

Sons of Thunder, The Sea, and A Canadian Thanksgiving: Can We Trust the New Testament Gospels?

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I. The Question: Are the New Testament Gospels Historically Reliable?

The Accusation: The Gospels are filled with inaccuracies, contradictions, and legendary stories; we cannot believe that what they say actually happened.

II. Six Lines of Evidence for the Historical Reliability of the Gospels

- A. *The Gospels Claim to Contain Eyewitness Testimony*
- B. *The Early Date of the Gospels*
- C. *The Church Has Always Recognized the Historical Reliability of the Gospels*
- D. **Internal Evidence: Undesigned Coincidences**
- E. *External Evidence for the Gospels*
- F. *Experiential Verification of the Gospels*

D. Undesigned Coincidences: Incidental Details, Insider Knowledge, Intricate Convergence

1) Incidental Details

John 5:1-5

- 1. What part of Jerusalem?
- 2. What pool?
- 3. What architectural structure?
- 4. How long paralyzed?

2) Insider Knowledge

- 1. Accurate Slang/Shorthand
 - a. Hanging Out at “The Fred” (NOBTS)
 - b. Going to “The Mall” (Edmonton)
 - c. Headed to “The Sea” (1st-century Galilee)
- 2. Knowledgeable Geographic References
- 3. Appropriate Names

3) Intricate Convergence

- 1. Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner @ The Anderson’s Home
- 2. John and James, ‘Sons of Thunder’ (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-55)
- 3. Jesus the Humble Foot-Washer (John 13:1-15; Luke 22:24-27)
- 4. Herod and His Servants (Matthew 14:1-2; Luke 8:1-3)
- 5. The Feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-15; Luke 9:10-17; John 12:21; Mark 6:30-44)
 - a. John 6:1-5 – Why Philip?
 - b. Where Are They? – Luke 9:10
 - c. Where is Philip From? – John 12:21 (and John 1:44)
 - d. Mark 6:30 – Why Is It So Busy? – John 6:4

Further Resources:

Tawa Anderson, *Why Believe? Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*

Lydia McGrew, *Hidden in Plain View: Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels and Acts*

Peter Williams, *Can We Trust The Gospels?*