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Forged: Writing in the Name of God - Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are by Bart D. Ehrman, HarperOne, 2011

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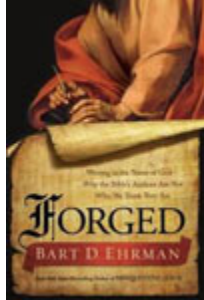
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Forged: Writing in the Name of God - Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are

by Bart D. Ehrman, HarperOne, 2011

Reviewed by James F. McGrath

I am grateful to Harper Collins for furnishing me with an advance copy of Bart Ehrman's forthcoming book *Forged: Writing in the Name of God--Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*. Ehrman has provided yet another book popularizing New Testament scholarship for a general audience. In this one, he focuses on forgery in early Christianity. He discusses numerous works outside of the New Testament, but all in service of a central aim, which is to explain why there is a widespread consensus that some of the New Testament works which contain explicit claims to authorship are not by who they say they are. Scholars refer to this as pseudepigraphy. Ehrman suggests that forgery is a better term, since the practice was no more acceptable in ancient times than today. This last point is one that scholars have often disputed, typically without evidence, and so Ehrman looks into the matter carefully and makes a persuasive case that then as now, forgers intended to deceive, and those who were their victims did not take kindly to it.

For the most part, the book presents mainstream scholarship's consensus on questions of authorship. Some cases, such as 2 Peter, are clear cut. They were not written by their purported author. If this is news to you, then Ehrman's new book provides a provocative and readable introduction to this important area of New Testament scholarship.

-James F. McGrath, Clarence L. Goodwin Chair in New Testament Language and Literature, Butler University.