

The Case for the
New Testament
&
The Resurrection



What is the Bible?

A Collection of 66 books, 39 in the OT, 27 in the NT, written over approximately 1,500 years by about forty different authors.

It tells the story of the creation, the fall, and the redemption of mankind, by an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God.

Fulfilled Prophecy is evidence that the Bible is Inspired.

About 27% of the Bible is predictive. There are more than 1,800 prophecies. Over half of them have already been fulfilled. (Payne, J. B., *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, Baker Pub. Group, 1980, p. 675)

“Wouldn’t it have been within the power of any mortal to write a book that confirms the predictions of a previous book?”

–Sam Harris (Atheist, Author)

A Common Misunderstanding: It fails to consider that many fulfilled prophecies could not have been orchestrated by anyone other than God.

Example:

Isaiah 53:4-9

Archeological Evidence

The fragmentary Tel Dan stela, containing the Tel Dan inscription (or "House of David" inscription) provided the first historical evidence of King David from the Bible. The Aramean king who erected the stela in the mid-eighth century B.C. claims to have defeated the "king of Israel" and the "king of the House of David." Photo: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem/Israel Antiquities Authority (photograph by Meidad Suchowolski).



Jesus confirmed the inspiration of the Old Testament.

- After His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and said:

“These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

(Luke 24:44)

- This statement encompasses the entire Old Testament canon that we have in our Bibles.

What is the New Testament?

27 independent primary source documents.

How was the New Testament passed down to us?

- **It's important to remember that the early church recognized these books as Scripture and so were careful in preserving them.**
- **Litmus Test:** Did it have the stamp of apostolic authority? That is, was it written by an apostle or someone close to an apostle.
- For example, Luke was not an apostle, but was close to Paul and Paul cited Luke's gospel as Scripture 1 Timothy 5:18: "For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."
- This is a quote from Luke 10:7.

This assumes that the early church recognized Luke's Gospel as Scripture.

New Testament
is the most
historically
verifiable book
from the ancient
world.

Reliability of the New Testament Compared to Other Ancient Documents

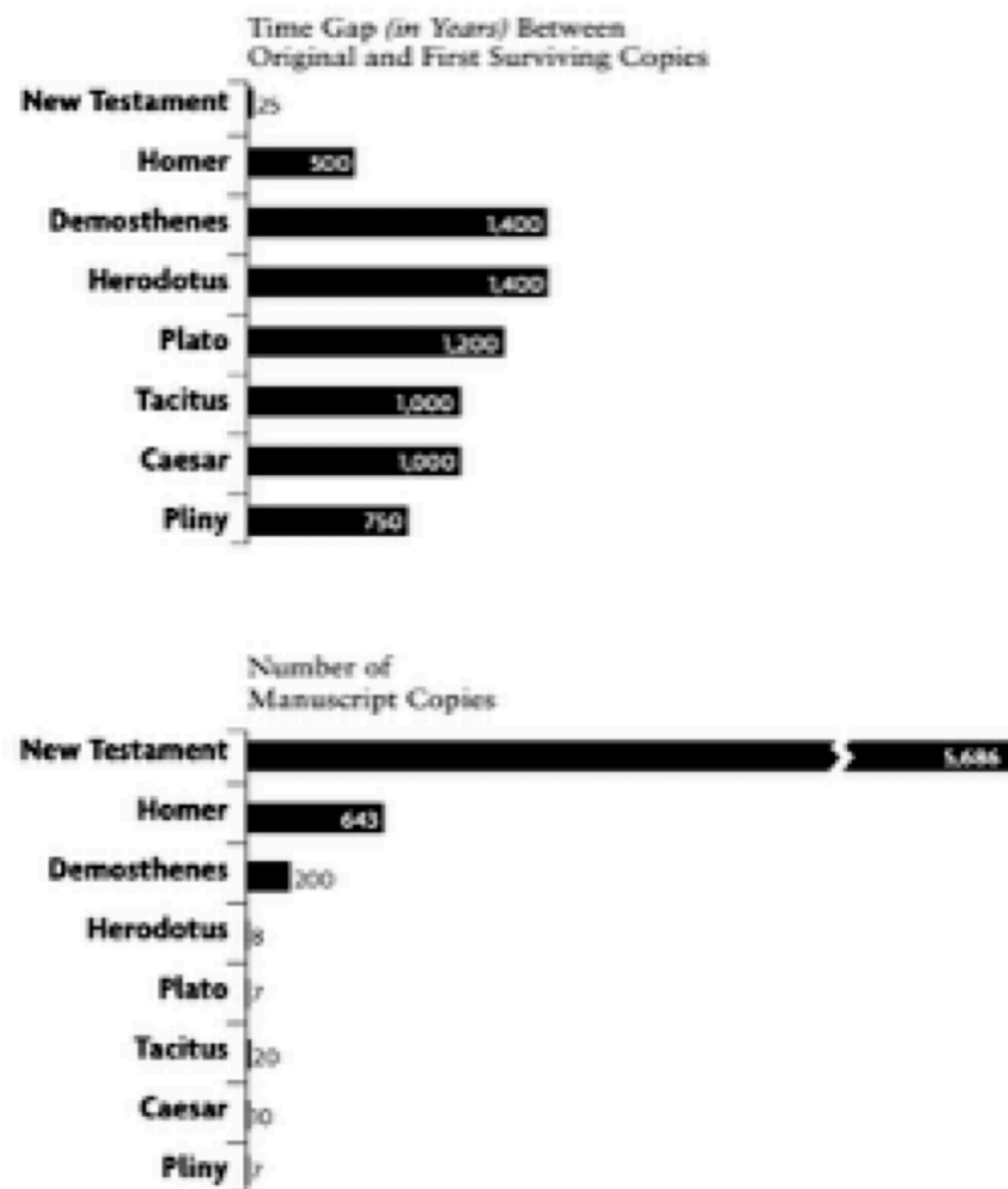


Fig. 9.1

What about errors in the copies?

How do we know what the original said?



Copy 1: God is #ust and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
Copy 2: God is j#st and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
Copy 3: God is ju#t and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
Copy 4: God is jus# and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
Original: God is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The NT Documents Have Far Fewer Variations Than This Example

Did the church create the New Testament canon?

- **Answer:** The church did not create the New Testament canon. The New Testament canon created the church.
- **Council of Hippo (AD 393) and the Council of Carthage (AD 397) affirmed the 27 books as authoritative.**

Evidence for the Resurrection

“For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

—1 Cor. 15:16-17:

Who did Jesus claim to be?

- **“Very truly I tell you, . . . before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:58).**

He was claiming preexistence and, more than that, to be Yahweh, the great “I AM” of Exodus 3:14.

- **In John 10:30, Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.”**

“His Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him” (John 10:31).

- **Thomas declared Him to be “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28).**

- **His disciples worshipped Him (Matthew 14:33). And in (Matthew 28:9).**

- **Jesus forgave sins (Matthew 9:1-6)**

Who did Jesus claim to be?

“...Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶² And Jesus said, “I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” ⁶³ Tearing his clothes, the high priest *said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.”

---**Mark 14:61-64**

Was the Resurrection story a myth that was later added by Church leaders?

- **Answer:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written in early 55 A.D. and it communicates what many N.T. scholars believe to be an early Christian Creed.
- **A creed:** a concise statement of faith that summarizes core Christian beliefs.

Dated to within five years of the Resurrection

(probably occurred in events described in Gal. 1:18-19)

- “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”

---1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Minimal Facts Argument

(Gary Habermas)

- 1) that Jesus *died by crucifixion*;
- 2) that very soon afterwards, his followers had *real experiences* that they thought were actual appearances of the risen Jesus;
- 3) that their lives were *transformed* as a result, even to the point of being willing to die specifically for their faith in the resurrection message;
- 4) that these things were *taught very early*, soon after the crucifixion;
- 5) that *James*, Jesus' unbelieving brother, became a Christian due to his own experience that he thought was the resurrected Christ;
- 6) that the Christian persecutor *Paul* (formerly Saul of Tarsus) also became a believer after a similar experience.

Let's consider just four points.

B - Jesus' Burial in a tomb

E - The Empty tomb

A - Jesus' Appearances after his death

T - The Takeoff of Christianity, or the origin of the disciples' belief in Jesus

B: Burial

- There are multiple independent sources describing this event
- Christians wouldn't have invented his burial by Joseph of Arimathea

E: Empty Tomb

- Why would people have made up women discovering the empty tomb?
 - In that society, women weren't considered reliable witnesses, so this would have been embarrassing
- If there was any body in the tomb, how could the disciples preach about Jesus' resurrection?
- It was in the same city - people could have checked
- The authorities would have wanted to point it out

A: The Appearances of Jesus after his death

- It is indisputable that some people at least thought they saw Jesus alive again!
- Not even James was a believer before Jesus died.
- **John 7:5:** “For not even His brothers believed in Him.”
- **James 1:1:** “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,”
- Some of these people were still alive and could be questioned. (1 Cor. 15:6)

Jesus wasn't described as a ghost, or as appearing in merely a vision.

“While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and *said to them, “Peace be to you.”³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.³⁸ And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?³⁹ See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”⁴⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.⁴¹ While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”⁴² They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;⁴³ and He took it and ate *it* before them.”

---Luke 24:36-43

T: The Takeoff of the Christian Movement

Preaching about Jesus' resurrection was enormously difficult

- He was publicly crucified in the same city where his resurrection supposedly happened.
Acts 2:41: "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."
- **Gentiles found the idea ridiculous, and Jews thought it could only happen at the last day.**
1 Cor. 1:22-24: "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."
- **The disciples still preached it anyway, and believed Jesus to be the Lord because they believed in his resurrection**

The disciples preached despite dangers.

“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. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.”

---First century Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus recounted in his *Annals of Imperial Rome*.

Despite the persecution, Peter wrote...

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales 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, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— ¹⁸ and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

---2 Peter 1:16

and Paul wrote...

“I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

---2 Timothy 4:1-5

Overview

- They had many enemies at the time, but their lives were changed.
- Even Paul went from persecutor to missionary, willing to endure hardship for Jesus.
- They were willing to die for Jesus, and many did!
- None of this would have happened if they didn't believe Jesus rose from the dead.

Top Four Responses to B.E.A.T.

1. The disciples stole Jesus' body and lied about his resurrection?

- Given Jewish beliefs then, the disciples wouldn't have invented the idea of his resurrection.
- There was no expectation the Messiah would be executed as a criminal and then rise from the dead.
- At most, they would have looked forward to his resurrection at the last day, maybe making a shrine at his tomb.

Why would they be willing to preach a lie?

- Knowing the difficulty of believing the message.
- Knowing the danger it would mean to their lives?

2. Jesus only appeared to die.

- **Romans knew how to kill people!**
- **Even if Jesus could escape, would the disciples have believed he was the Risen Lord?**
- **Wouldn't they just have thought he didn't die?**
- **An article, written by three physicians, and published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (March 21, 1986), confirmed that, based on the eyewitness testimony in the Gospel accounts, Jesus was dead before He was removed from the cross.**

3. The disciples had the wrong tomb.

- How do we explain the multiple appearances of Jesus to various people and groups of people?
- They wouldn't have concluded Jesus was resurrected just because the tomb was empty!
- Wouldn't other people have pointed this out?

4. All the eyewitnesses were hallucinating.

- How do you explain the empty tomb?
- It's virtually impossible for multiple people to hallucinate the same thing at once.
- Jesus appeared to different groups of people on multiple occasions.
- He even appeared to non-believers like James and Paul!
- Even if they did hallucinate, they wouldn't have hallucinated him alive on earth.
- The disciples were willing to die for their belief in Jesus' resurrection.
- Wouldn't they have wanted to be sure about this, especially when they knew about visions and dreams?

The Best Explanation: God raised Jesus from the dead.

- Jesus did say that He was the Son of God.
- There are also many good reasons to believe that God exists.
- Other explanations for the Resurrection stories aren't as good.

What does Jesus' resurrection mean?

- It means that Jesus really was who He said He was.
- God resurrected Him to prove He was right.
- There is truly forgiveness of sins by His death on the cross.