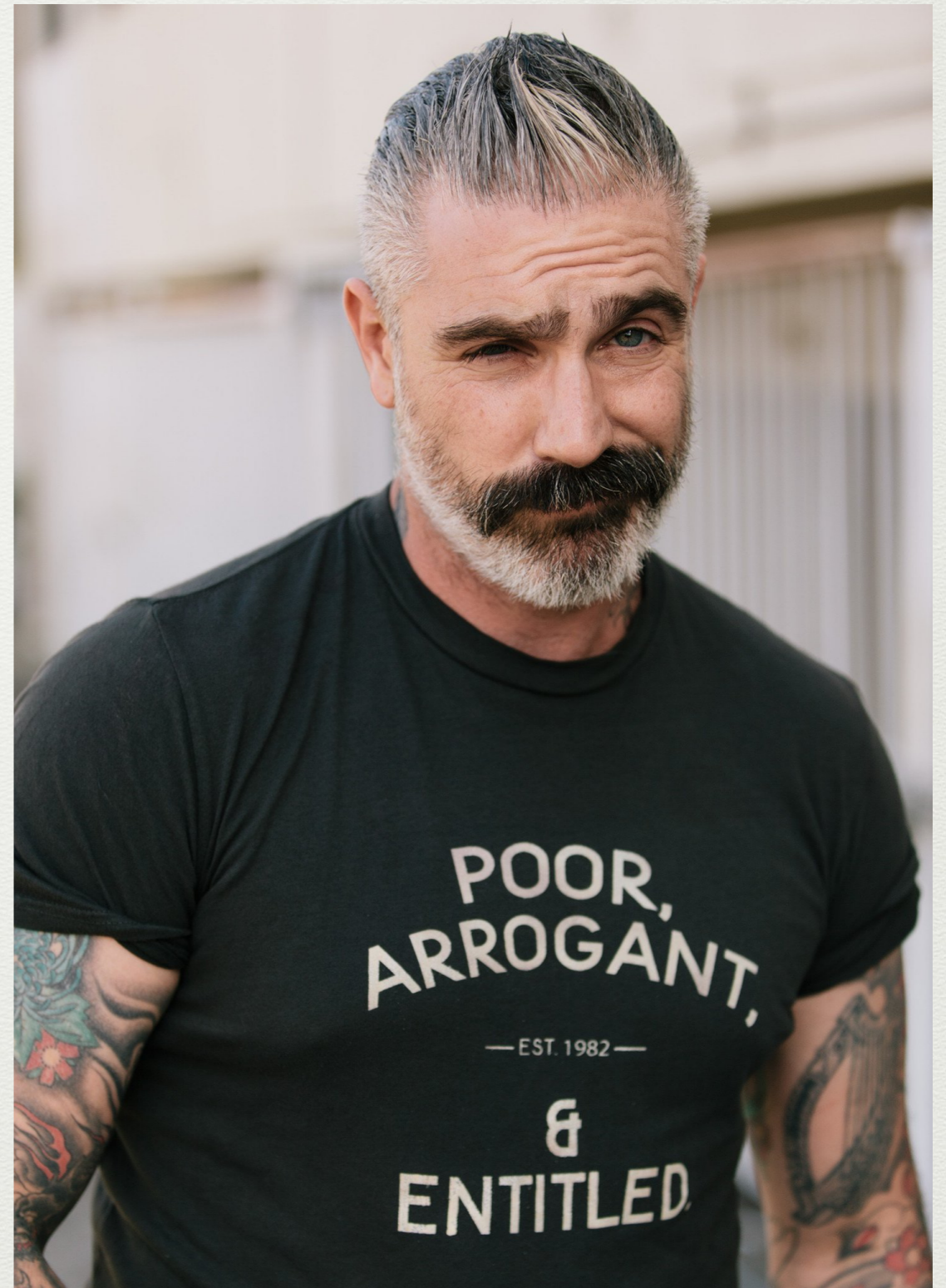


A Defense of the
**CHRISTIAN
SCRIPTURES**

The Challenge

The Bible has been translated and re-translated over and over so many times that no one can possibly know what the actual authors wrote!



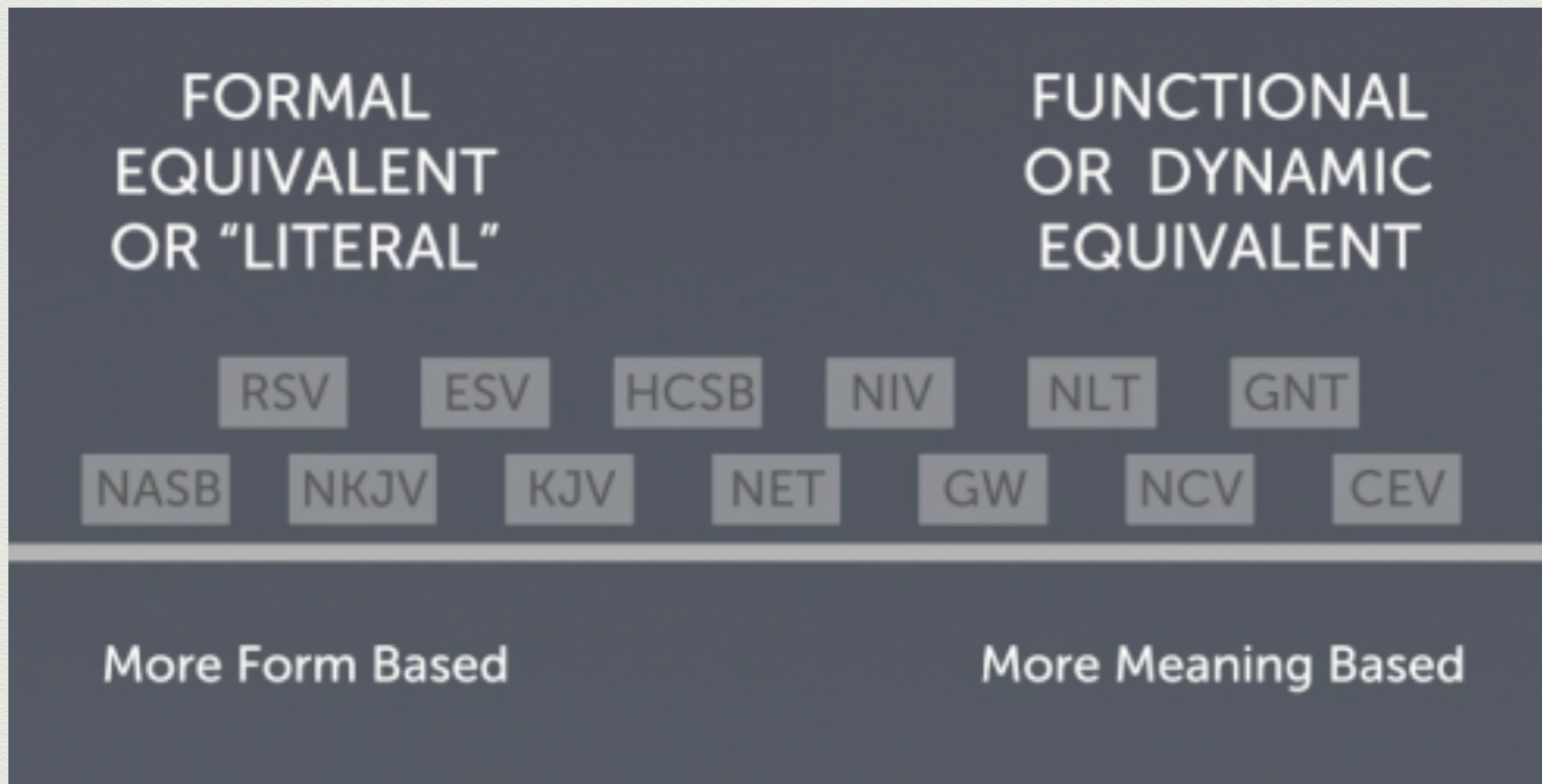
The Challenge's Origin

- The Challenge comes from several places:
 1. The sheer number of translations available to the public.
 2. The differences among the translations.
 3. The idea that the more time that passes by, the harder it becomes to know what the originals said.

Are Their Reasons Legitimate?

1. There are approximately 900 english translations of the Bible.
2. The translations scale from a “word-for-word” translation, to a “thought for thought” or paraphrase.
3. The opposite is actually true.

1. Source- “Number of English Translations of the Bible | Articles | News | American Bible Society.” *American Bible Society News*, 2 Dec. 2009, news.americanbible.org/article/number-of-english-translations-of-the-bible.



The Bible has a wide range of translations based on the type of translation philosophy adopted by the scholars involved.

The Manuscripts: The Hebrew Bible

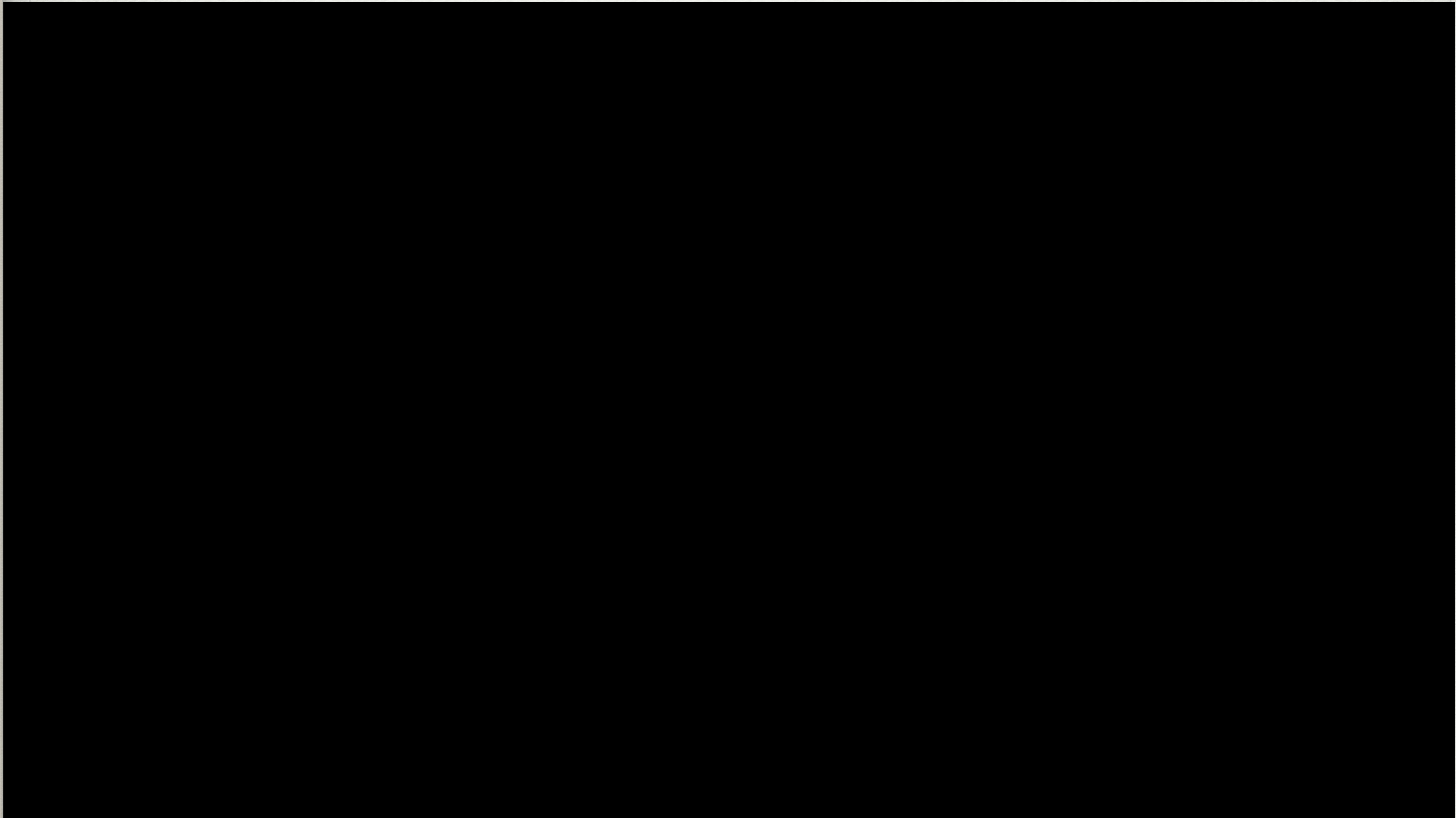
- “In the case of the Old Testament, there are a small number of Hebrew manuscripts, because the Jewish scribes ceremonially buried imperfect and worn manuscripts.
- Many ancient manuscripts were lost or destroyed during Israel's turbulent history.
- The Old Testament text was standardized by the Masoretic Jews by the sixth century A.D., and all manuscripts that deviated from the Masoretic Text were evidently eliminated.
- The existing Hebrew manuscripts are supplemented by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint (a third-century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Targums (ancient paraphrases of the Old Testament), as well as the Talmud (teachings and commentaries related to the Hebrew Scriptures).”

The Manuscripts: The Hebrew Bible

- “Because of the great reverence the Jewish scribes held toward the Scriptures, they exercised extreme care in making new copies of the Hebrew Bible. The entire scribal process was specified in meticulous detail to minimize the possibility of even the slightest error. The number of letters, words, and lines were counted, and the middle letters of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament were determined. If a single mistake was discovered, the entire manuscript would be destroyed.”
- “As a result of this extreme care, the quality of the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible surpasses all other ancient manuscripts. The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a significant check on this, because these Hebrew scrolls antedate the earliest Masoretic Old Testament manuscripts by about 1,000 years. But in spite of this time span, the number of variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text is quite small, and most of these are variations in spelling and style.”

The Manuscripts: The New Testament

- “There are well over 5,700 Greek manuscripts of anything from a small fragment of a few verses to entire New Testaments.
- There are approximately another 20,000 manuscripts, with the same spectrum of length and detail, of translations from the Greek into other ancient Middle Eastern and Eastern or Southern European languages.
 - Particularly common among the oldest translations are Old Italic, Latin, Syriac (including both Old Syriac and Palestinian Syriac), Coptic, (especially Sahidic and Bohairic), Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Old Slavonic.”



Numbers in () are the previously reported dates.²⁸

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest MSS	Time Gap	Old #	New
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	643	1,800+
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480-425 BC	1 st C AD	1,350	8	109
Sophocles ²⁹	Plays	496-406 BC	3 rd C BC	100-200	100	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1,300	7	210
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 BC	9 th C	950	10	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 BC-17 AD	Early 5 th C	400	1 Partial, 19 copies	90 & 60 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	100 AD	1 st half: 850, 2 nd : 1050 (1100 AD)	750-950	20	2 + 31 15 C copies
Pliny, the Elder	<i>Natural History</i>	49-79 AD	5 th C frag: 1; Rem. 14-15 th C	400 (750)	7	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460-400 BC	3 rd C BC (AD 900)	200 (1,350)	8	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	Some frags from 1 C. BC. (AD 1100)	1,100+ (1,400)	200	340
Greek N.T. Manuscripts		50-100 AD	AD 130 (or less) ³⁰	50	5366	5,838
Greek New Testament Early Translations						18,524
Old Testament						42,000+ **
Biblical Manuscripts, Scrolls and Translations:						
New Testament Greek Manuscripts						5,838
New Testament Early Translations						18,524
Old Testament Scrolls, Codices						42,000
TOTAL BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCES						66,362

*All these numbers can be obsolete by publication date

** The traditional listings of Old Testament manuscripts normally leave out all the abundant scroll evidence. It is not easy to determine the exact number of extant scrolls. The following are intelligent estimates:

Green Collection: 5,000
 Synagogues: 20,000
 Museums: 1,000
 Private family collections: 5,000
 Codices: 3,000
 Jewish Seminaries: 5,000
 Individuals: 3,000
 TOTAL: 42,000**

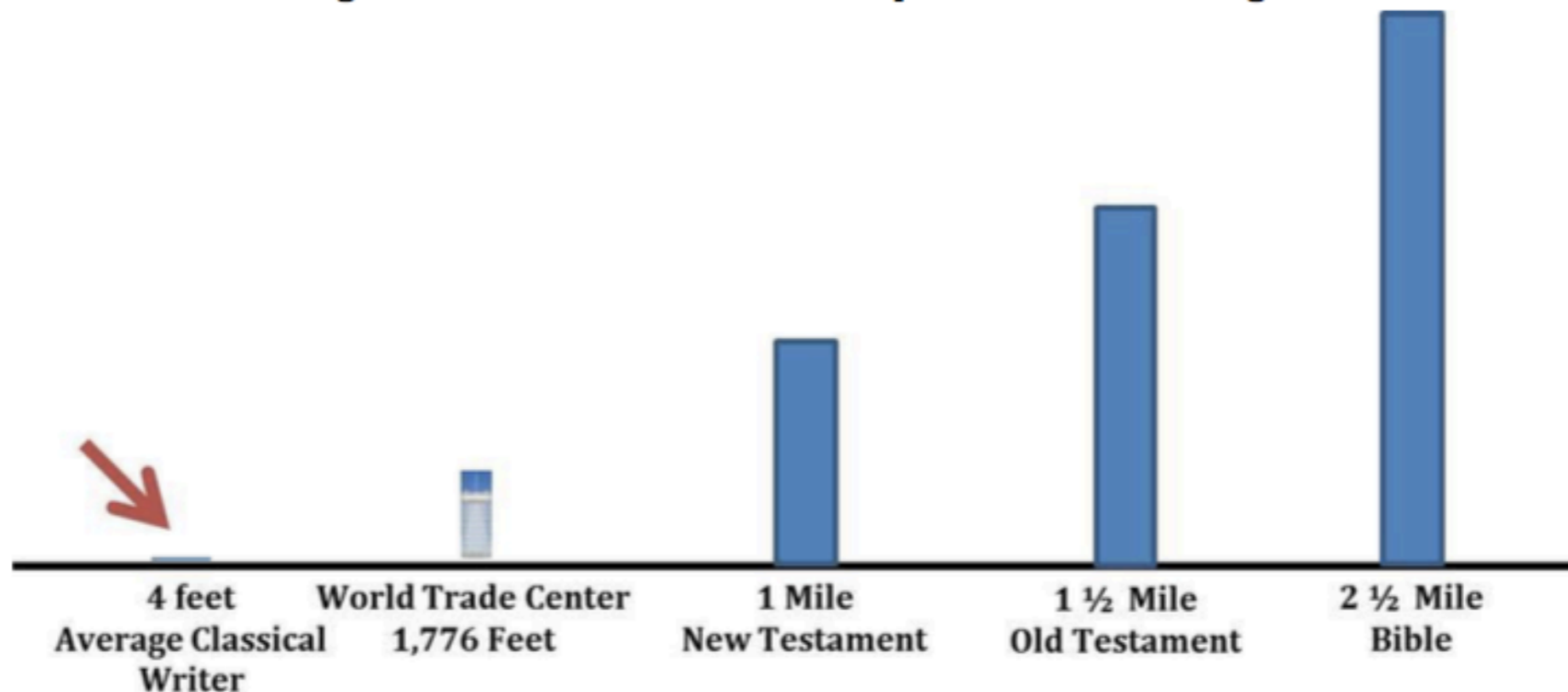
**Estimates by Dr. Scott Carroll, correspondence with Josh McDowell, November 15, 2013. Of the 42,000 scrolls and codices, approximately 25,000 are from the 19th -20th centuries, while 17,000 are earlier.

The Manuscripts

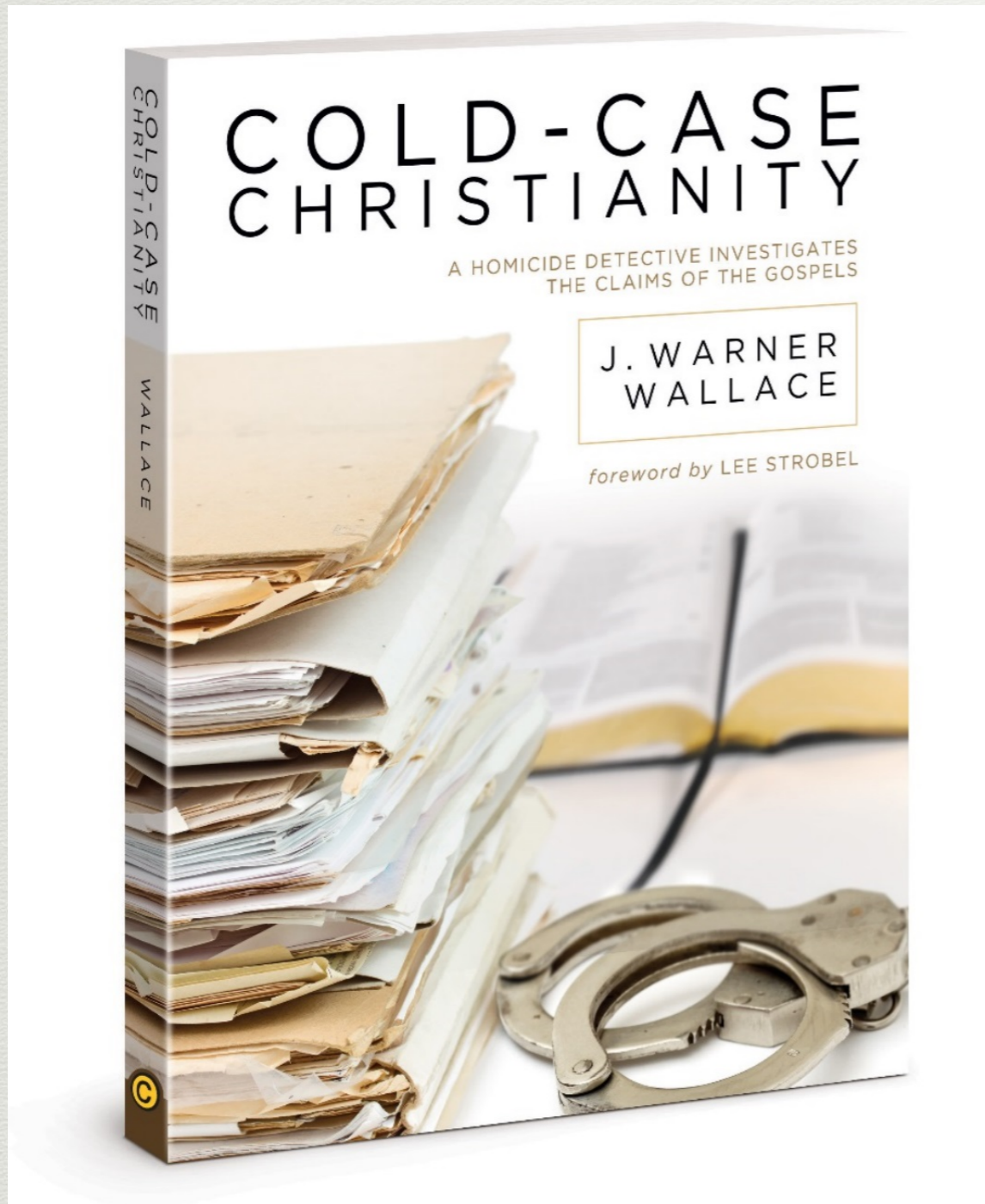
THE BIBLE IS 2½ MILES HIGH

How high do you think the stack of New Testament manuscripts would be? Think about this – of just the 5,800+ Greek New Testament manuscripts – there are more than 2.6 million pages. Combining both the Old and New Testament (the Bible) and there are more than 66,000 manuscripts and scrolls.

Do you think it would hit a ten foot ceiling? A 4-foot stack of manuscripts for the average classical writer compares to over one mile high of New Testament manuscripts and 2½ miles high for the entire Bible.



Cold-Case Christianity



Written and Illustrated by
Cold-Case Homicide Detective

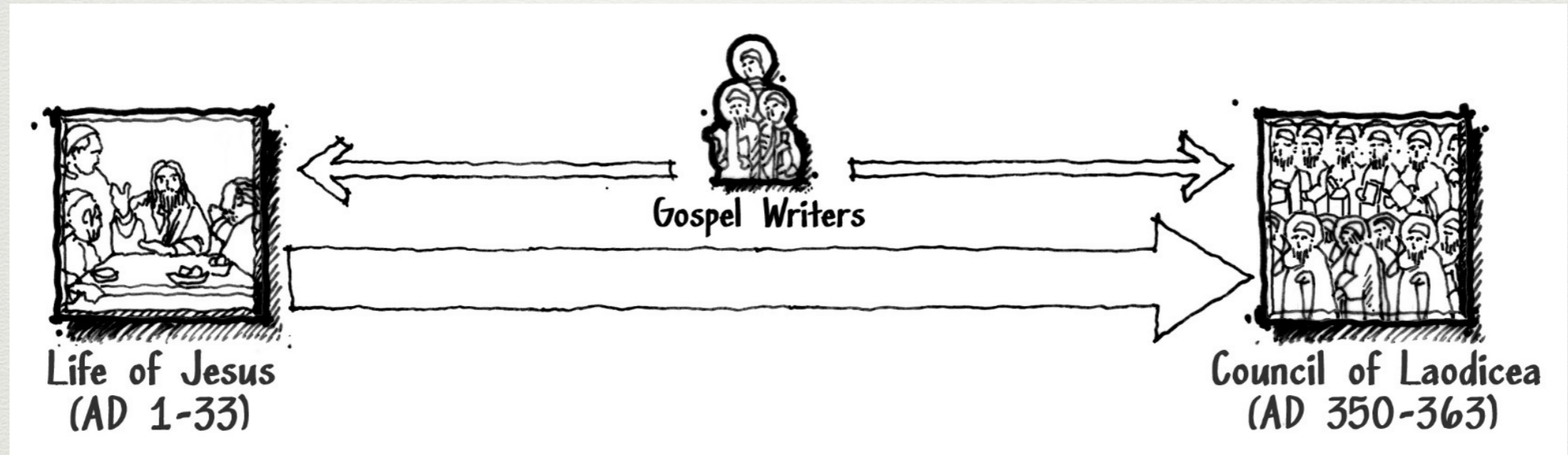
J. WARNER
WALLACE

published by

David©Cook®
transforming lives together

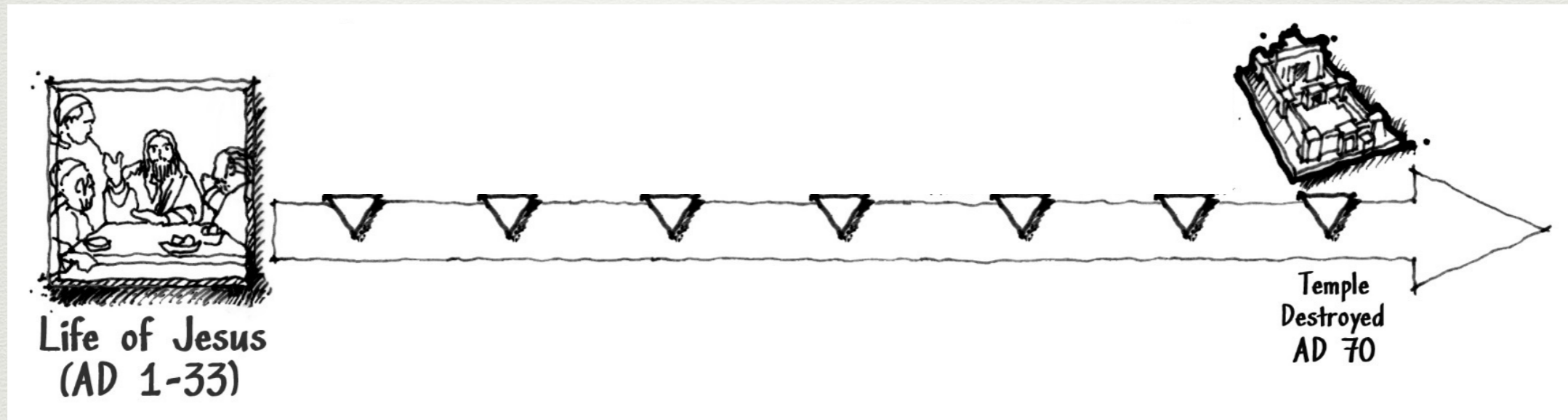
Were the
GOSPEL WRITERS
PRESENT?

When were the Gospels written?

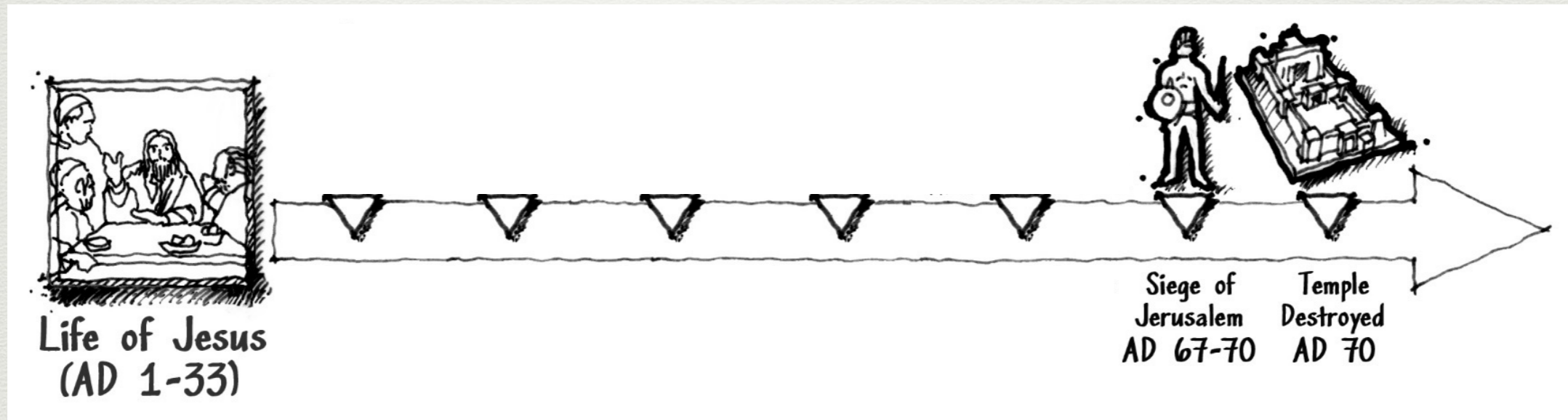


If the Gospels were written late, they weren't written by eyewitnesses

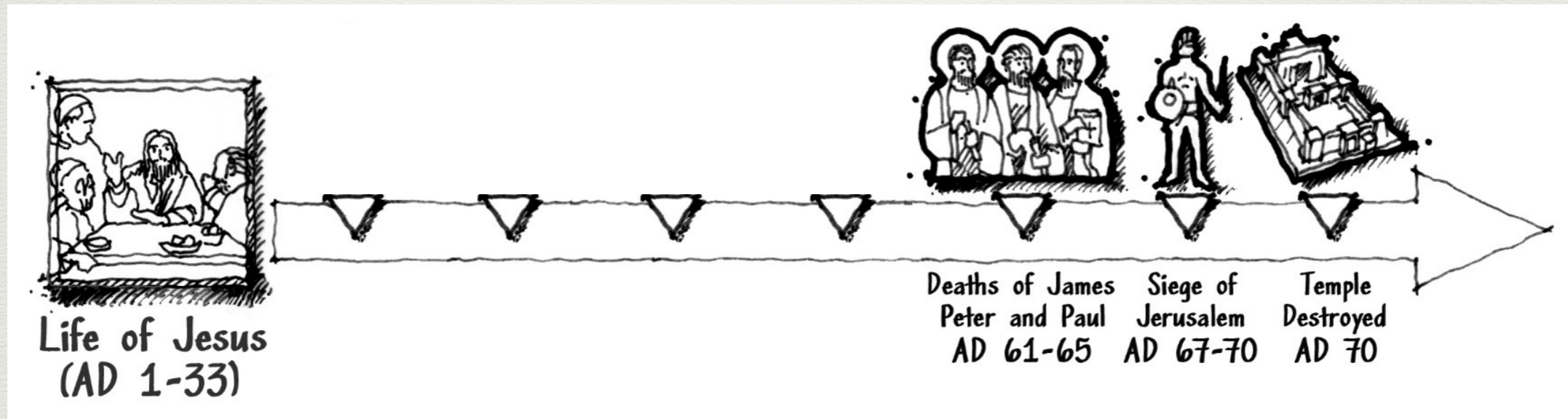
When were the Gospels written?



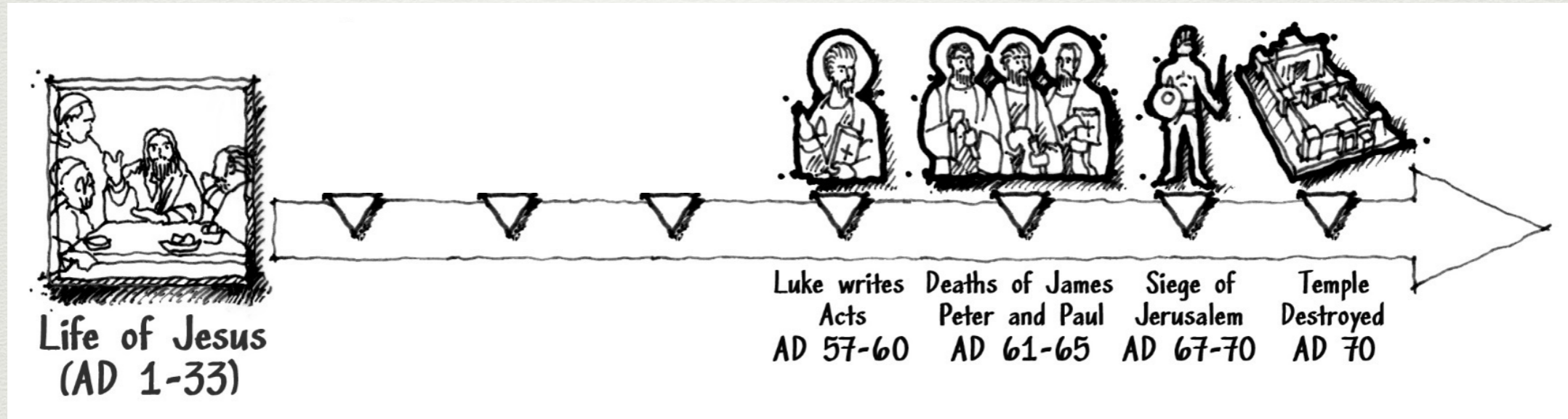
When were the Gospels written?



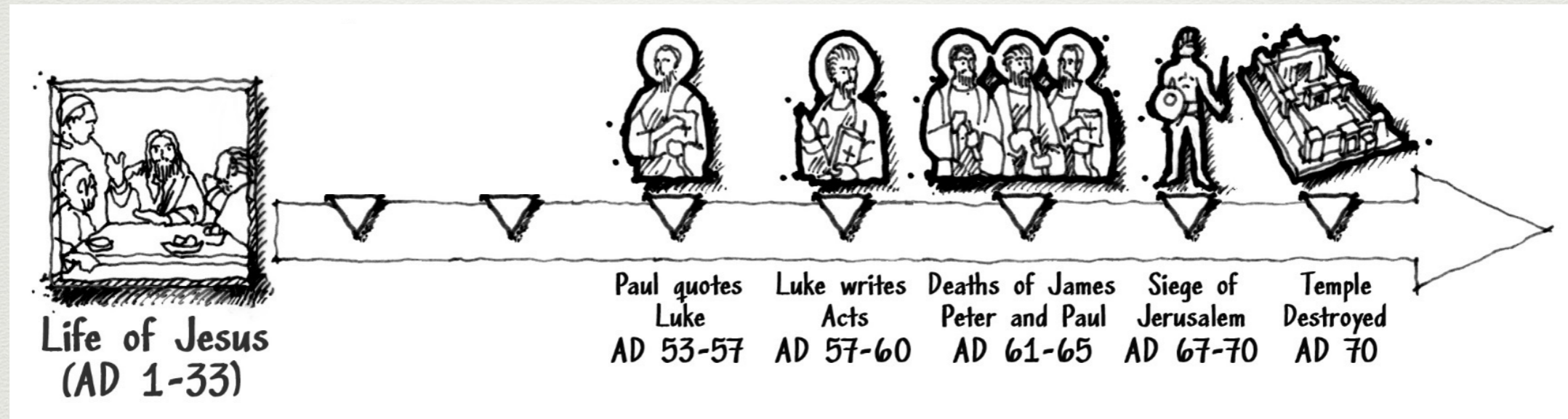
When were the Gospels written?



When were the Gospels written?



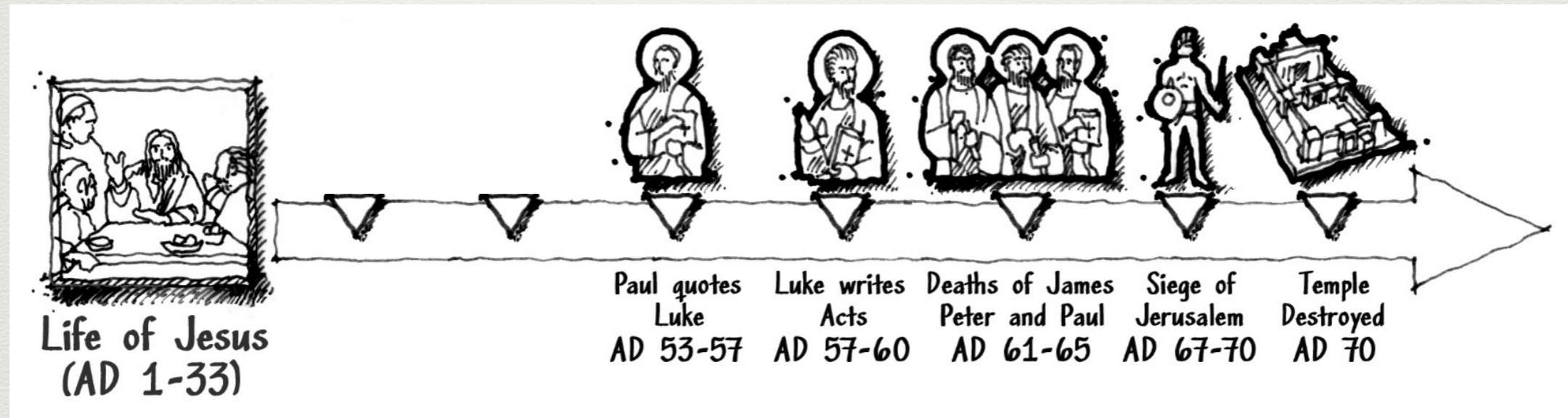
When were the Gospels written?



The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” (1 Tim. 5:17–18)

"Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages." (Luke 10:7)

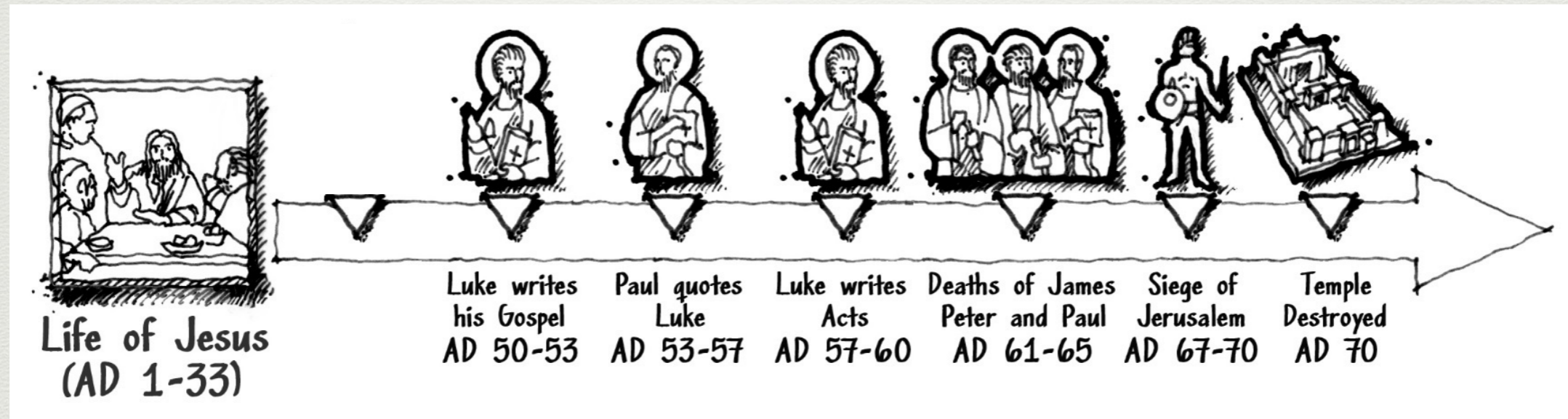
When were the Gospels written?



For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.”(1 Cor. 11:23–25)

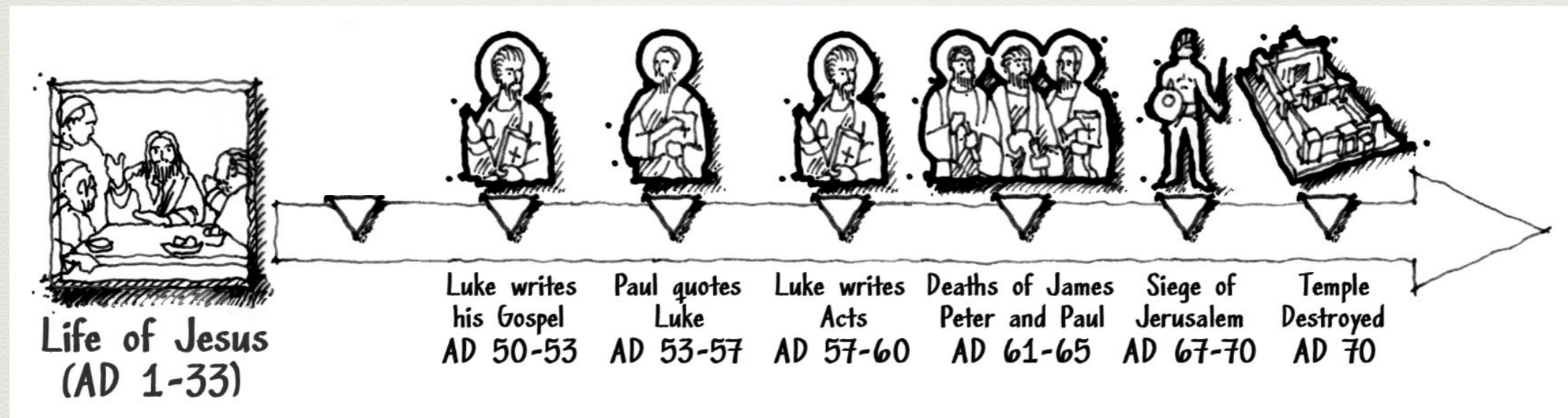
And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. (Luke 22:19–20)

When were the Gospels written?



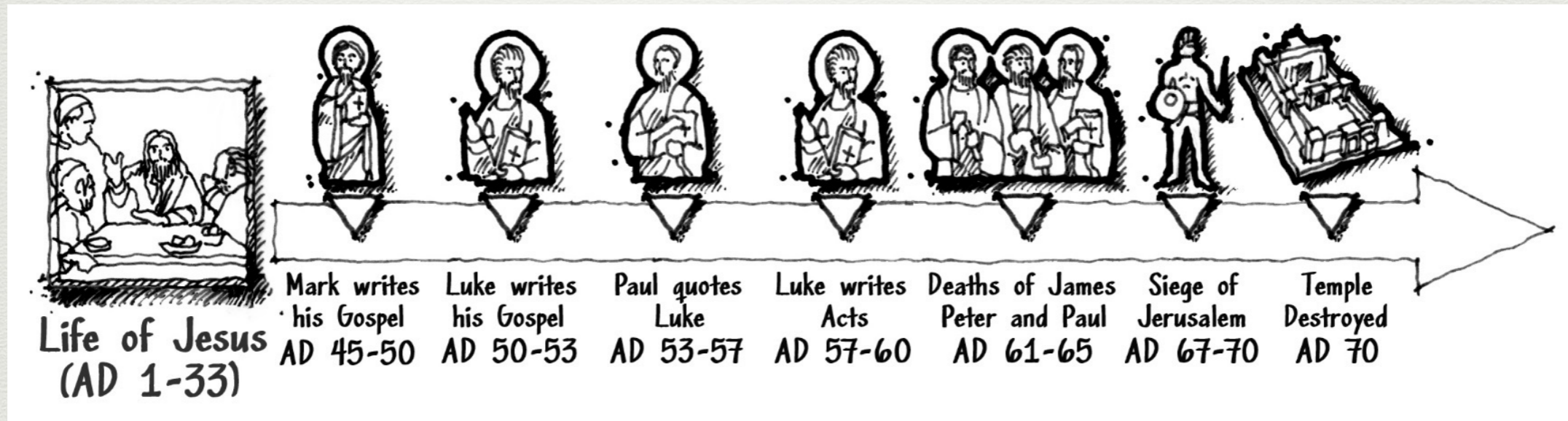
The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. (**Acts 1:1-2**)

When were the Gospels written?

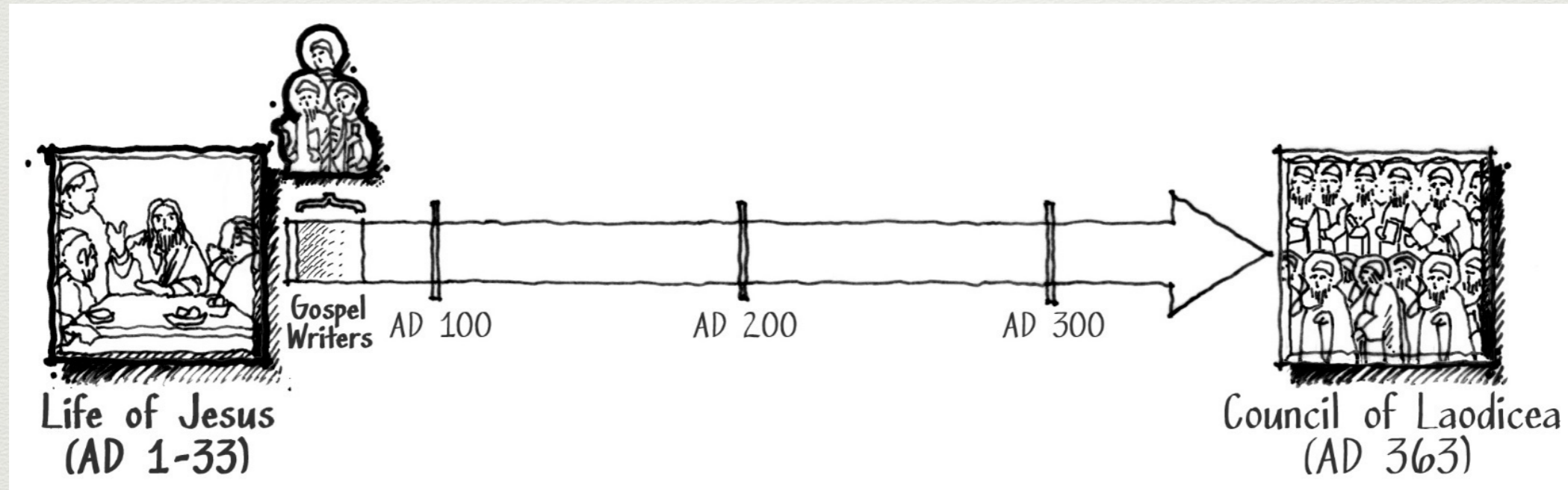


Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

When were the Gospels written?



When were the Gospels written?



The Gospels were written early enough to have been written by eyewitnesses.

Corroboration from the “Outside In”

Non-Biblical eyewitnesses corroborated the Gospels.

1. Josephus
2. Thallus
3. Tacitus
4. Mara Bar-Serapion
5. Phlegon

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Josephus (*AD 37–101*)

Described Jesus:

“At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. 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 three days after his crucifixion and that He was alive; accordingly, He was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Thallus (CA. AD 5–60)

Described Jesus:

“On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.”

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Tacitus (*AD 56–117*)

Described Jesus:

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.”

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Mara Bar-Serapion (*AD 70*)

Described Jesus:

"What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the teaching of Plato. Pythagoras did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; He lived on in the teaching which He had given."

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Phlegon (*AD 80–140*)

Described Jesus:

“Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his *Chronicles*, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although falling into confusion about some things which refer to Peter, as if they referred to Jesus), but also testified that the result corresponded to his predictions. So that he also, by these very admissions regarding foreknowledge, as if against his will, expressed his opinion that the doctrines taught by the fathers of our system were not devoid of divine power.”

Corroboration from the “Outside In”

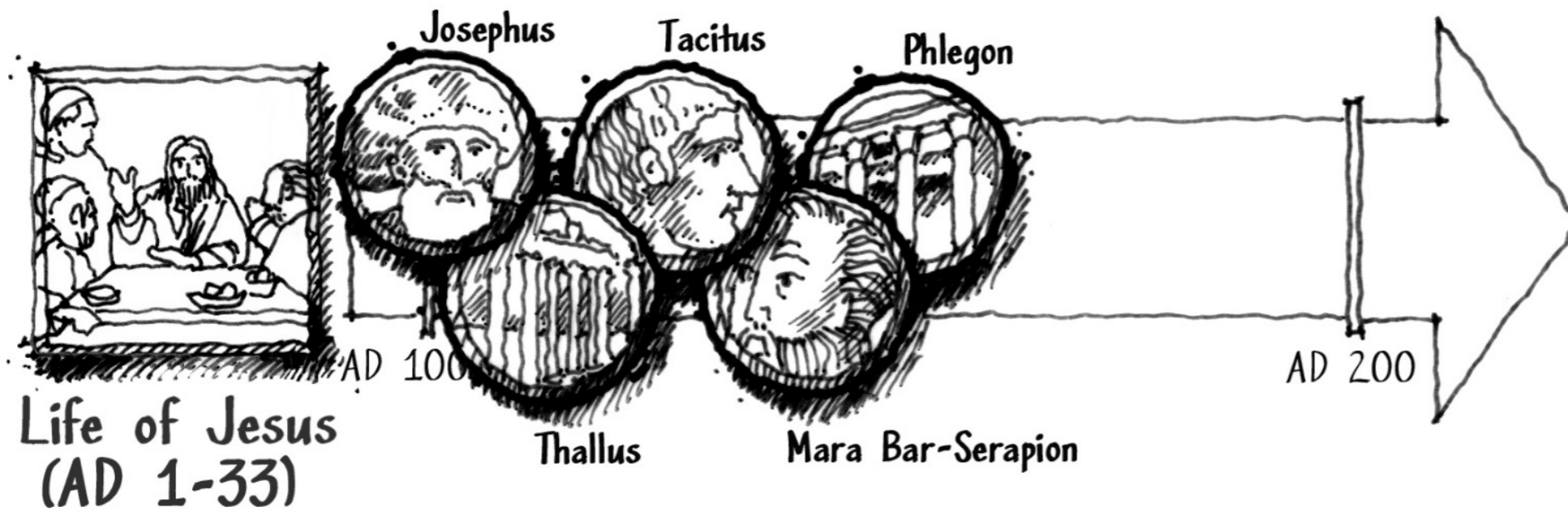


Phlegon (*AD 80–140*)

Described Jesus:

“And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place, Phlegon too, I think, has written in the thirteenth or fourteenth book of his *Chronicles*.”

Corroboration from the “Outside In”



Lived in Judea
A Virtuous Man
Had Wondrous Power
Could Predict the Future
Was "Wise King" of the Jews
Accused By Jewish Leaders
Crucified by Pilate
During Reign of Tiberius
Darkness and an Earthquake
Reportedly Rose After Death
Believed to Be the Messiah
Called the Christ
Followers Called Christians
A "Superstition" Spread

Just How Early Can We Go?

- “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;” (1 Corinthians 15:3–7, NASB95)
- “15: 3-7 Paul probably received this confessional statement 20 years earlier at his baptism in Damascus and later handed it over to the Corinthians when he established the church there. This vital summary of Christian belief was formed during the period between Christ's resurrection and Paul's Damascus call and baptism. This formula was carried by fugitives from Paul's persecutions to Damascus, where it was handed over to the new convert at his baptism. This statement may be the earliest formulation of NT Christianity, predating Paul's earliest letters by 15 years.” (William Lane Craig places this passage at A.D. 36, and most scholars agree)

Summary of Manuscript Evidence

1. We have an accurate copy of the original New Testament documents:
 - A. While the original New Testament documents did not survive or have not yet been found, we have abundant and accurate copies of the original New Testament documents—many more than that for the ten best pieces of ancient literature combined. Moreover, nearly perfect reconstruction of the originals can be accomplished by comparing the thousands of manuscript copies that do survive. We have discovered manuscript fragments from the early second century and perhaps as early as mid-first century. There are no works from the ancient world that even come close to the New Testament in terms of manuscript support.
 - B. Reconstruction is further authenticated by the thousands of quotations from early church fathers. In fact the entire New Testament, except for eleven verses, can be reconstructed just from their quotations of it.

Summary of Manuscript Evidence

2. The New Testament documents are early and contain even earlier source material:
 - A. Since the New Testament documents are referenced by other writers by about A.D. 100, they had to have been composed before then.
 - B. Since the New Testament documents speak as if the temple and the city were still standing at the time of their writing—an there is no mention of the onset of the Jewish war or the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem—most of the New Testament documents are probably earlier than A.D. 70.
 - C. We have very strong evidence that Acts was written by 62, which means Luke is even earlier.
 - D. We have source material that goes back into the 30s. Nearly all scholars agree that the death, burial, and resurrection testimony found in 1 Corinthians 15 comes from the time of those events or within a few years of them. Furthermore, there at least 40 other creeds in the New Testament that appear to be of very early origin.

External Evidences

“But the simple fact it dates from the 10th Century BC means it has been inevitably tied to the fabled King Solomon who, according to biblical accounts, was the driving force behind the success of the newly founded Jewish state...The Baptist archaeologists concede that there remains some doubt as to the dating of the site based on the styles of pottery found there. Carbon 14 radioactivity dating analysis is yet to be completed.”



External Evidences

“The Tel Dan Stele was a black basalt stele erected by an Aramaean (Syrian) king in northernmost Israel, containing an Aramaic inscription to commemorate his victory over the ancient Hebrews. Fragments of the stele, which has been dated to the ninth or eighth century B.C.E., were discovered at Tel Dan in 1993 and 1994.”

“Although the name of the author does not appear on the existing fragments, he is probably Hazael, a king of neighboring Aram Damascus. The stele affirms that, during a time of war between Israel and Syria, the god Hadad had made the author king and given him victory. In the process, he had killed King Joram of Israel and his ally, King Ahaziah of the "House of David."”



External Evidences

- “It has been speculated – especially by the skeptical scholar and author John Dominic Crossan – that the crucified corpse of Jesus would have been eaten by dogs, either as it hung on the cross or after it was buried in a shallow grave reserved for executed criminals. But a discovery in Giv’at ha-Mivtar, a Jewish neighborhood in north-east Jerusalem, proves that a victim of crucifixion could receive a proper, honorable Jewish burial. The story begins in 1968 when building contractors unexpectedly uncovered an ancient burial site containing about 35 bodies.”



External Evidences

“An early story about the empty tomb of Jesus, circulated by the Jerusalem authorities, was that his body had been stolen. Matthew’s Gospel records: ‘When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we 48 were asleep’”’ (Matthew 28:12-13). This story fits with the ‘Nazareth decree’ – an edict of the Roman Emperor which orders that anyone caught disturbing tombs or moving bodies from them should be put to death. It was reportedly discovered in Nazareth in 1878, and the emperor in question was Claudius, who ruled between AD 41 and 54.”



External Evidences

“In 1986, Israel suffered a drought, which caused the waters of the Sea of Galilee to recede, exposing large areas of the shallow seabed. Two local fishermen, who were also amateur archaeologists, discovered a boat buried in the mud, which turned out to be a well-preserved fishing boat from the time of Jesus. The design of the vessel – which measured over 27 feet in length – was typical of fishing boats used during the time of Jesus in the eastern Mediterranean. The boat was next to the village of Migdal, which in the first century was called Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene.”

“Professor Shelley Wachsmann and other archaeologists raced against time to recover the boat from the mud before the waters returned. It was placed in a climate-controlled environment to protect it. Pots and lamps found beside the boat helped to date it to the first century, which was confirmed by radiocarbon dating of the wooden planks. In the back of the boat is a raised section, like that where Jesus was sleeping in the story of calming the storm. The boat could accommodate 15 people, so there would certainly have been room for Jesus and his twelve disciples in such a boat.”



External Evidences

“In the third century AD, a church was built above a pool attached to Hezekiah’s water tunnel in Jerusalem to commemorate the healing of the blind man reported in John’s Gospel. Until recently, this was thought to be the Pool of Siloam. However, during sewerage works in 2004, engineers stumbled upon the steps of a first century ritual pool near the mouth of Hezekiah’s tunnel. By the summer of 2005, archaeologists said it was without doubt the missing pool of Siloam.”

“Mark D Roberts reports, ‘In the plaster of this pool were found coins that establish the date of the pool to the years before and after Jesus. There is little question that this is in fact the pool of Siloam, to which Jesus sent the blind man in John 9.’”



External Evidences

- “James the brother of Jesus was martyred in AD 62. A mid first century AD chalk ossuary discovered in 2002 bears this inscription: “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” (*“Ya’akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua”*)”
- “The ossuary has provoked controversy as the inscription was originally suspected of being a forgery. However, two eminent paleographers confirmed it authentic in 2012. New Testament scholar Ben Witherington states: ‘If, 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.’”

