

PRAISE FOR *TESTIMONIES TO THE TRUTH*

This is McGrew's best book to date! Not as technical as her previous ones, it ranges widely over all kinds of evidence within the Gospels that points to their reliability—from undesigned coincidences to unnecessary details to unexplained allusions to incidental consistency of personalities and much, much more. McGrew dips back into nineteenth-century observations long forgotten, stirs in better-known recent ones and adds a few of her own discoveries for flavor. Rather than interacting with her critics or those with whom she disagrees, McGrew has written a uniformly positive work, making it that much more valuable.

Craig L. Blomberg, Distinguished Professor of
New Testament Emeritus, Denver Seminary

Lydia McGrew has again written a very helpful and insightful book for those interested in examining the reliability and trustworthiness of the New Testament Gospels. McGrew identifies what might appear to be incidental elements that together weave a complex tapestry that reveals a clear portrait of Jesus. This book is ideally suited for individual and group use, since it includes study and discussion questions (and suggested answers in the back of the book!). Both confirmed believers and those with questions will find this book of great benefit.

Stanley E. Porter
President, Dean, Professor of New Testament,
Roy A. Hope Chair in Christian Worldview
McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON, Canada

In this overall synthesis of her previous critiques of critical biblical scholarship, Lydia McGrew raises probing questions that modern scholars have failed to address. In keen philosophic analytical form, she reverses the positivistic question: from verification to falsification. How do we *know* that there is nothing historically reliable in the Gospels? We don't, overall. If the Gospels do *not* reflect historical memory, whence the grounded verisimilitude, the realia of customs and culture, the undesigned coincidences, the unnecessary details, the unexplained allusions, the unexpected harmonies, and

the unified personalities of the Gospels—let alone an unmistakably distinctive Jesus of Nazareth? Another plank in the platform of the Fourth Quest for Jesus—one that includes the Gospel of John, instead of leaving it out!

Paul N. Anderson

Author of *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*

Co-editor of *John, Jesus, and History* (Vols. 1–3)

Lydia McGrew concisely and carefully presents a cumulative case that the Gospel writers were faithful reporters rather than inventors. With wide-ranging evidence *Testimonies to the Truth* again and again points to the reliability of the Gospel accounts, and ultimately the reliability of their portraits of Jesus. With chapter summaries, discussion and study questions (and answers), numerous real life illustrations, objections dealt with along the way, and pointers to further resources (including website links), McGrew's *Testimonies to the Truth* can be confidently given to anyone, believer and skeptic alike. This book could easily be used as an evangelistic tool on a University campus, a textbook for a survey class on the Gospels, or a guide for youth or church seminars and personal study. A convincing and edifying book!

Alan J. Thompson

Head of New Testament Department,

Sydney Missionary and Bible College, Australia

Author of *One Lord, One People: The Unity of the Church in Acts* (LNTS),

The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus (NSBT), *Luke* (EGGNT),

and *Colossians and Philemon* (TNTC)

I've been teaching apologetics for decades and I couldn't imagine another much-needed book demonstrating the reliability of the Gospels. But then comes along Lydia McGrew who has presented compelling arguments that had never even occurred to me. In *Testimonies to the Truth* McGrew puts together her years of research in readable and persuasive evidence that regularly surprised me. Skeptics will be hard pressed to escape her robust reasoning, and Christians will be emboldened in their confidence in the testimonies about Jesus. This is a wonderful book and I highly recommend!

Clay Jones

Visiting Scholar, Talbot School of Theology

Chairman of the Board, Ratio Christi

Author of *Why Does God Allow Evil?*

Compelling Answers for Life's Toughest Questions

A superb book. Lydia McGrew not only knows the relevant scriptural and historical issues extremely well, but brings to her analysis the precision of an analytic philosopher. At the same time, she writes with an admirable lucidity and sense of humor that make the book accessible and enjoyable to non-specialists.

Edward Feser

Professor of Philosophy, Pasadena City College

Is the historical narrative found in Scripture, and specifically in the New Testament Gospels, a record of what really happened? And is that a question worth asking? Given the fact that the faith of Scripture is necessarily and uniquely grounded in history, these are issues which demand to be considered. *Testimonies to the Truth* makes the very compelling case that the veracity of the Gospel narratives is indeed important and demonstrable. Marshalling arguments which have been long neglected by Bible believers but which are well recognized in the worlds of historiographical research and evidentiary canons, McGrew demonstrates that the New Testament Gospels deserve to be acknowledged and embraced as an accurate record of what actually happened in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Reflecting the meticulously careful reasoning of an analytical philosopher, based upon a delightfully close reading of the Gospels, written in an engagingly conversational and accessible style, enhanced by the techniques of a seasoned master teacher, and laser-focused on an issue of the greatest moment in today's evangelical world, this book deserves to be read—and carefully pondered—by every thinking Christian, especially by those committed to raising up another generation whose minds are shaped and governed by the written Word of God.

Douglas Bookman

Professor of Bible Exposition
Shepherds Theological Seminary

Contemporary trends in biblical studies have put a spin on historical reliability that would lead many I serve away from the Bible. In *Testimonies to the Truth*, Dr. McGrew presents a well-researched, readable alternative for laypeople and students alike, that convincingly supports the Gospels' truthfulness. The chapter summaries and questions are excellent for personal and small group engagement. I could not recommend this book more for anyone who is interested in the historicity and reliability of the Bible.

Donald Brooks

Co-Founder of Northern Discovery Academy
Pastor and former Regional Director at Ratio Christi

Lydia McGrew is one of the most important thinkers in New Testament scholarship today. In *Testimonies to the Truth: Why You Can Trust the Gospels*, Dr. McGrew offers a survey of various categories of evidence that confirm the Gospels as historical reportage. Though this book's primary target audience is the popular level and though it is more general in scope than her previous three books, being accessible to a lay audience, the book contains various insights that are not found in her previous published work. In addition to reprising the argument from undesigned coincidences (the focus of a previous book, *Hidden in Plain View*), McGrew covers a plethora of extrabiblical confirmations of the gospels. Indeed, some of the connections McGrew highlights I had not previously observed. She also covers various lines of evidence that are scarcely discussed in contemporary apologetics literature. For example, McGrew devotes two entire chapters to the unified personalities found in the gospels that are so artless, casual and subtle that they contribute to the evidential case for the robust reliability of the Gospel accounts. McGrew also discusses alleged discrepancies between the Gospels, turning the argument on its head by underscoring how reconcilable variations in fact support narrative independence and thereby tend to confirm the reliability of the accounts. She also covers other marks of verisimilitude including unexplained allusions and unnecessary details, as well as casual references to difficult local knowledge relating to geography, customs, and culture.

Whether you are an interested layperson, a pastor, a student, or a scholar, this book contains important and valuable insights that you have probably not hitherto encountered. In addition, the discussion questions that accompany each chapter (with answers included at the back of the book) are an excellent resource for small group studies and family devotions.

Jonathan McLatchie

Discovery Institute Fellow

Director of TalkAboutDoubts.com

It is often the case that a curious person, wondering about the truth of the New Testament and the historical Jesus, reaches for some piece of writing (or viewing) only to be told either that "truth" and "history" are beside the point, or that they are decidedly not qualities that the New Testament or Jesus enjoy. The effect is that Jesus and the New Testament are shrunk down to a size too small to contemplate. But this isn't all there is to say! Thankfully, to the cavalcade of sometimes-obscure and often-less-known volumes adequately *affirming* the historical quality of the New Testament, Lydia McGrew adds her voice yet again. With *Testimonies to the Truth*, we get a readable and useful summation of McGrew's academic and trade publications on the reliability of the New

Testament (and Gospels especially), with the same analytic and educated force of her other published works.

The early chapters treating external corroboration should put a stone in the path of anyone who has dismissed the Gospels as non-historical, and the remainder of the book—looking broadly at various kinds of internal connections—may well make the case for unreliability begin to seem a little foolish. (The Gospels that emerge from such a survey don't really look like what we'd expect to find if they were whatever their detractors accuse them of being.) The whole book, but the latter chapters especially and the important concepts they introduce, will benefit good faith readers who simply want to sit with an open Bible and an open mind and think hard about the nature of the Gospels in a fresh way (*no expertise required*).

Chapter summaries, study questions and answers, and discussion questions, all make *Testimonies to the Truth* an excellent place to learn about (and remember, and learn to speak about) the case for the reliability of the Gospels, and perhaps for some to begin to ask the more pressing, more personal question: "What if they were true?"

Nathan Nadeau

Ph.D. Candidate, McMaster Divinity College

In *Testimonies to the Truth*, Lydia McGrew has given a fresh, enjoyable, and eminently readable investigation of the historical reliability of the Gospels so that we may know the painstaking accuracy of what they recorded. From geography and customs, from undesigned coincidences to unexpected harmonies, to consistent character portrayals, chiefly the extraordinary figure of Jesus Himself, again and again, the authors of the Gospels get the facts right. And as Lydia points out, they aren't even trying to get this intricate labyrinth of details to agree. They are just telling the truth! In addition, Lydia has filled this wonderful book with stimulating insights concerning Jesus' words, deeds, and personality and how they connect in unexpected and marvelous ways across the Gospels. Many of these splendid truths about Jesus will inspire awe and worship. *Testimonies to the Truth* will bring new understandings (and ideas for fresh studies in the Gospels) to biblical scholars. It provides penetrating study/discussion questions for personal devotions and small groups, and it presents a compelling case that the Gospels are authentic historical records to the truth, *the Truth* (John 14.6).

Justin W. Bass

Author of *The Bedrock of Christianity:
The Unalterable Facts of Jesus' Death and Resurrection*

In *Testimonies to the Truth: Why You Can Trust the Gospels*, Christian apologist Lydia McGrew offers fascinating, rarely noticed evidences that what the Gospel writers have handed down to us are not “cleverly devised stories” but reliable eyewitness testimony of true historical happenings in the life of Jesus (2 Peter 1.16). McGrew’s awareness of critical scholarship is obvious, and her dismissal of it is well-reasoned and swift. Rather than lengthy debate with detractors, she wisely chooses to give her readers commonsense reasons for not being misled and proof upon proof for why they can trust the Gospels.

This volume will prove valuable to the seasoned Bible student as well as newcomers to the Gospel records. After fifty-plus years as a Bible reader and thirty-plus years as a pastor and seminary professor, I learned much and was amazed at things I had missed in my previous reading of the Gospels. Added value is found in the Summaries, Individual Study Questions, Group Discussion Questions, and Suggested Resources that end each chapter. Pastors, Bible study leaders, home school parents, Christian school teachers, individual believers, and honest seekers will all find much to praise in this newest offering from Dr. McGrew. It is both scholarly and accessible. May God give it wide circulation is my prayer.

Jim Kinnebrew

Professor of Theology, Luther Rice Seminary (retired)
Campground Pastor, www.campingoutwithgod.com

The Gospels claim to be the testimony of people who were in a position to know what Jesus said and did, including his dying on a cross and rising from the dead. *If* they are reliable historical sources, their reader may come to *know* (not just believe) those most important truths about Jesus. In her wonderful new little book, *Testimonies to the Truth*, Lydia McGrew gives us a thoroughly convincing defense of that big “if.” She very effectively describes what reliable witness accounts look like and shows that the Gospels fit those patterns time and time again. Lydia makes good on her ministry slogan that claims to “make common sense rigorous.” Her careful thinking is indeed connecting the Gospel accounts to our modern-day, reasonable intuitions of how truthful witnesses sound like in the real world, and reading her making those powerful connections had me mumbling, “Oh . . . , that makes so much sense!” at just about every chapter.

Years ago, when I read the Gospels as an adult atheist, they challenged my unbelief partly because they struck me as having the ring of truth, even though I couldn’t explain immediately what I saw that made them so truthful. But Lydia *can* and does explain it all: external confirmations, unexplained allusions, undesigned coincidences, unnecessary details, unified personalities—her

excellent book carefully breaks down those intuitive markers of truth we find in the Gospels, and thereby not only provides solid justification for Christian belief, but also trains the lay person to become the apologist. What a gift.

Guillaume Bignon

Philosopher, apologist, and author
of Confessions of a French Atheist

Skepticism of the Bible runs rampant through Western culture. Sadly, most Christians are ill-equipped to deal with the intellectual challenges. The result? Over time, their confidence in scripture slowly erodes and the authority they once gave to the Bible disappears. This is why Lydia's book is so important. She provides a thorough yet accessible recounting of multiple lines of evidence for the historical reliability of the Gospels. In doing so, she offers a powerful case that 21st Century readers are getting actual history from the pages of scripture. As a result, Lydia shows how all human history is centered on the work of God through the person of Christ. You don't have to be a scholar to defend the Bible or trust its message; you just need to read this book.

Brett Kunkle

Founder and President of MAVEN
co-author of *A Practical Guide to Culture:
Helping the Next Generation Navigate Today's World*

Lydia McGrew's latest work is a brief, practical summary of the evidence for treating the Gospel accounts in the New Testament as factual, non-mythological, trustworthy material. For those who may find Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* intimidating, and for pastors, Christian workers, and Bible school students looking for instructional assistance at the centre of the apologetic task, this book is ideal.

John Warwick Montgomery, Ph.D. (Chicago),
D.Théol. (Strasbourg). LL.D. (Cardiff),
Professor Emeritus of Law and Humanities,
University of Bedfordshire (UK),
Director, International Academy of Apologetics,
Evangelism and Human Rights (Strasbourg, France)

In *Testimonies to the Truth*, Lydia McGrew builds on the already formidable case for the historical reliability of the Gospels that she developed in her previous apologetic masterpieces *Hidden in Plain View* and *The Eye of the*

Beholder. In *Testimonies*, she demonstrates convincingly that the Gospels describe real-life events recounted by real people. In addition to the presence of unintended but complementary testimony from multiple sources about incidental details (what she calls “undesigned coincidences”), she shows that the Gospels exhibit numerous other marks of historical reliability including, for example, accurate descriptions of obscure first-century Roman and Judean places and customs, unnecessary but credible details about important events, and a consistency and coherence in the portrayal of the key figures, especially the portrayal of the central figure of the Gospels, Jesus Christ. McGrew shows that these features are associated with accurate historical narrative. Thus, she argues convincingly that these features anchor all four accounts securely in the place, time, and culture they describe. They contain historical truth about the historical Jesus. *Testimonies to the Truth* is clearly written, rigorously argued, and devastatingly persuasive.

Stephen C. Meyer

Author of *The Return of the God Hypothesis*

Absolutely fascinating! This book is a delightful look at intriguing Gospel details that don't necessarily jump off the page to readers. Yet, discovering these insights will help you savor the Gospels in a whole new way and better understand the remarkable—and critically important—qualities of the texts as “testimonies to the truth.”

Natasha Crain

Speaker, podcaster, and author of
four books including *Faithfully Different*

Lydia McGrew offers a fresh and powerful case for the reliability of the Gospels. Resurrecting some classic arguments and yet offering some unique insights, *Testimonies to the Truth* deserves to be read by skeptics and believers alike. This is one of the top books I will now be recommending on why the Gospels can be trusted.

Sean McDowell

Associate Professor of Christian Apologetics,
Talbot School of Theology, Biola University
Author of numerous books, including *The Fate of the Apostles*