

## GOSPELS WERE NOT READ BY PEOPLE WHO WERE IN A POSITION TO CHECK OUT THEIR VERACITY

Are the New Testament accounts of Jesus' life and death, the four gospels, possibly true or plausible? One obstacle is knowing when they were made available to read. They were written late and distributed later.

There is no evidence that anybody had a look at them who could vouch for them as accurate. And even if there were, what if the person did not mean strictly accurate but accurate enough? That is very subjective. But there is nothing.

## LITERACY

Evidence that the gospels were read to the public does not exist. The other problem is that who could get them and how many could read them?

Perhaps about ten to twenty percent of the people had “some form of basic literacy, but only about two percent could be regarded as fluent and sophisticated literates capable of reading and understanding the great works of Greek and Latin literature.” See Herring, Introduction to the History of Christianity Shiner, Proclaiming the Gospel at 11 (citing Harris, Ancient Literacy at 22, 272, 259 (may have been as low as three percent); Dunn, Jesus Remembered at 314 (citing C. Hezser, Jewish Literature in Roman Palestine (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) at 496-97); Dever, The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel at 225 (“most authorities estimate that no more than about 1 percent of the population of Israel and Judah in the Iron Age was literate”). Lost Christianities says, "The most persuasive estimates for the Greco-Roman world put the rates at around 10 to 15 percent of the populace in the best of times and places".

Freeman, A New Early History of Christianity at 22 (“it would certainly be unusual to find living eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life after AD 60 and it would be a matter of chance as to whether any of these survivors could provide accurate and valuable information”).

## THERE WAS NO READERSHIP DEMAND THAT COUNTS

“Christians certainly expanded in numbers with astonishing speed, but not until the third century. One scholar has “guesstimated” that in AD 200, a mere 0.35 percent of the Roman Empire – perhaps two hundred thousand people – were Christians. Most Greeks and Romans had at this stage little awareness or understanding of the cult of Jesus. For example, Herodian’s historical account of the Roman Empire, written in the mid-third century, contains not a single reference to Christianity. – By AD 300, they accounted for 10 percent of the population - this massive expansion raises the question not just of why Christianity grew so rapidly but also – more difficult to explain in confessional terms – why it grew rapidly then” page 234, Battling the Gods, Atheism in the Ancient World, Tim Whitmarsh. Faber & Faber, London, 2016.

Christianity then was small. And the numbers reduce when you consider other things. Not that many cared about having accurate scriptures. There were many versions of Christianity and many fake believers and hypocrites. Some were cut off and wouldn't have even known what a gospel was. And many defenders of the faith today want us to think that these people were interested avid New Testament students!! Even if the New Testament was not hidden, then maybe it did not need to be? Maybe hardly anybody cared. There were no intelligent attempts to refute the faith then.

The gospels and their preachers found it easy to lie and support the lie after it was told for they were not circulated to possible critics.

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THE WWW

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