

The Top 10 Reasons We Know the New Testament Writers Told the Truth

by Frank Turek, Apologist

1) The New Testament Writers Included Embarrassing Details about Themselves

- a. They are dim-witted – numerous times they fail to understand what Jesus is saying.
 - i. Mark 9:32; Luke 18:34; John 12:16
- b. They are uncaring – they fall asleep on Jesus twice when He asks them to pray.
 - i. Mark 14:32-41
- c. They are rebuked – Peter is called “Satan” by Jesus (Mark 8:33) and Paul rebukes Peter for being wrong about a theological issue. Galatians 2:1
- d. They are cowards – all the disciples but one hide when Jesus goes to the cross.
 - i. Matt. 26:33-35
- e. They are doubters – despite being taught several times that Jesus would rise from the dead, the disciples are doubtful when they hear of his resurrection.
 - i. Matt. 28:17

2) The New Testament Writers Included Embarrassing Details and Difficult Sayings of Jesus

- a. Jesus is considered “out of his mind” by his mother and brothers (his own family) who come to seize him in order to take him home (Mark 3:21, 31)
- b. Jesus is not believed by his own brothers (John 7:5)
- c. Jesus is thought to be a deceiver (John 7:12)
- d. Jesus is deserted by many of his followers (John 6:66)
- e. Jesus turns off “Jews who had believed in him” to the point that they want to stone him
 - i. John 8:30-31; 59
- f. Jesus is called a “drunkard” (Matt. 11:19)

It goes on and on as to what he was accused of : being demon-possessed, being a madman, having his feet wiped by the hair of a prostitute, is crucified by the Jews and Romans despite the fact the “anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse”.

This is certainly not a list of events and qualities the New Testament writers would choose if they were trying to depict Jesus as the perfect, sinless God-man!

There are many difficult sayings included about Jesus, the foremost one was when He made a completely morbid claim that “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” (John 6:53) After this hard saying John says: “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed hi,.” (John 6:66)

Since the New Testament writers certainly wouldnot invent this strange saying and unfavorable reaction, it must be authentic!

3) The New Testament Writers Left in Demanding Sayings of Jesus

- a. “I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt. 5:28
- b. “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.” Matt. 5:32
- c. “I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Matt. 5:39-42

- d. "I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven. Matt. 5: 44-45
- e. "Be Perfect... as your heavenly Father is perfect" Matt. 5:48
- f. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be, also." Matt. 6:19-21

- 4) The New Testament Writers Carefully Distinguished Jesus' Words from their own
It would have been easy for the New Testament writers to solve 1st century theological disputes by putting words in Jesus' mouth, but they stayed true to what Jesus said and didn't say.
- 5) The New Testament Writers Include Events Related to the Resurrection that they Would not have Invented
 - a. Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, so why would the disciples want to mention this and make the Sanhedrin look good?
 - b. The first witnesses were women who were not considered reliable witnesses
 - c. The conversion of Priests – why didn't Jesus appear to the Pharisees?
 - d. The explanation of the empty tomb by the Jews that the disciples stole his body
- 6) The New Testament writers include more than 30 Historically confirmed people in their writings
 - a. The New testament writers accurately recorded what they saw
- 7) The New Testament Writers Include Divergent Details
 - a. Divergent details actually strengthen the case of eye witness accounts for the same reason that two different newspaper reports covering the same event may report different details in their stories but both are accurate.
 - b. In the same way, all the Gospels present different details but agree on the same major fact – Jesus rose from the dead.
- 8) The New Testament Writers Challenge their Readers to Check Out Verifiable Facts, even Facts about Miracles
 - a. Pauls bold declaration to Festus and King Agrippa on the resurrected Christ. (Acts 26)
 - b. Paul reminds the Corinthians " The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles- were done among you with great perseverance" (2 Cor: 12:12)
- 9) New Testament Writers Describe Miracles Like other Historical Events: With simple, unembellished accounts
 - a. The accounts of Jesus resurrection were simple because the Gospel writers were concerned about getting the history correct, not inventing some new kind of theology.
- 10) The New Testament Writers Abandoned their Long-Held Sacred Beliefs and Practices, Adopted new ones, and Did not Deny their Testimony Under Persecution or Threat of Death
They gave up:
 - a. The animal sacrifice system
 - b. The binding supremacy of the Law of Moses – a new Law now fulfills the old –a Law inscribed on believers hearts through the Holy Spirit
 - c. Strict monotheism – new belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - d. Belief in a conquering messiah – Jesus is the opposite of this – a sacrificial Lamb!

How Do We Know that real Historical Events are at the core of the New Testament?

- a. The Dead Sea Scrolls are from the 50's and are copies so the originals book could have been from the 30's AD. All New Testament Documents were recorded before AD100.
- b. At least 10 ancient non-Christian writers within 150 years of his life, give information about Jesus, and have stories consistent with the New Testament.
- c. The New Testament contains at least 4-6 lines of early, independent eyewitness testimony.

We know this because:

- i. The New Testament writers record the same basic events with divergin details and unique material.
- ii. They cite at least thirty real historical figures who have been confirmed by ancient non-Christian writers and archeological discoveries.
- iii. Luke peppers the second half of Acts with at least 84 historically confirmed eyewitness details and includes several others in his Gospel.
- iv. Lukes proven trustworthiness affirms that of Mathew and Mark because they record the same basic story.
- v. John includes at least 59 historically confirmed or historically probable eyewitness details in his Gospel.
- vi. Paul and Peter provide the 5th and 6th written testimonies to the Resurrection.

Since this early, independent eyewitness testimony is within one generation of the events, the New Testament events cannot be considered legendary.