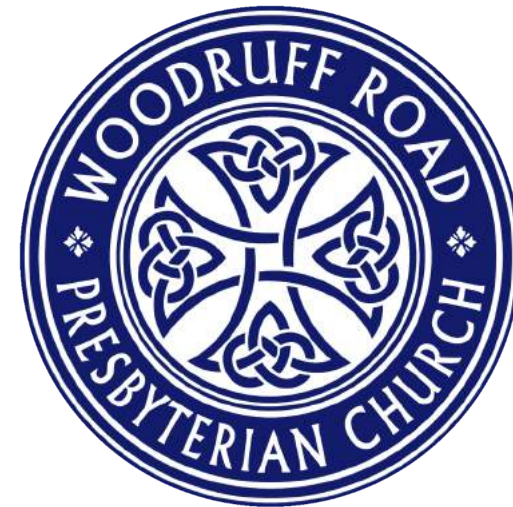


Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church
Spring Bible Conference
Dr. Michael Kruger



February 25-26
2017

Dr. Michael Kruger



Dr. Michael Kruger is the President of Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC and the Associate Pastor of Uptown PCA, also in Charlotte. You may know him better as the husband of Melissa Kruger (a former Women's Retreat speaker for us). They are the parents of 3 children.

Dr. Kruger is the foremost authority in evangelicalism on the subject of the Doctrine of Scripture and has written extensively on it. His books include: "Canon Re-Visited," "The Question of Canon," "The Early Text of the New Testament" and many others. He also serves as the Vice-President of the Evangelical Theological Society.

Dr. Kruger blogs at "michaeljkruger.com."
Twitter [@michaeljkruger](https://twitter.com/michaeljkruger).

IV. “Apocryphal Books Were as Popular as the New Testament Books”

V. “The New Testament Was Decided by Constantine in the Fourth Century”

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2017

5:00 PM

SESSION I

PRELUDE

The Church's One Foundation

GREETING

Pastor Scotty Anderson

PSALM

All People That on Earth Do Dwell

Hymnal #1

(based on Psalm 100)

SESSION I

Dr. Michael Kruger

Attacks on the Bible's Origins:

What Do We Do with the Gospel of Thomas?

HYMN

Be Thou My Vision

Hymnal #642

POSTLUDE

My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less

Dinner Break

Session 1

Attacks on the Bible's Origins: What Do We Do with the Gospel of Thomas?

Dr. Michael J. Kruger

Introduction: Discovery of the *Gospel of Thomas*

I. Our Culture's Fascination with Lost Gospels

A. Like the time of the Judges, our culture values diversity (so there is no absolute truth)

B. The study of early Christianity has been affected by the push for diversity

1. Walter Bauer's views of orthodoxy and heresy

2. For modern scholars, there is no such thing as "Christianity" in the earliest stages

C. Different (and equally legitimate) Christianities leads to different (and equally legitimate) Gospels

Examples include the Gospels of Thomas, Peter, Mary, and the recent so-called Gospel of Jesus' Wife

Session 3

Five Misconceptions About the Origins of the New Testament Canon

Dr. Michael J. Kruger

I. "The Authors of the NT Did Not Think They Were Writing Scripture"

II. "Early Christians Disagreed Widely Over Which Books Belonged in the New Testament"

III. "Apocryphal Books Are Just as Valid as the New Testament Books"

2. What evidence do we have about the quality of Christian scribes?

- The use of the codex book format

Why did early Christians prefer the codex?

“When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments” (2 Tim 4:13)

- The use of the *nomina sacra* (“sacred names”)

Special abbreviations for the Greek words for God, Jesus, Lord, and Christ

What do the *nomina sacra* tells us about early Christian scribal culture?

II. The Case for the Canonical Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

- A. The canonical gospels are the earliest we have

1. All the canonical gospels are dated c.50-90 A.D.

2. No apocryphal gospel is dated to the first century

Implications:

- Closer to the events of Jesus, the better
- Eyewitnesses were still alive when the Gospels were published (and thus could challenge their content)

- B. The canonical gospels have a credible connection to the apostles

- Who were the apostles?

1. We have good reasons to connect the canonical gospels to the apostles

Example: John. Irenaeus knew Polycarp who knew John personally

Implication: Gospels contain authoritative, eyewitness testimony

2. Not a single apocryphal gospel could have been written by an apostle

Apocryphal gospels bear the names of apostles for obvious reasons (Thomas, Peter, Phillip, etc.)

But, given their late date, none could have been written by an apostle or their companions

C. The canonical gospels lack the legendary embellishments of later gospels

1. The canonical gospels speak in a restrained, matter-of-fact manner

Scholars have observed for generations that the canonical gospels are quite restrained in the way they tell their story. They are very direct, straightforward.

2. Apocryphal gospels often have extensive legendary embellishments

Example: Infancy Gospel of Thomas

Example: Gospel of Peter

D. The canonical gospels were recognized as authoritative from a very early date

1. The canonical gospels were recognized as scripture very early

Irenaeus: Four and only Four

Muratorian Fragment: Four and Only Four

Clement of Alexandria: Four and Only Four

2. Most of the apocryphal gospels were expressly condemned or simply ignored

Not a single manuscript with both apocryphal and canonical gospels

Not a single canonical list with both apocryphal and canonical gospels

Very few manuscripts (e.g. Thomas has total of 3, whereas canonical are upwards of 2,500)

B. The date of the manuscripts

Roman historian Tacitus, wrote his *Annals of History* around 100 AD. The earliest is from 9th century

Josephus wrote *Jewish War* in the first century. The earliest copy is from the 10th century.

New Testament was written between 47-90 AD. The earliest text we possess dates from 100-125 AD, about 25 years after the originals were written.

C. The QUALITY of the manuscripts

1. What kind of changes do we find in our manuscripts?

**the vast majority of scribal changes do not affect the meaning of the text

Session 2

Attacks on the Bible's Transmission: Has the New Testament Text Been Changed or Corrupted?

Dr. Michael J. Kruger

I. The Challenge: Bart Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus*

A. Christian scribes were amateurs and lacked the ability to reliably copy books

B. The NT manuscripts have between 200,000 and 400,000 variants

II. The Response: The NT Textual Tradition is Very Reliable

A. The QUANTITY of the manuscripts

Tacitus, *Annals of History*: 3 copies

Josephus, *Jewish War*, around 50 copies

The New Testament: over 5,700 copies (and counting)

** It is the unusual quantity of manuscripts that explains why we have knowledge of so many textual variants!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2017

7:00 PM

SESSION 2

PRELUDE

Wonderful Words of Life

GREETING

Pastor Dan Dodds

HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

Hymnal #94

SESSION 2

Dr. Michael Kruger

Lost Words? Exploring the Transmission of the New Testament Text

PSALM

Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah

Hymnal #57

(based on Psalm 146)

POSTLUDE

O Worship the King