

On February 1st, 2012 I had a public debate with Dan Wallace, professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary. The event was sponsored by The Ehrman Project, which, despite its name, is something I've never had anything to do with (I believe it is now defunct); it is/was an attempt by conservative Christians to debunk what I have written and taught (and thought, and thought about thinking). We held the event on my turf, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Memorial Hall Performing Arts Theater. It was a large and responsive crowd.

As you might expect, I argue that even though we have thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament, we do not have many *early* ones — and hardly any *really* early ones. That is why we can not (always? ever?) know with absolute certainty what the authors of the New Testament originally said. That matters for lots of reasons, one of which is that fundamentalist Christians but their faith in the very words of the Bible. But what if, in some passages, we don't know what those words were? Dan, also as expected, argued that we have such extensive evidence for the New Testament — more than for any other book from the ancient world — we can trust that we have what the authors originally wrote.

This is the debate in which Dan announced that later that year (2012) a newly discovered first-century copy of the Gospel of Mark was to be published. As readers of this blog know, to this point (March 7, 2015) the manuscript fragment has still not been published or made available for scholarly analysis. It is now being said that the publication has been delayed for (another) two years.

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