

A final post on the conservative evangelical critics of my book Misquoting Jesus. One of the most common views they express is that we are virtually certain about what the authors of the New Testament wrote. We have thousands of manuscripts, and are better informed about the text of the New Testament than for any other book from the ancient world.

By way of response, to begin with, I completely agree (of course!) that we have thousands of New Testament manuscripts of the New Testament and are better informed about its text than any other book in the ancient world that is absolutely right. (It's not surprise why we have so many more manuscripts of the NT than for any other ancient book, btw. Who was copying manuscripts in the Middle Ages - whence the vast bulk of our manuscripts derive? Monks in Christian monasteries. What books were Christian monks more inclined to copy — the writings of Sophocles or the writings of Scripture?)

My conservative opponents sometimes press the fact that we are well informed about the text of the New Testament in a ridiculous way - ridiculous possibly because they simply don't know any better. They point out that with all this evidence for the New Testament, if I (crazy liberal that I am) don't think we can know exactly what the authors of the NT wrote (in places) then I'd have to say the same thing about Plato, or Homer, or Cicero, or ... or any other author!

Their view is that any such claim would be on the face of it completely bizarre and that this is why, in their view, no one says any such thing.

Which shows that they simply don't know what they're talking about. Most of my conservative opponents ...

For the rest of this post, you need to belong to the blog. The end is near: join soon! It won't cost you much and hey, since the end is near, what does it matter? But in the meantime you'll be helping out a good cause and getting a lot of bang for your buck.

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