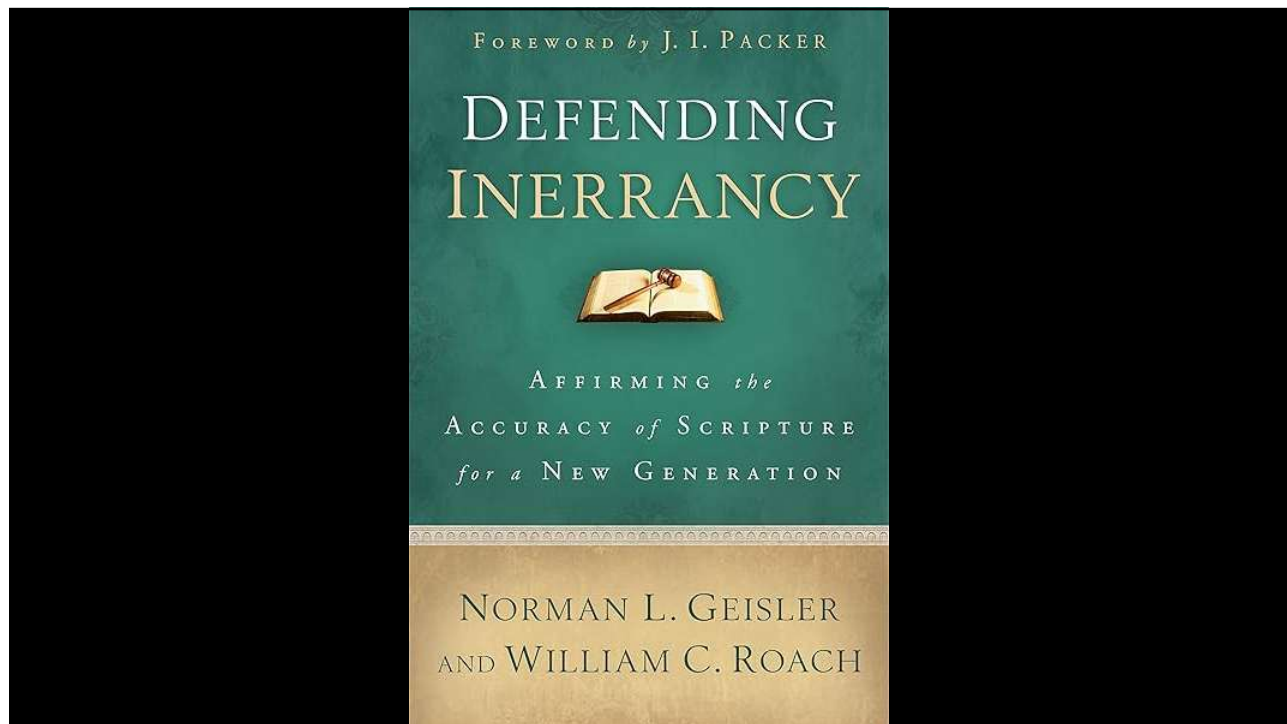
G. K. Beale



Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)



William C. Roach



The Current Evangelical Controversy

A promotional poster for the NCCA 2019 conference. The background is a textured blue with a faint circular pattern. At the top center is the NCCA 2019 logo. Below it, a yellow-bordered box contains the title 'WHY TRUTH STILL MATTERS' in bold white capital letters, with the dates 'OCT 11-12 / CHARLOTTE, NC' underneath. Further down, the text '2 DAYS / 45+ SPEAKERS / 90+ SESSIONS' is displayed in yellow and white. Below that is the website 'Conference.SES.edu' and the phone number '(704) 847-5600' in yellow. The word 'Including' is centered below the contact information. At the bottom, a white rectangular box contains two circular headshots of men. Below the headshots, the text 'DIALOG: What Does It Mean to Say the Bible is Inerrant?' is written in a blue serif font.

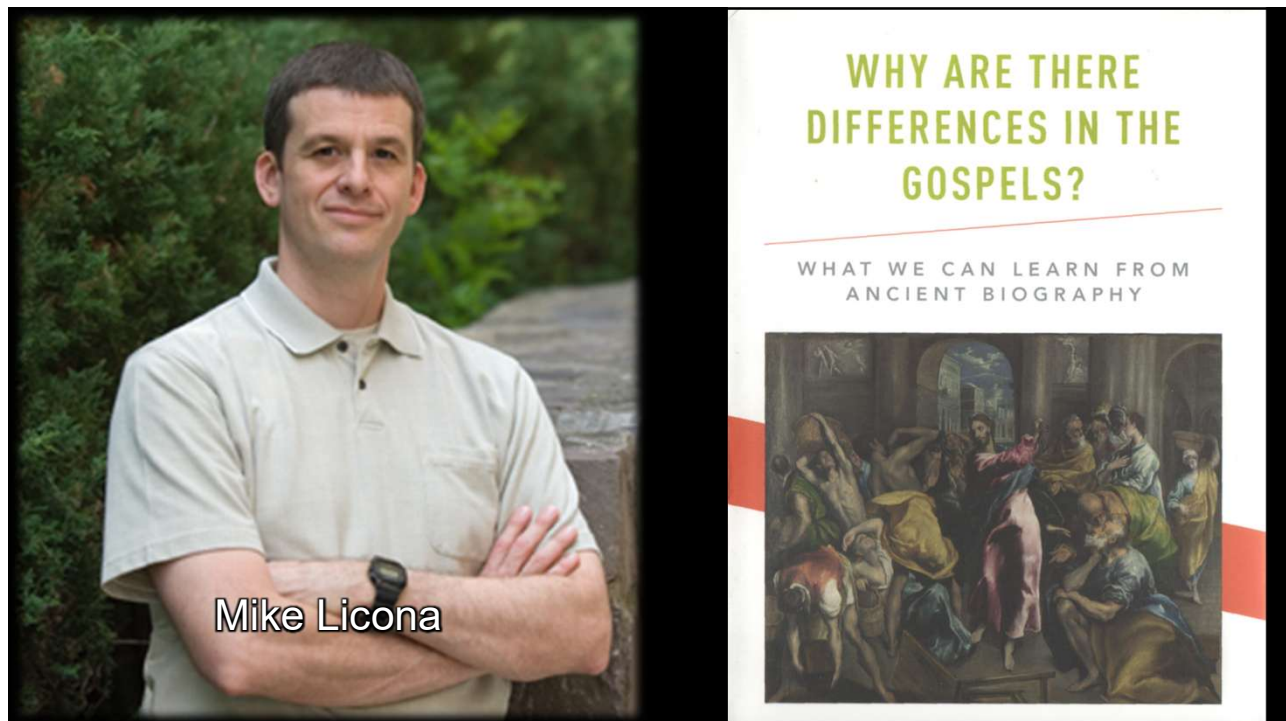
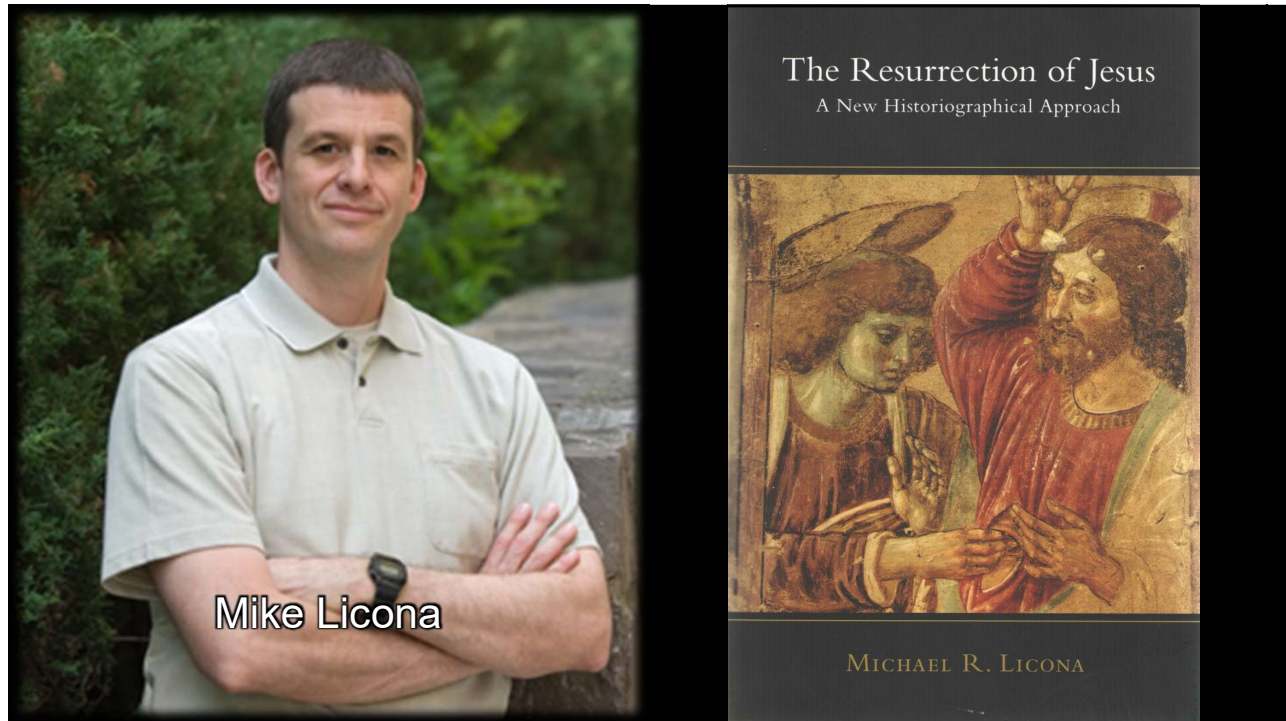
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2019

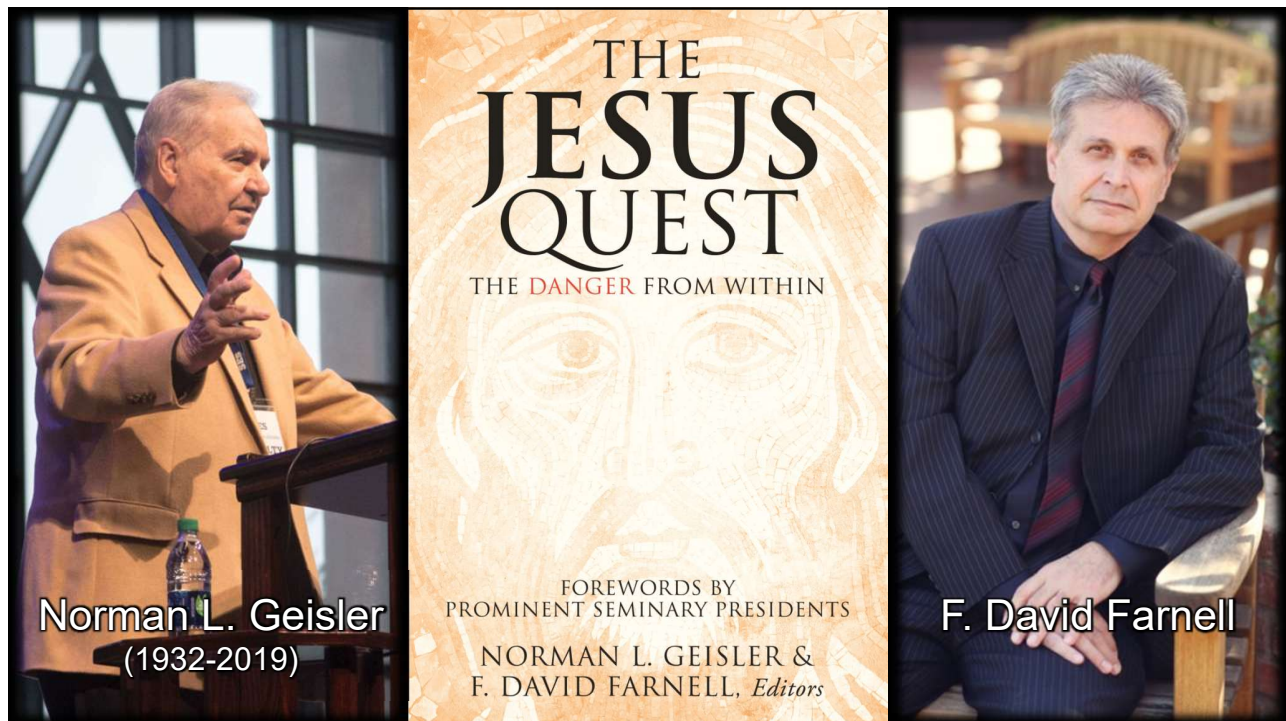
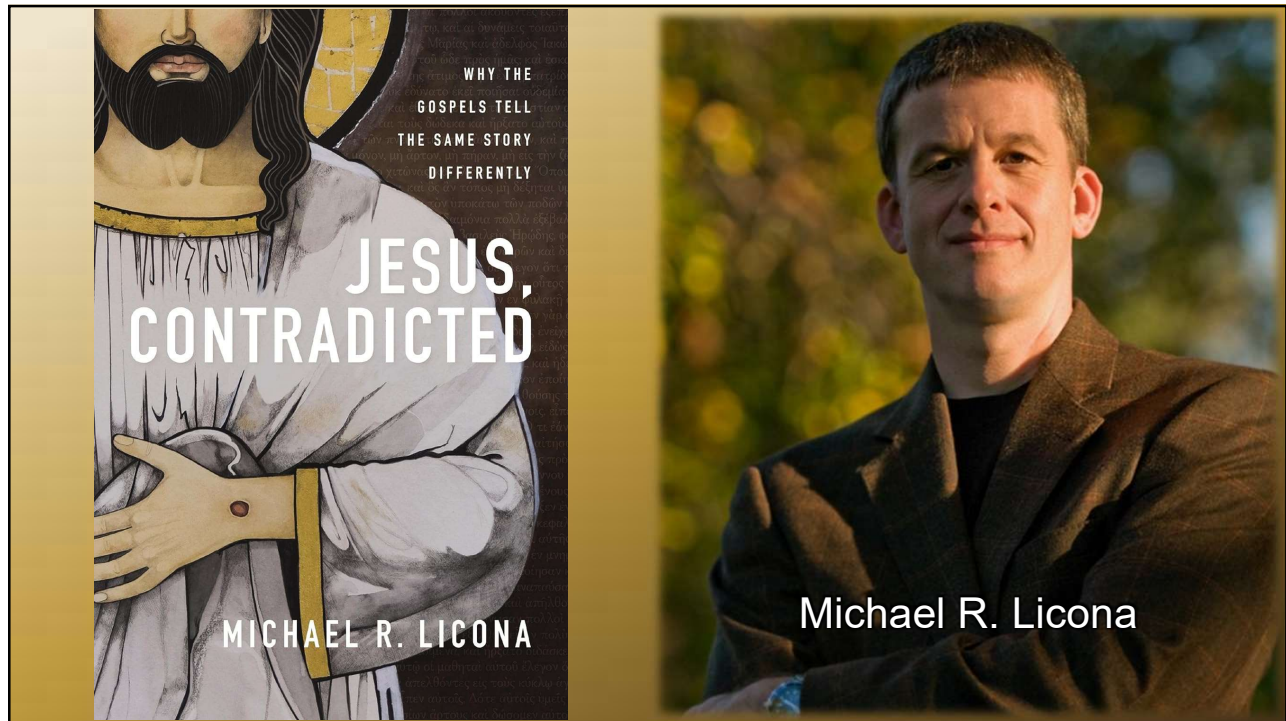
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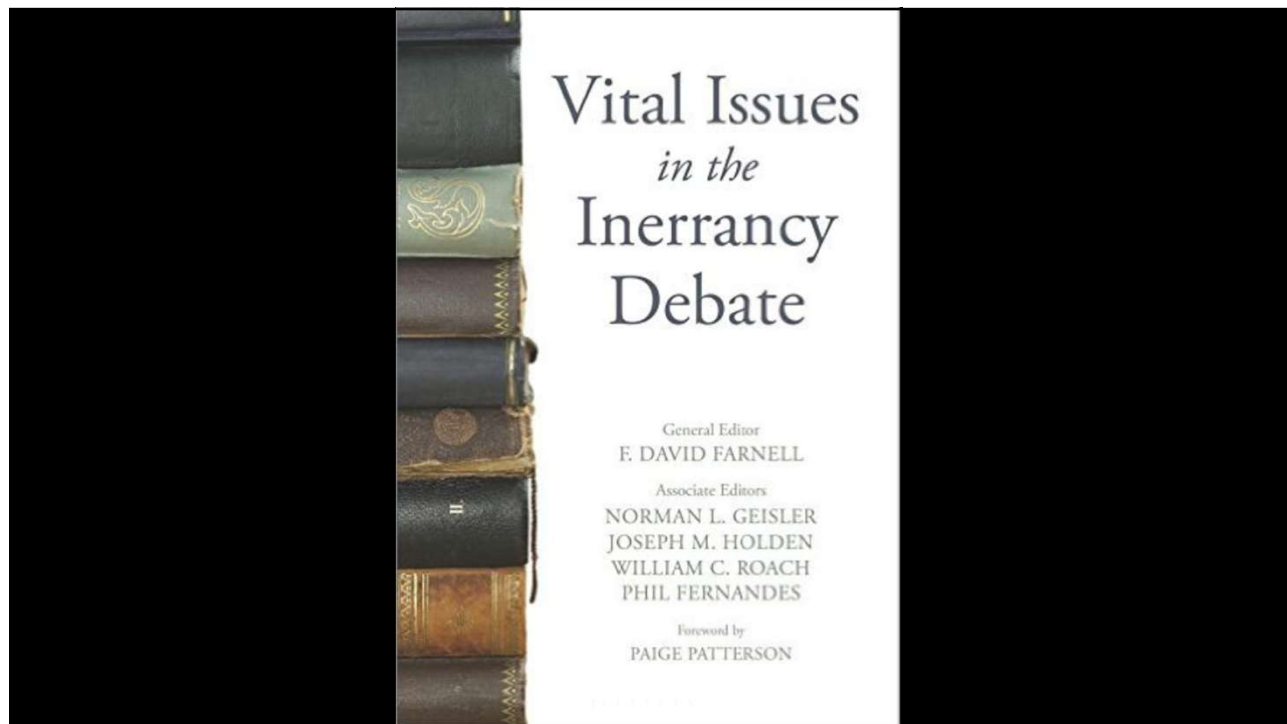
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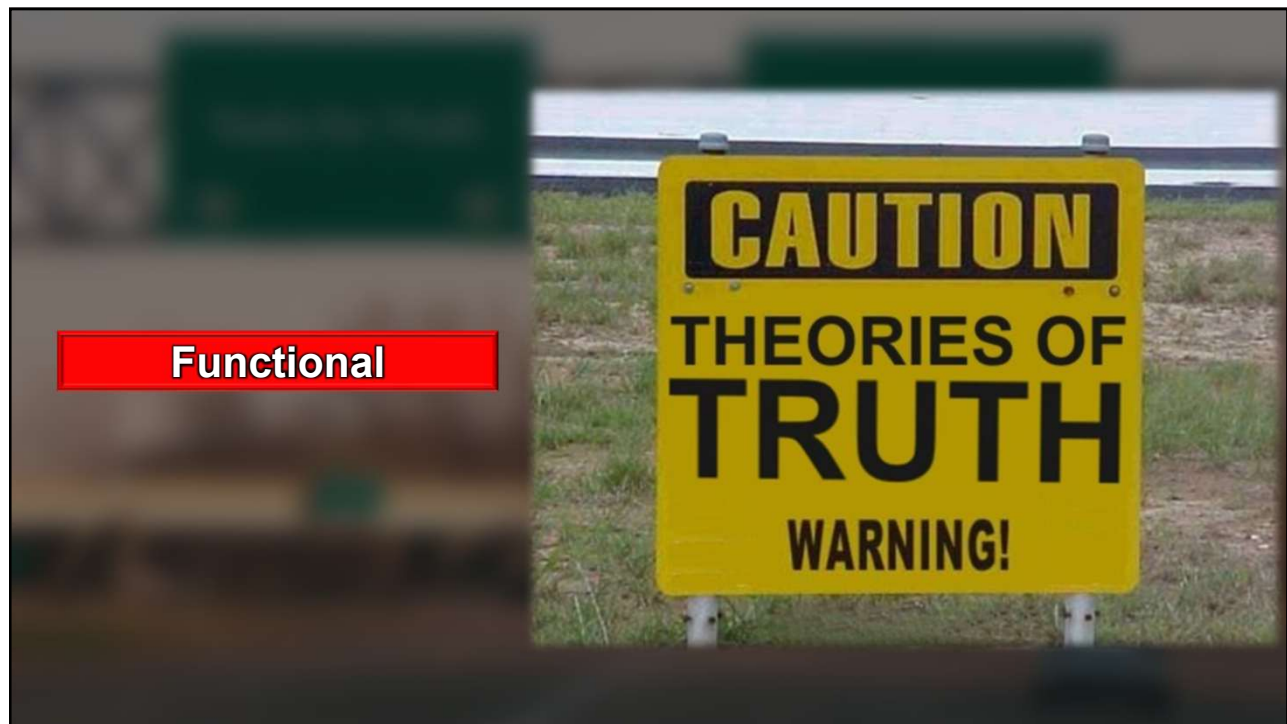




***Four things that
concern me in the
current controversies***

1. *The compromised theory of truth with which Geisler dealt in his 1980 article and which ICBI ("The Chicago Statement") examined thoroughly is still a problem today.*
2. *A newer compromised concept (theory) of truth has arisen from Postmodernism.*
3. *The theory that the Gospels are of the genre of Greco-Roman Biography allows Mike Licona—though he claims to hold to a correspondence theory of truth—to ascribe conflicting or contradictory statements to the Bible in as much as he overlooks various ways in which a proposition might correspond to reality.*
4. *Allowing for the possibility that there are conflicting or contradictory statements in the Bible is incompatible with Inspiration and Inerrancy.*

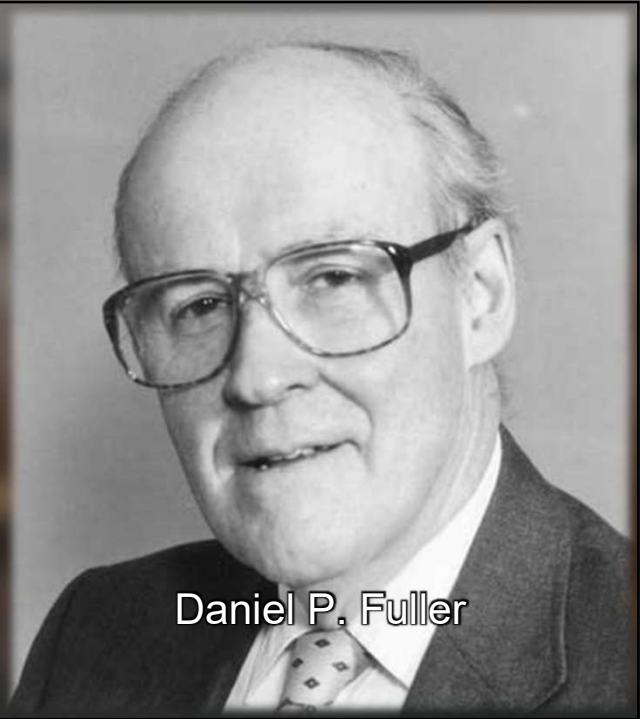
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Functional

- **Definition:** A statement is true in as much as it fulfills its intended purpose.
- It is sometimes known as the intentional theory of truth.

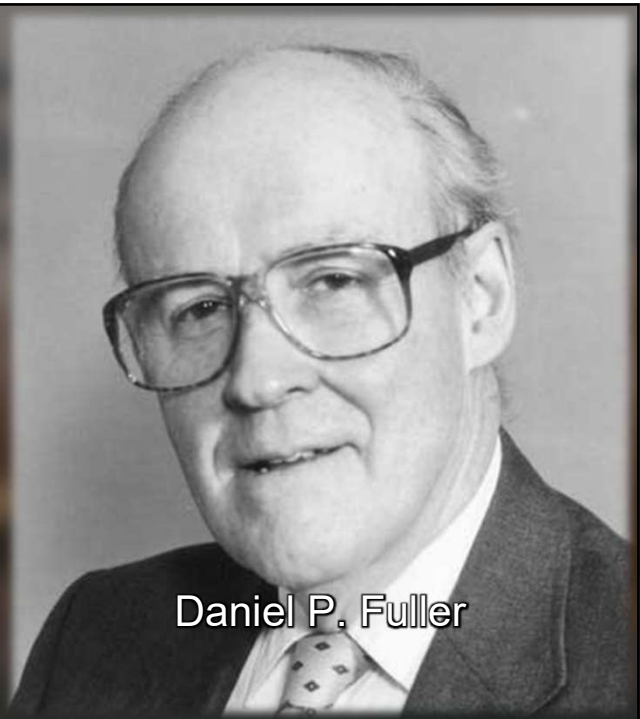
"Although the mustard seed is not really the smallest of all seeds, yet Jesus referred to it as such because . . .



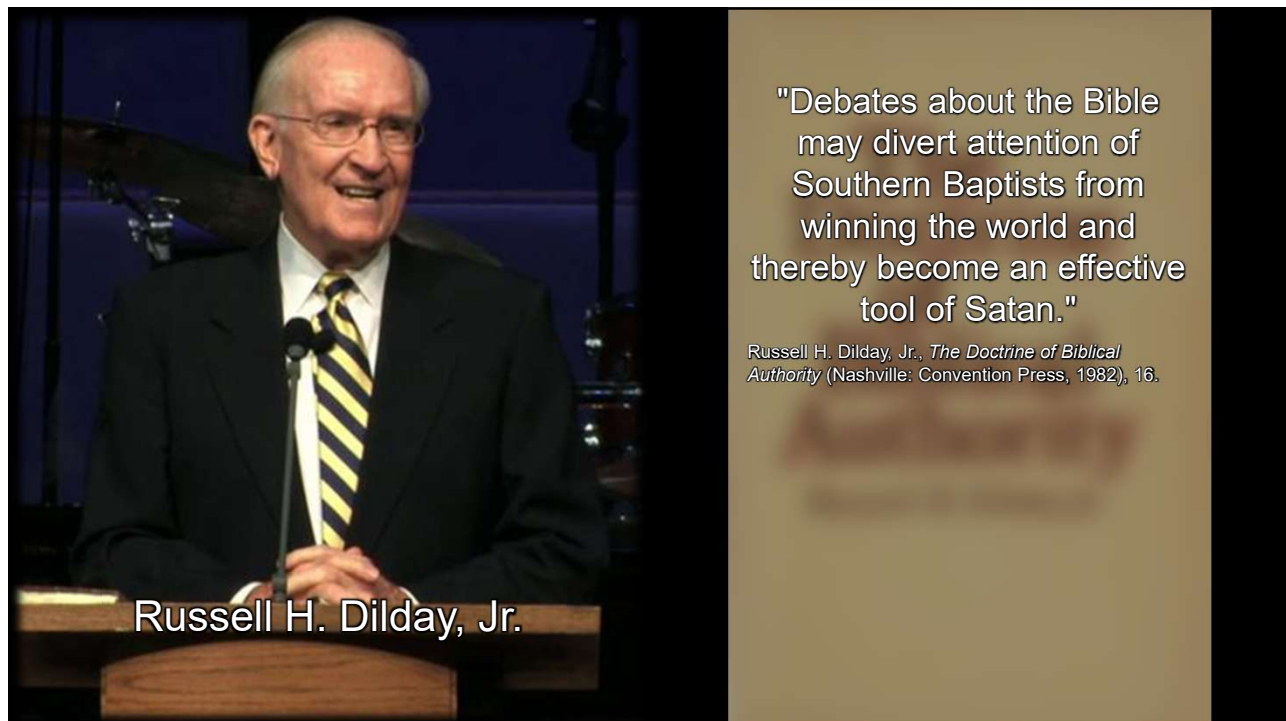
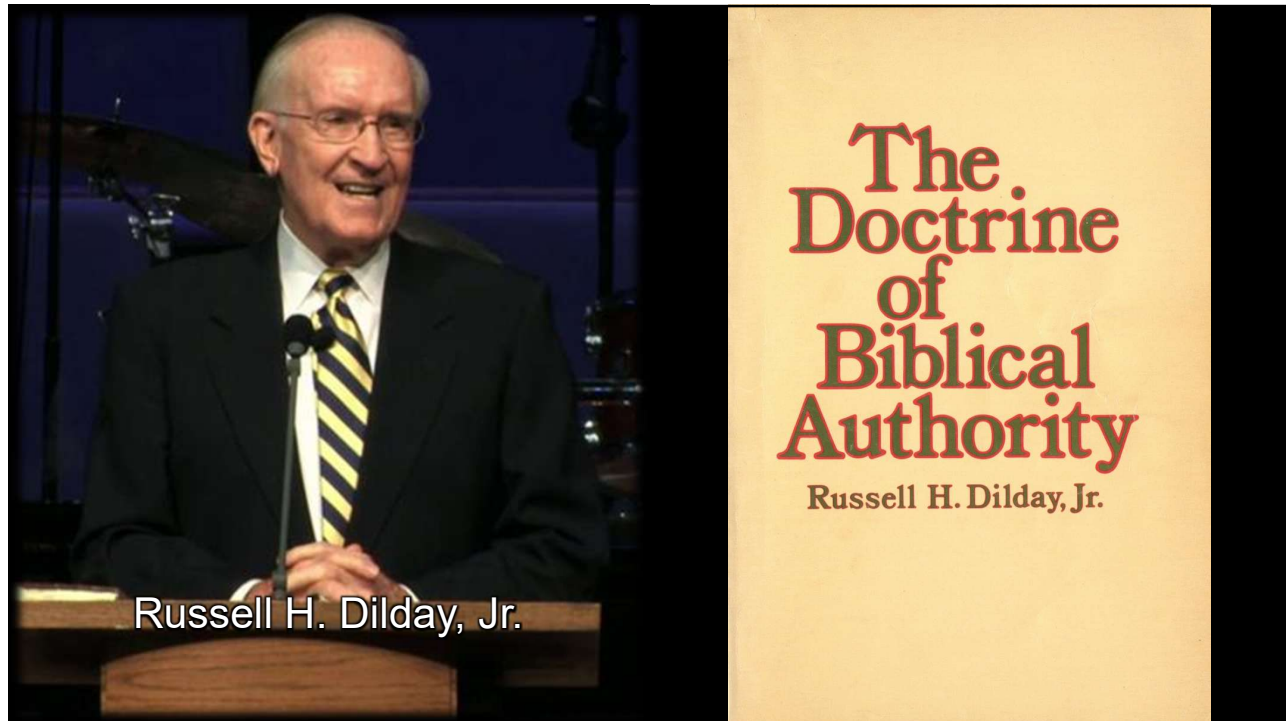
Daniel P. Fuller

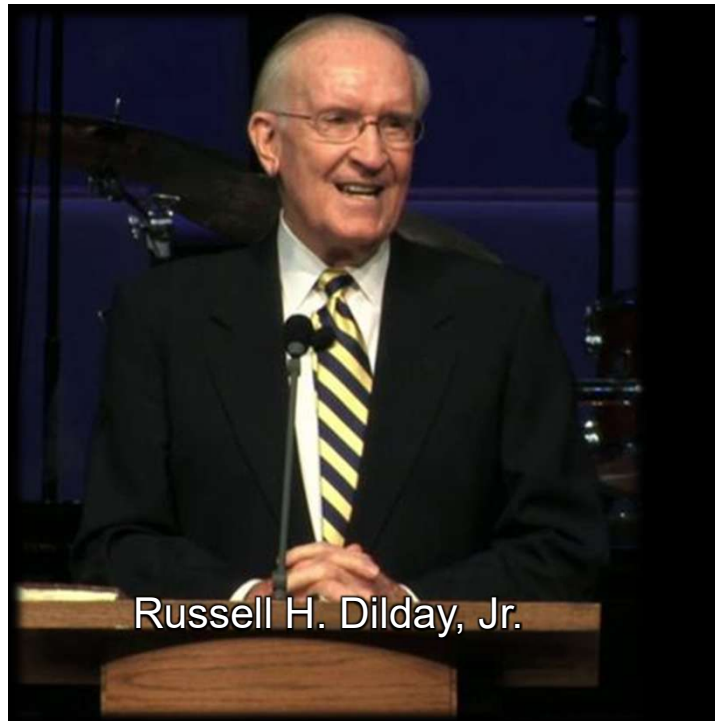
"to have gone contrary to their mind on what was the smallest seed would have so diverted their attention from the knowledge that would bring salvation to their souls that they might well have failed to hear these all-important revelational truths."

[Daniel P. Fuller, "Benjamin B. Warfield's View of Faith and History," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 11 (Spring 1968): 81, 82]



Daniel P. Fuller

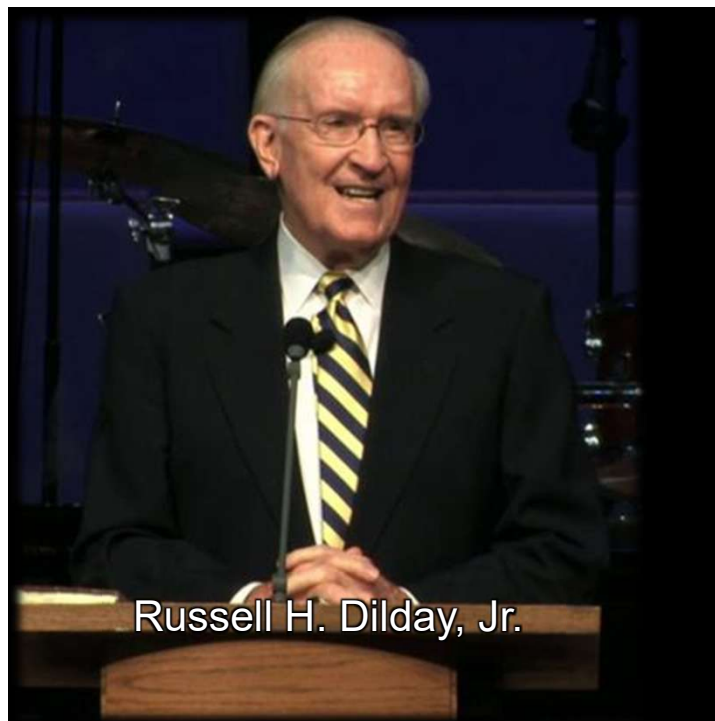




Russell H. Dilday, Jr.

"There are those who advocate a modified definition of inerrancy. If the term inerrant is to be used, it must be qualified to allow for certain problems in the Bible, such as unscientific statements about the universe, variations in the Gospel accounts, peculiarities in the genealogical lists, and the like."

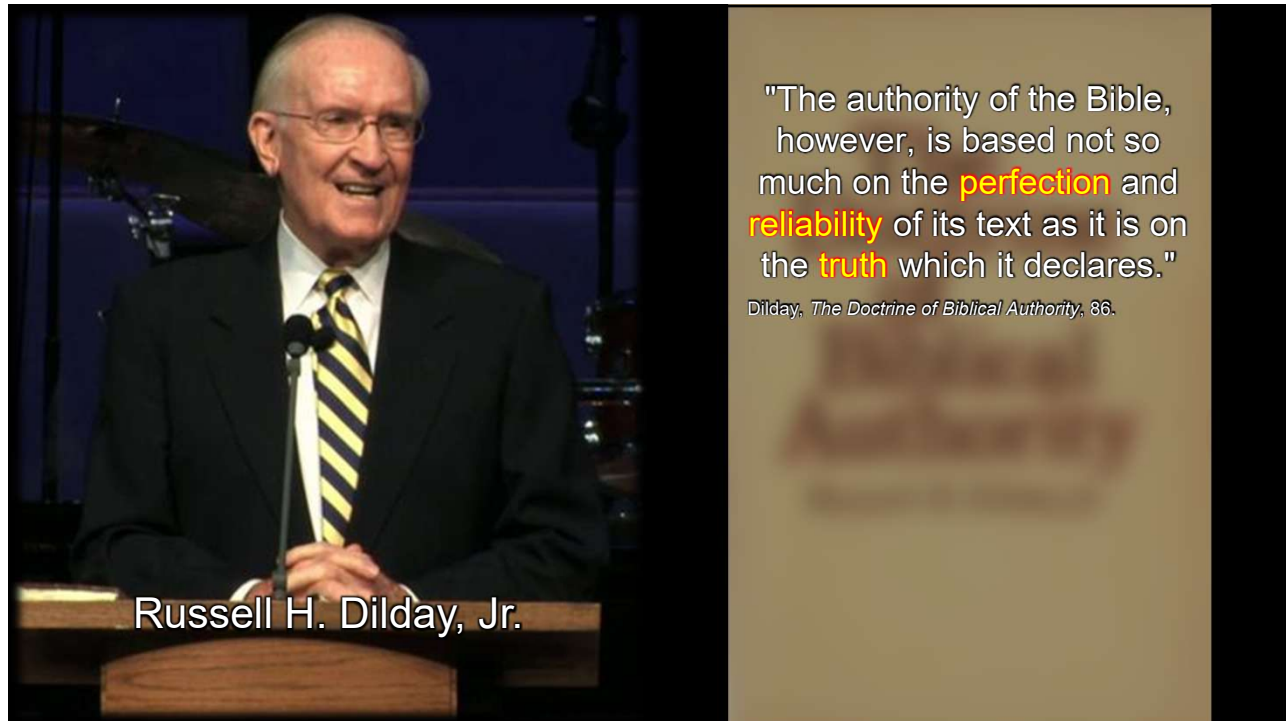
Dilday, *The Doctrine of Biblical Authority*, 96]



Russell H. Dilday, Jr.

"On the other hand, other Christians feel that the weaknesses of the word inerrant limit its use. ... It implies that one admitted insignificant error in the Bible would destroy one's confidence in the whole biblical revelation."

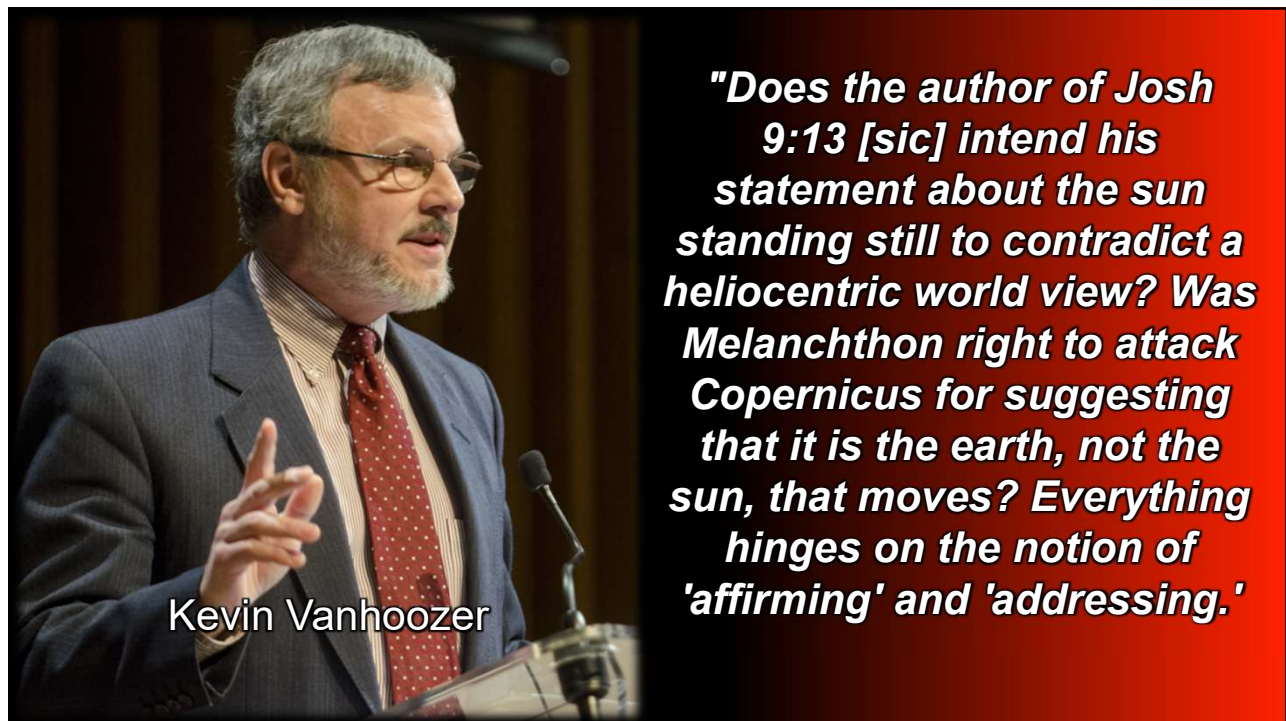
Dilday, *The Doctrine of Biblical Authority*, 99.



"The authority of the Bible, however, is based not so much on the **perfection** and **reliability** of its text as it is on the **truth** which it declares."

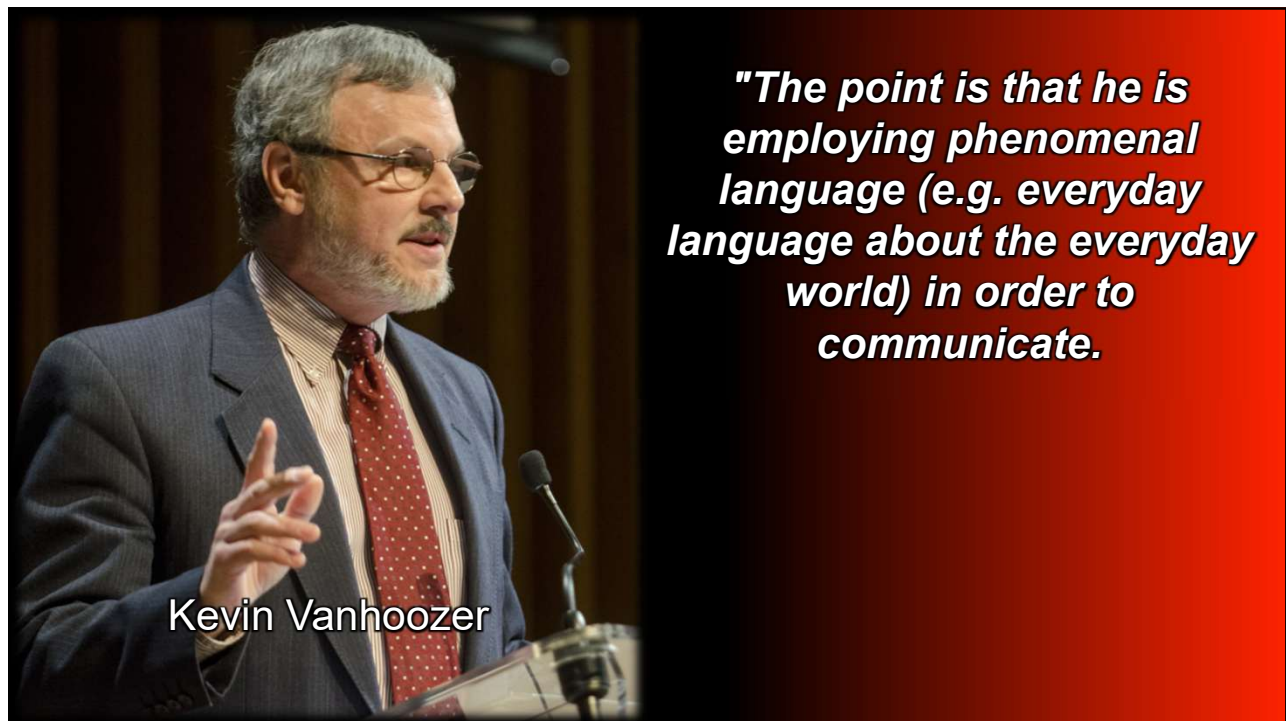
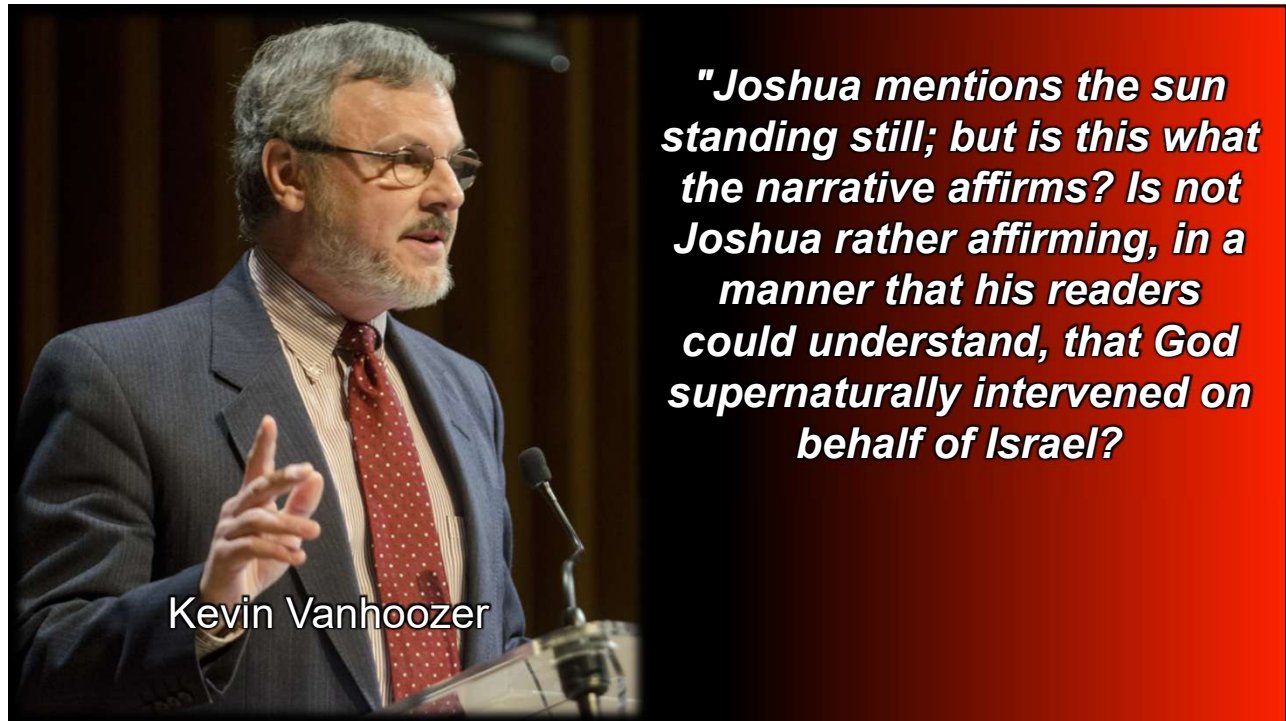
Dilday, *The Doctrine of Biblical Authority*, 86.

Russell H. Dilday, Jr.



"Does the author of Josh 9:13 [sic] intend his statement about the sun standing still to contradict a heliocentric world view? Was Melancthon right to attack Copernicus for suggesting that it is the earth, not the sun, that moves? Everything hinges on the notion of 'affirming' and 'addressing.'"

Kevin Vanhoozer





"To press Joshua 9 [sic] into the service of Ptolemaic science would be an odd use indeed of the passage. Why? Because the point of the passage lies elsewhere. To be precise: it is a theological and, yes, historical (but not astronomical) point."

[Kevin J. Vanhoozer "Lost in Interpretation? Truth, Scripture, and Hermeneutics" in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48/1 (March 2005) 89–114 (p. 106)]

Kevin Vanhoozer



"The biblical authors did not intend every one of their sentences to be an assertive statement. To return to Joshua 9: [sic] the author's use of phenomenal language is merely background scenery for what really matters, the theodramatic assertion about the act of God in history."

[Vanhoozer "Lost in Interpretation?" p. 107]

Kevin Vanhoozer

Q: What about a "What is the Bible?" on Adam & Eve—historical vs. fictional?

RB: All right, then, Adam and Eve.

Q: Do you think they were real people?

RB: I don't think that's the point of the story.

Q: Could they have been?

RB: Of course. But then you'd have to answer all sorts of questions about DNA and fossils and evidence for how old the earth is...

Rob Bell

Q: Does anybody actually know for sure whether or not they were actual, real people?

RB: No.

Rob Bell

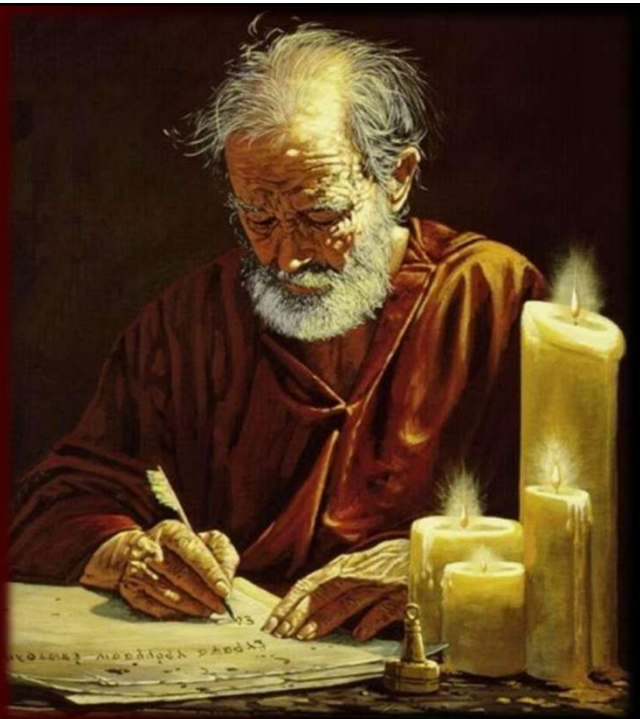
"Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, ... {38} the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."

Luke 3:23, 38



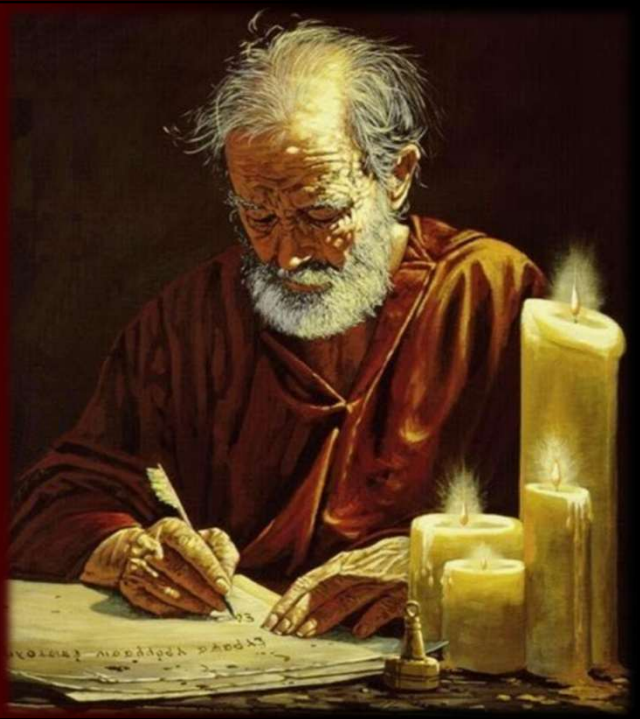
"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."

Romans 5:14



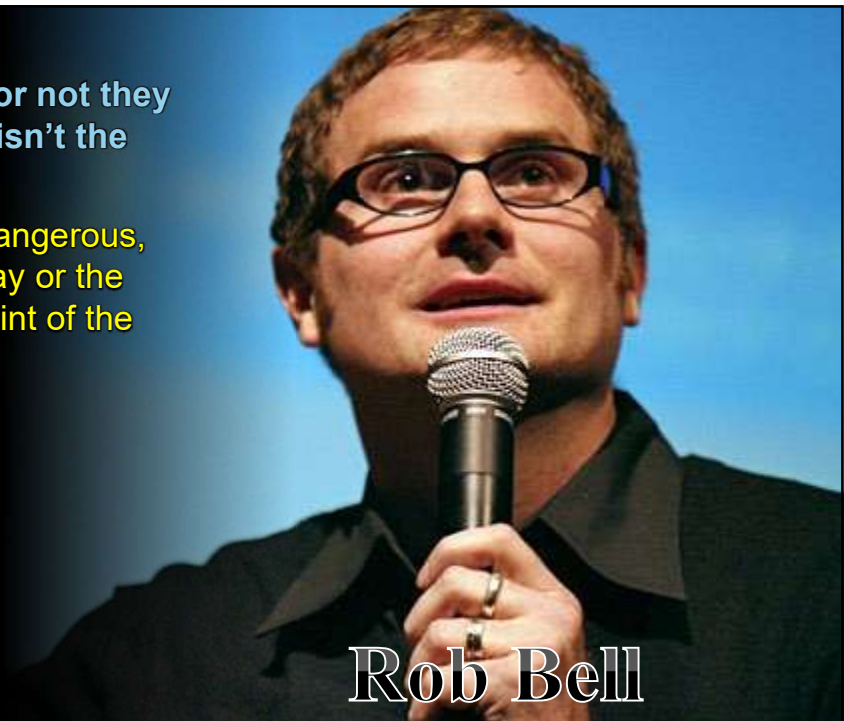
**"For Adam was
formed first,
then Eve."**

1Timothy 2:13

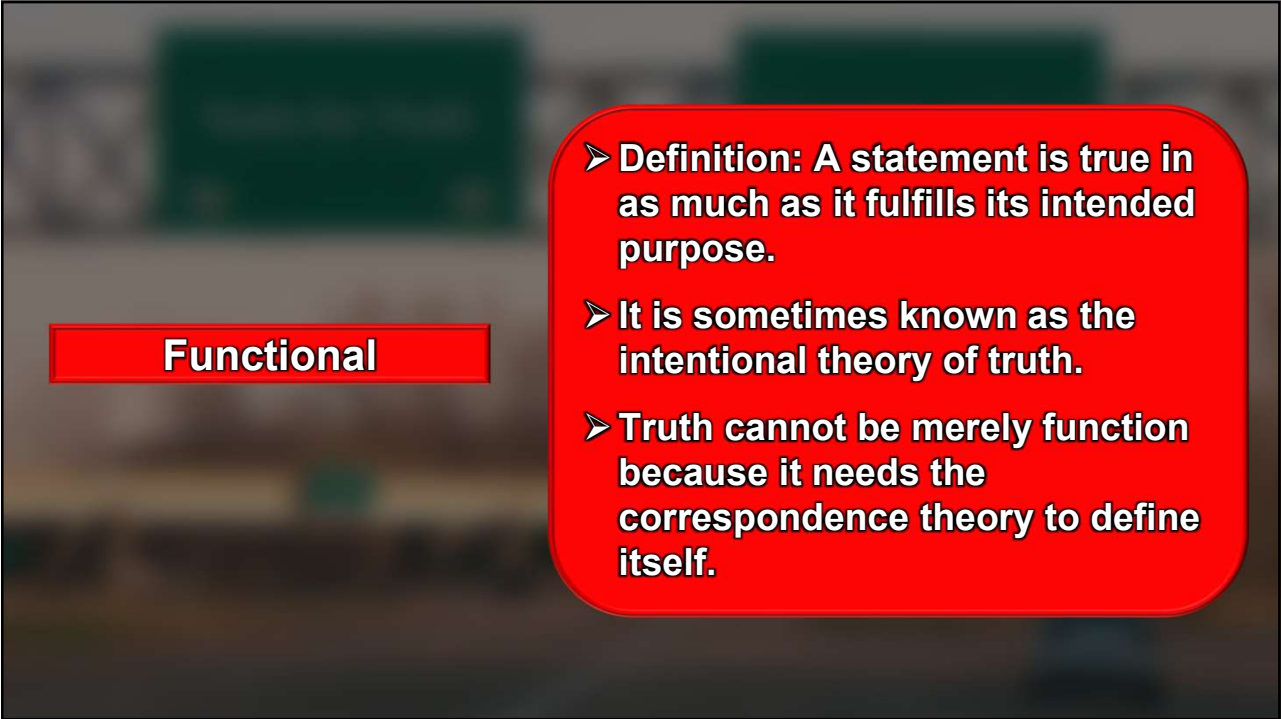


**Q: So debating whether or not they
were actual, real people isn't the
point.**

**RB: Exactly. It's actually dangerous,
because in arguing one way or the
other you may miss the point of the
story.**



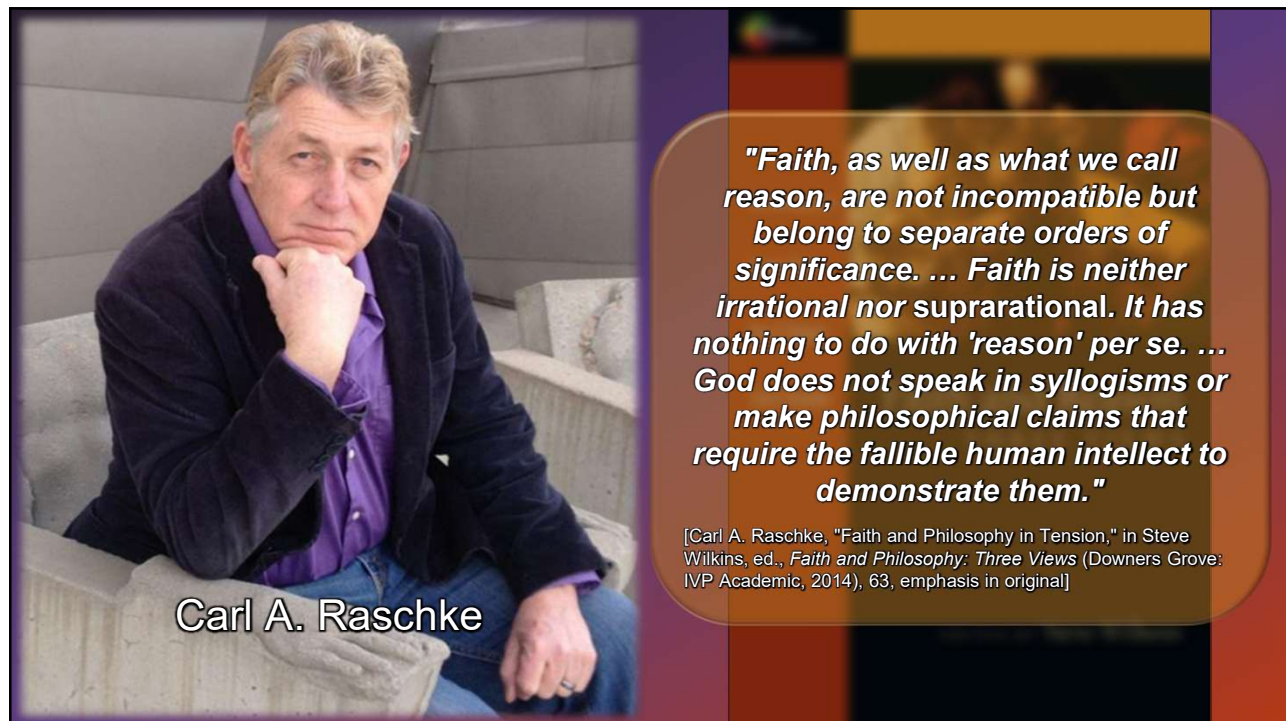
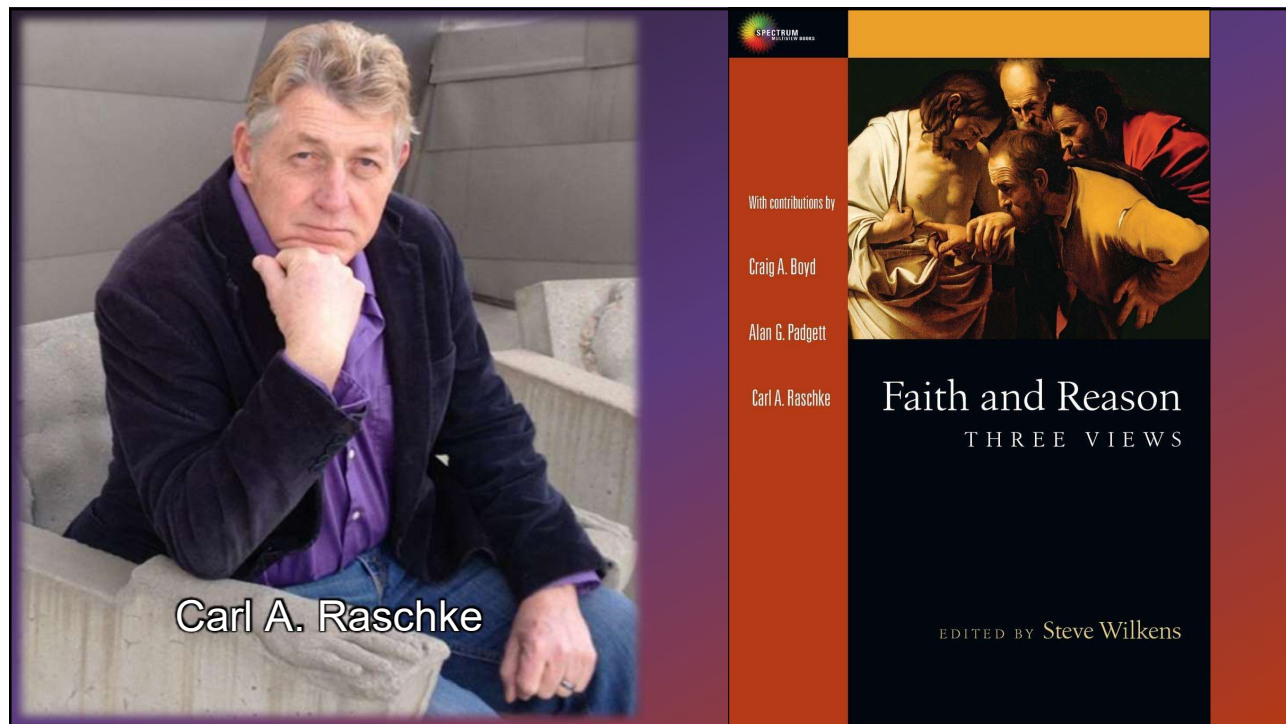
Rob Bell



Functional

- **Definition:** A statement is true in as much as it fulfills its intended purpose.
- It is sometimes known as the intentional theory of truth.
- Truth cannot be merely function because it needs the correspondence theory to define itself.

A newer compromised concept (theory) of truth has arisen from Postmodernism.





Carl A. Raschke

"Meaning is ultimately determined by now the intricate structures of communication work together in an overarching manner, and it is up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse in which what was first written or spoken can be fleshed out. The 'truth' of a text can be discerned in its deployability within a particular set of life circumstances."

[Carl A. Raschke, "Faith and Philosophy in Tension," in Steve Wilkins, ed., *Faith and Philosophy: Three Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 61, emphasis in original]



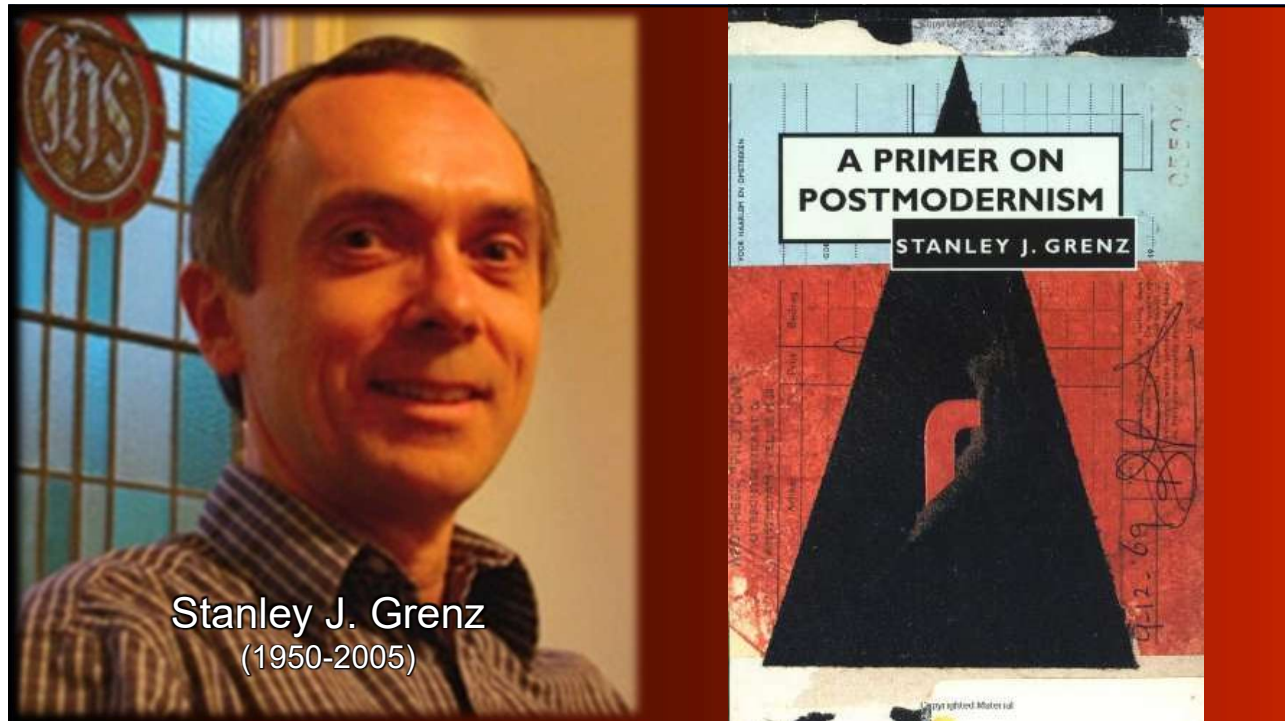
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If "meaning is ultimately determined by now intricate structures of communication work together in an overarching manner" and that "it is up to the interpreter to provide a new framework of discourse," then how are we to take the meaning you were seeking to communicate through your statement here?

If the interpreter provides a new framework, then why should we take your statement to be objectively true?



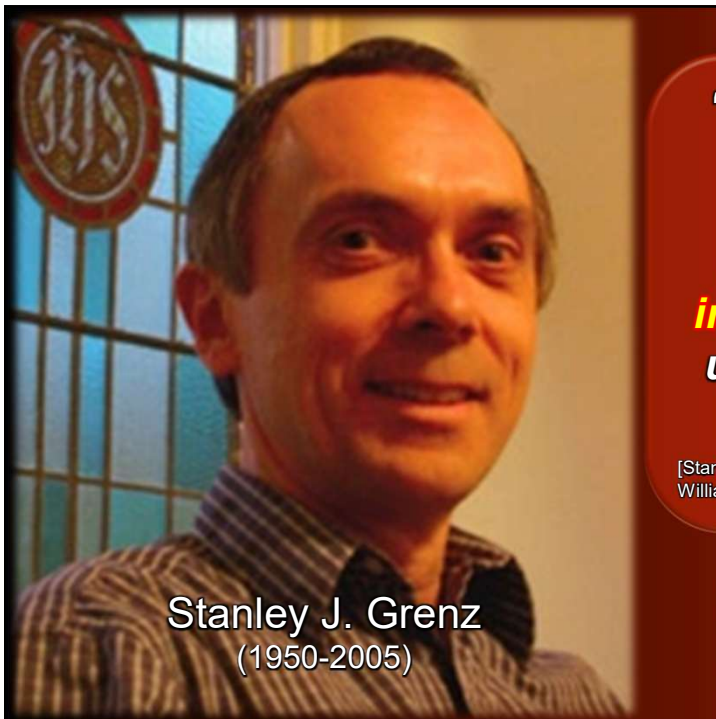


Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

"In contrast to the modern ideal of the dispassionate observer, we affirm the postmodern discovery that no observer can stand outside the historical process. Nor can we gain universal, culturally neutral knowledge as unconditioned specialists."

If what Grenz says is true, then his own statement itself does not come from an observer who stands "outside the historical process" and, thus, the statement is not itself "neutral knowledge" coming from an "unconditioned specialist."

Since this is the case, why should we believe that it is objectively true?



Stanley J. Grenz
(1950-2005)

*"On the contrary, we are participants in our historical and cultural context, and **all our intellectual endeavors** are unavoidably conditioned by that participation."*

[Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 166]



If "all our intellectual endeavors" are "unavoidably conditioned" then Grenz's own statement is itself "unavoidably conditioned."

But if his statement is "unavoidably conditioned," then why should we take it as objectively true?



Medium

Truth and Postmodernism

Dan M. · Follow
4 min read · Mar 29, 2017

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🔖 ⌂ 📌

I initially thought this was a parody of conservative thinking, but on second reading, I realized that it was a genuine (albeit likely willful) lack of understanding of postmodernist thinking. Thus, there are some critiques the discussants should consider.

First, postmodernism (and epistemology generally) distinguishes between subjective truths and objective truths. The former are statements about one's individual experience of the world, while the latter comprise propositions supported either inductively or deductively.

For example, the colour red contains both objective and subjective truths. Objectively, 'red' is the term given to light in the visible spectrum with wavelengths around 650 nm. However, seeing the colour is a subjective experience that happens within the brain of each observer. Thus, my experience of seeing red need not be identical to yours.

The discussants might still object to the existence of subjective truths, saying



Dan McGee

*"Postmodernism stresses the distinction between objectivity of facts, versus objectivity of knowledge or people. It accepts the possible existence of facts outside human context, but argues that **all knowledge is mediated** by an individual and that the experiences, **biases**, beliefs, and identity of that individual **necessarily influence how they mediate any knowledge.**"*

[Dan McGee, "Truth and Postmodernism" downloaded from <https://medium.com/@danmcgee/truth-and-postmodernism-816ea9b3007a>, 05/09/22]



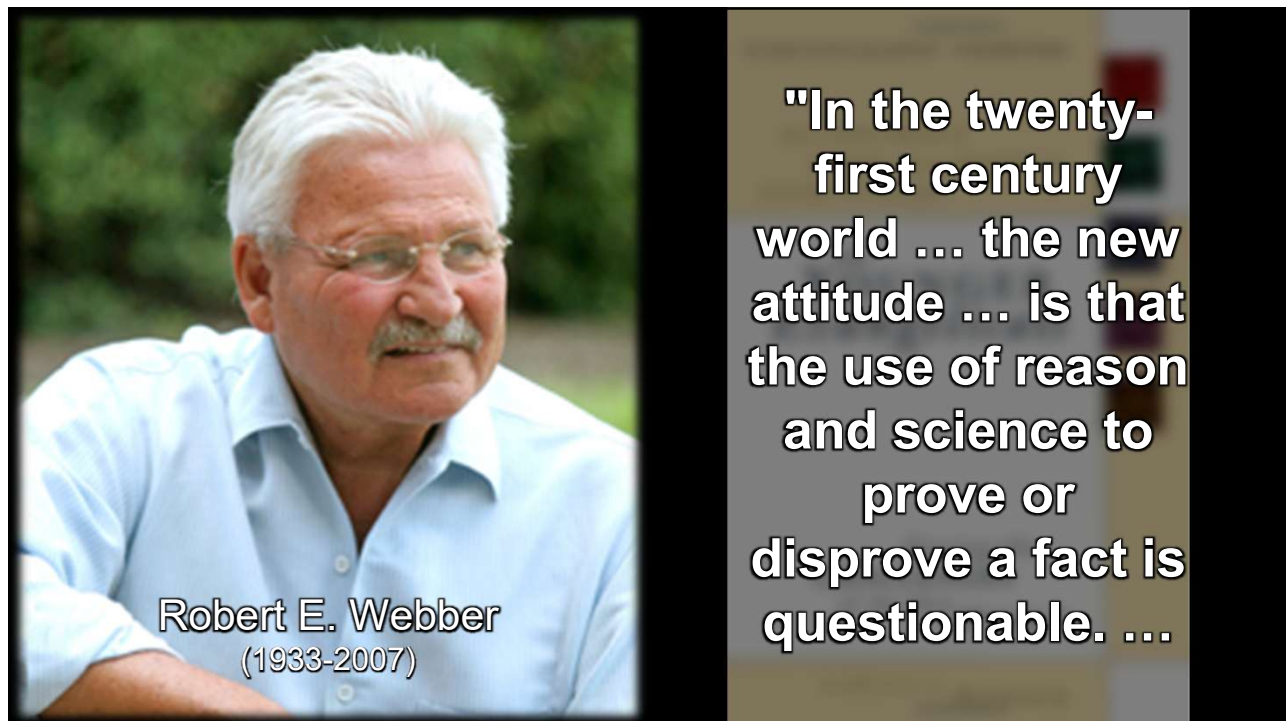
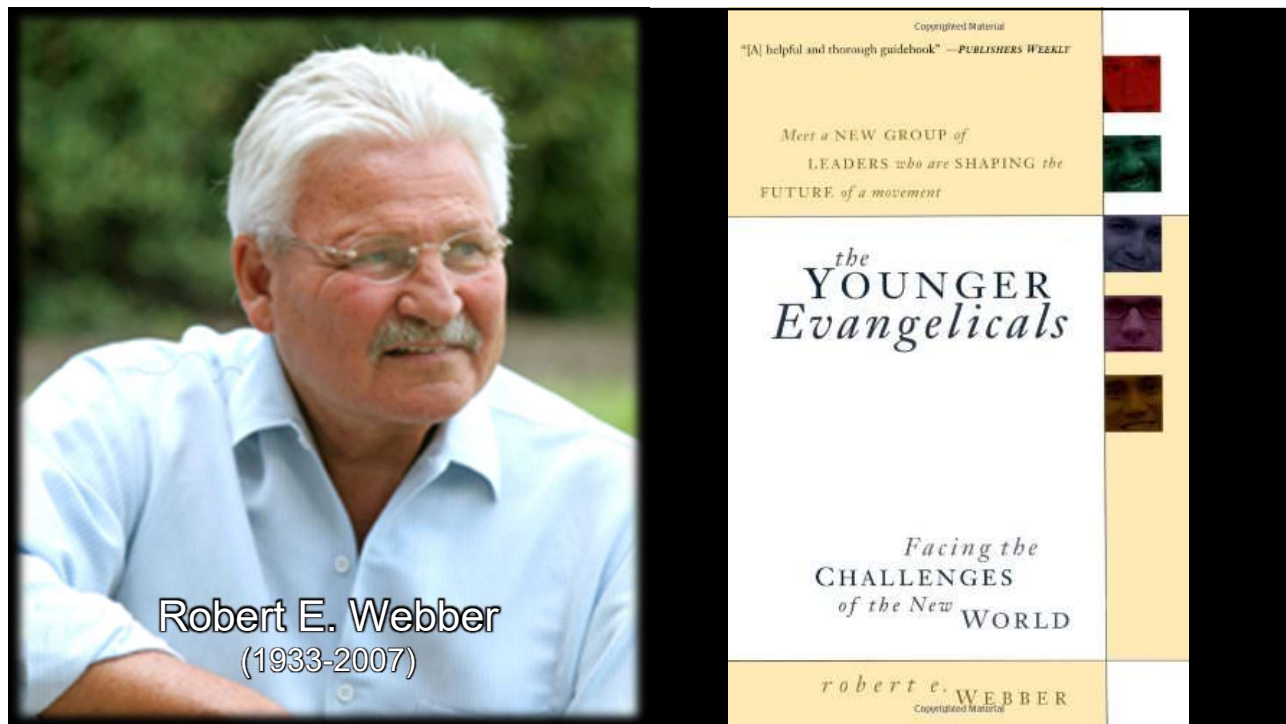
Dan McGee

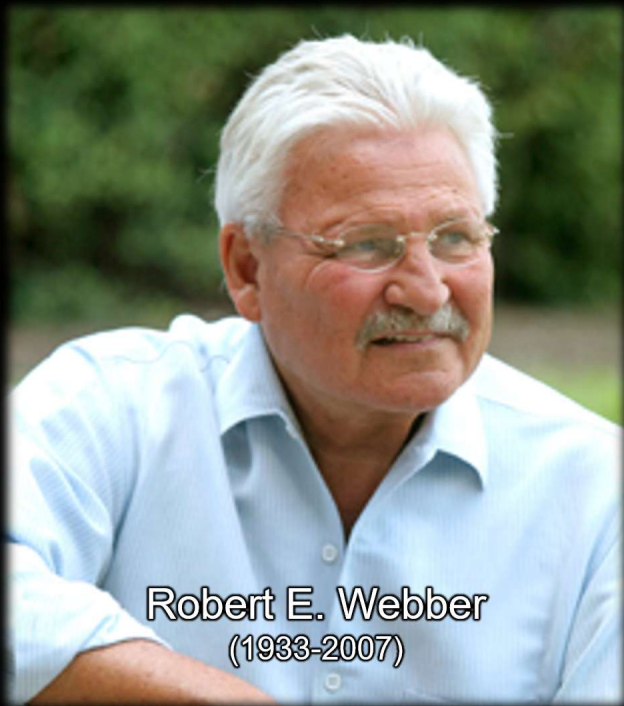
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[Dan McGee, "Truth and Postmodernism" downloaded from <https://medium.com/@danmcgee/truth-and-postmodernism-816ea9b3007a>, 05/09/22]

If "all knowledge is mediated" and the individual has "biases" that "necessarily influence how they mediate ANY knowledge" (emphasis added), then this would be true of Dan McGee and the knowledge claim he is making right here.

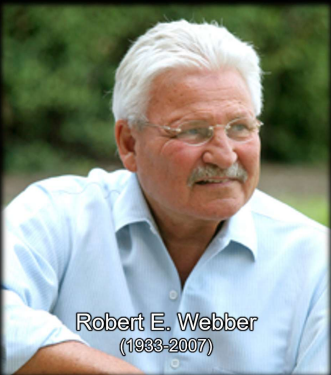
But if this is true of Dan McGee's claim here, why should we take his claim to be objectively true?





Robert E. Webber
(1933-2007)

"This ... points
... to the
postmodern
conclusion that
we deal with
'interpreted
facts.' ...



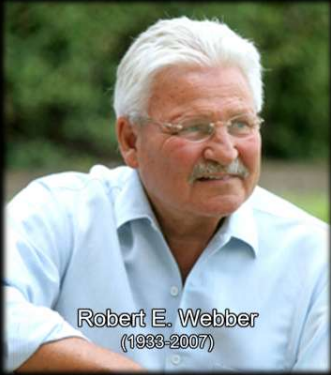
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"This ... points
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facts.' ...

***Again, if we deal with
"interpreted facts," then
what does that say about
Webber's statement
itself?***

***Is his claim here merely
an "interpreted fact?"***

***If so, then why should we
take it as objectively
true?***



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(1933-2007)

"This ... points ... to the postmodern conclusion that we deal with 'interpreted facts.' ..."

Again, if we deal with "interpreted facts," then what does that say about Webber's statement itself?

Is his claim here merely an "interpreted fact?"

If so, then why should we take it as objectively true?



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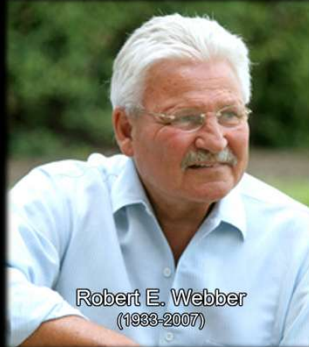
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Saturday, 10 March 2018

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HOMILETICS INTERVIEW: Robert E. Webber

What Younger Evangelicals Want—and Are Getting!

Robert E. Webber is the William R. and Geraldyn B. Myers Professor of Ministry at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, one of the only seminaries in the country that offers a Master's and a Doctorate in worship and which has intentional studies that integrate worship and spirituality into the program. He is also the President of the Institute For Worship Studies which offers a MWS (Masters of Worship Studies) and a DWS (Doctor of Worship Studies). He is also Professor of Theology Emeritus at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

Dr. Webber has lectured on worship in nearly every denomination and fellowship, and has authored or edited more than 40 books on worship including the eight-volume work, *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*. His most recent books include: *Planning Blended Worship* (Abingdon, 1998), *Ancient-Future Faith* (Baker, 1999), and *Journey to Jesus* (Abingdon, 2001).

His latest book, *The Younger Evangelical* (Baker, 2002), is attracting broad attention and interest because of its incisive look at a new emerging leadership in the church, while at the same time pausing to look at the leadership models of the 20th-century church.

Dr. Webber was scheduled to speak at a conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Radical Orthodoxy, where Homiletics was to meet up with him for this interview. But he called a few days before the conference to say that he had had back surgery and wouldn't be there. So we met with him in his home in Wheaton, where in the kitchen, and in a straight-back chair, he gladly and graciously discussed his observations about a church that is in the midst of change and the Younger Evangelicals who are leading the way.

Homiletics: To start, we should probably clarify the categories you develop for evangelicals in the 20th century and the early 21st century. You identify traditional, pragmatic and Younger Evangelicals. What defines these groups?

Webber: The underlying idea of these three groups is that evangelicalism seems to follow the curvature of culture and reflects culture. And if you look back over the last 50-60 years, culture has actually gone through three very distinct groupings: Boomers, Gen-Xers and now Millennials. It seems to me that as evangelicalism encounters each cultural shift that each cultural shift as they integrate with it gives a different shape and form, not so much to the message, but to the way in which the message itself is presented. So, I think that the Traditional Evangelicalism, the Pragmatic Evangelicalism, and the Younger Evangelicalism are all part of the same tradition, but they are shaped by different cultural contexts.



Robert E. Webber

Other Homiletics Interviews:

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Jesus and the Consumerist Culture — **Tyler Wigg Stevenson**

Taking God to Work — **David Miller**

Why Things Are the Way They Are — **Paul Shepherd**

Let's Try to Keep the China on the Table — **N.T. Wright**

Stitching Together the Patchwork Family — **Barbara Carnal**

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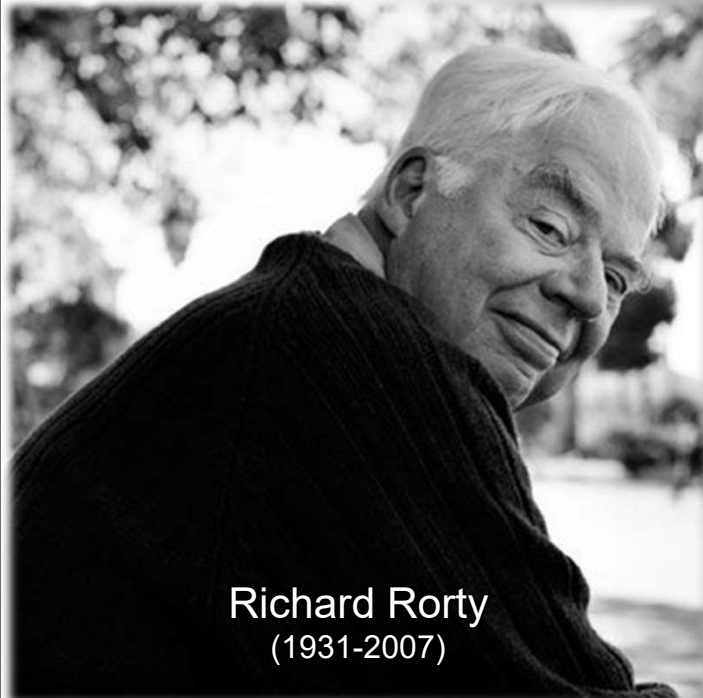
Stitching Together the Patchwork Family — **Barbara Carnal**

Homiletics: So then, the Traditional Evangelicals function within a modern worldview that is rationalistic, and propositional.

Webber: "That probably is the most distinguishing feature of the Traditionalists. They've been shaped by the Enlightenment. So they work with modern philosophy, a modern understanding of science, history, sociology. They're modernist, and so they interpret the Christian faith through these modern categories."

Webber: "And what's very interesting about Traditional Evangelicals is that the categories through which they interpret the Christian faith are almost regarded as sacred, almost as sacred as the Christian faith itself. So if you say, 'Well, I don't believe in evidential apologetics,' there's something wrong with you."

[<http://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/interviews/webber.asp>, accessed 09/05/20]

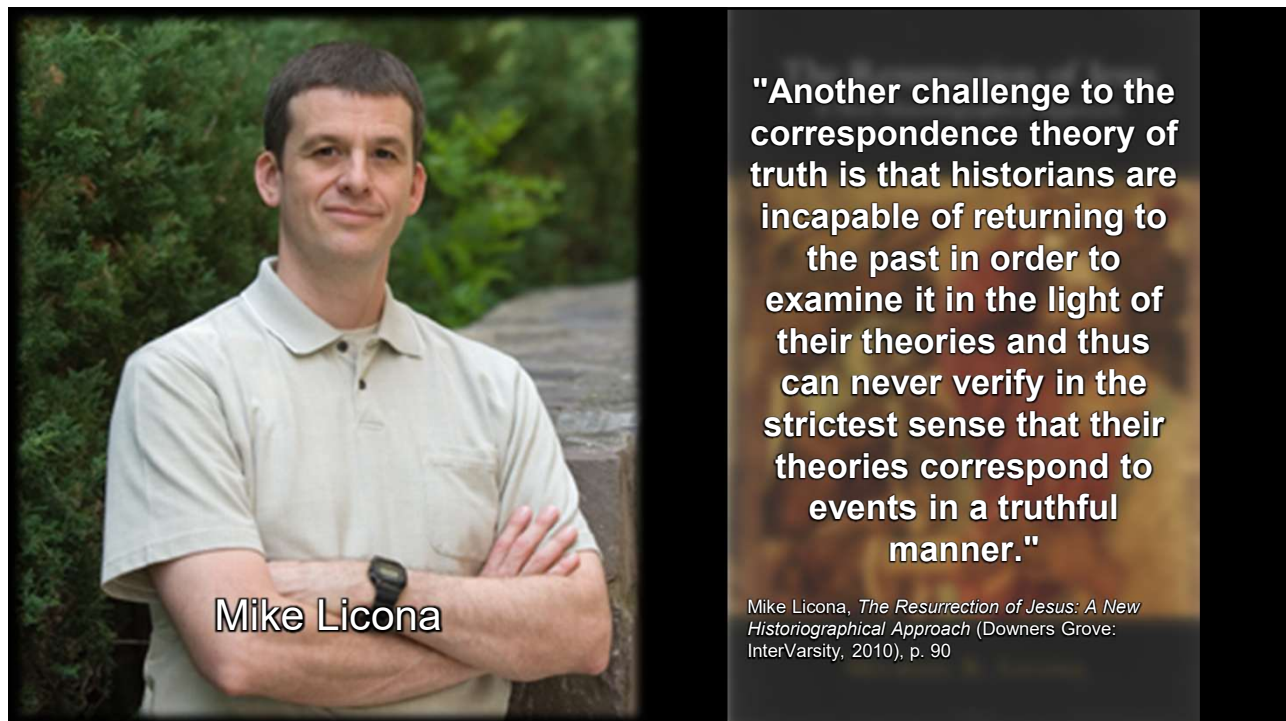
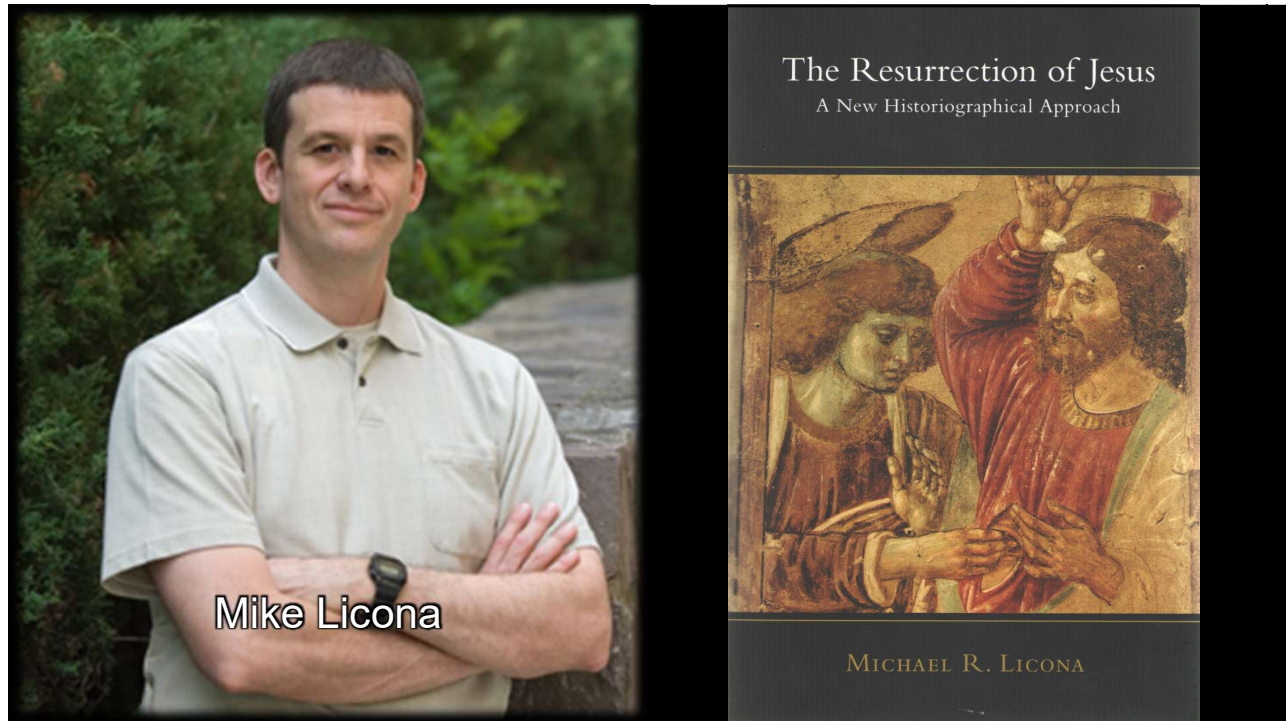


Richard Rorty
(1931-2007)

"Philosophy is 'edifying discourse' the purpose of which is 'finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking' and 'to keep the conversation going rather than to find objective truth.'"

[Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 360, 377, as cited in William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: An Historical Introduction to Philosophy*, 2nd ed., (Belmont, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002), 563]

The theory that the Gospels are of the genre of Greco-Roman Biography allows Mike Licona—though he claims to hold to a correspondence theory of truth—to ascribe conflicting or contradictory statements to the Bible in as much as he overlooks various ways in which a proposition might correspond to reality.





Mike Licona

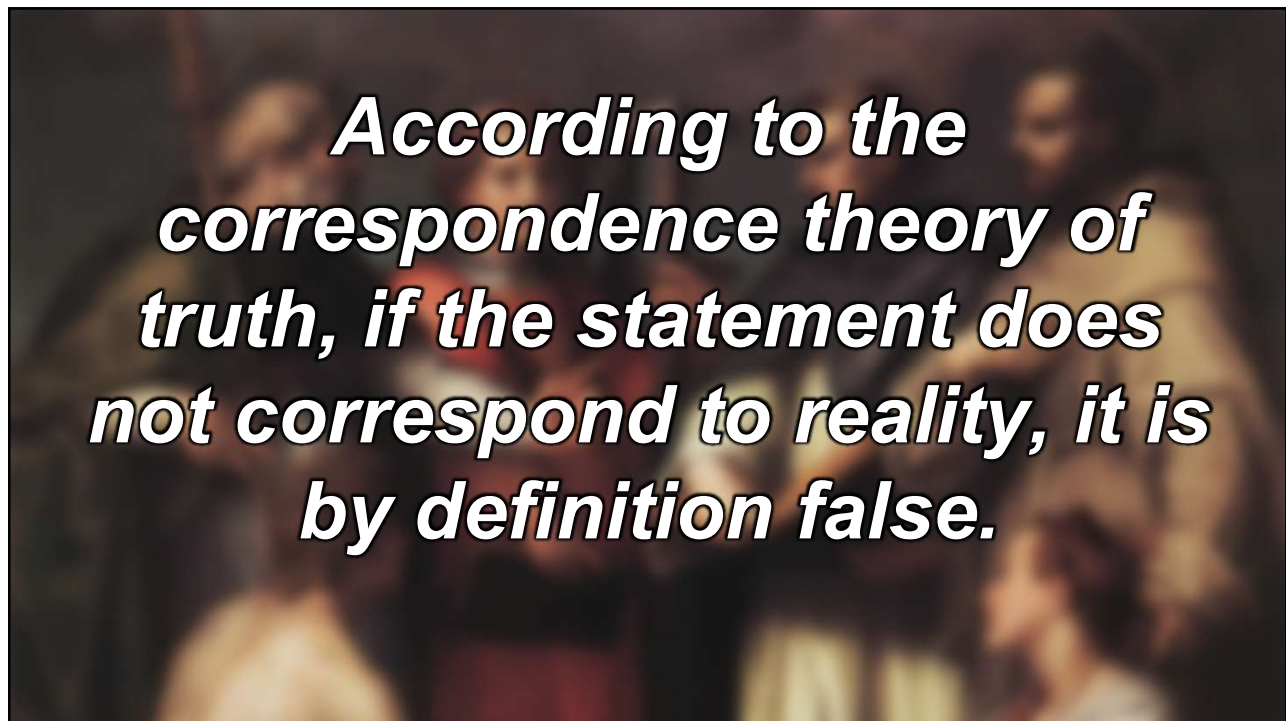
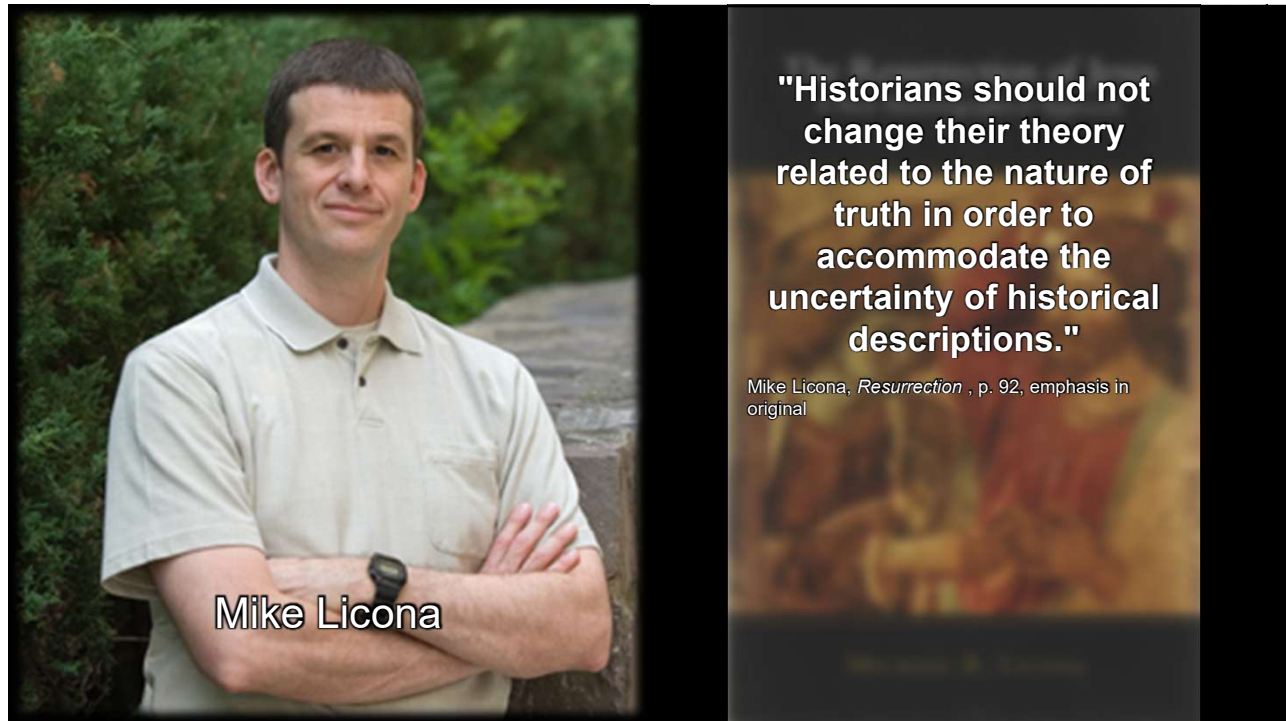
"As with the challenges affiliated with perceptions, the inability of historians to verify their hypotheses most of the time only affects their ability to know truth. It does not affect the nature of truth itself."

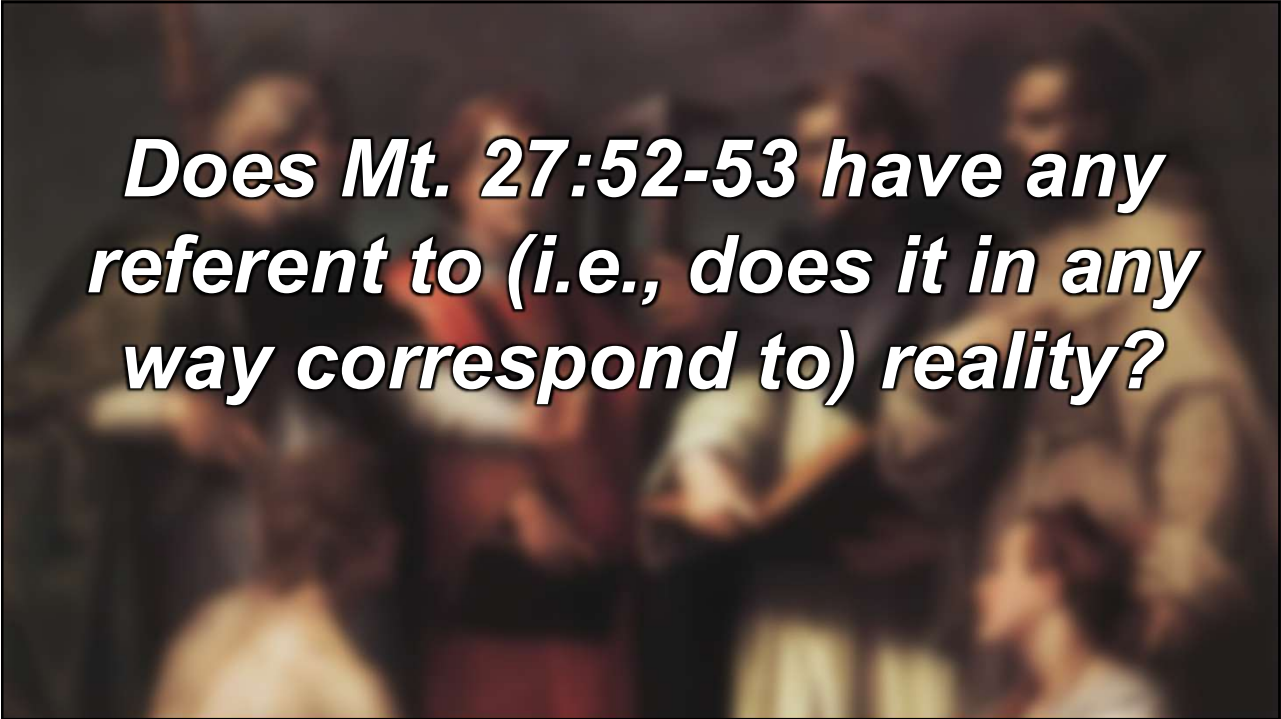
Mike Licona, *Resurrection*, p. 90, emphasis in original



Mike Licona

"In addition to defining truth in a correspondence sense, realist historians attempt to establish criteria for identifying what is true in a correspondence sense."





Does Mt. 27:52-53 have any referent to (i.e., does it in any way correspond to) reality?

✧ Matthew 27:51-53 ✧

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, {52} and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; {53} and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Does the dragon in Revelation 12 pose a problem for my view of inerrancy?

✧ Revelation 12:3-4 ✧

*And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. {4} **His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.** And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*



Mike didn't see how I could reconcile my interpretation of Luke 7:6 in light of Matt. 8:8 with a correspondence theory of truth.

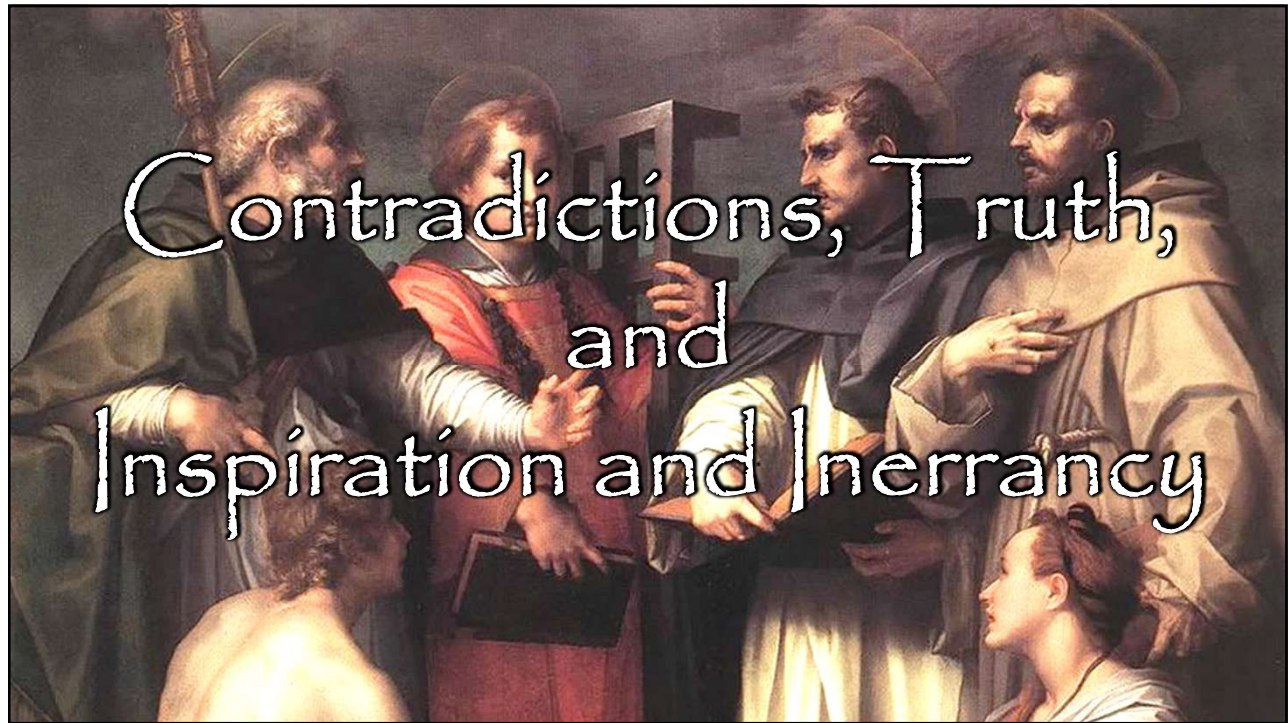
Metonymy

*"The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, **I am not worthy** that You should come under my roof. ...'"*

Matt. 8:8

*"... the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for **I am not worthy** that You should enter under my roof.'"*

Luke 7:6



***Mike rightly says that if
Jesus rose from the dead,
then Christianity is still true
even if it turned out that
some things in the
Bible weren't.***

But the question is not whether Christianity is still true even if some of the things in the Bible are not. Instead the questions are:

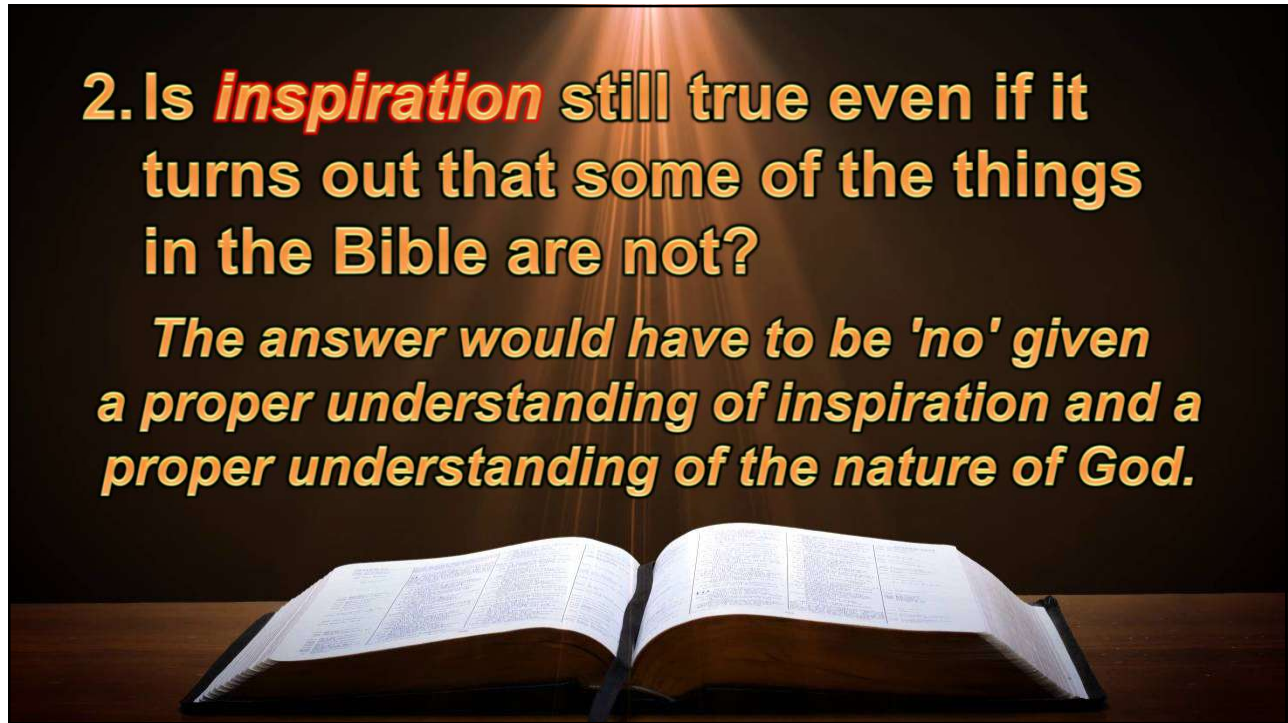
1. Is ***inerrancy*** still true even if it turns out that some of the things in the Bible are not?

*The answer would have to be 'no' unless you have a ***qualified notion*** of what truth is, and, by implication, ***what it means to not be true.****



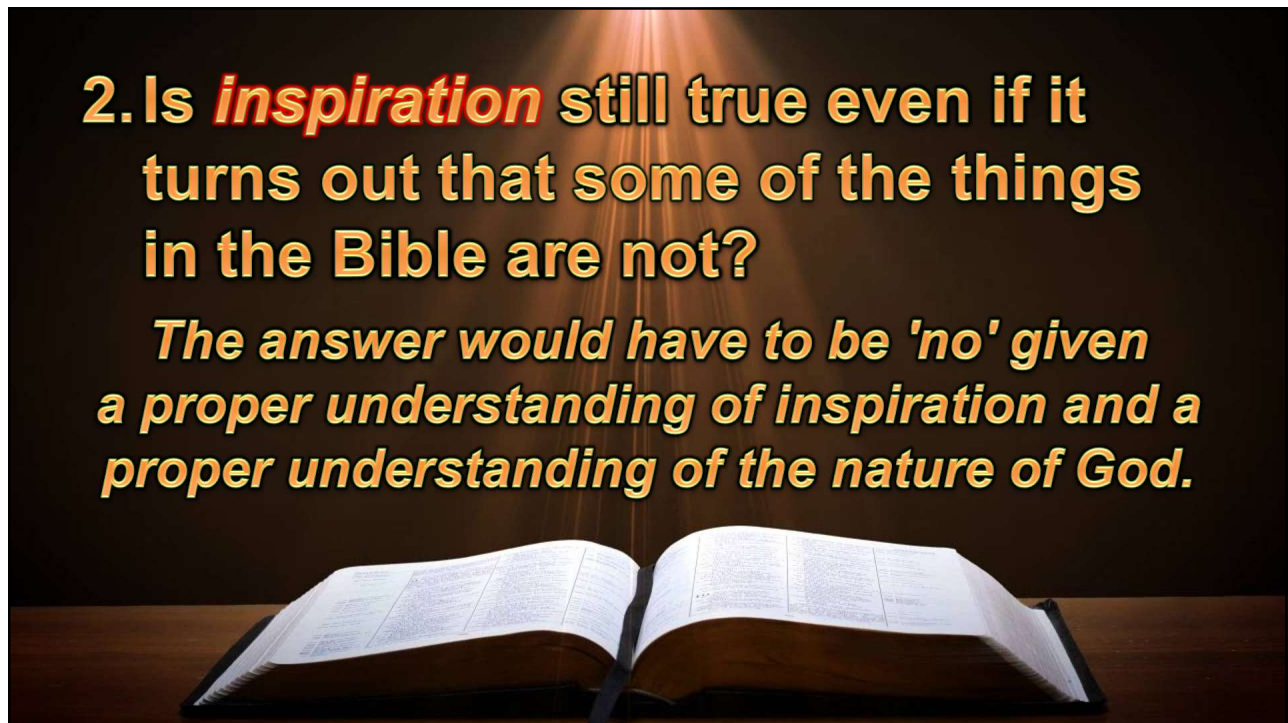
2. Is ***inspiration*** still true even if it turns out that some of the things in the Bible are not?

The answer would have to be 'no' given a proper understanding of inspiration and a proper understanding of the nature of God.



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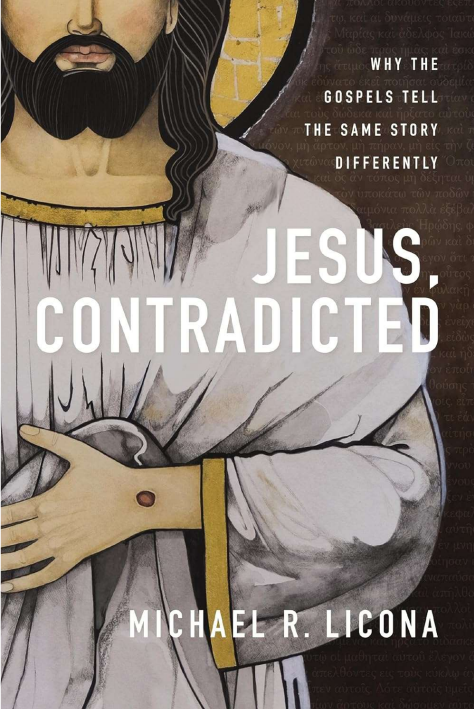
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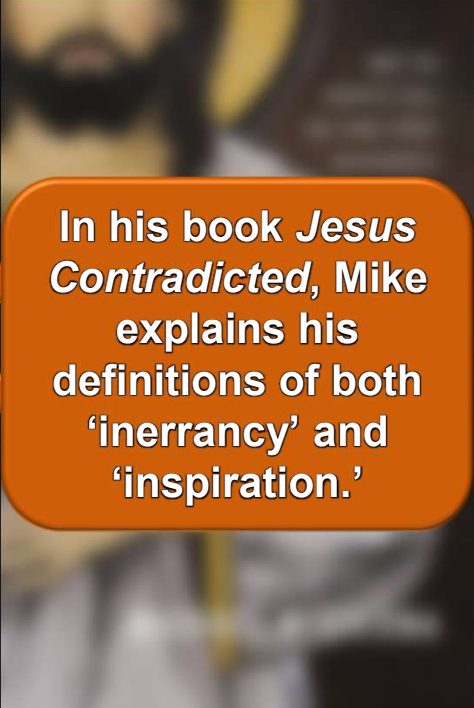
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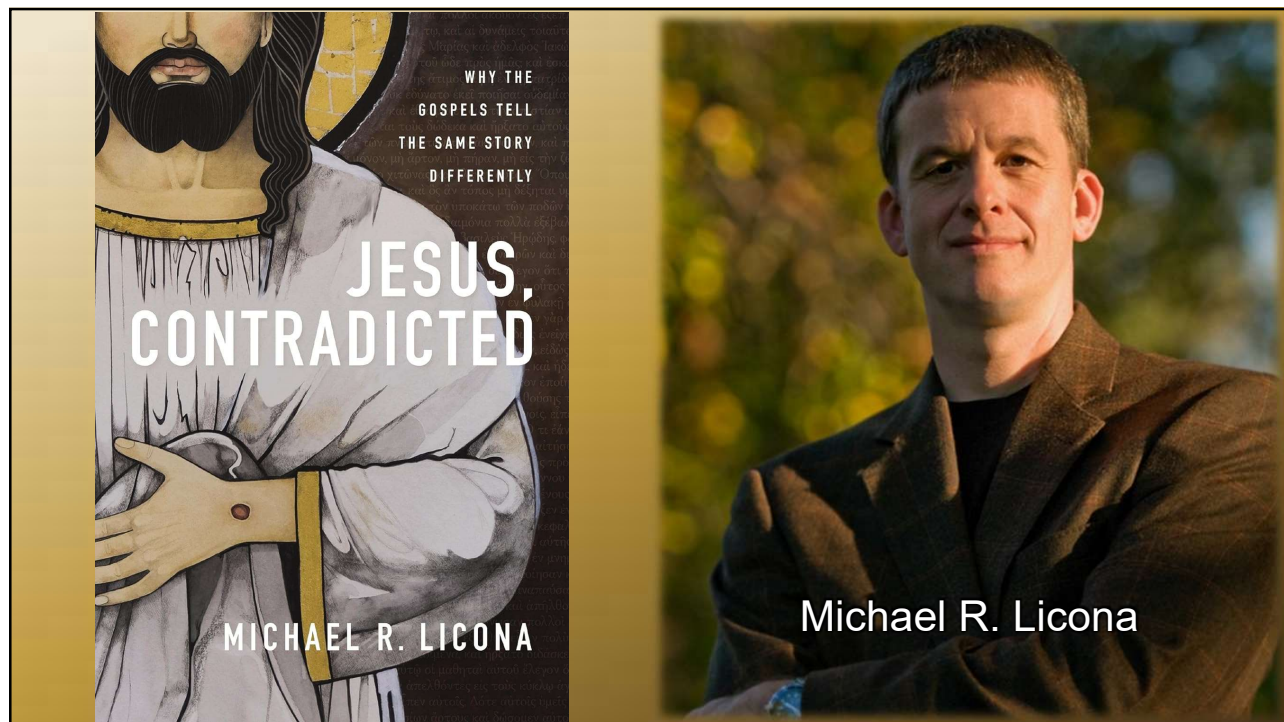
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The answer would have to be 'no' given a proper understanding of inspiration and a proper understanding of the nature of God.





In his book *Jesus Contradicted*, Mike explains his definitions of both 'inerrancy' and 'inspiration.'




RISEN JESUS
WITH MIKE LICONA
Professor of New Testament Studies, Houston Christian University

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CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY NEEDS A FACELIFT

CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY NEEDS A FACELIFT



CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY NEEDS A FACELIFT
By Posted May 1, 2024 In Blog

At the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, I read a paper titled *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy Needs a Facelift*. The paper was well-attended and was followed by a period of thoughtful Q&A. I'm making my paper public, due to having received many requests for it.

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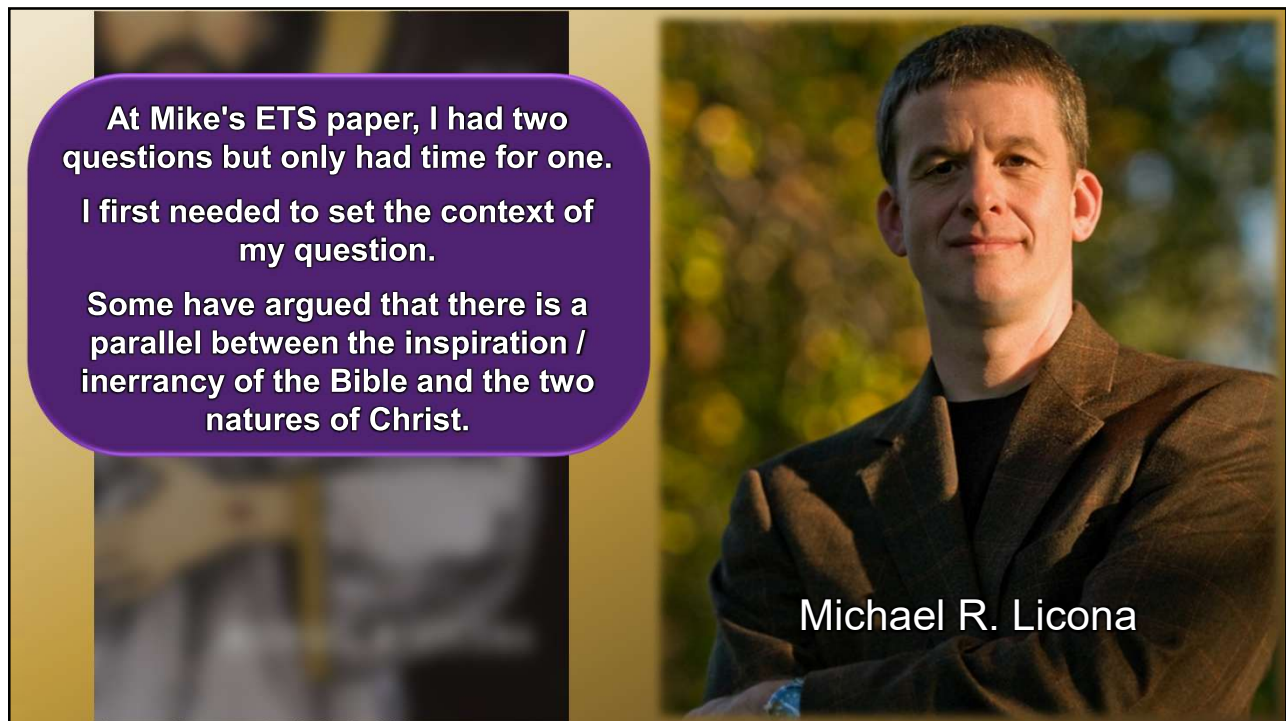
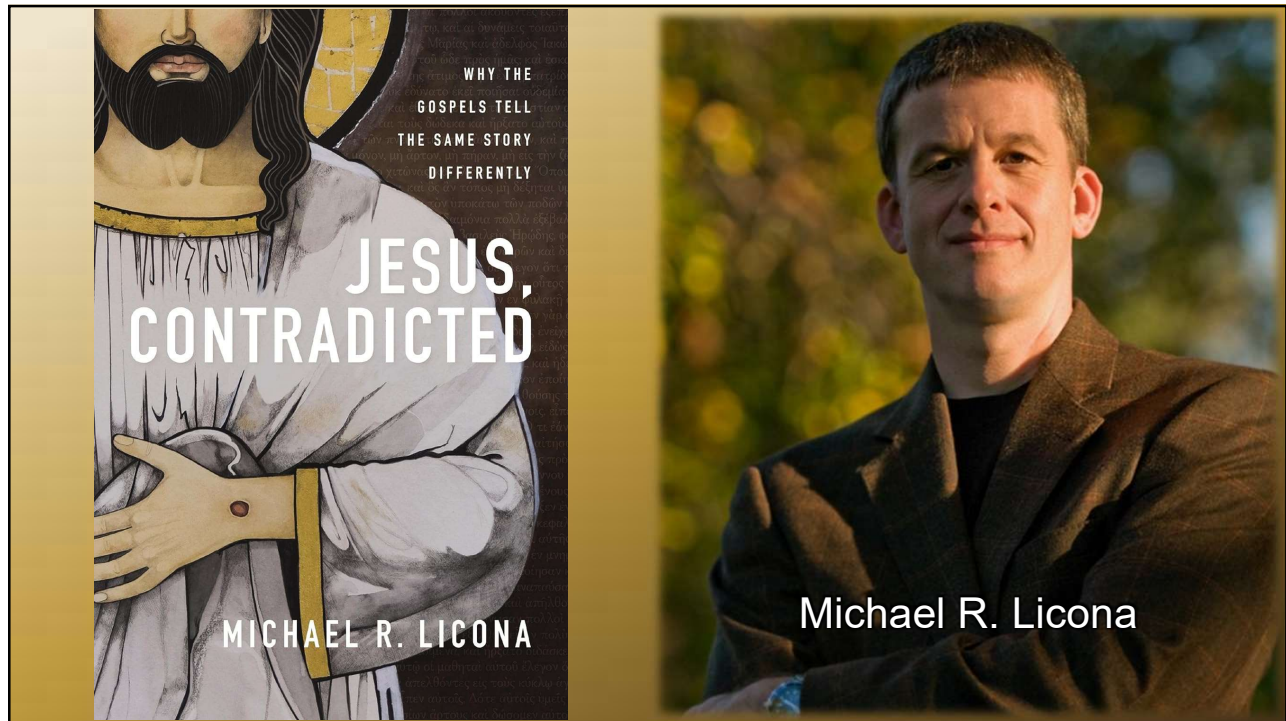
ETS 2023: CSBI Needs a Facelift

When COVID hit in late-2019, it was a new and uncharted problem and no one really knew how to handle it properly. Vaccines, masks, and lockdowns resulted. All of us remember these too well! At the time, most believed these were the best ways to limit the spread of COVID. This wasn't necessarily a left vs right matter. I have two physicians on the board of my ministry who are political conservatives. Both got the vaccines and booster and encouraged my wife and me to do the same, given our age. So we did and I have a vaccine card to prove it!

However, there were some along the way, including numerous medical doctors, who were pushing back and saying, "Wait a minute. Something's wrong here." Unfortunately, those voices were strongly rebuked, labeled "anti-vaxxers," and quickly cancelled.

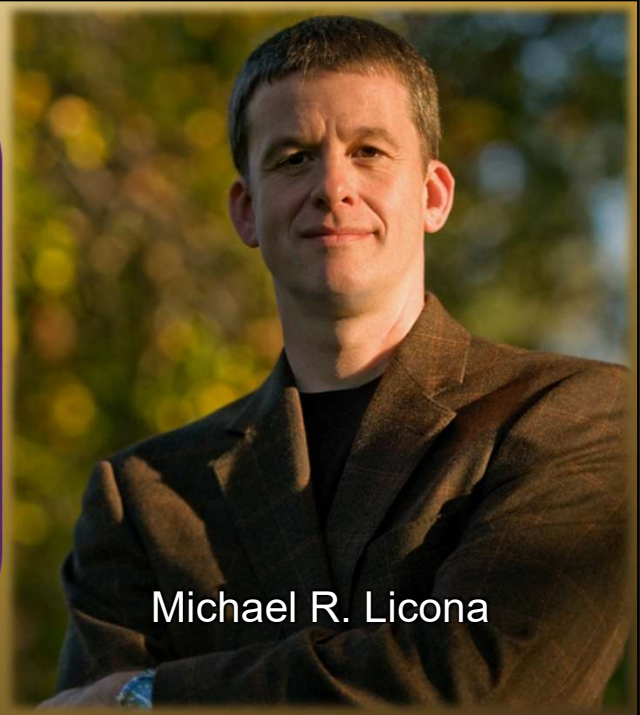
But it turns out those dissenting voices were largely correct. Some of the recommended precautions did little to prevent the spread of COVID. In fact, the benefits of some solutions were outweighed by negative consequences: suicide rates increased, children became delayed in their learning, unemployment surged, many small businesses went out of business, health professionals, first responders, military personnel and civil servants who refused to get the vaccine lost their jobs. Ultimately, some of the forced solutions were wrong from the beginning and have been revised or abandoned altogether.

During the next 19 minutes, I will contend that some of the solutions to COVID and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (henceforth CSBI) have something major in common: Despite the good intentions of their proponents to



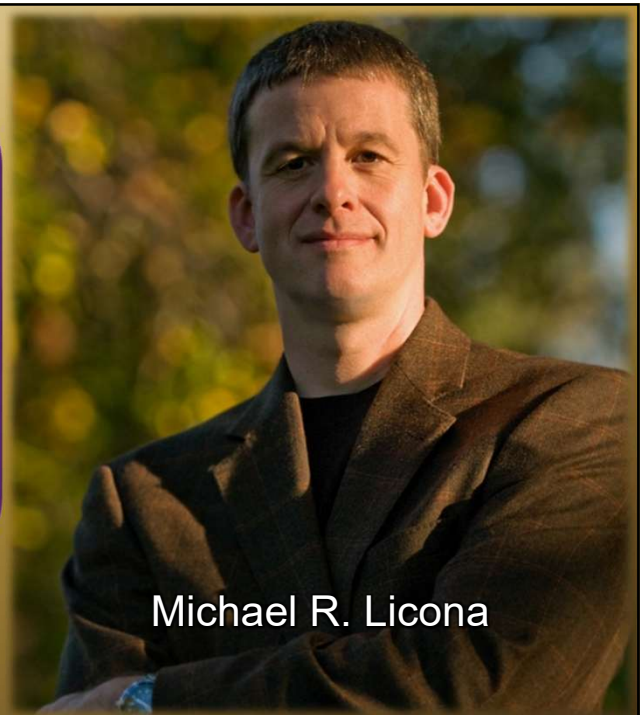
The doctrine of the hypostatic union whereby Christ is two natures—human and divine—in one person further maintains that, despite the fact that all humans born in Adam are fallen in sin, Jesus, being born of a virgin (and thus, not a descendent of Adam) is the perfect man.

In other words, Jesus' human nature does not entail that Jesus is a sinner. As a human, the God/Man Jesus is unique.



The "traditional" (as Mike Licona labels it) view of inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible argues that, though God used human beings to write His inspired word, their writings contain no errors.

In other words, the Scriptures do not take on the fallenness of humans just because God used humans in the writing. As a book, the God/Human writings of the Scriptures is unique.



My question to Mike was this.
If you allows for "errors" (in the traditional sense of the term underlying the ICBI Chicago Statement) like Matthew having one or more names wrong in his genealogy or John having a different day of the week than the synoptics, would you be comfortable allowing "errors" or mistakes in the life of Jesus.

His answer was 'yes'.

A portrait of Michael R. Licona, a man with short dark hair, wearing a brown blazer over a black shirt. He is standing outdoors with trees in the background.

Michael R. Licona

My second question which I did not have time to ask was this.

Your earlier works which employed the thesis that the Gospels were in the literary genre of Greco-Roman Biography allowed for a qualified definition of 'error' given the literary conventions of the genre.

Your latest work adds a qualified definition of 'inspiration'. Whereas the Greco-Roman Biography would apply only to the Gospels, what implications does your qualified definition of 'inspiration' have for the epistles?

A portrait of Michael R. Licona, a man with short dark hair, wearing a brown blazer over a black shirt. He is standing outdoors with trees in the background.

Michael R. Licona

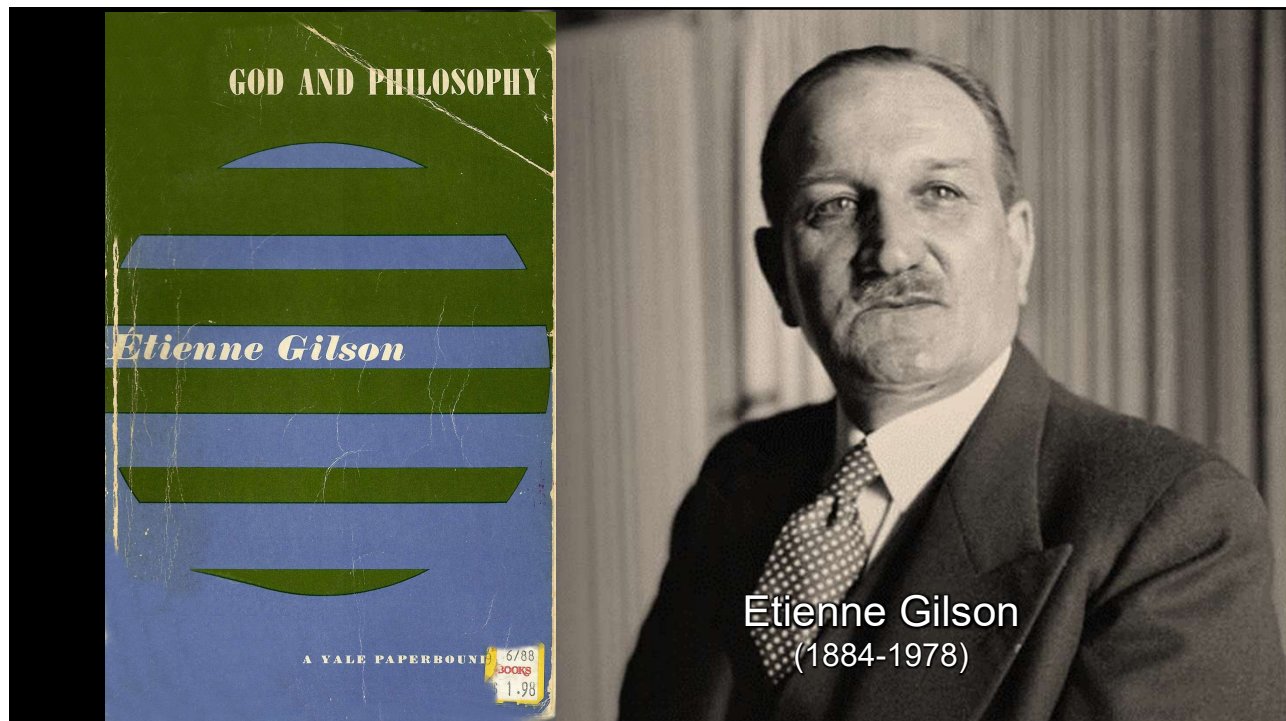
Regarding the usages of *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος) in 2 Tim. 3:16, translated “inspiration” (KJV, NKJV) and “God breathed” (NIV), Mike argues that our understanding of Paul’s use of the term needs to be modified, moving us away from the traditional understanding of inspiration, given how the term is used in extrabiblical Greek sources.

A third question, then, is this: What would Mike say about the fact that no extrabiblical **Greek sources could possibly have used in the same way Paul does** the term *theos* (Θεός) which Paul uses in the very next verse and is the root of the above word translated ‘inspired’.

Should Christians modify their understanding of God and move away from the traditional view?

I say this because at no point did the Ancient Greeks connect the ultimate principles or realities of their religion to the ultimate principles or realities of their philosophy.

Greek thinking outside the influence of Christianity (itself influenced by the Old Testament) could never make the connection.



Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

“We should not be surprised to see very great Greek philosophers at a loss how to identify their principles with their gods, or their gods with their principles.”

[Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 23]

Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

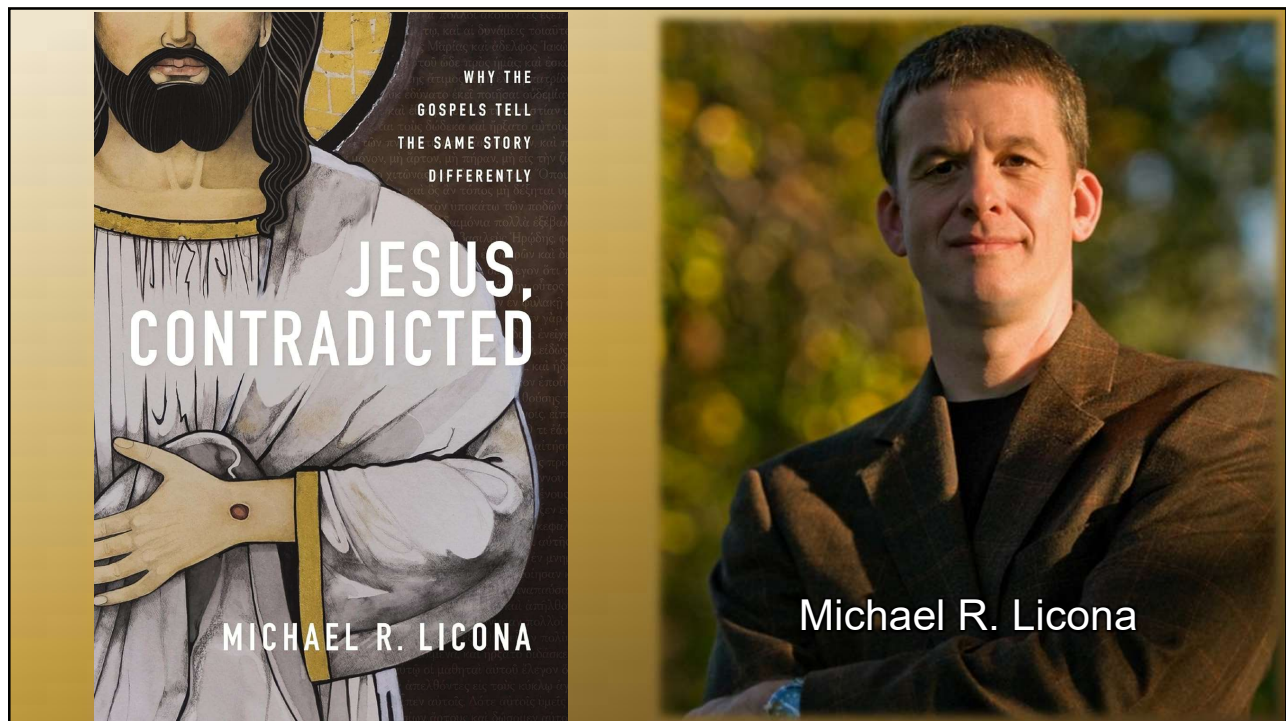
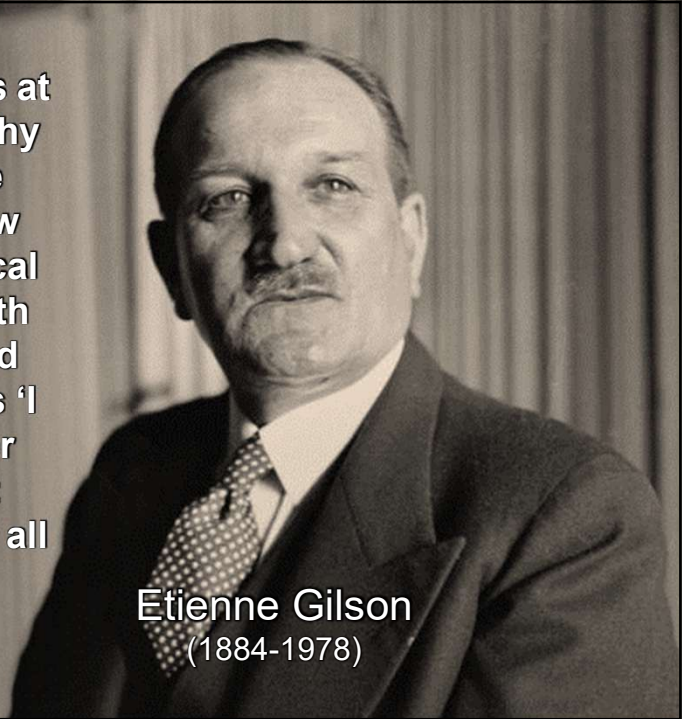
“So long as the Jew kept their own religious revelation to themselves, nothing happened to philosophy. But owing to the preaching of the Gospel, of the God of the Jews ceased to be the private God of an elect race and became the universal God of all men.

Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)

“Any Christian convert who was at all familiar with Greek philosophy was then bound to realize the metaphysical import of his new religious belief. His philosophical first principle had to be one with his religious first principle, and since the name of this God was ‘I am,’ any Christian philosopher had to posit ‘I am’ as his first principle and supreme cause of all things, even in philosophy.”

[Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, 41]

Etienne Gilson
(1884-1978)



Michael R. Licona

"The Roman historian Tacitus is regarded as being a fairly accurate historian. ... After identifying the Gospels as either belonging to or having a close affinity to the genre of ancient biography, it cannot be merely assumed that each of the Evangelists had Tacitus's level of commitment to accurate reporting. ... Truth-telling in ancient historiography permitted the facts to be reported with some elasticity."

[Michael R. Licona, *Jesus Contradicted: Why the Gospels Tell the Same Story Differently* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 65, 67]

Michael R. Licona

*"The Roman historian Tacitus is regarded as being a **fairly accurate** historian. ... After identifying the Gospels as either belonging to or having a close affinity to the genre of ancient biography, it cannot be merely assumed that each of the Evangelists had Tacitus's level of commitment to accurate reporting. ... **Truth-telling in ancient historiography permitted the facts to be reported with some elasticity.**"*

[Michael R. Licona, *Jesus Contradicted: Why the Gospels Tell the Same Story Differently* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 65, 67]

If "truth-telling in ancient historiography permitted the facts to be reported with some elasticity" then what is one to make of the category 'fairly accurate'?

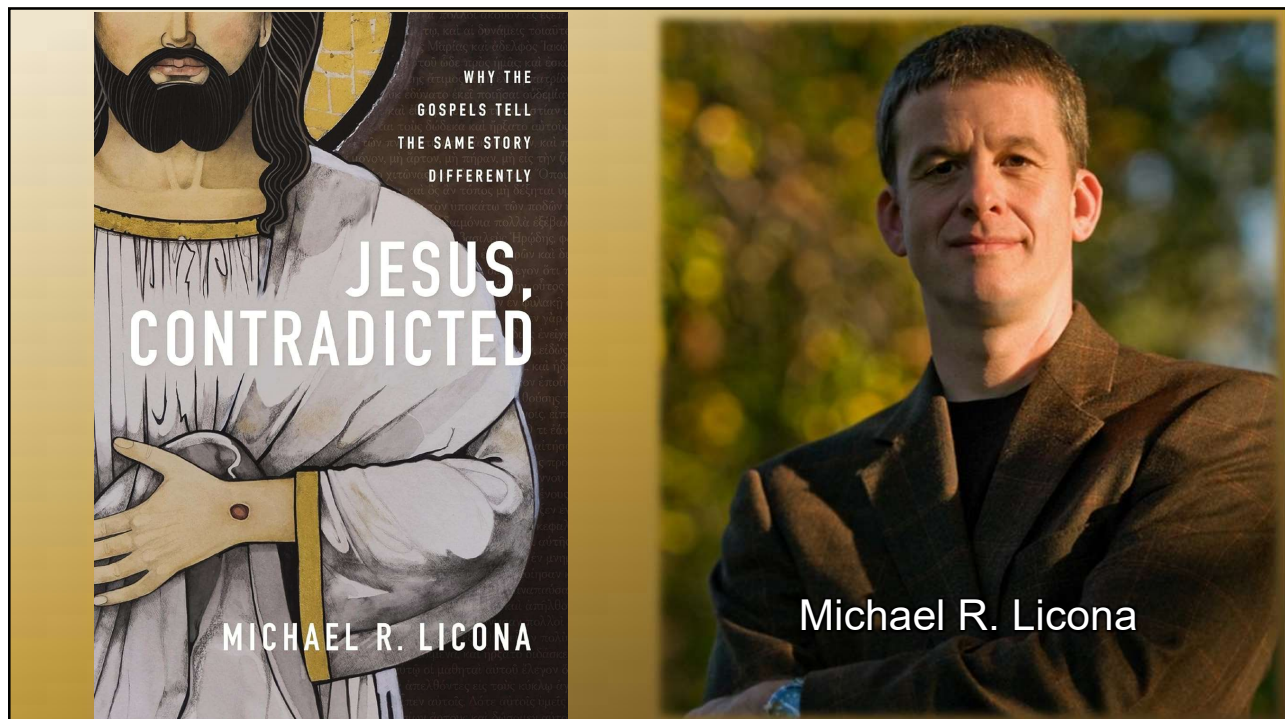
How can a statement be "fairly accurate" if truth-telling allows "some elasticity"?

"The Roman historian Tacitus is regarded as being a fairly accurate historian. ... After identifying the Gospels as either belonging to or having a close affinity to the genre of ancient biography, it cannot be merely assumed that each of the Evangelists had Tacitus's level of commitment to accurate reporting. ... Truth-telling in ancient historiography permitted the facts to be reported with some elasticity."

[Michael R. Licona, *Jesus Contradicted: Why the Gospels Tell the Same Story Differently* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 65, 67]

Further, there is a difference between what a "genre" permits and what people may in fact actually say.

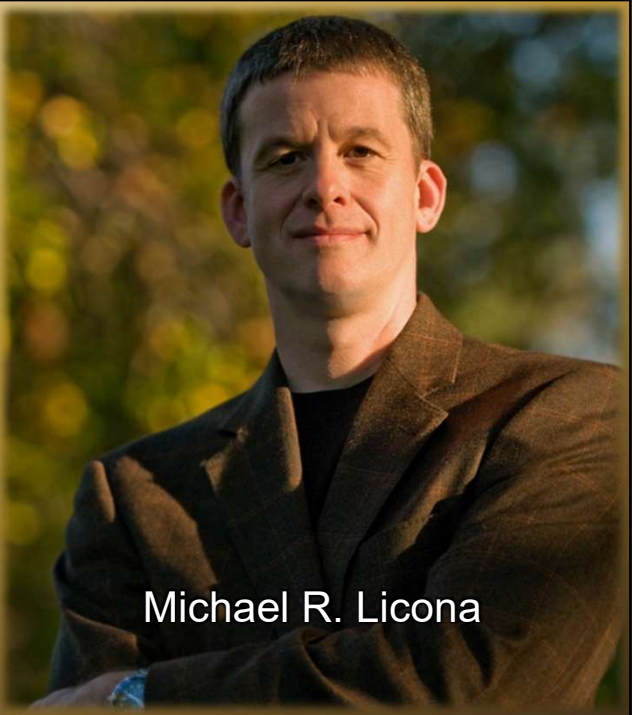
Court testimony does not "permit" misremembering or lying, but sometimes witnesses do misremember or lie.



Michael R. Licona

"In my view, this does not undermine the overall reliability of the literature in which they appear, as long as we have the understanding that what we are reading was most often intended to convey an accurate gist of the people and events described rather than preserving details with the precision of a legal transcript."

[Licona, *Jesus Contradicted*, 67]



Michael R. Licona

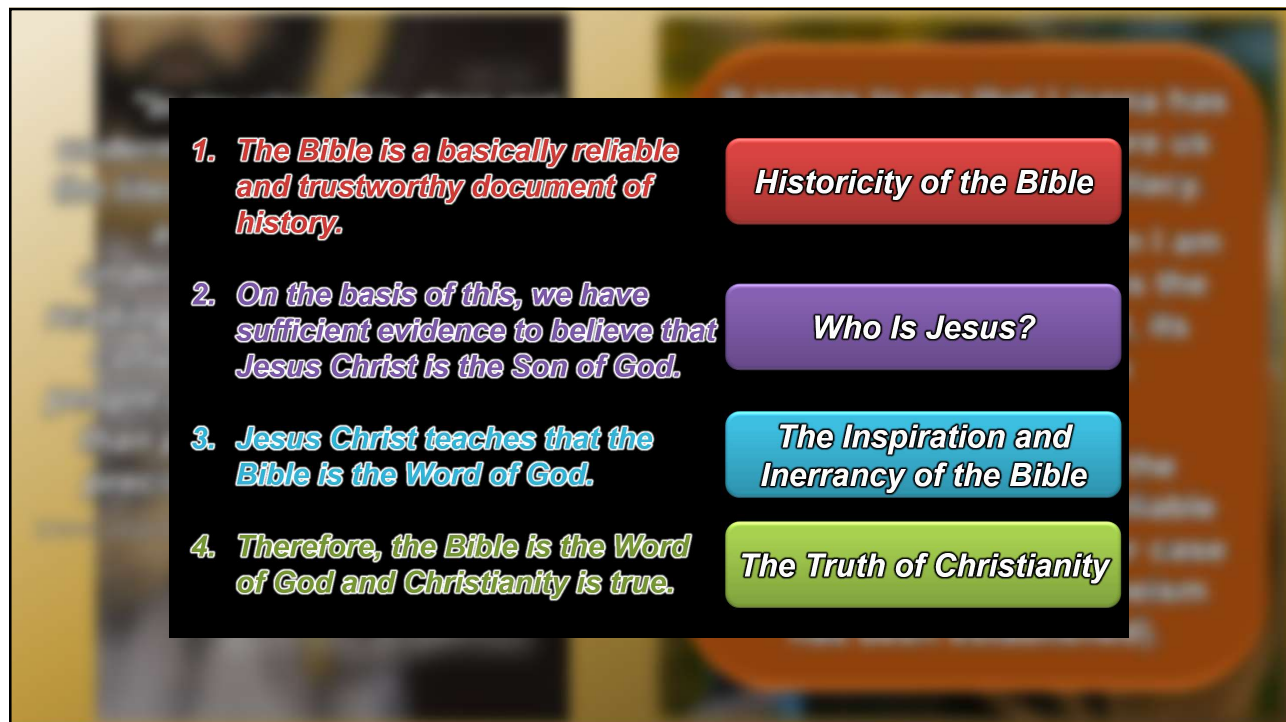
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[Licona, *Jesus Contradicted*, 67]

It seems to me that Licona has muddled the issue before us with a false dilemma fallacy.

No inerrantist with whom I am familiar says that unless the biblical text is inerrant, its overall reliability is undermined.

In fact, the point that the biblical text is overall reliable is the first premise in our case for Christianity (after theism has been established).



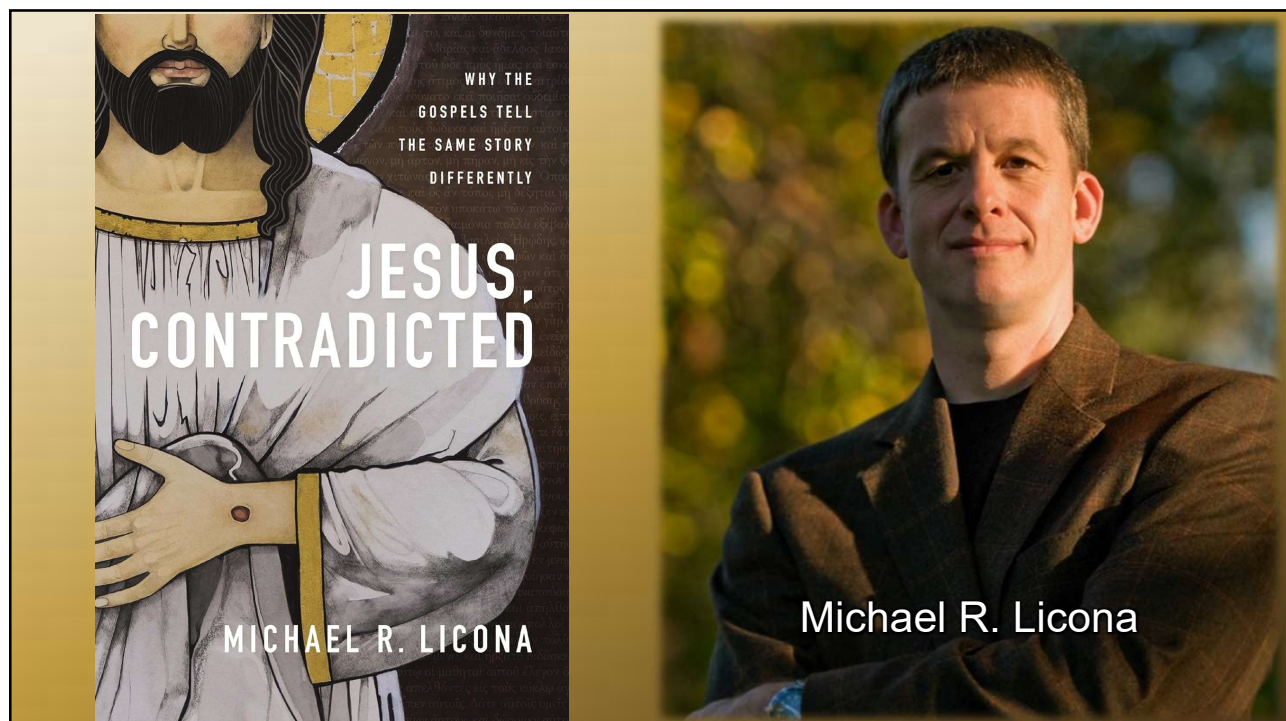
1. *The Bible is a basically reliable and trustworthy document of history.*
2. *On the basis of this, we have sufficient evidence to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*
3. *Jesus Christ teaches that the Bible is the Word of God.*
4. *Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God and Christianity is true.*

Historicity of the Bible

Who Is Jesus?

The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible

The Truth of Christianity



"I want to draw attention to two occurrences in the Gospels where the author takes some liberty reporting details in order to make a point. In doing so, he sacrifices accuracy on the ground level of precise reporting while providing his readers with a high-level view of the person and mission of Jesus."

[Licona, *Jesus Contradicted*, 71]

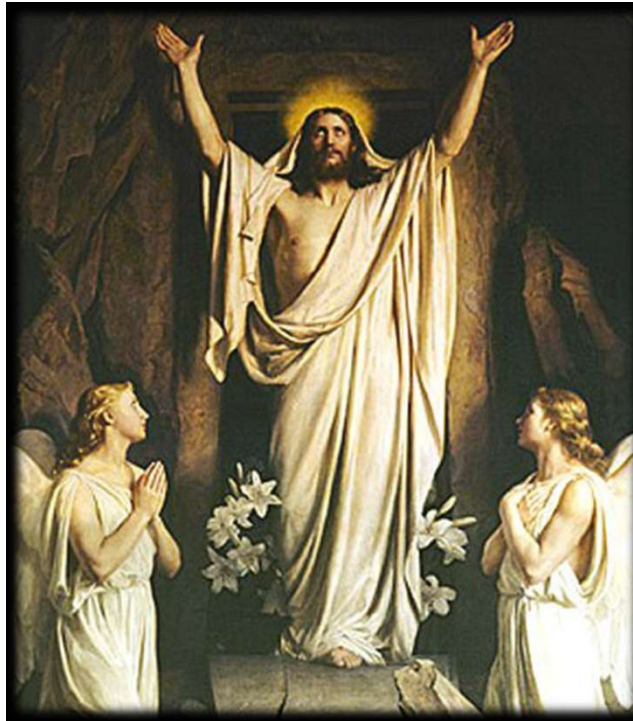
Michael R. Licona

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[Licona, *Jesus Contradicted*, 71]

Even if it was the case that the Gospel authors took some liberty in reporting the details to make a point, this has nothing necessarily to do with the question of the overall reliability of the text.

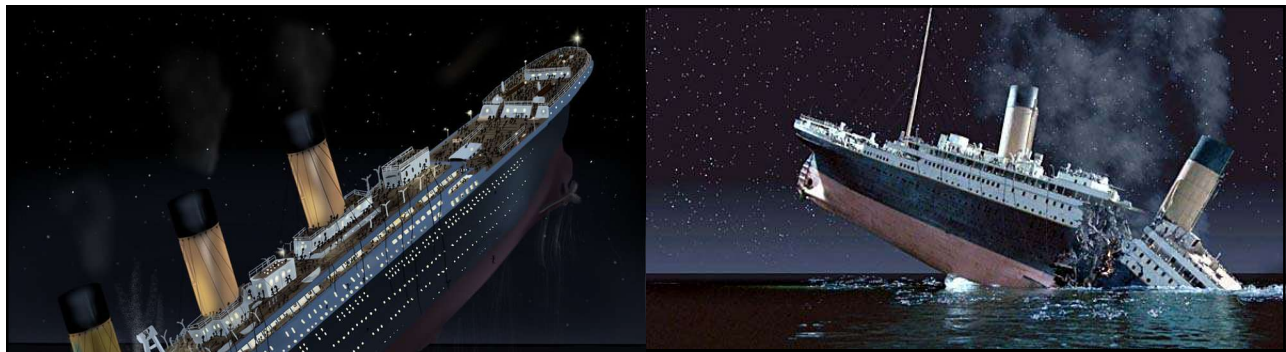
However, it is another matter as to whether it has anything to do with the inspiration and inerrancy of the text.



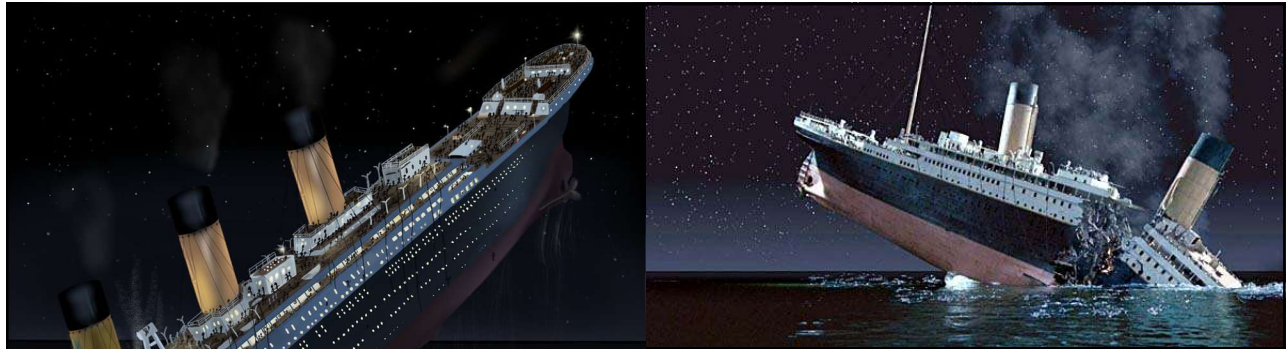
Mike's point from the Titanic example is well taken.

Even if there were contradictions in the Gospel accounts, this does not prove that Jesus did not rise from the dead.

However . . .



While it is true that contradictory eyewitness accounts do not prove that the Titanic did not sink, it does prove that the eyewitnesses were not inerrant and, thus, their writings are not inspired by God.



While it is true that contradictory eyewitness accounts do not prove that the Titanic did not sink, it does prove that the eyewitnesses were not inerrant and, thus, their writings are not inspired by God.

Dr. Al Mohler
President, Southern
Baptist Theological
Seminary

"It would be nonsense to affirm real contradictions in the Bible and then to affirm inerrancy."

Dr. Al Mohler
President, Southern
Baptist Theological
Seminary

"Even Dr. Licona concedes that we 'may lose some form of biblical inerrancy if there are contradictions in the Gospels,' what you lose is inerrancy itself. ... An actual contradiction is an error."

[quoted in Erin Roach, "HBU's Licona addresses Bible's 'contradictions,'" <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/hbus-licona-addresses-bibles-contradictions/>, accessed 06/21/26]

1. The Bible is the Word of God.

2. God cannot err.

3. Therefore, the Bible cannot err.

If the Bible errs, then either:

- ❖ *there is some sense in which it is not the Word of God, or*
- ❖ *there is some sense in which God can err.*

WTJ 73 (2011): 1-22

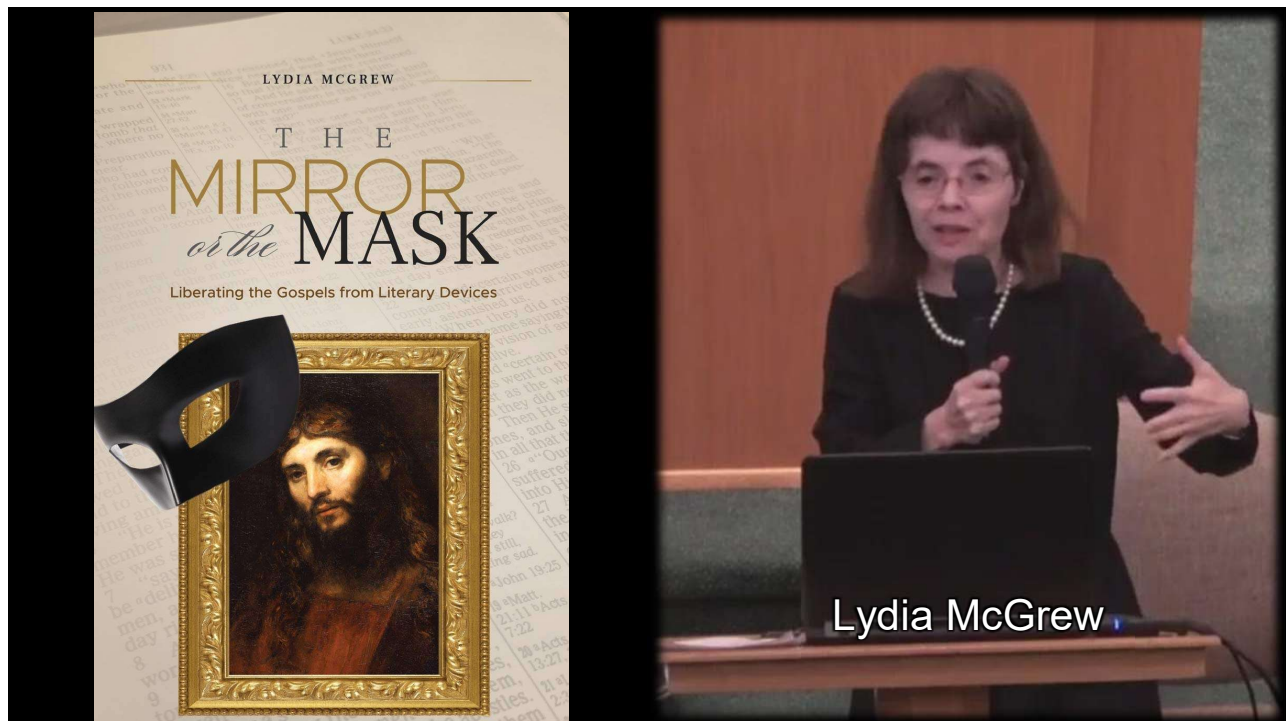
SPECIAL LECTURE

CAN THE BIBLE BE COMPLETELY INSPIRED BY GOD
AND YET STILL CONTAIN ERRORS?
A RESPONSE TO SOME RECENT "EVANGELICAL" PROPOSALS

G. K. BEALE

There has been much literature written over the past fifty years on the topic of the authority of the Bible, especially discussions within so-called "evangelicalism" concerning the nature of the notions of infallibility and inerrancy. Recent writers have especially questioned the traditional understanding of inerrancy. In particular, a central idea underlying inerrancy has been that since God is true and without error and, therefore, his oral word is true and without error, consequently, his word in Scripture is true and without error. This implication or theological inference that reasons from God's flawless character to flawless Scripture has been challenged, and it has been argued that it is a logi-

Allowing for the possibility that there are conflicting or contradictory statements in the Bible as Greco-Roman Biography allows, is incompatible with Inspiration and Inerrancy.



"It would be difficult to exaggerate the acceptance that the claim 'The Gospels are Greco-Roman biographies' or even 'The Gospels are something very much like Greco-Roman biographies' enjoys in the current evangelical scholarly milieu."

[Lydia McGrew, *The Mirror or the Mask: Liberating the Gospels from Literary Devices* (Tampa: DeWard, 2019), 67]



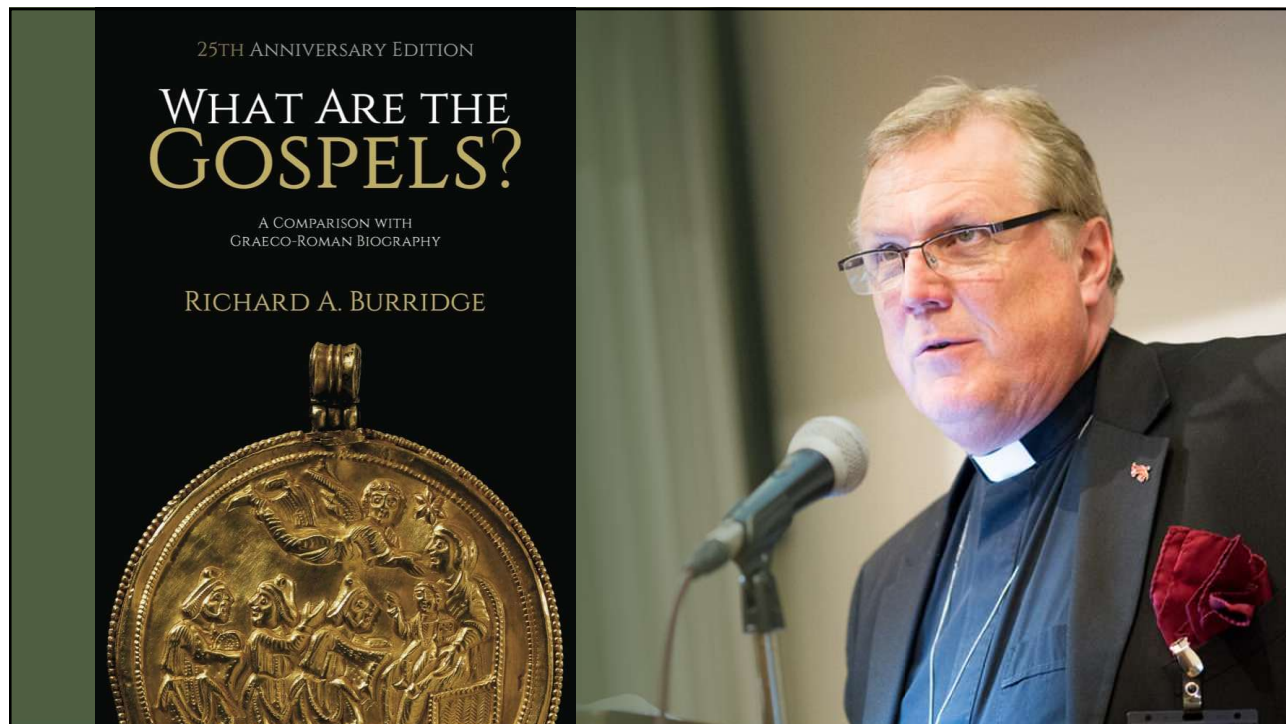
Lydia McGrew

"The popularity of this claim, based most of all upon the book *What Are the Gospels?* by the classicist Richard Burridge, has only grown since that book's first publication in 1994 and its release in a second edition in 2004."

[Lydia McGrew, *The Mirror or the Mask*, 67]



Lydia McGrew



"Burridge's work is also noteworthy for the extent to which he overlooks evidence for the traditional authorship of the Gospels. This is relevant to his thesis because traditional authorship would mean that at least three out of four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and John—were written by Jews who were likely not educated in a Hellenistic fashion. ..."

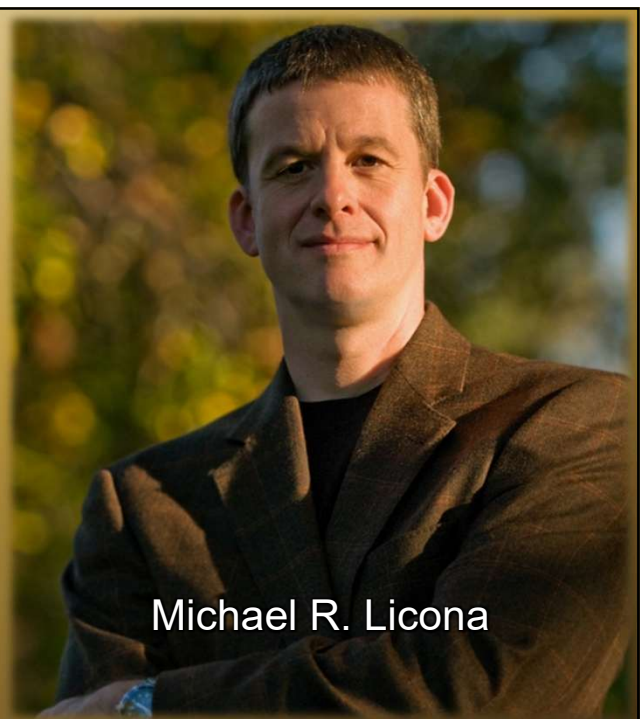
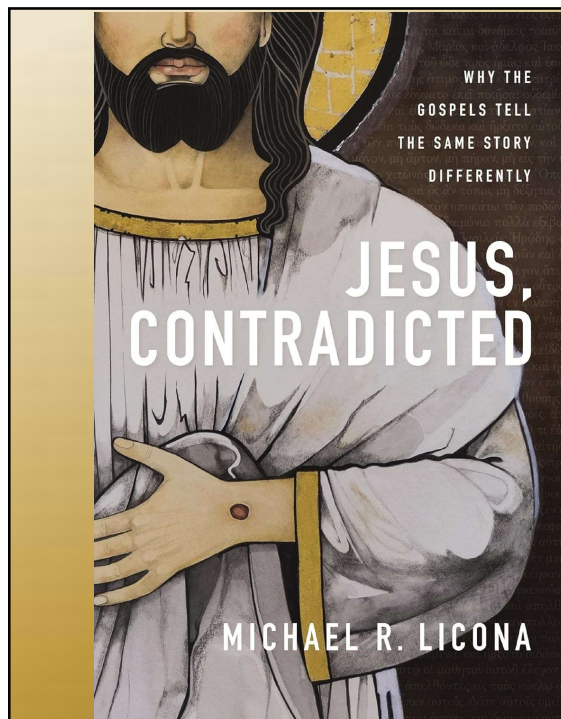


"How likely is it that Matthew the tax collector, John, Mark, Peter, or even John the son of Zebedee would have read or heard the earlier writers of biography discussed by Burridge such as Xenophon, Isocrates, Satyrus, and Nepos and that they would have desired to emulate a specific Greco-Roman genre?."

[Lydia McGrew, *The Mirror or the Mask*, 76]



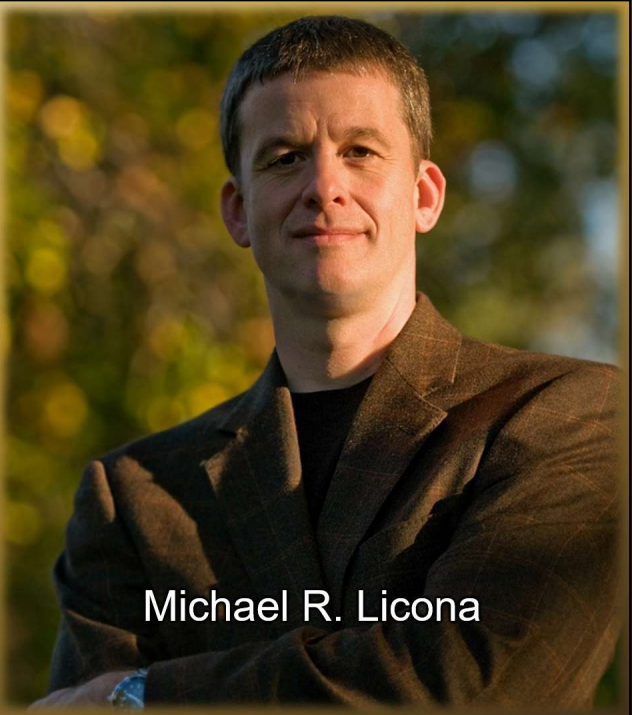
Lydia McGrew



Michael R. Licona

**"The bottom line:
Contradictions offer a
challenge to the historical
reliability of the Gospels *and
to some versions of the
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however, they do not
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faith."**

[Licona, *Jesus Contradicted*, 7]



Michael R. Licona

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Michael R. Licona

In the chapter titled "Fine-Tuning Our Doctrine of Scripture: Inerrancy" Licona seeks to challenge what he calls the "Traditional View of Inerrancy" and argue for his "Flexible View of Inerrancy."

In his critique of the "traditional view" Licona rejects an understanding on the *Chicago Statement* that is undoubtedly the way the statement has been understood since it was written.

The question that needs to be answered is whether Licona's "flexible view" is consistent with the meaning of the *Chicago Statement*.

The reason this is important is because to be a member of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), one is required to affirm the inerrancy of Scripture.

Devoted to the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures and the gospel of Jesus Christ. [Log in](#)

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MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

July 10, 2009 by Abigail Matteson

DOCTRINAL BASIS:

All members must subscribe annually to the Doctrinal Basis of the Society. Initially, this is done by completing the application process and affirming the ETS Doctrinal Basis.

For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978). The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture's testimony to itself. A proper understanding of inerrancy takes into account the language, genres, and intent of Scripture. We reject approaches to Scripture that deny that biblical truth claims are grounded in reality.

ANNUAL DUES:

ETS memberships are valid for one year from the date of initial membership or renewal. Annual dues are \$50 (USD) for full members (\$30 USD, if retired), \$45 for associate members (\$30 USD, if retired), and \$30 (USD) for student members. A subscription to *JETS* is included as a membership benefit.

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DOCTRINAL BASIS

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL BASIS

The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs.

God is a Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each an uncreated person, one in essence, equal in power and glory.

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FULL MEMBERS:

JETS 49:1 (March 2006) 205-9

REPORTS RELATING TO THE FIFTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The 57th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society had the third-highest attendance on record with 2,162 persons registered. The meetings were held at the Valley Forge Convention Center and in the adjoining Radisson and Scanticon Hotels. Participating publishers offered generous discounts on their books and other products from one hundred booths in a large carpeted hall. The program theme, "Christianity in the Early Centuries," was explored in four excellent plenary sessions, and by many of the nearly five hundred individual papers. Participants gathered from six continents and the islands of the seas to fellowship, exchange ideas, critique one another, and to keep abreast of the most recent scholarship in their disciplines. More than twenty study groups also met as part of the overall program.

President-Elect Edwin Yamauchi served as program chairman and put together a superb array of plenary speakers. On Wednesday afternoon, Christopher Hall, Chair of the Bible and Theology Department and Dean of Templeton College at Eastern University, addressed the society on "What Evangelicals and Liberals Can Learn from Early Christian Literature." Later that evening, author Nicholas Perrin, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College, posed the issue, "Thomas, the Fifth Gospel?" in which he reflected on the literary dependence and relationship of the Gospel of Thomas with Tatian's *Diatessaron*.

On Thursday morning attendees heard ETS member D. Jeffrey Bingham, Chair and Professor of Theological Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, explore the "Development and Diversity in Early Christianity," demonstrating from the early Church fathers that there were competing voices in the early Church, but that what was orthodox, and what was not, was clearly evident to the writers themselves.

The fourth and final plenary was delivered by international scholar Paul Trebilco, Head of the Department of Theology and Professor of New Testament at the University of Otago, the oldest university in New Zealand. He spoke on "Ignatius and Others as Witnesses against Bauer," pointing out that what we would call heresy was neither early nor strong in Smyrna, Philadelphia, Ephesus, and other centers of Christianity in Asia Minor, a fatal blow to Walter Bauer's thesis and the corresponding *Da Vinci Code*.

More than twenty parallel sessions ran concurrently on such disciplines as OT, NT, biblical, historical, and systematic theology, Church history, archaeology, philosophy, hermeneutics, evangelism and missions, pastoral ministry, and psychology and theology. Parallel programs were also conducted by the Evangelical Philosophical Society, the Near East Archaeological Society, and the Adventist Theological Society. Tables and a large

"For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978). The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture's testimony to itself. A proper understanding of inerrancy takes into account the language, genres, and intent of Scripture. We reject approaches to Scripture that deny that biblical truth claims are grounded in reality."

[https://etsjets.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/files_JETS-PDF's_49_49-1_JETS_49-1_205-209_MeetingReport.pdf]

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(Licona, Jesus Contradicted, 7)



Michael R. Licona

In seeking to explore this question, Licona asks: "Precisely how much wiggle room does CSBI [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy] allow?" (p.194)

This is indeed a question that anyone who is interested in this conversation must ask.

However, one must be careful to avoid the informal "fallacy of the beard"



The name of the fallacy comes from asking, "How many whiskers does it take to make a beard?" The question is impossible to answer.

However, just because one cannot tell how many whiskers it takes to make a beard, this does not mean that one cannot tell the difference between clean shaven and bearded.

*"The bottom line:
Contradictions offer a
challenge to the historical
reliability of the Gospels and
to some versions of the
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however, they do not
necessarily call into question
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faith."*

[Licona, Jesus Contradicted, 7]

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This is indeed a question that anyone who is interested in this conversation must ask.

However, one must be careful to avoid the informal "fallacy of the beard" which is the fallacy that says that if you cannot draw an exact line between extremes on a continuum, then you cannot legitimately affirm the differences between the extremes of the continuum.

I would argue that the extent to which Licona seeks to qualify the definition of 'inerrancy' and move it away from how ICBI and the "Chicago Statement" has understood the term, amounts to a denial of inerrancy.

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To repeat a point, the issue is not whether one view or another of inerrancy is compatible with the truth of Christianity.

Rather, the issue is whether one view or another of inerrancy is compatible with the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy.

Introduction to Christian Apologetics

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- ❖ Defined Apologetics
- ❖ Identified Apologetic Issues
- ❖ Why Do Apologetics?
- ❖ What Apologetics Can Do
- ❖ What Apologetics Can't Do
- ❖ Classical (Three-Step) System
- ❖ Philosophical Foundations
- ❖ The Existence of God
- ❖ Miracles
- ❖ Historicity of the Bible
- ❖ What the Bible Says about Jesus
- ❖ What Jesus Says about the Bible

❧ Jude 1:24-25 ❧

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. "

