

II. THE EVIDENCE FOR A HISTORICAL JESUS

A. AMONG "PAGAN" SOURCES...

1. THALLUS (a Samaritan historian, ca. 52 A.D.)

a. Wrote attempting to give a natural explanation for the

darkness which occurred at the crucifixion of Jesus

b. Note carefully:

1) He did not deny the existence of Jesus

2) But only tried to explain away the strange circumstances

surrounding His death

2. LETTER OF MARA-SERAPION (written to his son, ca. 73 A.D.)

a. He tells of the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras, and of Jesus

b. "What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise

king?...Nor did the wise king die for good; he lived on in

the teaching which he had given."

3. CORNELIUS TACITUS (Roman historian, ca. 112 A.D.)

a. Writes of Jesus in his ANNALS

b. "Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by

Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of

Tiberias."

4. PLINY THE YOUNGER

- a. Governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, ca. 112 A.D.
- b. Wrote to the emperor Trajan about Christians and their devotion to Christ

5. SEUTONIUS (Court official and annalist under Hadrian, 120 A.D.)

- a. "As the Jews were making constant disturbance at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."
- b. Luke makes reference to this same expulsion in Ac 18:1-2

B. AMONG "JEWISH" SOURCES...

1. THE TALMUD

- a. Consists of two separate books dealing with Jewish law, written during the period from 100 A.D. to 500 A.D.
- b. Speaks frequently of Jesus of Nazareth...
 - 1) In unfriendly terms, of course
 - 2) But never disputing his status as a historical figure

2. FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

- a. A Jewish general turned Roman historian, born 37 A.D.

b. Makes several references to Jesus in his History Of The Jews

c. E.g., "...and brought before it the brother of Jesus, the
so-called Christ, whose name was James."

1. It provides a solid basis upon which one can intelligently

believe in Jesus as a person who actually existed in history

2. It exposes the shallow thinking of any who would try to mark

off Jesus as a myth

3. It requires everyone to give some sort of answer to the

question posed by Jesus Himself: "But who do you say that I

am?" - **Mt 16:15**

Is the New Testament Reliable?

Number of manuscripts

Proximity to events

Variants (not necessarily errors)



Is the New Testament Reliable?

Extra biblical confirmation

Archaeology

Support of non canonical manuscripts
(Dead Sea Scrolls, other)

Total New Testament Manuscripts

Greek Manuscripts - 5,800+

Latin Manuscripts - 10,000+

Other Languages - 5,000 - 10,000

Church Father Quotes - 1 Million +

NUMBER OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Language*	Earliest MS (old)	Earliest MS (new)	Number of MSS (old)	Number of MSS (new)
Armenian	AD 887	AD 862	2000+	2000+
Coptic	Late 3rd c. AD	Late 3rd c. AD	Around 975	Around 975
Gothic	5th or 6th c. AD	5th or 6th c. AD	6	6
Ethiopian	10th c. AD	6th c. AD	600+	600+
Total Latin Translations	N/A	N/A		
Old Latin	4th c. AD	4th c. AD	50	110
Vulgate	4th c. AD	4th c. AD	10,000+	10,000+
Syriac	5th c. AD	Late 4th or Early 5th c. AD	350+	350+
Georgian	Late 9th c. AD	5th c. AD	43+	89
Slavic	10th c. AD	10th c. AD	4,000+	4,000+
Total Non-Greek manuscripts				18,130+
Greek	AD 130 (or earlier)	AD 130 (or earlier)	5838	5,856

TOTAL GREEK AND NON-GREEK MANUSCRIPTS **23,986**

Biblical Manuscripts, Scrolls, and Translations

New Testament Greek Manuscripts	5,856
New Testament Early Translations	18,130
Old Testament Scrolls, Codices	42,300**
TOTAL BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCES	66,286

Work	Earliest MS (old)	Earliest MS (new)	Number of MSS (old)	Number of MSS (new)
Homer's Iliad	About 400 BC	About 415 BC	1,800+	1,900+
Herodotus—History	1st c. AD	150–50 BC	109	About 106
Sophocles' Plays	3rd c. BC	3rd c. BC	193	About 226
Plato's Tetralogies	AD 895	3rd c. BC	210	238
Caesar's Gallic Wars	9th c. AD	9th c. AD	251	251
Livy's History of Rome	Early 5th c. AD	4th c. AD	150	About 473
Tacitus's Annals	1st half: AD 850 2nd half: AD 1050	1st half: AD 850 2nd half: AD 1050	33	36
Pliny the Elder's Natural History	One 5th c. AD fragment. Others in 14th and 15th c.	5th c. AD	200	200+
Thucydides' History	3rd c. BC	3rd c. BC	96	188
Demosthenes' Speeches	Fragments from 1st c. BC	1st c. BC, possibly earlier	340	444
TOTAL				4,062+

What do we have of the New Testament?

Total New Testament Manuscripts

Greek Manuscripts - 5,800+

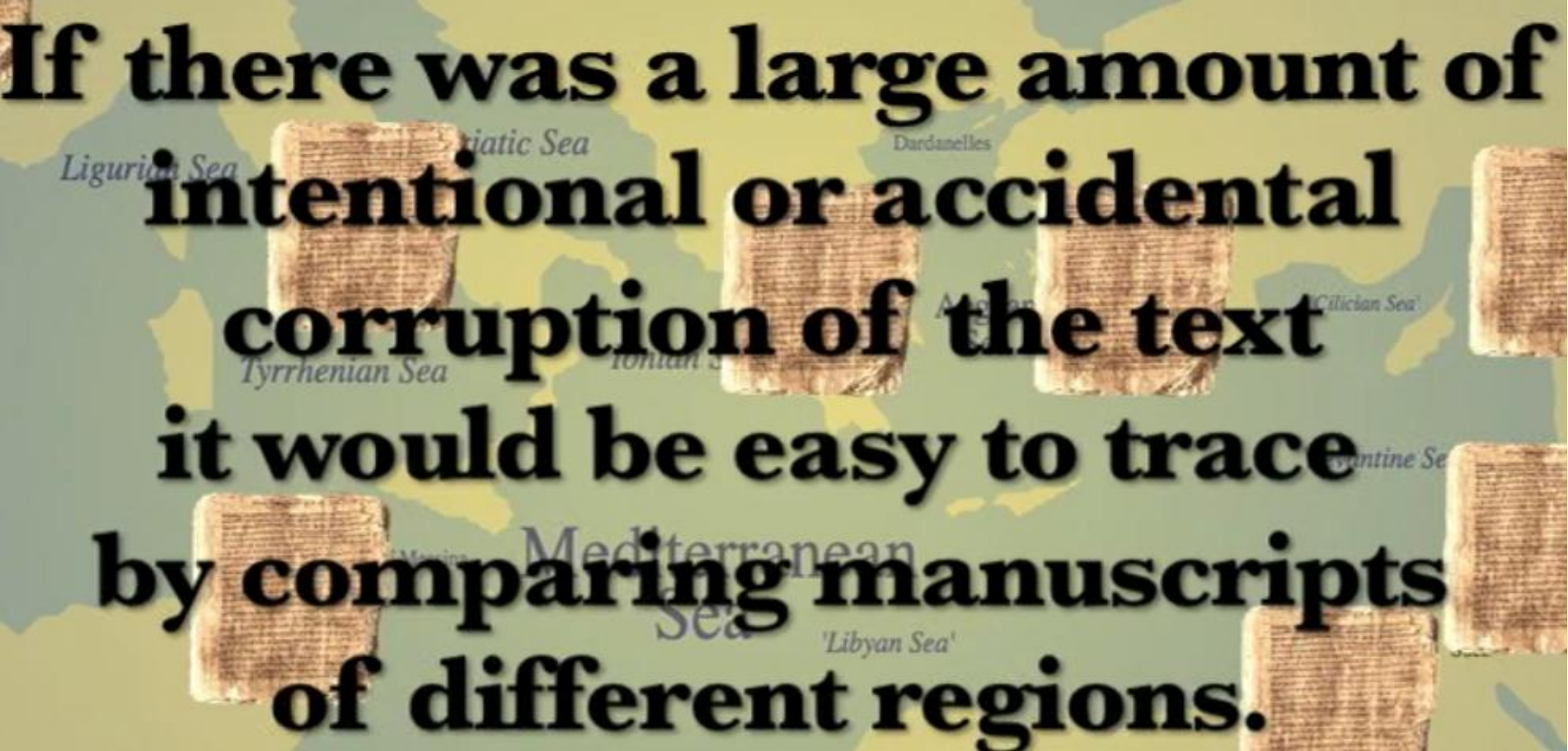
Latin Manuscripts - 10,000+

Other Languages - 5,000 - 10,000

Church Father Quotes - 1 Million +

The more manuscripts the more accurate we will be in reconstructing the original through textual criticism.

**Even if we didn't have any
manuscripts
we would still have the entire
New Testament preserved in the
writings of the church fathers.**

The background is a stylized map of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding regions, including parts of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. The map is in a muted green and yellow color scheme. Several ancient papyrus scrolls are scattered across the map, some partially overlapping the text. The text is written in a large, bold, black serif font with a slight drop shadow, making it stand out against the map background.

**If there was a large amount of
intentional or accidental
corruption of the text
it would be easy to trace
by comparing manuscripts
of different regions.**

Total New Testament Manuscripts
Greek Manuscripts - 5,800+

Total Iliad Manuscripts
Total Manuscripts - 1,757

Total Suetonius Manuscripts
Total Manuscripts - 200+/-

Codex Sinaiticus

330 AD –360 AD



P52
90AD - 125 AD

170 AD - 220 AD

P66

P46

ΝΗΘΟΥΧΑΙΤΟΤΕΝΗΘΕΛΑΛΑΙΑ
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 ΕΛΑΚΑΥΤΗΝΟΑΥΤΟΥΤΥΡΙΝΩΟΥ
 ΔΕΝΑΧΕΛΕΑΥΤΟΥΜΟΔΕΕΩ
 ΗΚΥΕΤΗΕΧΑΛΗΘΕΣΤΗΝΟΤΙ
 ΑΝΕΥΕΟΥΧΑΛΑΛΕΤΟΥΧΑΙΟ

P67

P75

**102 pages from
Luke and John**

	Number of Manuscripts	Oldest Manuscript
New Testament	24,000+	< 300 Complete < 70 Fragment
Iliad	1,757	500 +/-
Suetonius	200 +/-	800 +/-

**If we are to be skeptical of
the New Testament
then we should be even
more skeptical of other
ancient literature.**

Fragmented Manuscripts From or Around 2nd Century

P90	P64	P98
P104	P67	P75
P66	P77	P32
P46	P103	P52

**There may be more. See: "The Text of the Earliest
New Testament Greek Manuscripts"
by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett*

Fragmented Manuscripts From or Around 2nd Century

P90	P64	P98
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**There may be more. See: "The Text of the Earliest
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43% of
the New Testament

**We have 120 manuscripts
around 300 years from the
original.**

**Some scholars still argue the
New Testament copies are too
late and full of errors.**



Bart Ehrman

**What we have are copies
made later—much later...
And these copies all
differ from one another,
in many thousands of
places."**

***Misquoting Jesus
Page 10***

Bart Ehrman's Objections

- 1. All the New Testament copies today are too late.**
- 2. Our copies differ in many places and are full of errors.**

**There is also no reason to assume
the originals or first copies
were copied once and thrown
away or lost.**

NOT

**There is also no reason to assume
the originals or first copies
were copied once and thrown
away or lost.**

NOT

Page 91

THE TEXT OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT
Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration
Fourth Edition



BRUCE M. METZGER
BART D. EHRMAN

**Ehrman acknowledges
that a manuscript can
likely be a direct copy of
one from 100 years prior
to it.**

There is no reason to assume the originals were just copied once and forgotten or that scribes only had one copy to pull from.



Tertullian

He seems to suggest the originals were still around when he was writing at the end of the second century.



Tertullian

It appears Tertullian is saying the originals were still in churches to that day.

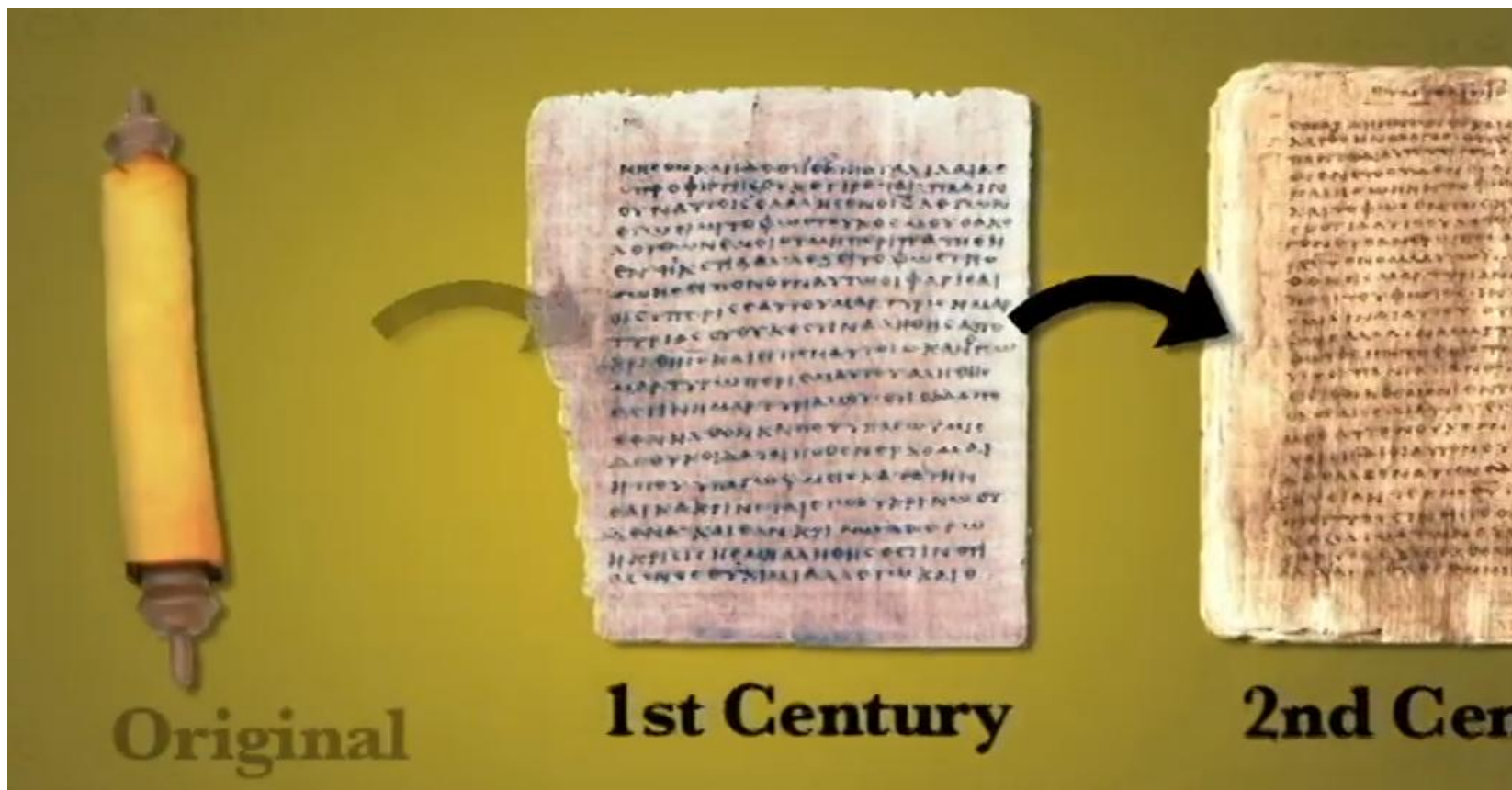
Prescription against Heresy Chapter 36

"Come now, you who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over to the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read..."



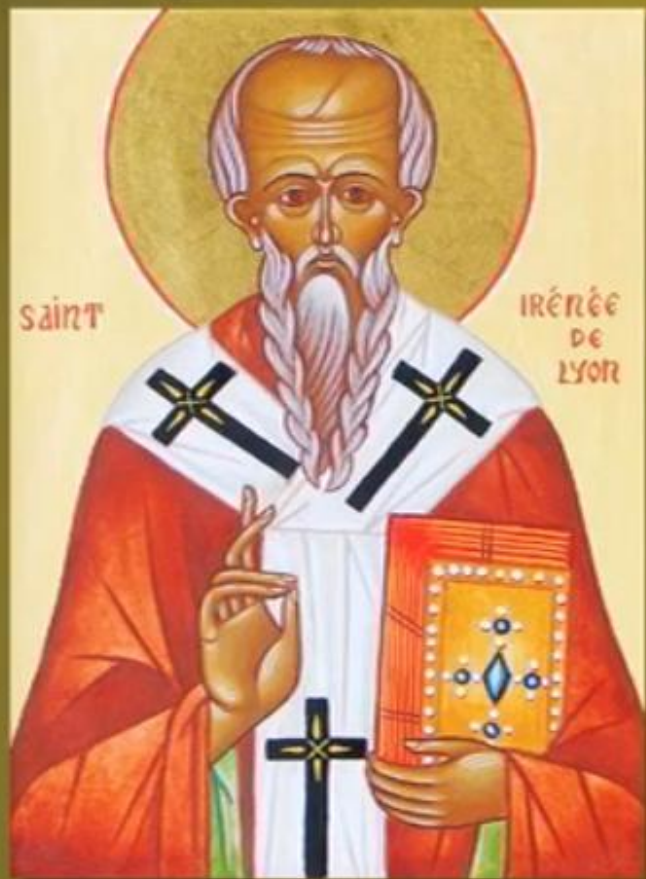
- Letters to the Corinthians
- Letter to the Phillipians
- Letters to the Thessalonians
- Letters to the Ephesians
- Letters to the Romans

Tertullian



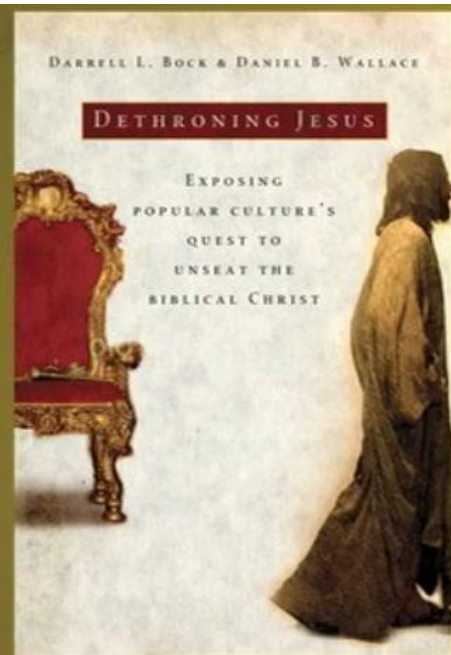
There is no reason to suggest the originals, or the first copies were simply lost after they were copied.

They did not discard copies, were available for use for long time as papyrus may last 100 yrs



- Testifies he had access to early copies of the book of Revelation (Adversus haereses).

St. Irenaeus

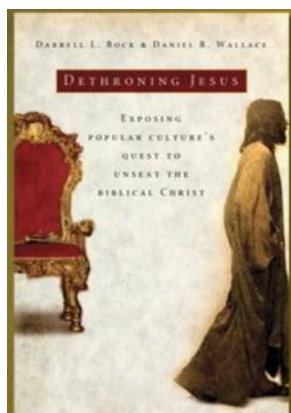
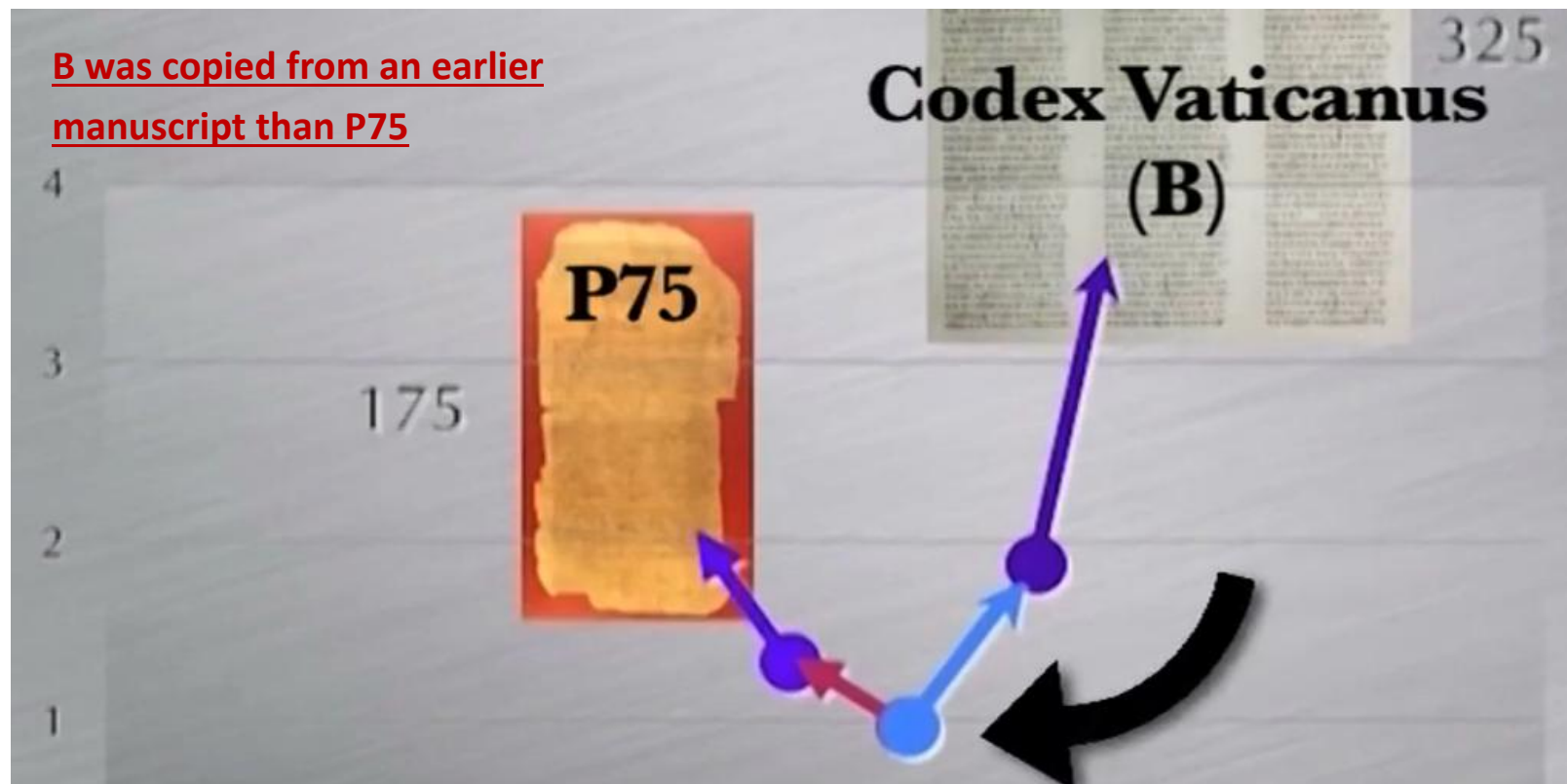


**Darrell Bock
&
Dan Wallace**

"Two of the oldest manuscripts we have, Papyrus 75 (or P75) and Codex Vaticanus (or B), have an exceptionally strong agreement. And they are among the most accurate manuscripts

that exist today. P75 is about 125 years older than B, yet it is not an ancestor of B. Instead, B was copied from an earlier ancestor of P75 (see Porter 1962, 363-76; 1967, 71-80).

B was copied from an earlier
manuscript than P75



**Darrell Bock
&
Dan Wallace**

**The combination of these
two manuscripts in a
particular reading must
surely go back to the very
beginning of the second
century."**

*Dethroning Jesus
Page 47*

**The idea that our copies are
far too late
doesn't stand up to evidence.**

Bart Ehrman's Objections

- 1. ~~All the New Testament copies today~~
~~are too late.~~**
- 2. Our copies differ in many places and
are full of errors.**

Bart Ehrman's Objections

- 2. Our copies differ in many places and
are full of errors.**

**There are 400,000 variants
in Greek New Testament
manuscripts!**

The reason we have so many variants is because we have so many manuscripts.

Total New Testament Manuscripts

Greek Manuscripts - 5,800+
Latin Manuscripts - 10,000+
Other Languages - 5,000 - 10,000
Church Father Quotes - 1 Million +

Total New Testament Manuscripts

Greek Manuscripts - 5,800+

Total Pages - 2.6 Million

Total Variants - 400,000

1 Variant per 6.5 Pages

Even if the variant error is repeated such as spelling or use of different article it is counted

Total Variants - 400,000

- 75% are spelling errors or differences.**
- 15% are variations in Greek synonyms and transpositions.**
- > 9% - Late changes**
- < 1% - Do affect the meaning of the text and are from early manuscripts.**

The late 9% are resolved by comparison to earlier manuscripts

**None of these VARIANTS
actually CHALLENGE or
AFFECT essential
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES!**



Bart Ehrman

"The position I argue for in 'Misquoting Jesus' does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger's position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."

Misquoting Jesus
Page 252

**There is absolutely no evidence
to suggest Christian doctrines
are affected by variants in
the manuscripts.**

**There is next to zero evidence
to suggest
we cannot get back to the
originals.**

New Testament Accuracy

40 lines unresolved by textual criticism

99.5%

Followed by:

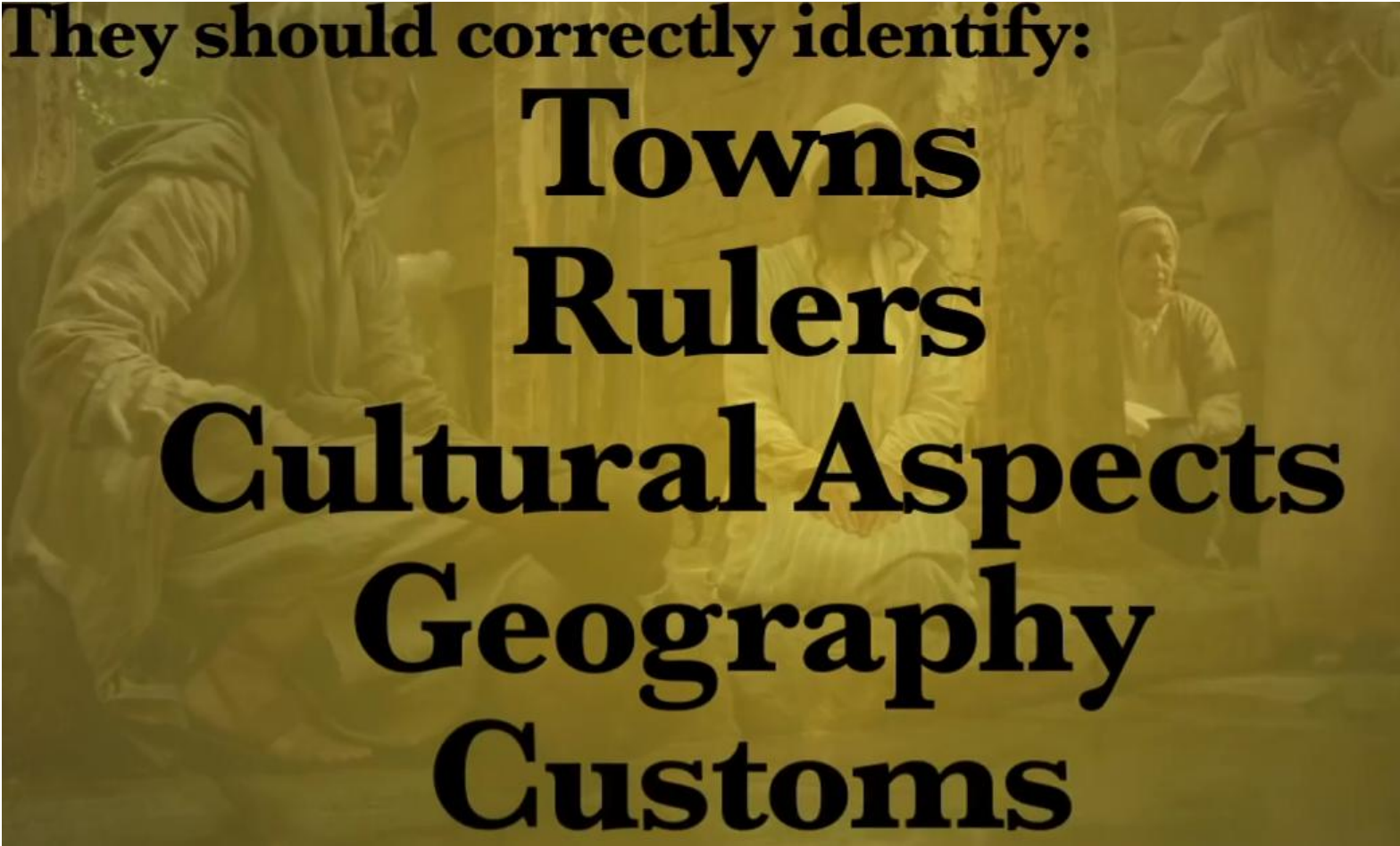
Iliad - 95% Accuracy with 764 lines of corruption.

**There is no textual
evidence that threatens the
origins of essential
Christian doctrines.**

External Witnesses

**If the New Testament was
written by eyewitnesses
and is not a fabrication from
later imposters,
then they should be able to
get most of their facts right.**

Some scholars have offered that though the Gospels were not intended as history books that the history contained in them is so detailed and accurate that not only did they help direct research in this area but reliably confirm the details of the Gospels, related to geography, dates, rulers and other details which lends support to the veracity and reliability of the Gospels.

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of several individuals, likely women, dressed in traditional Middle Eastern clothing such as headscarves and long robes. They appear to be in a social gathering or a public space, with some looking towards the camera and others looking away.

They should correctly identify:

Towns

Rulers

Cultural Aspects

Geography

Customs

New Testament External Evidence:

1. Secular attestation to the life and ministry of Jesus

2. Confirmation in archeological finds

3. Coherence with ancient history

THALLUS (a Samaritan historian, ca. 52 A.D.)

LETTER OF MARA-SERAPION (written to his son, ca. 73 A.D.)

CORNELIUS TACITUS (Roman historian, ca. 112 A.D.)

PLINY THE YOUNGER

SEUTONIUS (Court official and annalist under Hadrian, 120 A.D.)

THE TALMUD

- a. Consists of two separate books dealing with Jewish law, written during the period from 100 A.D. to 500 A.D.

b. Speaks frequently of Jesus of Nazareth...

- 1) In unfriendly terms, of course
- 2) But never disputing his status as a historical figure

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

a. A Jewish general turned Roman historian, born 37 A.D.

It provides a solid basis upon which one can intelligently believe in Jesus as a person who actually existed in history

New Testament External Evidence:

1. Secular attestation to the life and ministry of Jesus

**Josephus
Lucian
Mara bar-Serapion
Pliny**

**Seutonius
Tacitus
The Talmud**

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Tacitus
*meets the criteria
of embarrassment.*



Tacitus

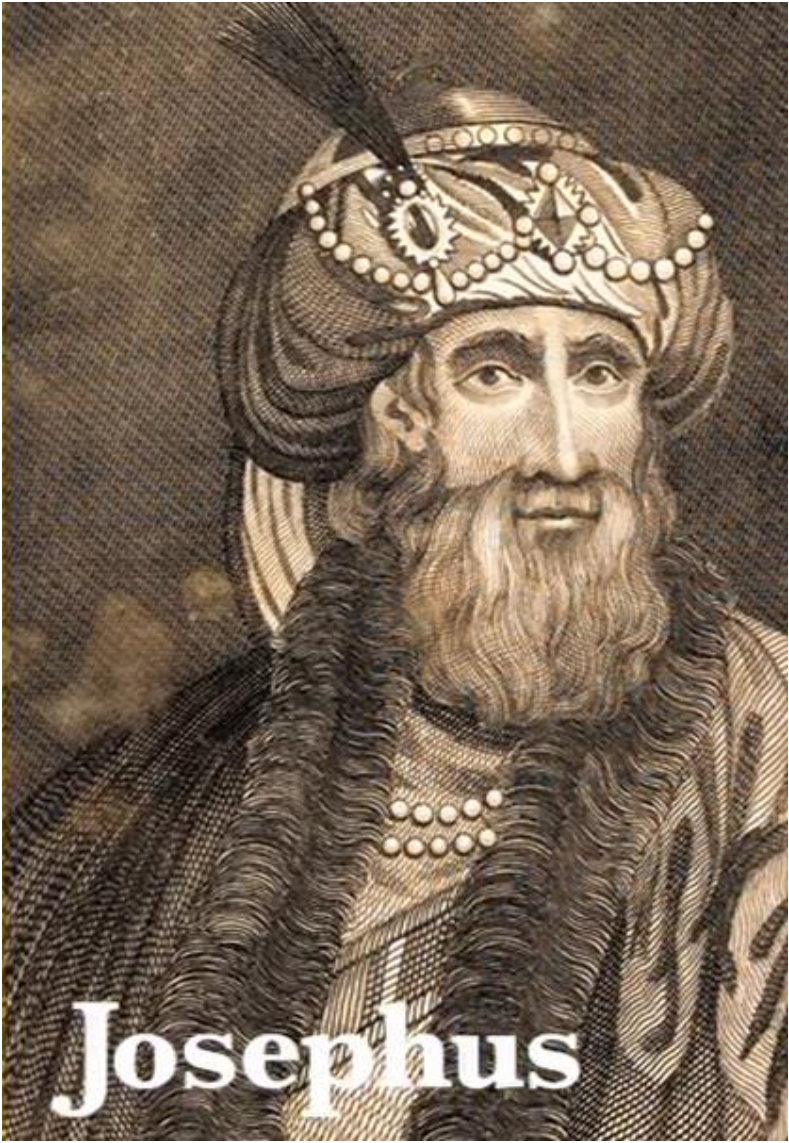


Tacitus

- 1. Jesus existed**
- 2. He was put to death**
- 3. Under Pontius Pilate**
- 4. Ruling in Judea**
- 5. Under Tiberius**

“Hence to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius”

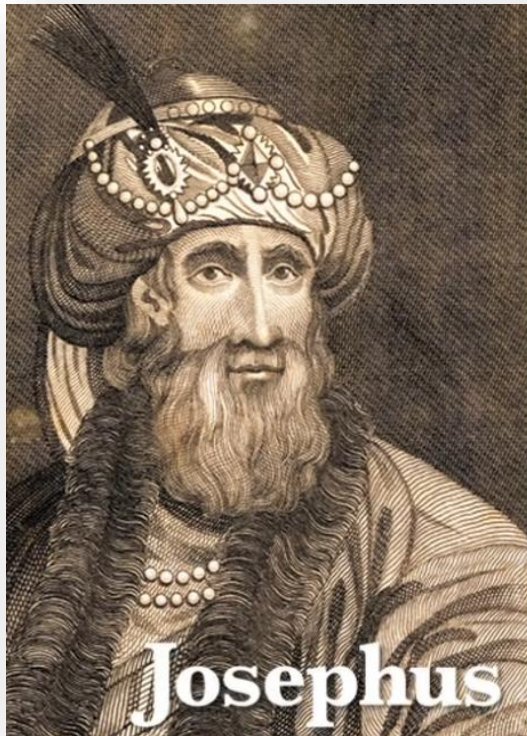
Annals 15.44

An engraving of a man with a long, dark beard and mustache, wearing a turban with a feather and a decorative headband. He is wearing a dark, fur-trimmed cloak over a patterned garment. The name 'Josephus' is written in large, white, serif letters at the bottom left of the image.

In fact, most think it is original and just doctored.

Scholars agree this passage has been interpolated
(doctored by a later Christian scribe).

Joseph was a Jew. Concerns over initial corruption of document later resolved with finding of another document. Later documented accepted considered reliable described Jesus.



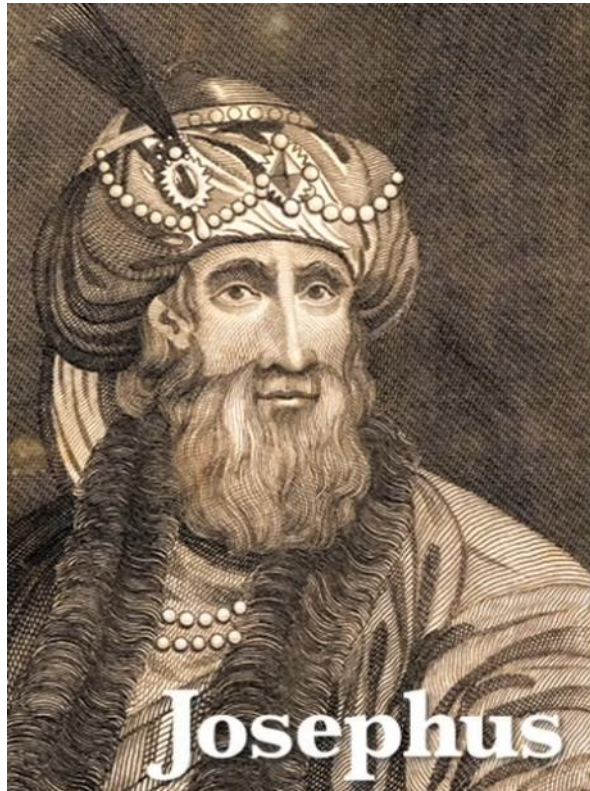
Most scholars accept this passage was interpolated and was originally more like what is found in the Arabic manuscript.

discovered an Arabic quote in Agapius, of the Title."

لك يوسفوس² العبراني فانه قال في
مان رجل حكيم يقال له ايسوعا وكا
من الناس من اليهود وسائر الشعب
تتلمذوا له يدعوا تلمذته وذكروا ان

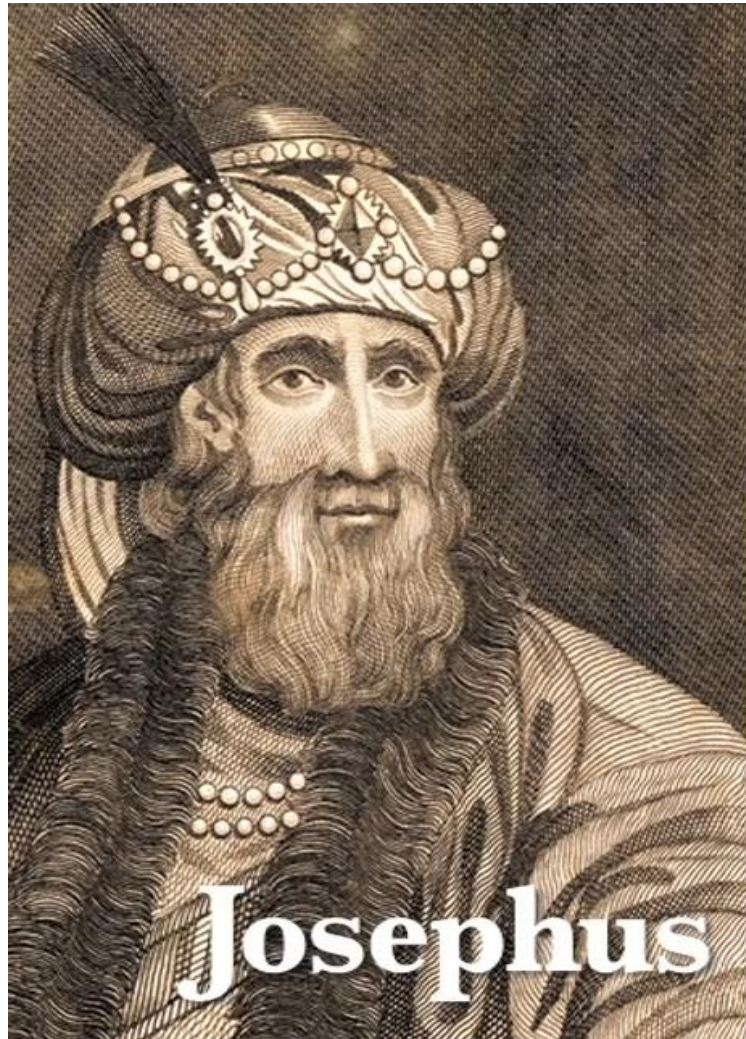
هو المسيح الذي قالت عنه الانبياء الاعاجيب فهذا قول يوسفوس واصحابه

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders."



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his discipleship. They reported that he had
appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he
was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah
concerning whom the prophets have recounted
wonders.”**



1. Jesus existed
2. He was a good and moral teacher
3. Many people followed Him
4. He was put to death by Pilate
5. Crucified
6. Disciples claimed He was alive
7. Continued to preach his message
8. James was the brother of Jesus
9. John the baptist was killed by Herod Antipas

Babylonian Talmud

1. Jews wanted to Stone Jesus (See: John 8:59)
2. Jesus was Crucified around Passover (Matthew 26:2)
3. He led many Jews astray
4. Implication a trial happened
5. Believed to be a miracle worker

“On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu. And an announcer went out, in front of him, for 40 days (saying): ‘He is going to be stoned, because he practiced sorcery and enticed and led Israel astray. Anyone who knows anything in his favor, let him come and plead in his behalf.’ But, not having found anything in his favor, they hanged him on the eve of Passover.”

Sanhedrin 43a; df.t.Sanh. 10:11

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John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

**Josephus,
Antiquities, 14**

?

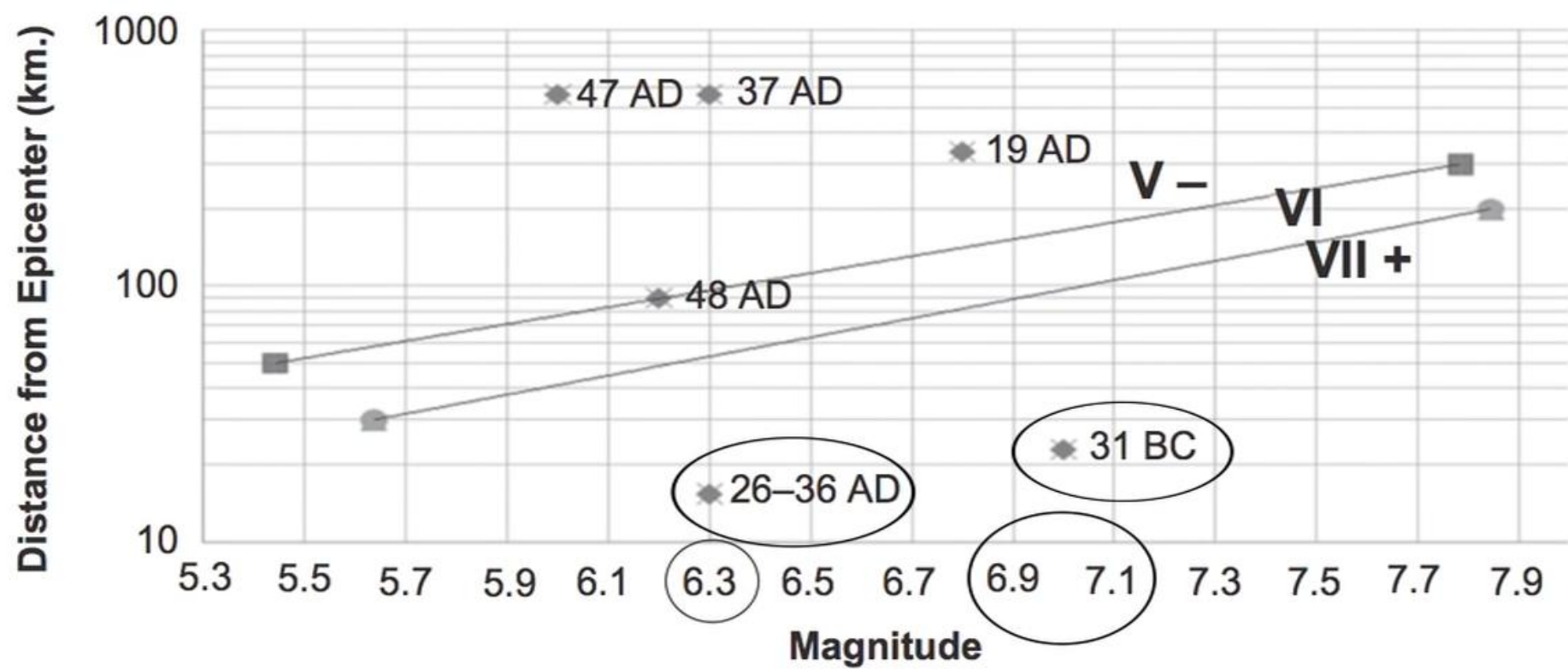


Lysanias, Tetrarch of Chalcis, ruled from 40 to 36 BC



This inscription, dating to the time of Tiberius, names Lysanias as Tetrarch.

There turned out to be 2 Lysanias government officials



Archeological Evidence for:

Herod the Great

Ancient Jewish Coins: Herod the Great's Coins

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/HerodsCoins.html>

Herod Antipas

ScienceDaily, 'Ancient Tiberias Reveals More of Its Beauty',

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/07/050728173930.htm.

Gallio the Proconsul (Acts 18)

The Gallio Inscription

<http://users.wfu.edu/horton/r102/gallio.html>

House of Caiaphas Ossuary is Authentic

Archeologists authenticate 2,000 year old burial box of Miriam, daughter of Yeshua son of High Priest Caiaphas.

First Publish: 6/29/2011, 7:17 PM / Last Update: 6/30/2011, 1:13 AM



Archeological Evidence for:

Bethlehem

"Israeli archaeologists find ancient seal that mentions Bethlehem"
*[http://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/6/19/israeli-archaeologists-
find-ancient-seal-mentions-/](http://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/6/19/israeli-archaeologists-find-ancient-seal-mentions-/)*

Nazareth

First Jesus-era house found in Nazareth
*[http://www.nbcnews.com/id/34511072/ns/technology_and_
science-science/#.VW4Hic6GpaY](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/34511072/ns/technology_and_science-science/#.VW4Hic6GpaY)*

Archeological Evidence for:

Capernaum

*Randall Price, The Stones Cry Out:
What Archaeology Reveals about the Truth of the Bible, Page 305*



Graham Twelftree

"There is now almost unanimous agreement among Jesus questers that the historical Jesus performed mighty works."

The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research
Page 206

There is evidence in a citation from Africanus:

Phlegon

Thallus

mentioned a period of darkness that happened around the time of Christ's death.

Julius Africanus

"Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun unreasonably..."

- Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18.1

"Phlegon also comments on the darkness at the time of Christ's crucifixion: 'During the time of Tiberius Caesar an eclipse of the sun occurred during the full moon.'"

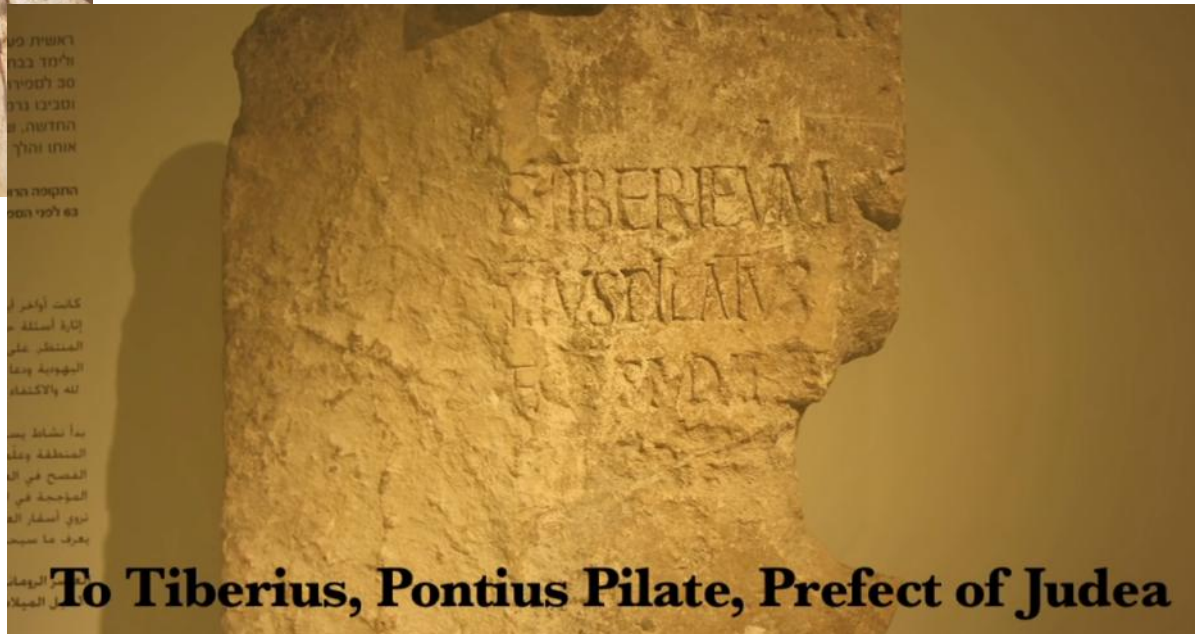
- Julius Africanus, Chronography, 18.1

**The majority of what we
find in archeology
confirms the biblical account.**



Initially doubted Pilate

**But stone found in 1961 confirmed historical
Pilate**



To Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea

Jesus 'died on Friday, April 3, 33AD' claims study that matches crucifixion to earthquake mentioned in gospel

By EDDIE WRENN FOR MAILONLINE

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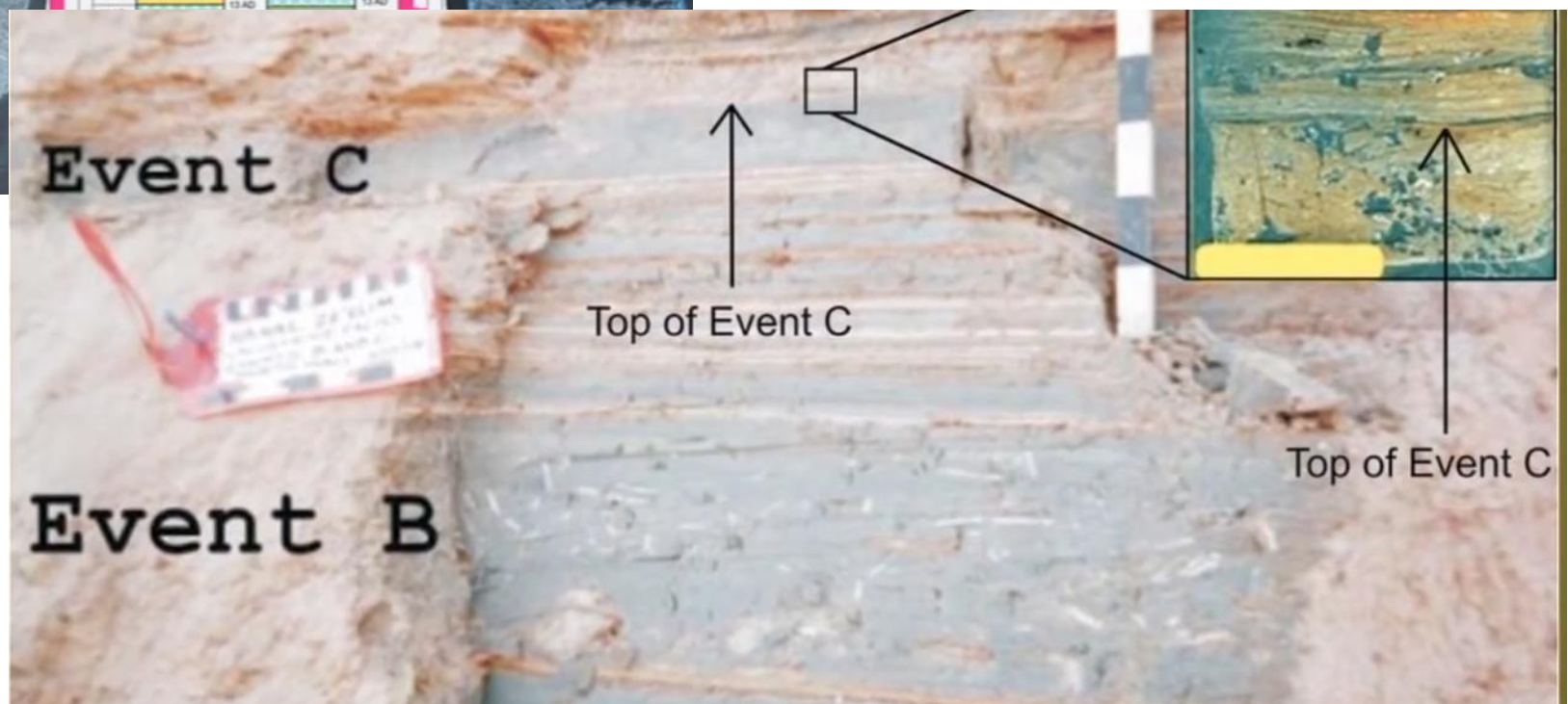
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Jesus died on Friday, April 3, 33AD, according to an investigation which matches his death to an earthquake.

The investigation, from the International Geology Review, looked at earthquake activity around the Dead Sea, which is around 13 miles from Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 27, says that as Jesus lay dying on the cross, an earthquake shook the area, scattering graves and making the sky go dark.







1st Century Galilean Fishing Boat

antiquities.org.il/site_Item_eng.asp?id=133



Ben Witherington III

“...as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extra-biblical evidence of its kind.”

*Building Belief: Constructing
Faith from the Ground Up
Page 146*

New Testament External Evidence:

- 1. Secular attestation to the life and ministry of Jesus**
- 2. Confirmation in archeological finds**
- 3. Coherence with ancient history**

The Temple Tax

²⁴ When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?" ²⁵ He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" ²⁶ And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel.^[9] Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

**Matthew records the appropriate
currency exchange:**

1 Shekel = 4 drachma

