

Back to issues related to my book. In ch. 4 I talk about why the Gospels are problematic as “witnesses” to the resurrection (apart from the question of whether you can have *any* historical “evidence” for a miracle). This is the first part of my short discussion there, again, in rough draft

We have already seen why the Gospels of the New Testament – our earliest available narratives of Jesus’ life – are so problematic for historians who want to know what really happened. They are written decades later, not by eyewitnesses, but by authors living in different countries from Jesus and speaking a different language. These authors are basing their accounts on written sources and, especially, oral traditions that had been in circulation year after year, decade after decade, until the authors themselves wrote them down. In this long process of oral transmission, stories about Jesus were changed, embellished, and made up. That in no small measure is why we find so many discrepancies and contradictions in our various Gospel accounts. Story tellers – including the Gospel writers themselves – were changing their stories as they retold them.

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