

Jesus – Lord, Liar, Lunatic..... or Legend

1 Peter 3:15

“...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always **being prepared to make a defense** to anyone who asks you **for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”

Jesus – Lord, Liar, Lunatic..... or Legend

Christianity is a “**Reasonable**” faith, remember Voddie Baucham:

“I chose to believe the Bible because the Bible is a reliable collection of historical documents, written by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses, which report supernatural events in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed their writings are Divine and not of human origin. “

Jesus – Lord, Liar, Lunatic..... or Legend

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Jesus – Lord, Liar, Lunatic..... or Legend

C.S. Lewis popularized the argument that Jesus was either a Liar or a lunatic or the Lord back in 1942.

But, he didn't invent it...

John Duncan (1796-1870) –
Scottish Christian preacher

“Christ either deceived mankind by conscious fraud, or He was himself deluded and self-deceived, or He was Divine. There is no getting out of this trilemma. It is inexorable.”

Watchman Nee (1936)

“A person who claims to be God must belong to one of three categories; First, if he claims to be God and yet in fact is not, he has to be a madman or a lunatic. Second, if he is neither God nor a lunatic, he has to be a liar, deceiving others by his lie. Third, if he is neither of these, he must be God. You can only choose one of the three possibilities. If you do not believe that he is God, you have to consider him a madman.

Question: Is this a sound argument?

1. Are the terms clear? Yes
2. Is the logic valid? Yes
3. Are the Premises true? NO

There's another option, what if
the things said about Jesus are

just

LEGEND?

Legend/Myth?

Legend meaning:

The Jesus of history isn't the
Jesus of the Bible

Legend Defined:

(Note: I'm using legend/myth interchangeably)

History and legends are historical facts, but history is an evidence-based record of past, whereas legends are exaggerated stories of ancient truths.

**Myths – Muthos (noun) “false story”
or tale, legend, fable, fiction**

Legend/Myth Theory

Skeptics rely heavily upon this “Legend” theory to discount the Gospel Records and their argument is an argument from SILENCE. They believe that the Gospel records were written LATE which gave time for legend to creep in and make the assertions below:

Assertion #1:

It is possible that legend crept in after the historical Jesus lived. This legend could have been created and propagated by his disciples to keep this new Christianity alive. Jesus of history was just a man with no supernatural powers and his disciples “created” the supernatural Jesus after his death and “supposed” resurrection.

Assertion #2

Summed up by this quote from Dan Brown's Di Vinci Code

“The Bible has evolved through countless translations, editions and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book”

Keep in Mind

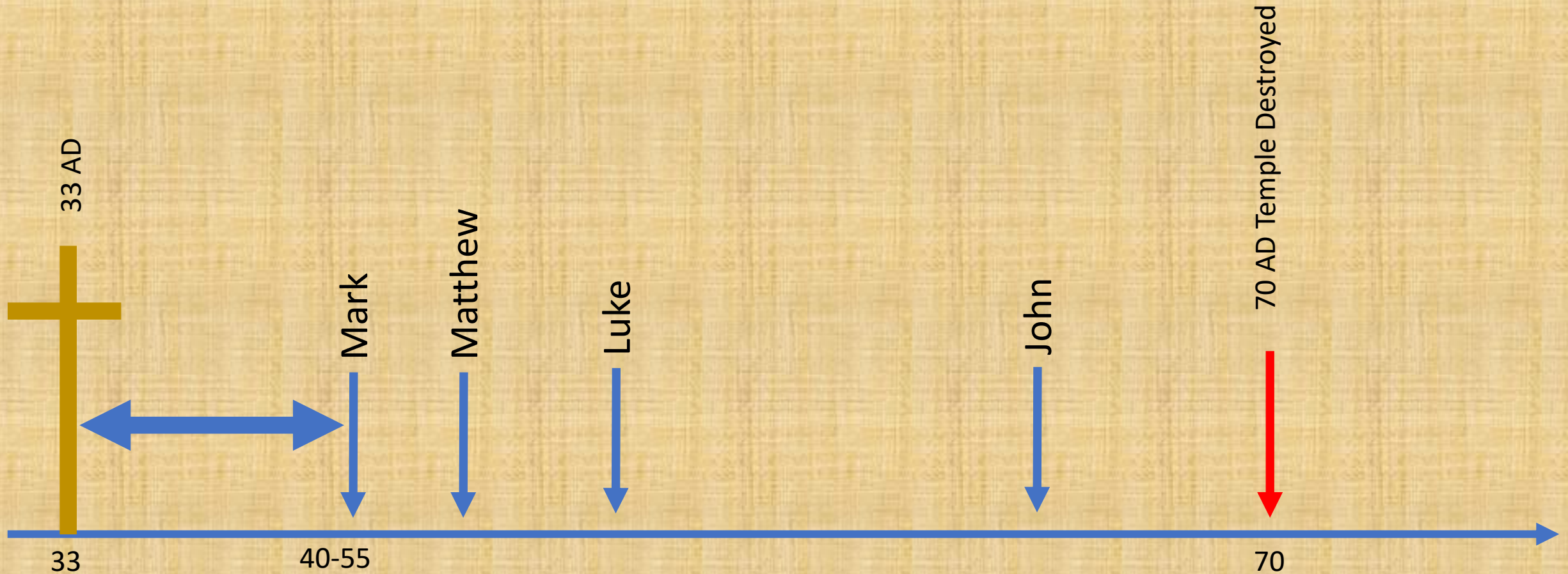
There are absolutely no texts from the first century that contradict the Gospel records.

These “Theories” are arguments from silence.

2 Peter 1:16-17

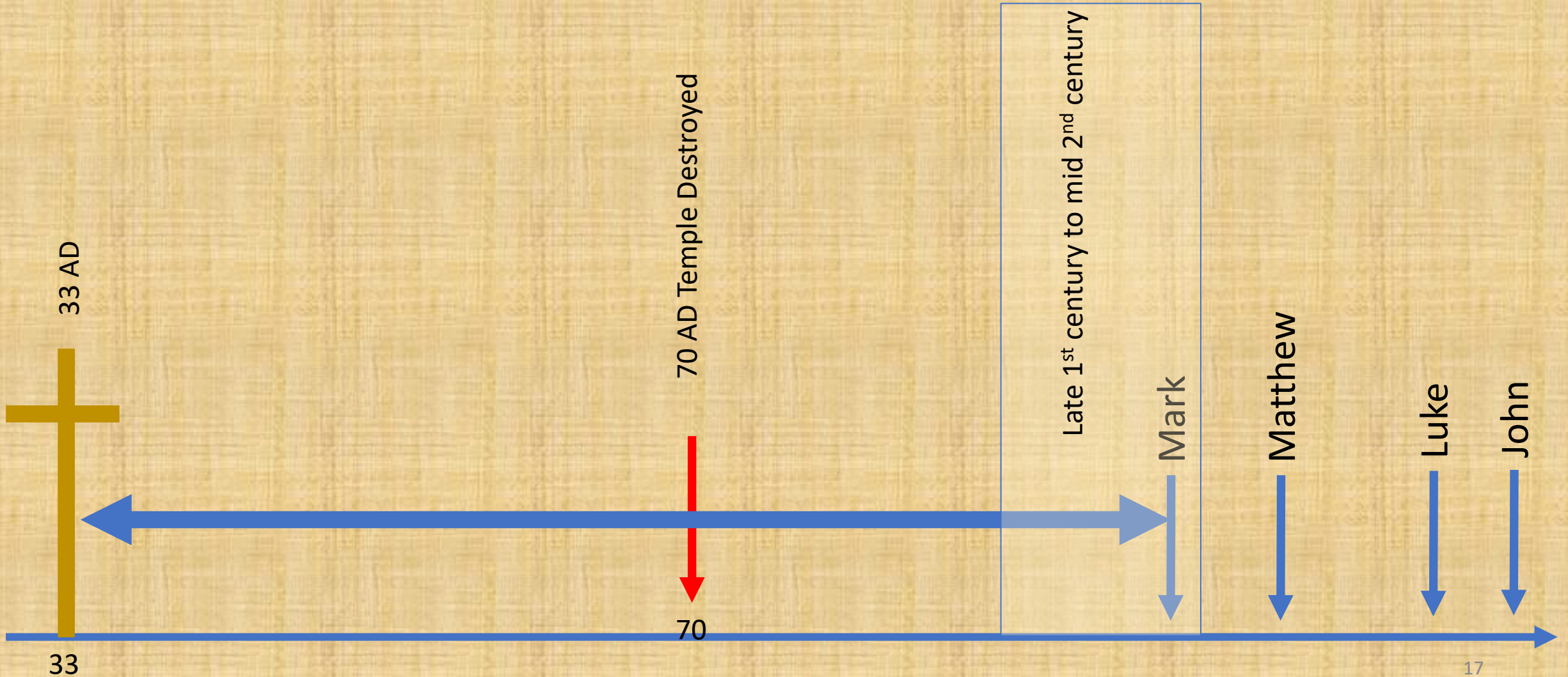
16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son,^[a] with whom I am well pleased”...

Note the gap between Jesus' crucifixion and the earliest NT document.
Skeptics make use of this gap to try to conjure up a different picture of Jesus
that is depicted in the Gospels.



This is how Skeptic NT liberal scholars try to date the NT

They actually push the Gospels into the 2nd Century



Refuting the Legend/Myth theory

C. S. Lewis, In a 1950 essay “What are we to Make of Jesus?”.

Lewis shows how unlikely it would be for the Jews to invent God become man: this is difficult because his followers were all Jews; that is, they belonged to that Nation which of all others was convinced that there was only one God – that there could not possibly be another. It is very odd that this horrible invention about a religious leader should grow up among the one people in the earth least likely to make such a mistake.

C. S. Lewis, In a 1950 essay “What are we to Make of Jesus?” Cont’d

Lewis draws upon his background as a literary historian, “I am perfectly convinced that whatever else the Gospels are they are not Legends. I have read a great deal of legend and I am quite clear that they are not the same sort of thing. They are not artistic enough to be legends. From an imaginative point of view, they are clumsy, they don’t work up to things properly. Most of the life of Jesus is totally unknown to us, as is the life of anyone else who lived at that time, and no people building up a legend would allow that to be so”

So, Lewis thinks it implausible that the monotheistic Jews would have invented an incarnate Messiah and he thinks that the genre of the gospels bears none of the typical marks of legends – based upon a lifetime of scholarly and leisure reading of ancient legends.

Julius Muller (The Theory of Myths in its Application to the Gospel History Examined and Confuted - 1844)

“One cannot imagine how such a series of legends could arise in an historical age, obtain universal respect, and supplant the historical recollection of the true character (of Jesus) if eyewitnesses were still at hand who could be questioned respecting the truth of the recorded marvels.”

Other facts disproving the Myth/Legend Theory

- The Gospels are not written in the style of myth, they do not contain the normal features found in myth.
- No overblown, spectacular, childishly exaggerated events
- Nothing is arbitrary, everything in the Gospels fits and is meaningful.
- Psychological depth is at a maximum, in myth it is at a minimum.
- The character development in the Gospels, especially of Jesus, is remarkable.
- Myths are verbose, the Gospels are laconic (concise)

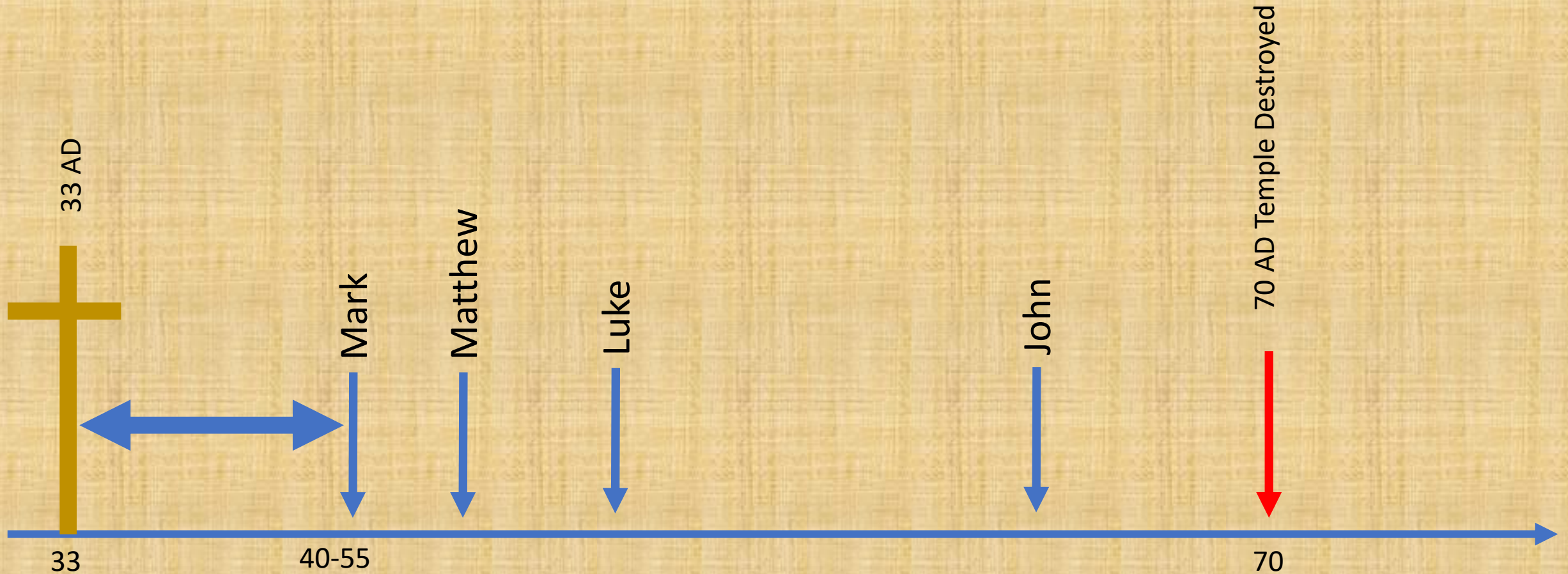
- Not enough time for myth/legend to develop, it usually takes greater than two generations before legend can develop and wipe out hard core historical fact.
- If the resurrection account is supposed to be legend for example, you would NEVER have women be the ones to discover the empty tomb!
- If you are trying to foist a myth or legend you don't propagate it while eyewitnesses are still alive and able to refute your claims
- You don't propagate a myth/legend in the same area where the events took place, you make it far removed from the location.

EXAMPLE of a mythical writing from that era
THE GOSPEL OF PETER ~125 AD

As William Lane Craig puts it: (a supposed scene at the Resurrection site)

"In this account, the tomb is not only surrounded by Roman guards but also by all the Jewish Pharisees and elders as well as a great multitude from all the surrounding countryside who have come to watch the resurrection. Suddenly in the night there rings out a loud voice in heaven, and two men descend from heaven to the tomb. The stone over the door rolls back by itself, and they go into the tomb. The three men come out of the tomb, two of them holding up the third man. The heads of the two men reach up into the clouds, but the head of the third man reaches beyond the clouds. Then a cross comes out of the tomb, and a voice from heaven asks, 'Have you preached to them that sleep?' And the cross answers, 'Yes.'" (Apologetics, p. 189)

WE CAN CLOSE THIS GAP BY USING THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE



Important fact #1

1 It is important to understand that the dating of the Gospels and other New Testament books is at best an educated guess and at worst foolish speculation. For example, suggested dates for the writing of the Gospel of Matthew range from as early as A.D. 40 to as late as A.D. 140. This wide range of dates from scholars indicates the subjective nature of the dating process. Generally, one will find that the presuppositions of the scholars greatly influence their dating of the Gospels.

Important fact #2

The Presupposition of Anti-supernaturalism

- **Critics rule out Jesus' ability to predict the destruction of the Temple so precisely, so they say the NT documents have to be written AFTER 70 AD meaning the disciples added Jesus' prediction after the fact.**
- **Additionally, critics assume that if the text includes claims of miracles, then the truth of the text is automatically considered questionable/doubtful**

To refute these assertions, we must establish the following facts:

1.Oral Tradition

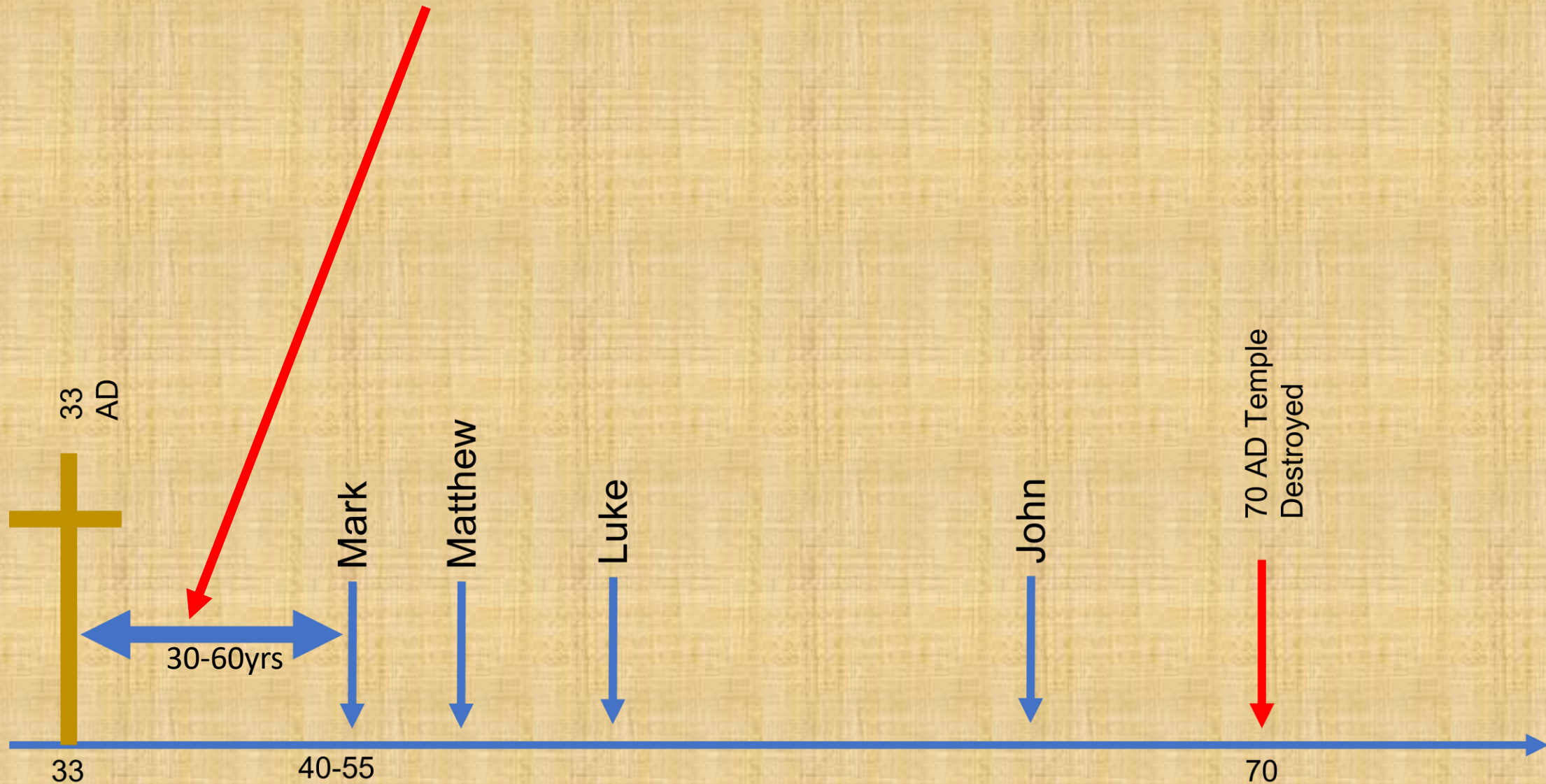
2.Memory

3.The value of Eyewitness testimony

4.Creeds

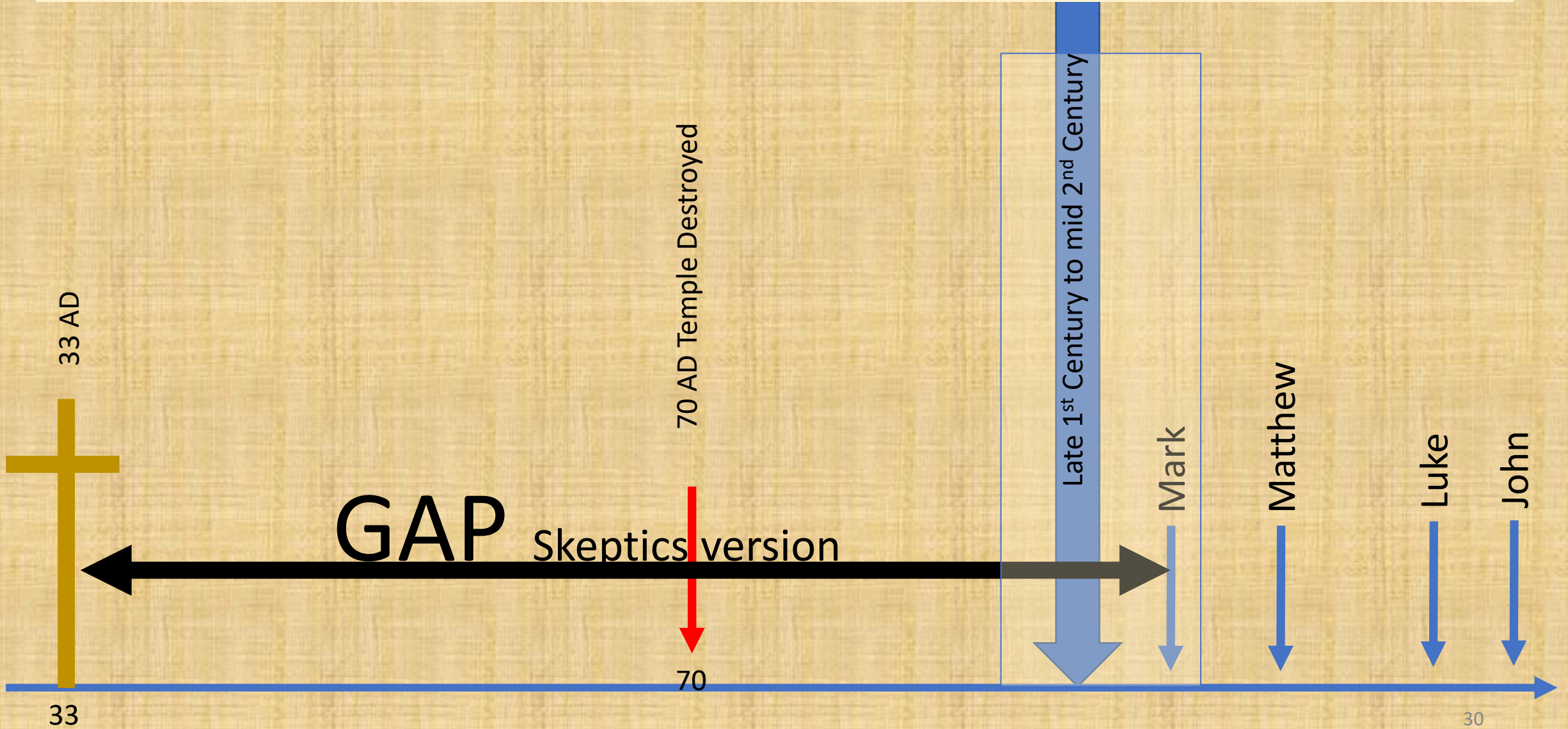
5.The EARLY dating of the NT MSS not giving enough time for “Legend/Myth” to develop

Remember we're working on closing that gap



This is how Skeptic NT liberal scholars try to date the NT

They actually push the Gospels into the 2nd Century



Oral Tradition & Memory

- Ancient culture was vastly different from today, they were able to memorize vast amounts of information because upwards of 90% were illiterate
- Greek school children would memorize the Iliad or the Odyssey by Homer (52,000 words and 134,560 words respectively)
- It was common for a 14 year old Jewish student to have the entire Old Testament committed to memory (419,687 words)

Oral Tradition (Orality)

Three different types of Oral Tradition, Informal Uncontrolled, Formal Controlled and Informal Controlled

- Informal Uncontrolled: oral tradition was information that was committed to memory but was able to be added to and modified
- Formal Controlled: Oral Tradition was to be memorized and unchanged – this is how the NT was transmitted before it was written down

Oral Tradition

Informal Controlled:

Oral Tradition was to be memorized and unchanged – but allows for variations in style without changing the “CORE” information. There was oversight by the elders in the community who would correct the teller if they got to “Core” facts wrong – This is what the NT writers used

Oral Tradition

This is not like the “Telephone Game” where the goal is to have a mixed-up message at the end for a good laugh. Jewish oral tradition was spoken publicly in a community, recited and committed to memory, if one stated it incorrectly, they would be corrected by the group.

Memory

- Memory plays an important role in in keeping the story straight.
- However, critics cite problems with memory, namely, it “LEAKS”.
Meaning that over time memories become clouded and obscured.
- Study at SMU using the “Challenger Disaster” on Jan 28th, 1986.
Asked Freshmen about the event then 3 years later asked the same question of the same students. 50% gave a different answer than their fist and when shown the difference they considered their most recent answer the accurate one. This is the study that critics site to prove MEMORY LEAKS over time.

Memory

- Nothing at stake for the college students, THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE THE STUDY WITH NASA astronauts and those involved with the space program.
- THESE STUDIES FOCUSED ON INDIVIDUALS, NOT CORPORATE GROUPS
- Subsequent studies have shown that individuals with something at stake, who were involved in the event have a significantly better recall of the event.

Memory

- The Gospel messages were orally shared over and over in churches which involves 'CORPORATE' memory rather than 'INDIVIDUAL' memory. Corporate memory is many people remembering for the sake of everybody rather than just one individual. This improves integrity of the story significantly.
- How many parents have read their children bedtime stories and the child wants the same bedtime story over and over again, to the point where both parent and child have the book memorized. Then, just for fun the parent tells the story differently and watch the reaction of the child.

Memory

Did Jesus ever command his disciples to WRITE
DOWN what he said? 1 Jn Rev Why Not?

John 14:26

²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Memory

Jesus taught in such a way as to enhance memorization using word pictures and stories that are easily remembered.

- Parables & Visuals
- Word Play –
- Parallelisms

Memory

Parables & Visuals

- **The Sower of the seeds** (Mark 4:3-9; Matt 13:3-9; Luke 8:5-8)
- **The Grain of Wheat** (John 12:24)
- **The weeds in the Grain or the Tares** (Matt 13:24-30)
- **The Net** (Matt 13:47-50)
- **The Patient Husbandman** (Mark 4:26-29)
- **The Mustard Seed** (Matt 13:31; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18)
- **The Leaven** (Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20)
- **The budding fig tree** (Matt 24:32; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:19-31)
- **The Barren Fig tree** (Luke 13:6-9)

Memory

Parables & Visuals

- **The Birds of Heaven** (Matt 6:26; Luke 12:24)
- **The Flowers of the Field** (Matt 6:28-30)
- **The Vultures & the Carcass** (Matt 24:28; Luke 17:37)
- **The Tree and Its Fruits** (Matt 7:16; Luke 6:43-49)
- **The Weather signs** (Luke 12:54-56; Matt 26:2; Mark 8:11-13)
- **Master and Servant** (Luke 17: 7-10)
- **The Faithful and Unfaithful Servants** (Matt 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46)
- **The Laborers in the Vineyard** (Matt 20:1-16)
- **The Money in Trust or The Talents** (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19: 12-27)

Memory

Parables & Visuals

- **The Lamp** (Matt 5:14-16; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16)
- **The Salt of the Earth, Light on a Hill** (Matt 5:13-14)
- **The unshrunk cloth on old wineskins** (Matt 9:16)
- **The Householders Treasure** (Matt 13:52)

Memory

Visuals

Mark 10:8

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Memory

Visuals & Hyperbole

Matthew 7:3

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Memory

Word Play

Matthew 23:24

**You blind guides, straining out a gnat
and swallowing a camel!**

Aramaic Words

Galma – Gnat

Gamla - Camel

Memory

Parallelisms

Luke 11:9

**9 “Ask, and it will be given to you;
Seek, and you shall find;
Knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**10 For everyone who asks receives
And the one who seeks finds
And to the one who knocks it will be opened”**

Memory

Parallelisms

Matt 7:17

So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

Memory

Conclusion on Memory:

Jesus taught in a “**Controlled**” style in order to enhance memorization

He expected his disciples to be able to remember what he taught them and then transfer that knowledge to others

Eyewitness Testimony

Dr. Gary Habermas New Testament Scholar

The two most important items in Historiography are:

1. Early Testimony
2. Authoritative Testimony

People who are in the right place at the right time

Eyewitness Testimony

Luke 24:46-49

“Thus, it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high”

Eyewitness Testimony

John 21:24

“This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.”

Eyewitness Testimony

1 John 1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—
² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—
³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Eyewitness Testimony

2 Peter 1:16-18

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

Eyewitness Testimony

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³ it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Eyewitness Testimony

Acts 2:32

This Jesus God raised up, and of that **we are all witnesses**. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

Eyewitness Testimony

Norman Geisler – “The New Testament contains 27 books written by eight or nine writers (depending on whether Paul wrote Hebrews). The traditional writers were Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James (all eyewitnesses or 1st hand to eyewitnesses) and the writer of Hebrews. By comparison most events from the ancient world are recorded by only one or two writers. So, for the New Testament we have more written records by more authors than for any other book from antiquity. An ancient dictum, still followed today, reads: “A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses”.

Eyewitness Testimony

Matthew – apostle of Jesus – eyewitness

Mark – an associate of the apostle Peter

Luke – an associate of the apostle Paul

John – an apostle of Jesus – eyewitness

Paul – an apostle of Jesus – eyewitness

Peter – an apostle of Jesus – eyewitness

James – brother of Jesus – eyewitness

Jude – brother of Jesus - eyewitness

Eyewitness Testimony

ACTS 1:21-26

The replacement of Judas must be an Eyewitness

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.

²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Eyewitness Testimony

Facts that support the authenticity of the writers

1. There was not attempt to harmonize their accounts; there are many conflicts between their accounts which is what you would expect from eyewitness accounts.
2. They included material that put Jesus in a bad light; his hometown tried to kill him, his family thought he was crazy, many of his followers deserted him
3. They retained many self-incriminating details; falling asleep when they're supposed to pray, afraid for their lives, denying Jesus 3 times; refusing to believe after the resurrection (Thomas)
4. They included many demanding saying of Jesus, no attempt was made to hide them, e.g. drink his blood, eat his flesh, hate their families in order to prove their love for him

Eyewitness Testimony

5. They distinguish their words from Jesus'; even without quotation marks its easy to distinguish the disciples' words from Jesus words
6. They did not deny their testimony under threat of death; eleven of the twelve apostles died martyrs deaths, yet nobody denied their testimony
7. They claimed their record was based upon Eyewitnesses
8. They had women witnessing the resurrection
9. They challenged readers to check out the facts
- 10.They discarded long-held Jewish beliefs overnight

Eyewitness Testimony

The Disciples Got it Right

Throughout the Gospels the disciples mention rulers, customs, cities, towns, names, geography, botany and get it all right down to the precise stratification and distribution of name usage etc.

The writers of the Gospels were contemporaries who had intimate knowledge of the common demographics of Jerusalem rather than forgers who wrote from somewhere outside the region.

Eyewitness Testimony

The Disciples Got it Right

Example # 1:

What was the most popular male name in Palestine at the time?

Answer: Simon

The frequency of the occurrence of the name Simon in the Bible correlates exactly with the distribution of that name based upon other sources (compared to 3000 sources eg bone boxes, public information etc)

Eyewitness Testimony

The Disciples Got it Right

Example # 2:

Where was Zacchaeus when he climbed the tree to see Jesus?

Answer: Jericho

What kind of tree did Zacchaeus climb?

Answer: Sycamore

Were there sycamore trees in Jericho at that time? YES!

Conclusion: the disciples were firsthand, early, reliable eyewitnesses who died martyrs deaths holding fast to their testimony

Jesus – Lord, Liar, Lunatic..... or Legend

1 Peter 3:15

“...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,”

To refute these assertions, we must establish the following facts:

1.Oral Tradition

2.Memory

3.The value of Eyewitness testimony

4.Creeds

5.The EARLY dating of the NT MSS not giving enough time for “Legend/Myth” to develop

Creeds: a Formal Statement of Christian Beliefs

- How early were these Creeds formulated?
- What facts did the earliest Christians report concerning Jesus in the initial years after his crucifixion? And of what did the earliest Christology consist before the writing of the NT?

Creeds

- Creeds are the most promising means of describing the nature of Christian thought before the writing of the NT they preserve some of the earliest reports concerning Jesus from about AD 30-50
- These creeds first appeared verbally then later were written in the books of the NT.
- In one sense this material (creeds) are not extrabiblical since they are included in the NT
- In another sense, they were formulated ***before*** the NT books.

Creeds

The two most common elements in these creeds concerned the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and His resulting deity (Oscar Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, 1949)

Creeds also emphasize Jesus' Humanity and Divinity

Creeds

Earliest and most important Creed 1 Corinthians 15: 3-7

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Creeds

When did Paul “receive” this creed?

He’s telling the Corinthians that he delivered to them what he received so he had to have received this creed before he visited Corinth in 51-52 AD

We know the date above because Gallio was only *proconsul of Achaia from 51-52 AD, and he arrested Paul in Corinth Acts 18:12-16*

Who did Paul receive the Creed From?

Paul most likely received the creed when he visited Peter & James in 35 AD (Galatians 1:15-19)

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. *Visit = to get Information*

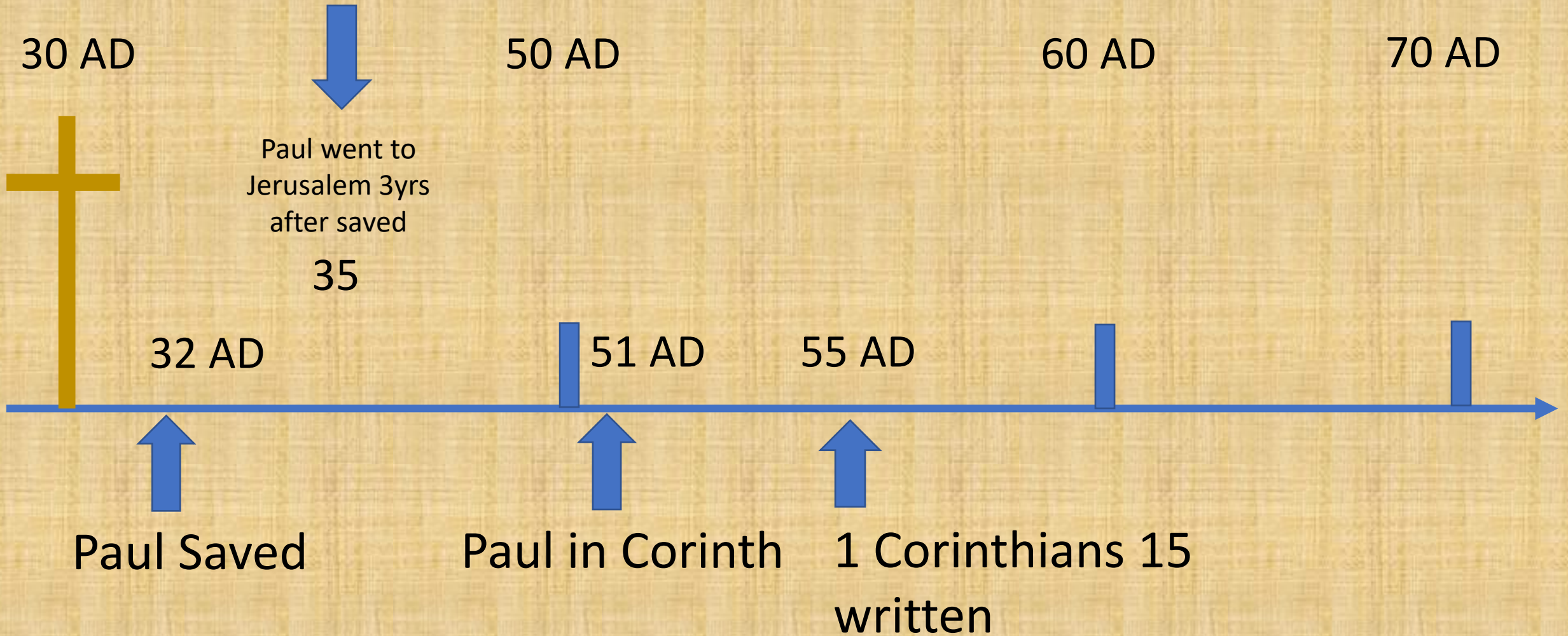
Paul spent 15 days in Jerusalem speaking with Peter and James the brother of Jesus. One can only imagine the content of their conversations

Creeds

The Creed had to already be established in 35 AD for Paul to hear it, meaning it's *Pre-Pauline*. This is important because some critics try to say Paul invented the supernatural activities of Jesus

So, if the Creed is Pre-Pauline and Paul was saved somewhere between 18 months and 2 years after the cross then the creed most likely preceded His Salvation experience. That brings us all the way back to the cross.

Earliest Creed



Creeds

No less a scholar than James D. G. Dunn even states regarding this crucial text (1 Cor 15:3)

“This tradition, we can be entirely confident, *was formulated as tradition within months of Jesus’ death.*”

Creeds

The Apostle Peter gave speeches centering on the death and resurrection of Jesus. These have some very early creeds in them (see **Acts 2:31; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30-31; 10:39-42**).

Here are some other early Christian creeds found in the New Testament:

- **Luke 24:34**
- **Acts 2:22-24; 13:31; 13:37-39**
- **Rom. 1:3-4; 4:25; 10:9**
- **1 Cor. 11:23-26; 15:3-8**
- **Phil. 2:6-11**
- **1 Tim. 2:6; 3:16; 6:13**
- **2 Tim. 2:8**
- **1 Peter 3:18**
- **1 John 4:2**

Facts that Creeds Establish about Early Christology

- **Jesus was born in the lineage of David**
- Jesus came from the town of Nazareth
- John preceded his ministry, which began in Galilee and afterwards expanding throughout Judea

Facts that Creeds Establish about Early Christology

- **Jesus performed miracles and fulfilled numerous Old Testament Prophecies**
- Jesus attended a dinner on the evening of his betrayal
- He gave thanks before the meal and shared both bread and drink which he declared represented his imminent atoning sacrifice for sin

Facts that Creeds Establish about Early Christology

- Later Jesus stood before Pilate and made a “good confession” which very possibly concerned his identity as **King of the Jews**
- Afterwards Jesus was killed for mankind’s sins in spite of his righteous life
- **Crucifixion was specified as the mode of death**

Facts that Creeds Establish about Early Christology

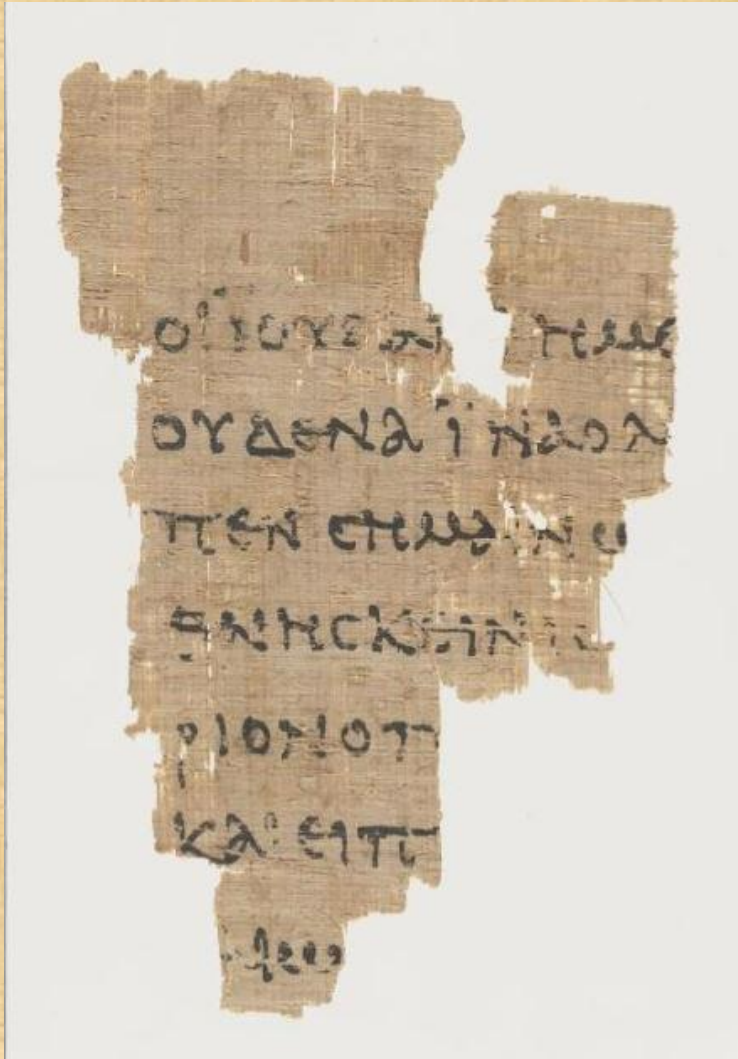
- He was crucified by wicked men
- **He was buried**
- After his death **he was resurrected on the third day** and **appeared to his followers** even eating with them
- **His disciples were eyewitness of these events**

Facts that Creeds Establish about Early Christology

- After his resurrection, **Jesus ascended to heaven and was glorified and exalted**
- The risen **Jesus instructed that salvation be preached in his name**
- **This event (the resurrection) showed God's approval of Jesus, by validating his person and message**
- **Creeds prove early testimony of Jesus' miracles, fulfilling OT Scripture, raising from the dead, all within months of the events thus, ruling out "Legend" & Myth theories**

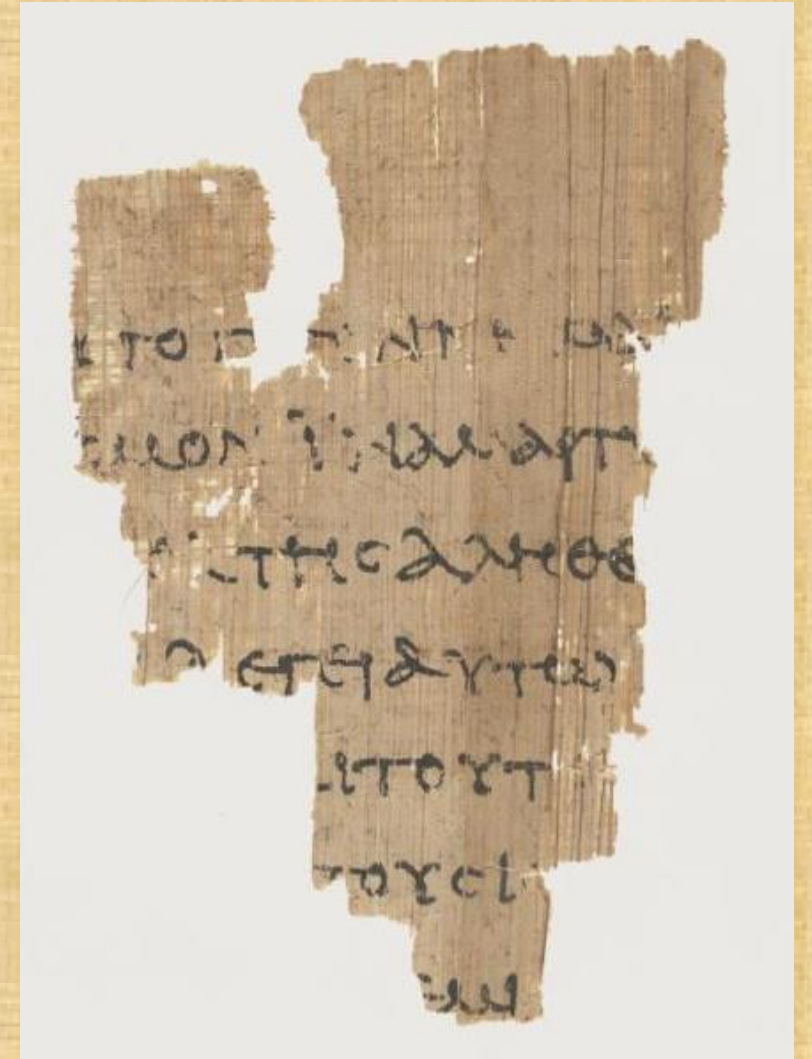
New Testament Manuscripts

John 18.31, John 18.32, John 18.33



P 52

John 18.37, John 18.38



Definitions:

1. Manuscript (MSS) = handwritten document
2. Papyrus = a paper like material, more durable than our paper today but usually only lasts approx. 100 yrs.
3. Variant = a difference between two or more MSS

Was the New Testament Corrupted?

Definitions:

4. Textual Criticism = The study of copies of any written document whose original (autograph) is unknown or non-existent, for the primary purpose of determining the exact wording of the original
5. Codex – (Latin for *block of wood*, book; plural *codices*) is a book in the format used for modern books, with separate pages normally bound together and given a cover

New Testament Manuscripts

1. How many New Testament Manuscripts do we have?
2. How does the New Testament stack against other ancient texts in relation to quantity of manuscripts?
3. What is the time between the original writing and the earliest Manuscript?

New Testament Manuscripts

4. Are there mistakes (“Variants”) in the New Testament Manuscripts?
5. Do any Variants impact any essential Christian doctrine?
6. Were the NT MSS corrupted by scribes or others?

Number of New Testament Manuscripts?

- 5500+ Greek New Testament MSS
- 10,000 Latin MSS
- 5000-10,000 various other languages (Syriac, Coptic, others)
- Totaling over 20,000 NT MSS

Number of New Testament Manuscripts?

Fascinating Fact!

Even If all the existing MSS were destroyed, we could still reproduce the entire NT Multiple times over due to the prolific quoting of the NT by the Church Fathers who quote the NT MSS over 1Million times!

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Number of Copies
Homer	9th Century BC	NA	643
Herodotus	5th Century BC	AD 900	8
Thucydides	5th Century BC	AD 900	8
Demosthenes	4th Century BC	AD 1100	200
Caesar	1st Century BC	AD 900	10
Livy	1st Century BC	NA	20
New Testament	1st Century AD (AD 50-100)	2nd Century	5500+
Tacitus	AD 100	AD 1100	20
Rufus	1st Century	AD 900	1

Quantity & Early existence of NT MSS

If we are going to question the reliability of the NT due to its Quantity of MSS or dating of MSS we would have to throw out all writings of antiquity because they fall FAR SHORT of the NT

How Many Variants Are There?

138,162
Words
in Grk
NT

Over 400,000 Variants in Greek
New Testament

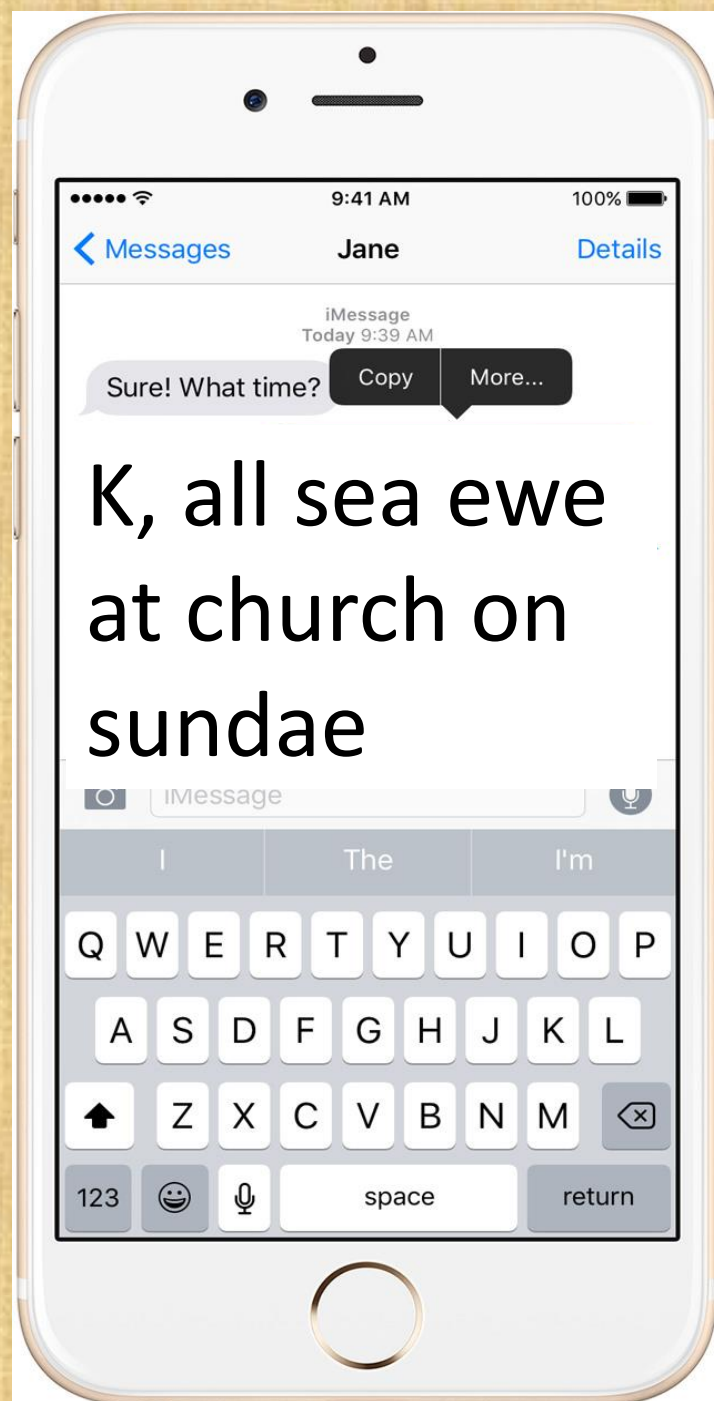
Do Variants affect any essential Doctrine of Christianity?

Short answer: NO

77% of all variants have to do with spelling (*the Joseph, the Mary vs Joseph, Mary*) or the movable nu..... *an apple, a pair*

1% of Variants are what would be considered “Viable” variants, would change the meaning of the text but no *essential doctrine is affected by any “viable” variants.*

Example Rev 13:18 number of beast 616 rather than 666

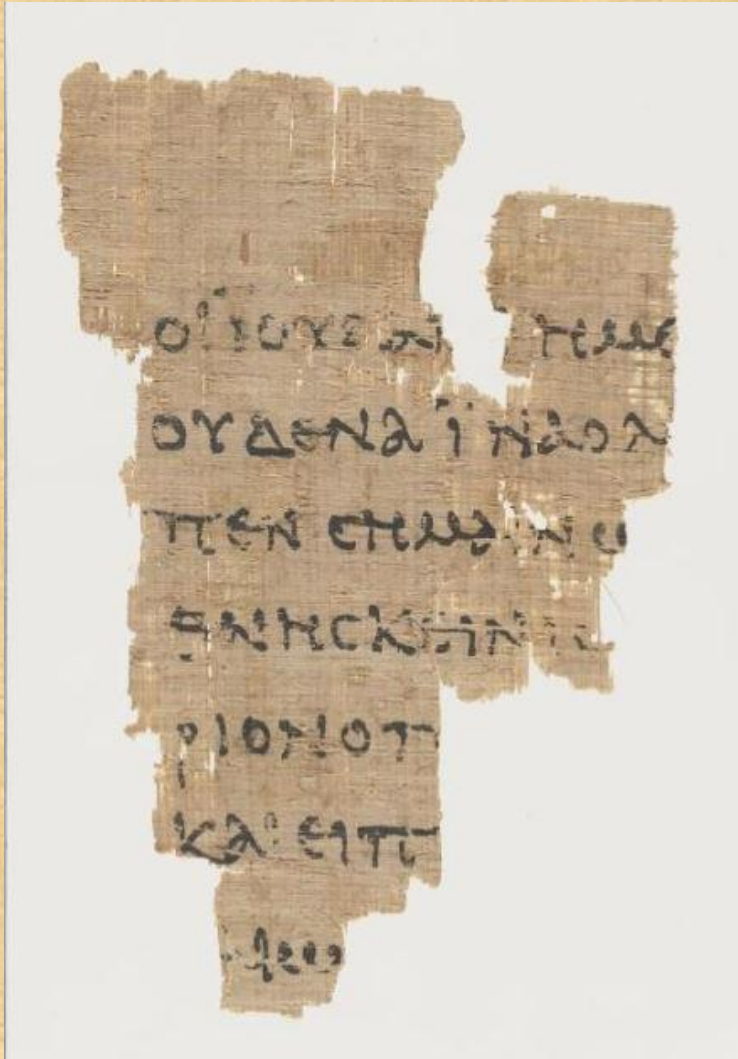




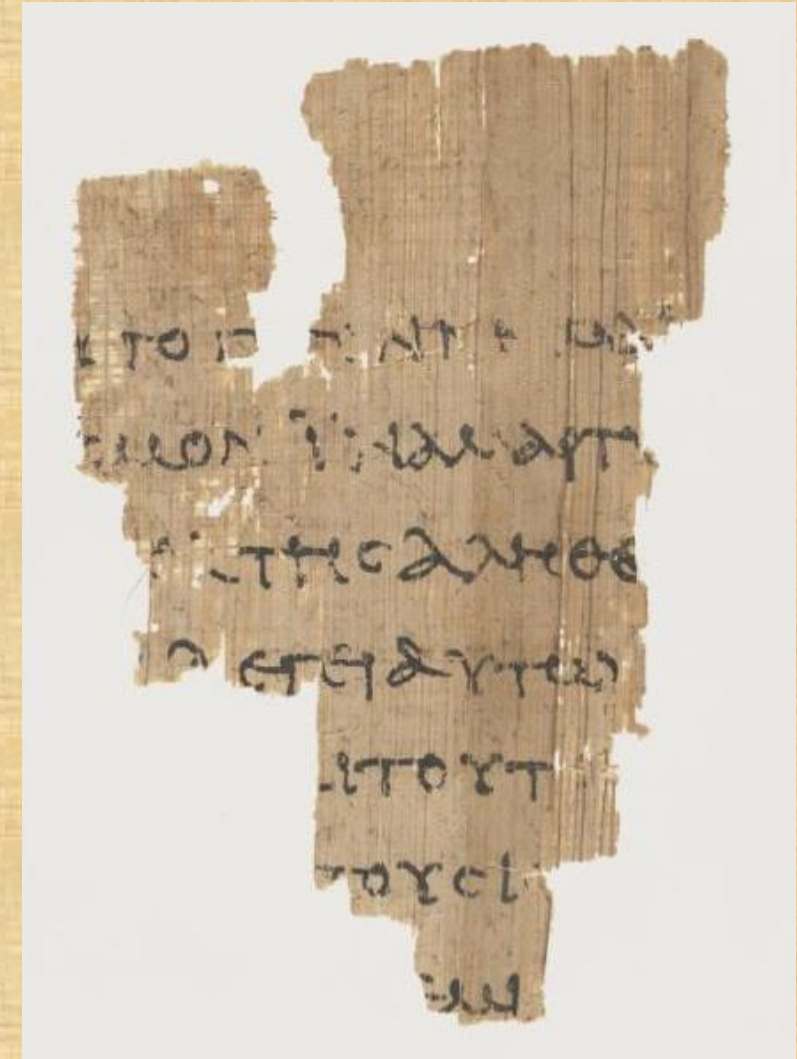
Ok, I'll see you in church on Sunday

What is the earliest Manuscript we have?

John 18.31, John 18.32, John 18.33



John 18.37, John 18.38



P 52
90-100
AD
codex

Manuscript P66, Gospel of John Chapter 1

Proves that the Deity of Christ was not a “Later” development but is found in the late 1st century, early 2nd century P66 MSS



Manuscript P66, Gospel of John Chapter 1



Conclusion

1. Due to the vast amount of New Testament MSS we are able to compare early copies with late copies and that comparison reveals that there is No Corruption of the NT Gospels.
2. Due to the fact that we possess early New Testament Manuscripts as early as the 1st century there was not enough time for legend or Myth to develop.

Conclusion

3. The MSS could not have been corrupted by rogue scribes due to the vast number of copies that began circulating immediately upon writing of the NT Gospels. They would have had to track down every copy and make changes in addition to all the writings of the Church Fathers.

THAT'S JUST NOT REASONABLE, CREDIBLE OR POSSIBLE