

The Catholic Hack! Episode No. 6 – The Authenticity and Historicity of Scripture

Sources:

http://www.joemcclane.com/Authority_of_Mystery_Hahn.pdf - Dr. Hahn on Pope Benedicts view on hermeneutics

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1998/9803fea3.asp> - St. Augustine on Science and the Bible

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03274a.htm> -Article on the Canon of the New Testament

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08438a.htm> - Article on the Gospel of St. John

<http://pjiisoe.org/pamphlets/139WhoWroteGospels.pdf> -Who wrote the Gospels

<http://pjiisoe.org/pamphlets/270PontificalBiblicalCommission.pdf> - Pontifical Biblical Commission on the Four Gospels

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/muratorian.html> - The Muratorian Canon

In General, on this topic, I would say:

1. The historical evidence clearly points to the authorship of the Gospels by Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Every single manuscript (extant which date back to the 3rd & 4th centuries or in fragments which date back to 2nd & 3rd centuries) list Mathew, Mark, Luke and John as the authors themselves. We also have early Church fathers, some of whom know St. John personally, tell us that St. John (as well as the other authors) was the actual author of the 4th Gospel. We also have the Muratorian Canon which is a list of the books of the New Testament in the year 170 AD. Not only does this doc tell us St. John wrote his Gospel but this also gives us a peak into the discussion that was going on in the Church over which books were to be in the cannon.
2. I believe the REAL issue is not: Did St. John write his Gospel? But instead, the modern critics (because the authorship of the Gospel was NOT questioned for 18 centuries) really have a difficulty with the fact that St. John talked more about the Divinity of Jesus than any other book in the Bible. If “they” can show that St. John didn’t write the Gospel then “they” can also reject the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus or anything else they find on the Gospel because it was not from Apostolic origin.
3. The Bible is not void of scientific or historical truth. The Catholic reasserts, see paragraph 19 in Die Verbum, that the bible is historical. God created all the universe and therefore we would naturally find truth in nature. God inspired sacred scripture and therefore we would naturally find truth in the written word. The truth is a person... it is Jesus as St. John tells us in his Gospel (he is the way the truth and the life). The truth can not contradict itself!

4. St. Augustine said (see the link to the article from Catholic Answers on this point) that if you find a truth in nature and a truth in scripture that seem to contradict each other then dig deeper because truth can not contradict itself. The bible is trustworthy but we also must understand that it was never intended to be a text book on science or history. Rather the written word is about our salvation. This does NOT mean that we are to reject the scripture on science and history though.
5. Our goal is to just get to what the author intended to tell us. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, in discussing interpretation, brings out the fact that we must take into account the litany forms as well as the 4 senses of scripture. See below.
6. We should never read the bible like we would read the New York Times or the science journal. We need to read it like a letter of love and affection from our Father.
7. Not everything we read in scripture about science and nature is to be considered "myth". That is the modern problem that the Church is now dealing with. We must get to the intention... God mentions scientific points in discussing theological issues... the subject is NOT the scientific points rather the theological issues. So, if God does not seem 100% correct with what science says that's because the focus was not on the scientific facts (like in a journal) but rather on the point of our salvation like in a letter to a loved one.

CCC :The senses of Scripture

115 According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two *senses* of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116 The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."⁸³

117 The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

(1) The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.⁸⁴

(2) The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction".⁸⁵

(3) The *anagogical sense* (Greek: anagoge, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁸⁶

118 A medieval couplet summarizes the significance of the four senses:

The Letter speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith; The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny.⁸⁷

119 "It is the task of exegetes to work, according to these rules, towards a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture in order that their research may help the Church to form a firmer judgement. For, of course, all that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgement of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God."⁸⁸

But I would not believe in the Gospel, had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me.⁸⁹