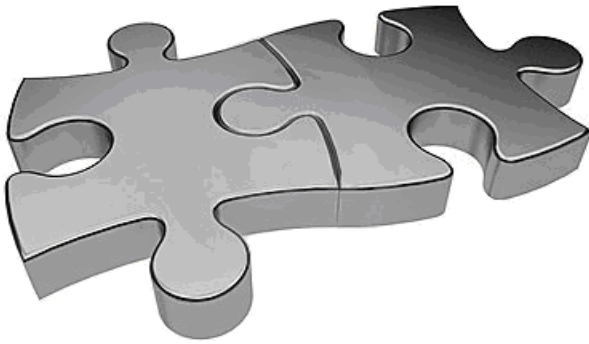


The Ring of Truth:



*How the Gospels
Authenticate One Another*

An *undesigned coincidence* in the Gospels occurs when one account of an event leaves out a bit of information that doesn't affect the overall picture, and a different account supplies the missing detail, usually answering some natural question – but in a way that we would *not* expect if one of the authors had simply copied from the other. Forgers do not want to leave loose ends; they take care to tie everything together neatly. But these are the sorts of things we would expect to find in authentic records of the same real event told by different people.

The evidence of undesigned coincidences shows that our four Gospels were written by people who knew about the actual events of which they wrote. The details in different accounts interlock with one another, time after time, because they are grounded in the actual events.

Below, we'll investigate some undesigned coincidences. In most cases, the first passage raises a natural question that is answered (sometimes quite incidentally) by the second. It may be helpful to create a diagram indicating how the Gospels interlock and explain one another. You can use the space below to show how the web of interconnections develops.

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

1. Matthew & Luke

Question (Matt. 14:2): How would Matthew know what Herod Antipas was saying to his servants?

Answer (Luke 8:3)

2. John & Matthew

Question (John 1:32-34): How does John the Baptist know that Jesus is the *Son of God*?

Answer (Matt. 3:17)

3. Luke & Mark

Question (Luke 9:36): Why did the disciples tell no one about the transfiguration?

Answer (Mark 9:9)

4. Mark & John

Question (Mark 6:31): Why were there many coming and going?

Answer (John 6:4)

5. Luke & John

Question (Luke 23:1-4): Why does Pilate find no fault after Jesus admits that He is a king?

Answer (John 18:36)

6. John & Luke

Another question about the same passages: Why, in John's account, does Herod even *ask* Jesus whether he is a king?

Answer (Luke 23:4)

7. John & Mark

Question (John 21:15): Why does Jesus ask Peter whether he loves him *more than the others do*?

Answer (Mark 14:29)

8. John & Luke

Question (John 18:10-11, 36) How can Jesus use this phrase to Pilate (36) when Peter *actually* cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant, Malchus (10)?

Answer (Luke 22:50-51)

9. John & Luke again

Question (John 6:5) Why does Jesus ask Philip where to buy bread for the multitude?

Answer (Luke 9:10; John 12:21)

10. Matthew & John

Question (Matt. 26:71) How did the servant girl know that Peter was with Jesus?

Answer (John 18:15-16)

11. Mark & Luke

Question (Mark 1:19) Why were James and John mending their nets?

Answer (Luke 5:4-11)

12. John & Mark

Question (John 2:7) If the jars were for water anyway, why were they empty and needing to be filled?

Answer (Mark 7:2-3; *cf.* John 2:10)

Want More?

Edmund Bennett, *The Four Gospels from a Lawyer's Standpoint* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899). This brief and readable book presents some internal evidence for the authorship and authenticity of the Gospels.

John James Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings of the Old & New Testament*, 9th ed. (London: John Murray, 1869). Blunt's work, inspired by Paley (below), applies the method of undesigned coincidences to both the Old and the New Testaments.

John William McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity* (Cincinnati: Guide Printing & Publishing Co., 1886), Part III, ch. 7. McGarvey's textbook contains a chapter discussing nineteen undesigned coincidences among the Gospels. He draws material from Blunt, but he also adds some of his own. The whole book provides excellent material for further study.

William Paley, *Horae Paulinae; or, The Truth of the Scripture History of St. Paul Evinced* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1850). This is the classic work on undesigned coincidences, applied to the investigation of the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. This edition is edited by T. R. Birks and contains a supplementary work, *Horae Apostolicae*, in which Birks explores further connections among the Pauline epistles, examines the internal evidence for the book of Acts by comparison of some parts of the narrative with others, and presents internal coincidences among the four Gospels and between the Gospels and the other parts of the New Testament.

Download Links

<http://tinyurl.com/FourGospels>

<http://tinyurl.com/UndesignedCoincidences>

<http://tinyurl.com/McGarveyEvidences>

<http://tinyurl.com/HoraePaulinae>