

# HOW ARCHAEOLOGY ILLUMINATES THE BIBLE

BY J. LUIS DIZON



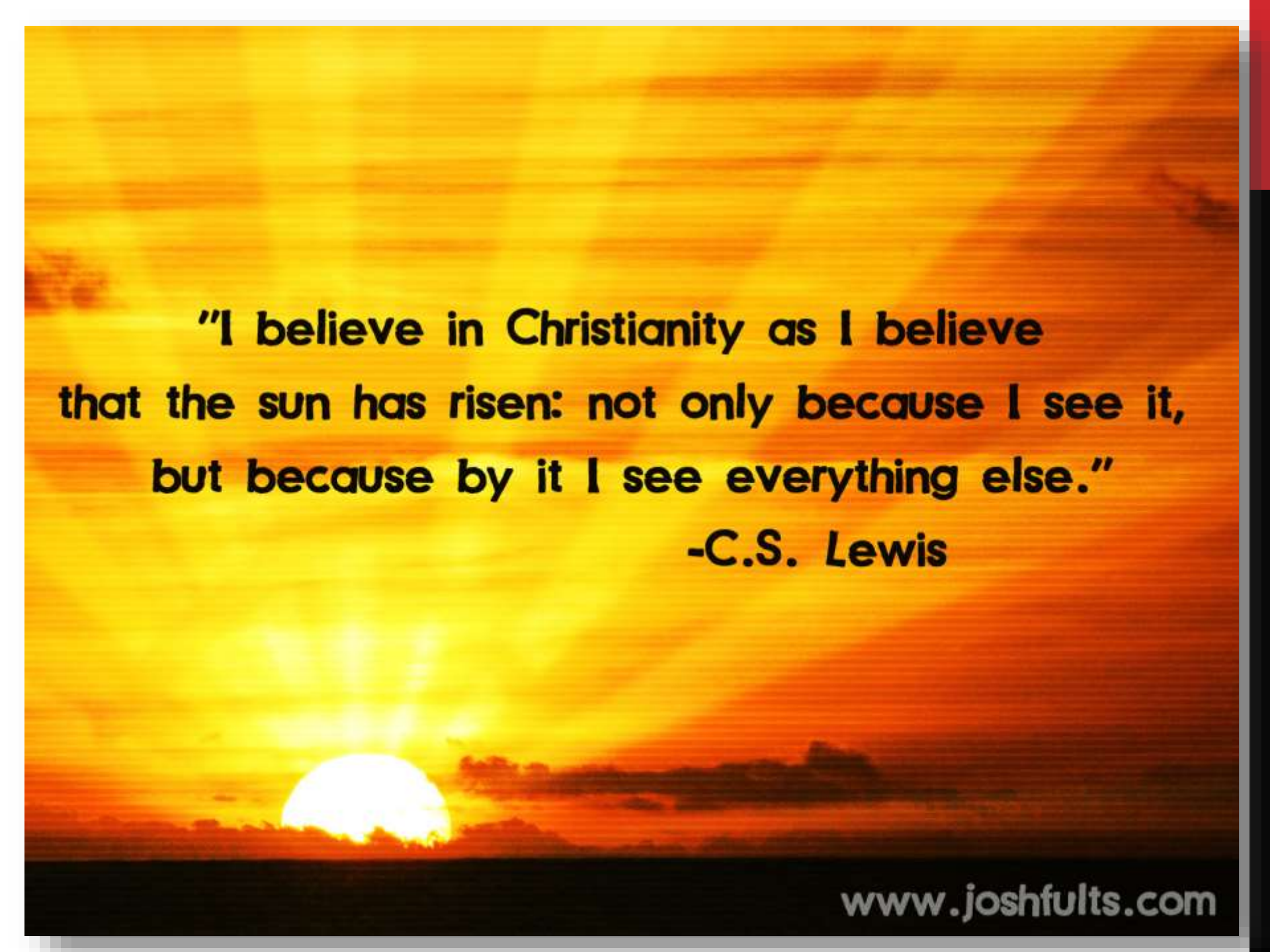
# RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS TO APPROACH BIBLICAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- **Wrong:** History and archaeology “prove” the reliability of the Bible
- **Right:** History and archaeology help to illuminate why the Bible is reliable

# RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS TO APPROACH BIBLICAL HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- **Even better:** History and archaeology provide evidence that only make sense if we looked at them from a Biblical worldview (*A presuppositional* approach)

See Psalm 36:9 and Colossians 2:1-4



**"I believe in Christianity as I believe  
that the sun has risen: not only because I see it,  
but because by it I see everything else."**

**-C.S. Lewis**

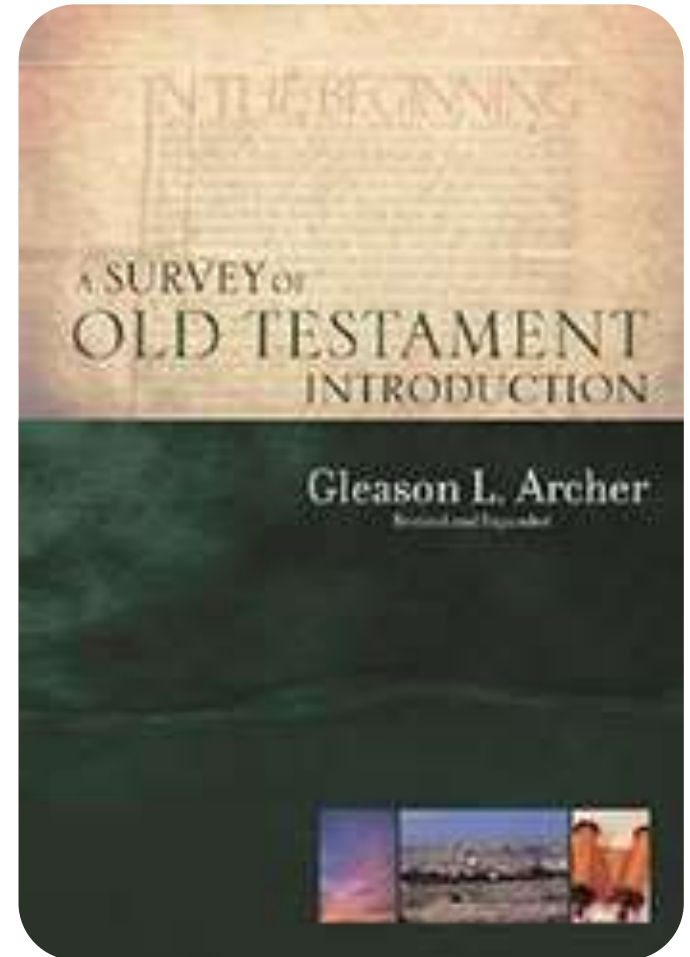
# THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

1. The Bible does not just give us a set of historical facts, but arranges them in such a way that they explain to us God's plan of salvation
2. The Biblical authors have theological motivations for writing their books, but this should not be taken to mean that they invented or exaggerated their stories
3. If we get into archaeology, our goal as Christians is the same as with everything else—to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31)

# BIAS IN LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP

“...No serious account is taken of the many infallible proofs of divine inspiration with which the sixty-six books of the Bible abound. Even to suggest an investigation of these evidences is absolutely unthinkable in the minds of the Liberal establishment...”

Gleason L. Archer



# BIAS IN LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP

Advocates of historical criticism take fulfilled prophecies as evidence that the prophecies must be written after the events:

1. In Isaiah 44-45, the prophet predicts the Persian king Cyrus three centuries before his birth; therefore this prophecy must be dated to the Persian period.
2. Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) in Matthew 24:3 and Luke 21:6; therefore Matthew and Luke must be written after AD 70.

# PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

## **Primary Sources**

- Actual documents from the ancient world (e.g. the Bible)
- Archaeological site reports

## **Secondary Sources**

- Books/articles interpreting the primary sources
- Anything that tries to fit the primary sources into a specific theory/model



# TWO TENDENCIES IN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

- **Maximalism** – What the Bible says about history must be accepted as factual unless archaeological evidence shows otherwise.
- **Minimalism** – What the Bible says about history must be viewed with suspicion unless archaeological evidence corroborates it.

# THE CAMEL CONTROVERSY



Camels, shown here in the Liwa desert outside Abu Dhabi, are the subject of a surprising new discovery

February 11th, 2014  
01:56 PM ET

## Will camel discovery break the Bible's back?

Opinion by Joel Baden, special to CNN

[Follow @JoelBaden](#)

(CNN) — It's been a rough 2014 for the book of Genesis.

First a Noah's Ark discovery raised a flood of questions, then there was the much-hyped debate over life's origins between Bill Nye the Science Guy and creationist Ken Ham.

And now this: a scientific report establishing that camels, the basic mode of transportation for the biblical patriarchs, weren't domesticated in Israel until hundreds of years after Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are said to have wandered the earth.

Using radiocarbon dating of camel bones that showed signs of having carried heavy loads, Israeli archaeologists have dated the earliest domesticated camels to the end of the 10th century BCE.

Do any of you remember when this article floating around the internet 3 years ago?

# CAMELS IN GENESIS

*As it turns out, there's plenty of evidence for them:*

1. Inscriptions of camels carrying water jugs in Egypt from the 15th century BC
2. Texts from the city of Alalakh in northern Syria from the 18th century BC which mention camels as pack animals
3. The point: Mainstream media is often very careless in presenting evidence that may be construed as disproving the Bible!



**Would you say no to  
this pretty face?**

# THE HITTITE AND NEO-HITTITE CIVILIZATIONS



# SUZERAIN-VASSAL TREATIES

16<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.



# COMPARISON OF HITTITE VASSAL TREATIES WITH DEUTERONOMY

Treaty Parts	Equivalent in Deuteronomy
Historical Prologue	Deut. 1 – 3
Stipulations	Deut. 4 – 26
Deposition Clause	Deut. 27
Divine Witnesses	N/A
Curses	Deut. 28:15 – 68
Blessings	Deut. 28:1 – 14

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HITTITE VASSAL TREATIES

- Hittite Vassal Treaties were only used during the 16<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.
- Vassal treaties occurring later display a significantly different structure (e.g. Neo-Assyrian treaties).
- The fact that Deuteronomy adheres to the Hittite treaty structure indicates that it was written during the same time period.
- This goes against modern liberal scholarship that tends to date Deuteronomy to the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.

# THE PRICE OF A SLAVE

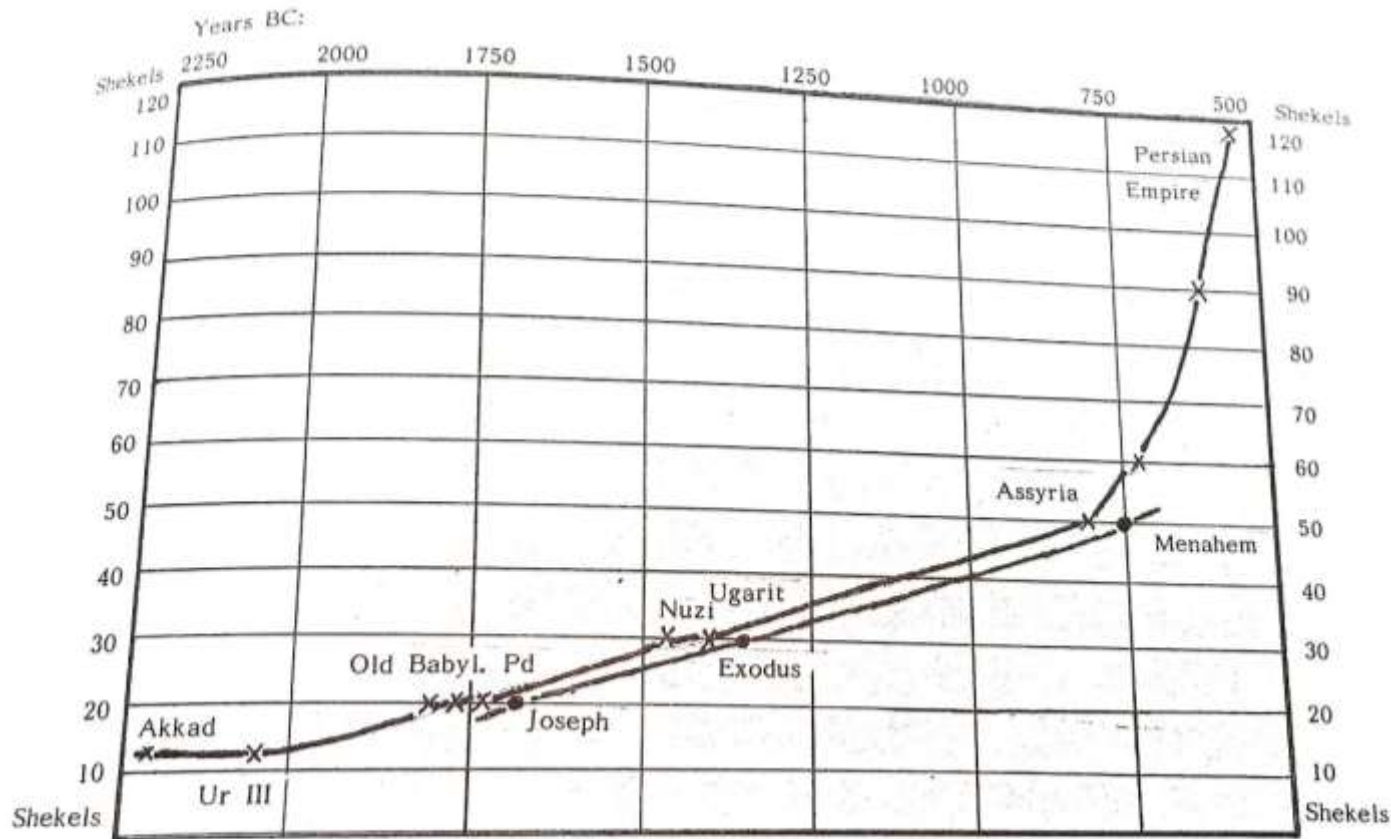




# THE PRICE OF A SLAVE

Date	Price	Biblical Text	Extra-Biblical Corroboration
Late 3 <sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.	8-10 shekels	N/A	3 <sup>rd</sup> dynasty of Ur
Early 2 <sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.	15-30 shekels	Genesis 37:28	Code of Hammurabi
Mid-late 2 <sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.	+30 shekels	Exodus 21:32	Nuzi Tablets
Early 1 <sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.	50-60 shekels	2 Kings 15:20	Neo-Assyrian Documents
Mid-late 1 <sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.	90-120 shekels	N/A	Achaemenid (Persian) Empire

# THE PRICE OF A SLAVE



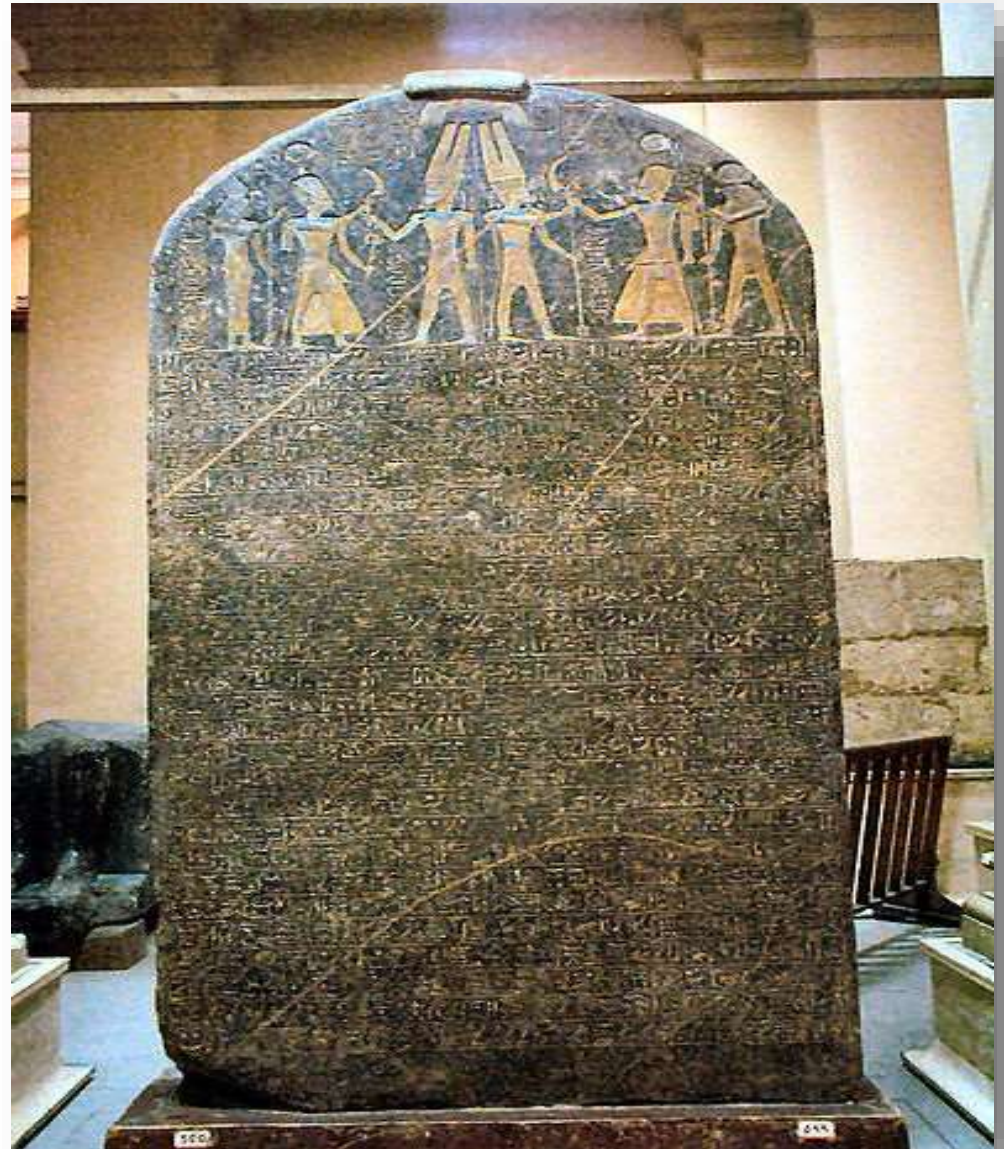
The Rising Price of Slaves in the Biblical World

Anc. Nr E. : X ——— X      OT : ● ——— ●      © K.A. Kitchen 1994

Figure 43 The Rising Price of Slaves through 2000 Years

# THE MERNEPTAH STELE

- Earliest extra-biblical reference to Israel: ***“Israel is laid waste; his seed is not...”***
- Evidence for the Philistine invasion in Judges (13<sup>th</sup> century BC)



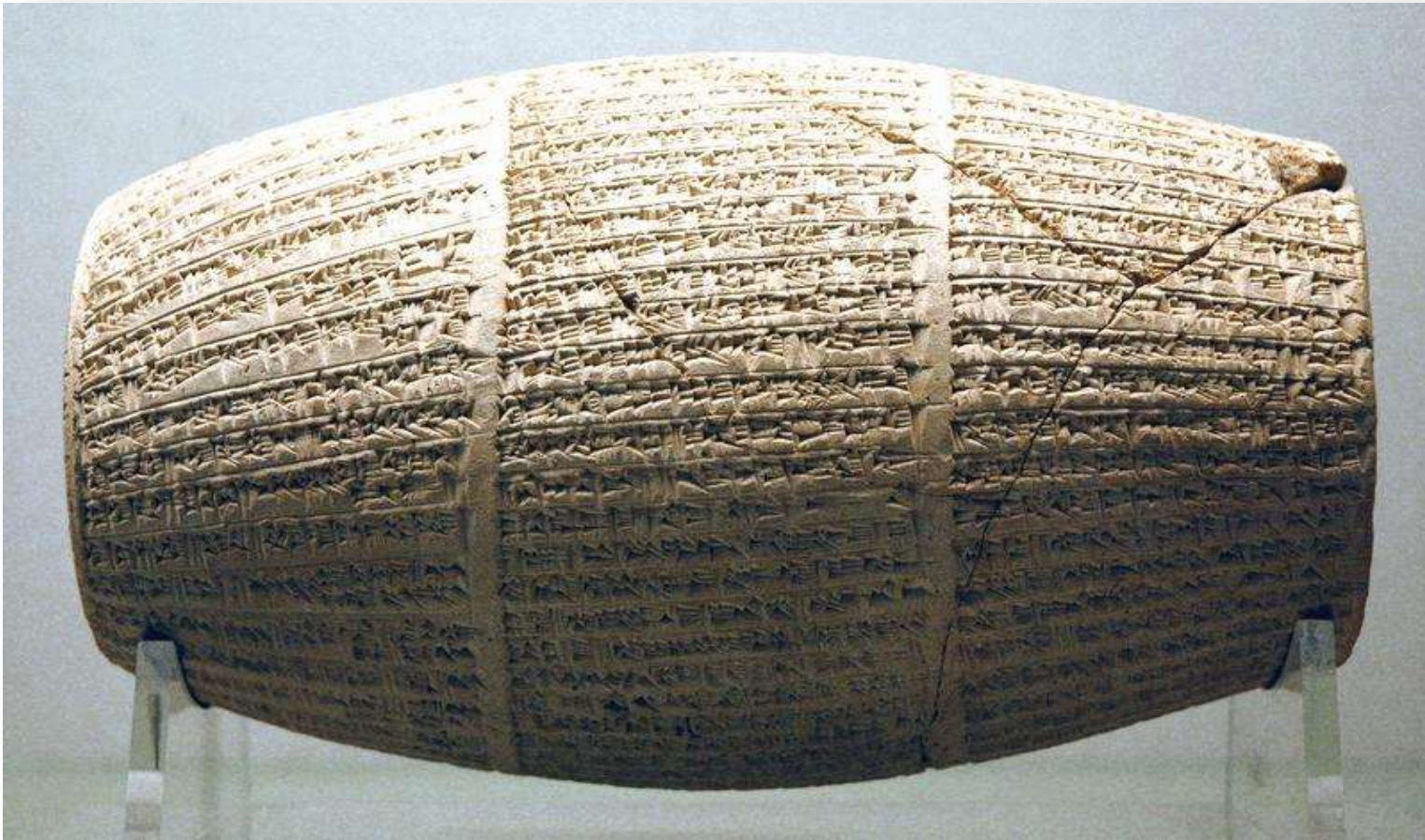
# TEL HAZOR

A Canaanite city mentioned in Joshua and Judges (15<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE)



# THE NABONIDUS CYLINDER

**Speaks of King Belshazzar from the book of Daniel**



# THE PILATE INSCRIPTION

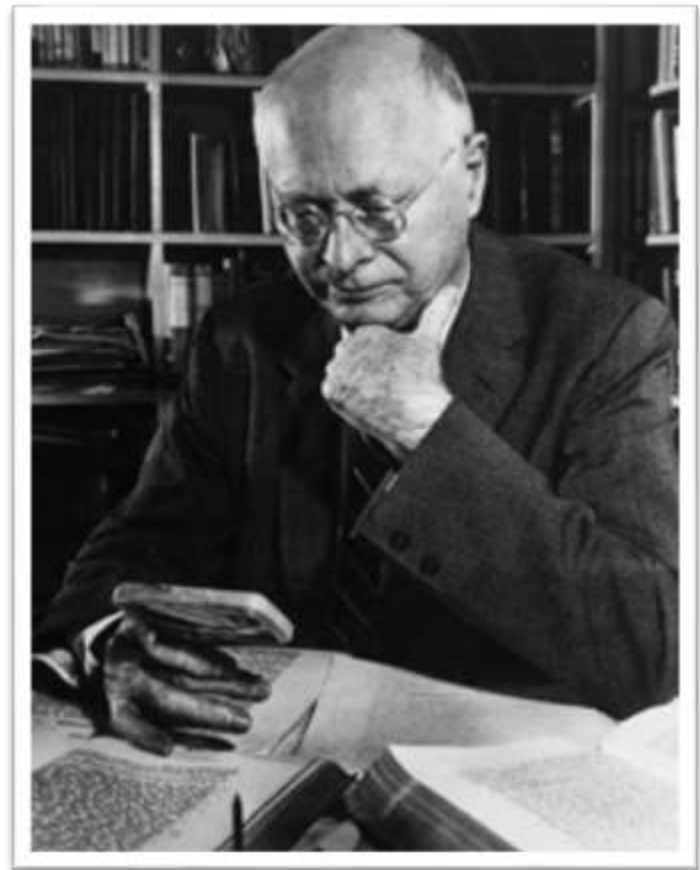


# THE POOL OF BETHESDA



## W. F. ALBRIGHT ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

“The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible [by certain schools of thought] has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of numerous details.”

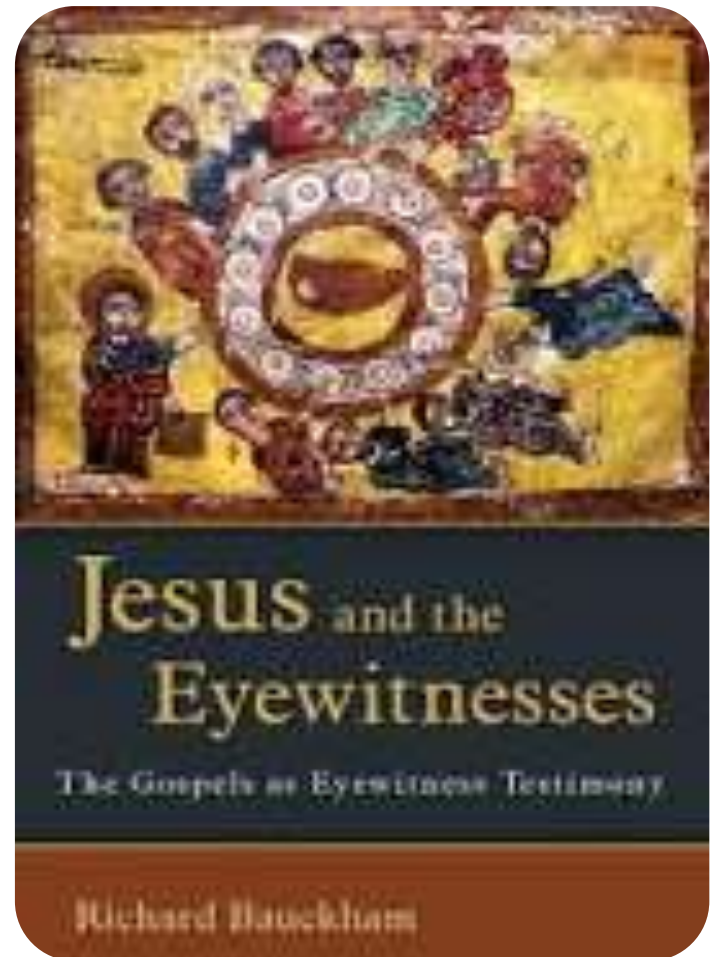




# THE NEW TESTAMENT AS EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY



Prof. Richard J. Bauckham,  
*the go-to guy when it comes to this topic*



# NAMES IN INSCRIPTIONS IN PALESTINE

## Most Popular Jewish Names among Palestinian Jews (330 BC-AD 200)

Rank	Name	Total	NT	Josephus	Ossuaries	Dead Sea Scrolls
1	Simon/Simeon	243	8	29	59	72
2	Joseph/Joses	218	6	21	45	78
3	Lazarus/Eleazar	166	1	20	29	52
4	Judas/Judah	164	5	14	44	35
5	John/Johanan	122	5	13	25	40
6	Jesus/Joshua	99	2	14	22	38
7	Ananias	82	2	10	18	13
8	Jonathan	71		14	14	21
9	Matthew/Mattathias	62	2	12	17	15
10	Manaen/Menahem	42	1	2	4	23
11	James/Jacob	40	5	4	5	10

Source: Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, page

# NAMES IN INSCRIPTIONS IN PALESTINE

## Top Jewish names

	Israel	Gospels/Acts
Top 2 men's names: Simon and Joseph	15.6%	18.2%
Top 9 men's names	41.5%	40.3%
Top 2 women's names: Mary and Salome	28.6%	38.9%
Top 9 women's names	49.7%	61.1%

Source: Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*,

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM

TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE

# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM



# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Modern critical text: *The Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*



# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## The Masoretic Text (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE)



**Left: Codex Aleppo**  
(ca. 900 CE)

**Right: Codex Leningrad**  
(ca. 1008 CE)



# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The Greek Septuagint (LXX) (4<sup>th</sup> century BC)





# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Aramaic Targums (1<sup>st</sup> century onwards)



MS 206

Hebrew square book script. Iraq, 1st half of 11th c.

# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Isaiah 52:13 in the Hebrew Bible:

הִנֵּה יִשְׁכִּיל עַבְדִּי יְרוּם וְנִשְׂא וְגָבַהּ מְאֹד

*Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. (ESV)*

## Targum Jonathan's rendering of Isaiah 52:13:

*Behold, my servant the Messiah shall prosper; he shall be exalted and great and very powerful.*

# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## The Nash Papyrus (ca. 150-200 CE)



Contains chapters 5 - 6 of Deuteronomy

# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

**The Dead Sea Scrolls (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE to 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE)**



# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Comparison of OT texts: Psalm 22:16

The Masoretic Text (with JPS trans.)	The Septuagint (LXX)	The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)
For dogs have encompassed me; a company of evil-doers have inclosed me; <u>like a lion</u> (כַּאֲרִי), they are at my hands and my feet.	For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; <u>they have pierced</u> (ῥυξαν) my hands and feet.	For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; <u>they have pierced</u> (כָּאֵרוּ) my hands and feet.

**NOTE:** Every major Bible translation except the Jewish Publication Society's (JPS) English translation follows the LXX/DSS reading rather than the MT.

# OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Comparison of OT texts: 1 Samuel 13:1

The Masoretic Text (MT)	The Septuagint (LXX)	The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)	Acts 13:32
Saul was... years old when he began to reign, and he reigned... and two years over Israel.  <i>(The number dropped out of the text)</i>	Saul was <u>thirty</u> years old when he began to reign, and he reigned <u>forty two</u> years over Israel.	<i>Information not available</i>	...Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, <u>for forty years...</u>

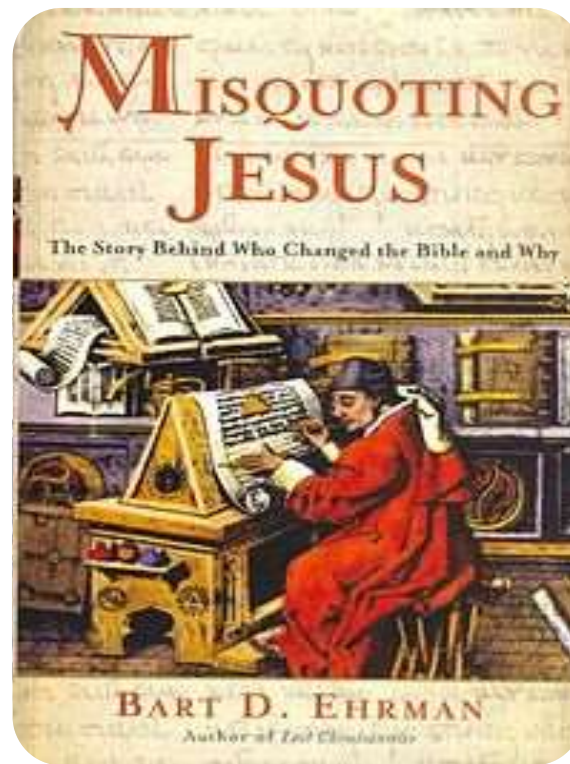
**NOTE:** Most likely, the number given in Acts is a rounding off of forty-two years, which is evidence in favour of the LXX reading being the original.

# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM



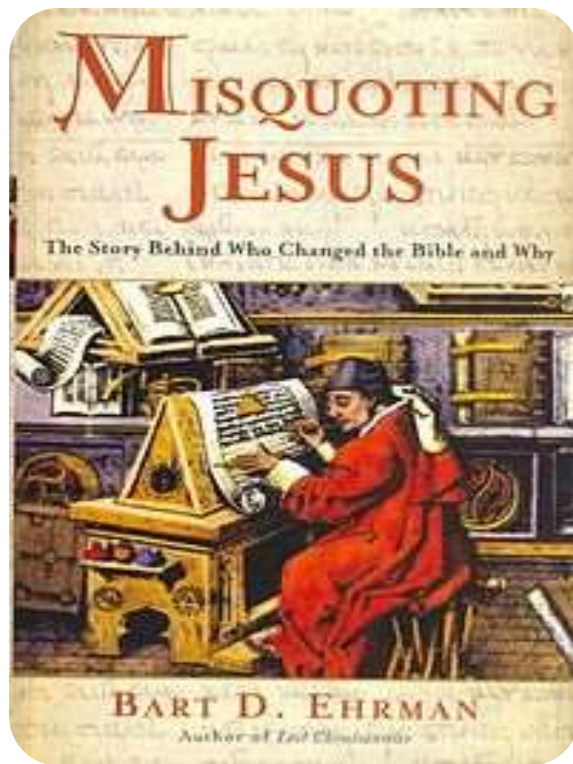
# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Prof. Bart D. Ehrman





# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM



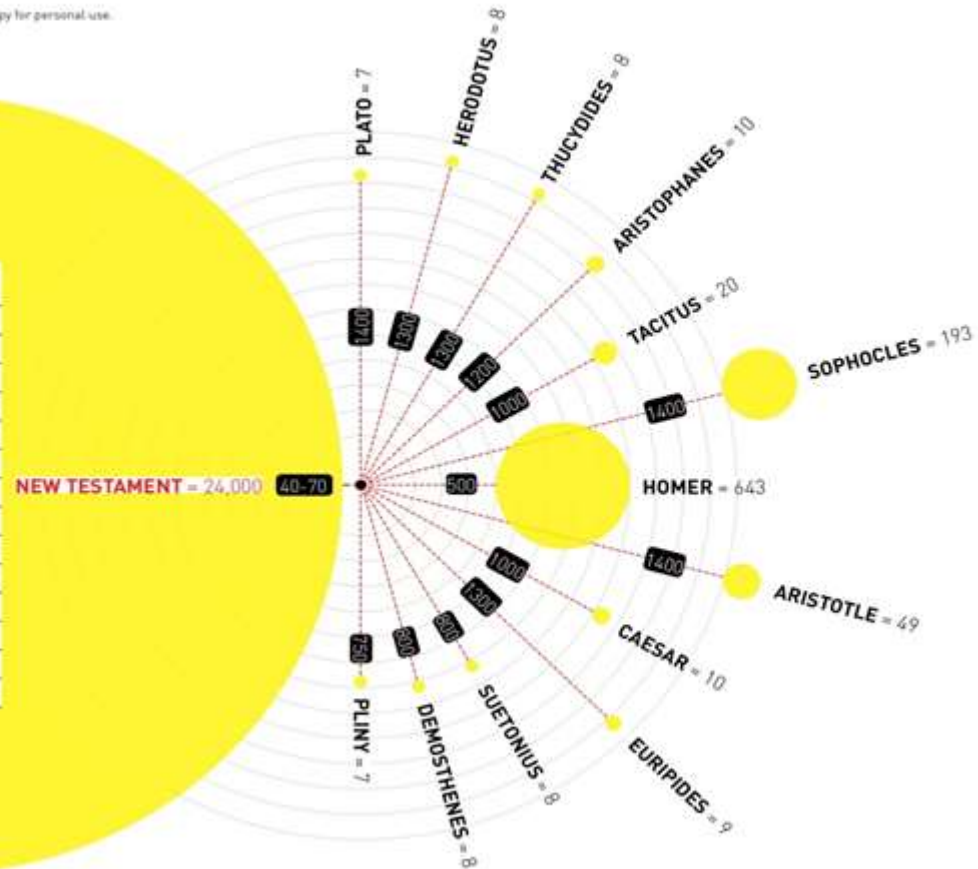
“It is probably safe to say that the copying of early Christian texts was by and large a “conservative” process. The scribes—whether non-professional scribes in the early centuries or professional scribes of the Middle Ages—were intent on “conserving” the textual tradition they were passing on. Their ultimate concern was not to modify the tradition, but to preserve it for themselves and for those who would follow them. Most scribes, no doubt, tried to do a faithful job in making sure that the text they reproduced was the same text they inherited” (Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 177)

# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT TEXTS

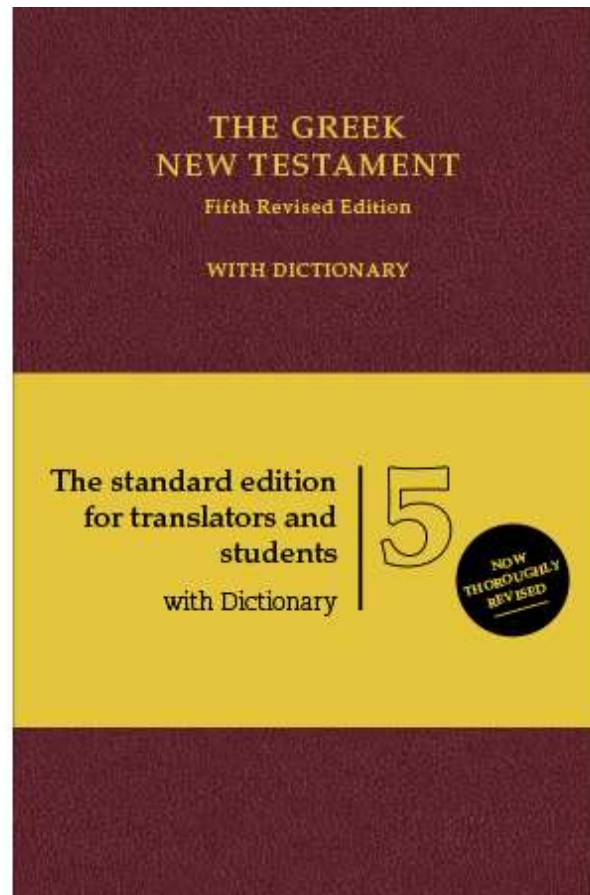
© Mark Barry 2010. Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.

AUTHOR / TEXT	EXISTING COPIES	YEARS BETWEEN ORIGINAL & EARLIEST SURVIVING COPIES
<b>NEW TESTAMENT</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>40-70</b>
HOMER / ILIAD	643	500
SOPHOCLES	193	1400
ARISTOTLE	49	1400
TACITUS	20	1000
CAESAR	10	1000
ARISTOPHANES	10	1200
EURIPIDES	9	1300
SUETONIUS	8	800
DEMOSTHENES	8	800
THUCYDIDES	8	1300
HERODOTUS	8	1300
PLINY	7	750
PLATO	7	1200



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Modern critical text: *The United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*



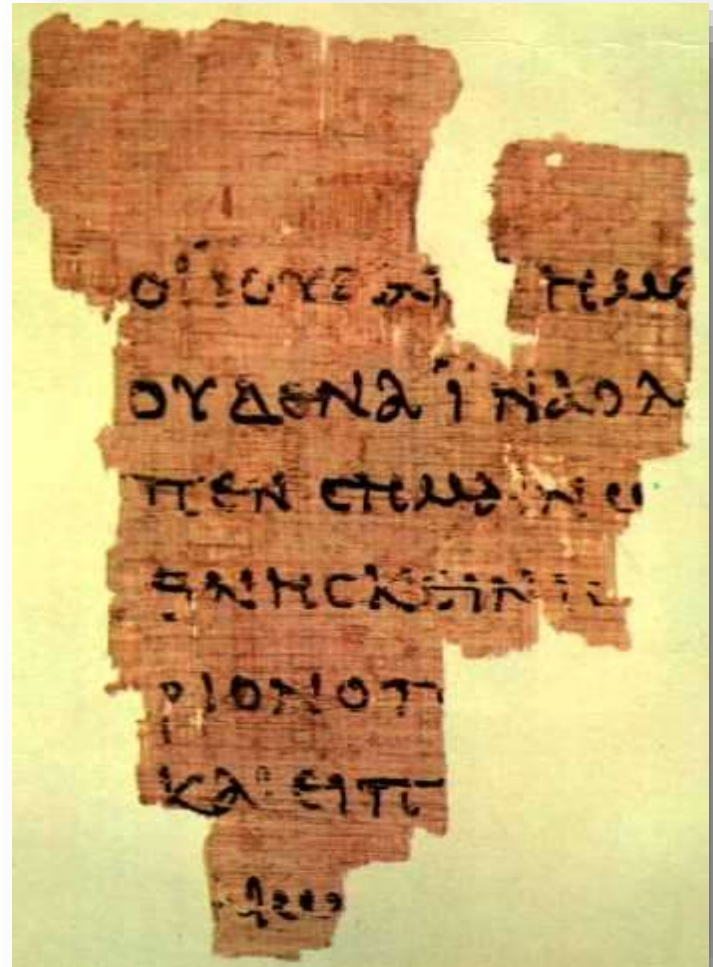
# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## **P52, a.k.a the John Rylands Papyrus**

Small, about the size of a credit card

Contains John 17:31-33, 37-38

Dated ca. 117-125



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

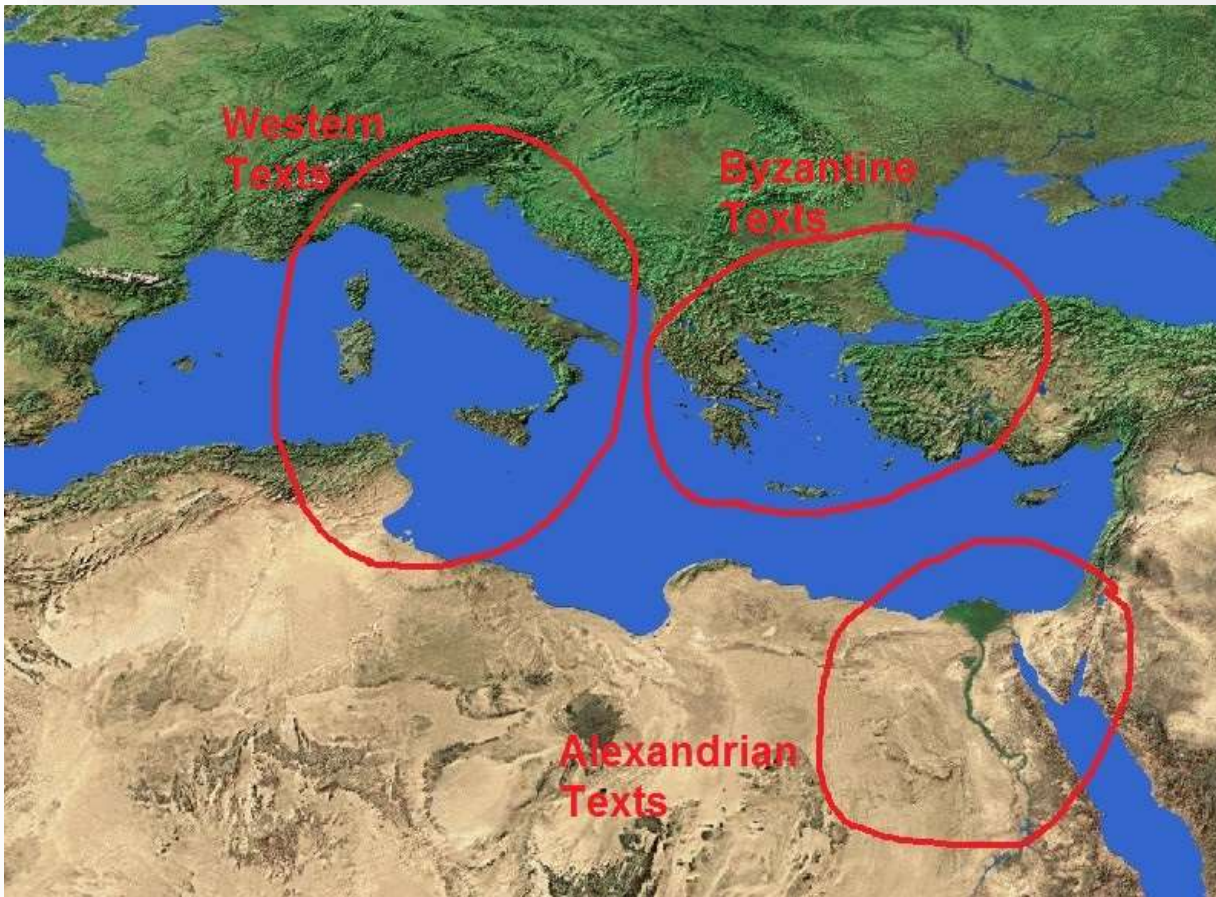
## Chester Beatty Papyri (3<sup>rd</sup> century)

Contains the four Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles and Revelation



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The Three Major Textual “Families” (4th century onwards)



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Codex Sinaiticus

Ca. 4<sup>th</sup> century; discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

St. Catherine's Monastery, where Codex Sinaiticus was discovered by Konstantin von Tischendorf in 1844





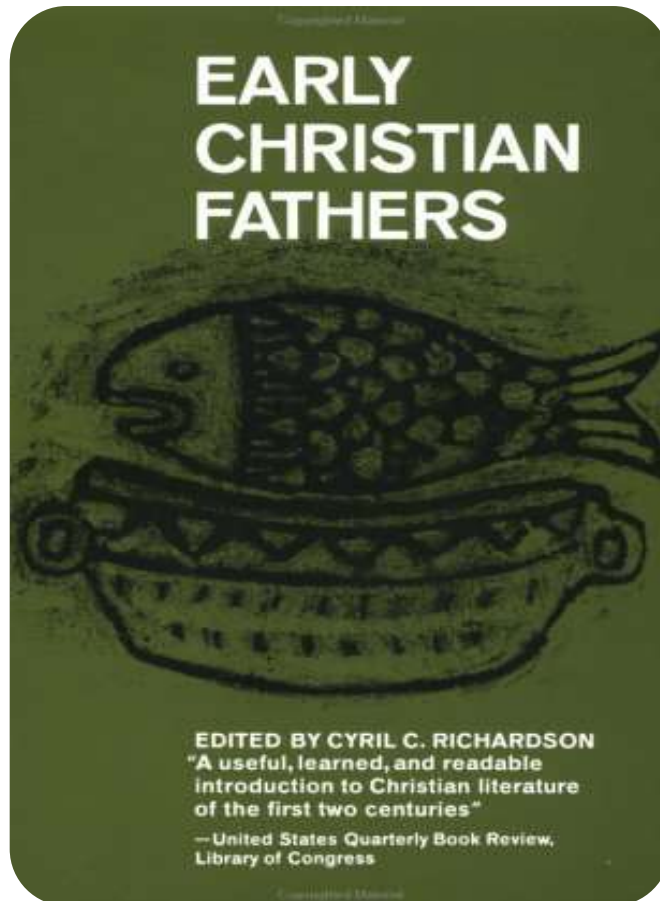
# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Photographs of Codex Sinaiticus and other New Testament manuscripts may be viewed at: <http://www.csntm.org>



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Citations from the early church fathers



# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Comparison of NT Texts: Acts 8:36-38

NKJV	NIV
<p>Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" <i>Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."</i> So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.</p>	<p>As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.</p>

# NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## Comparison of NT Texts: 1 John 5:7-8

NKJV	NIV
<p>For there are three that bear witness <i>in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.</i></p>	<p>For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.</p>

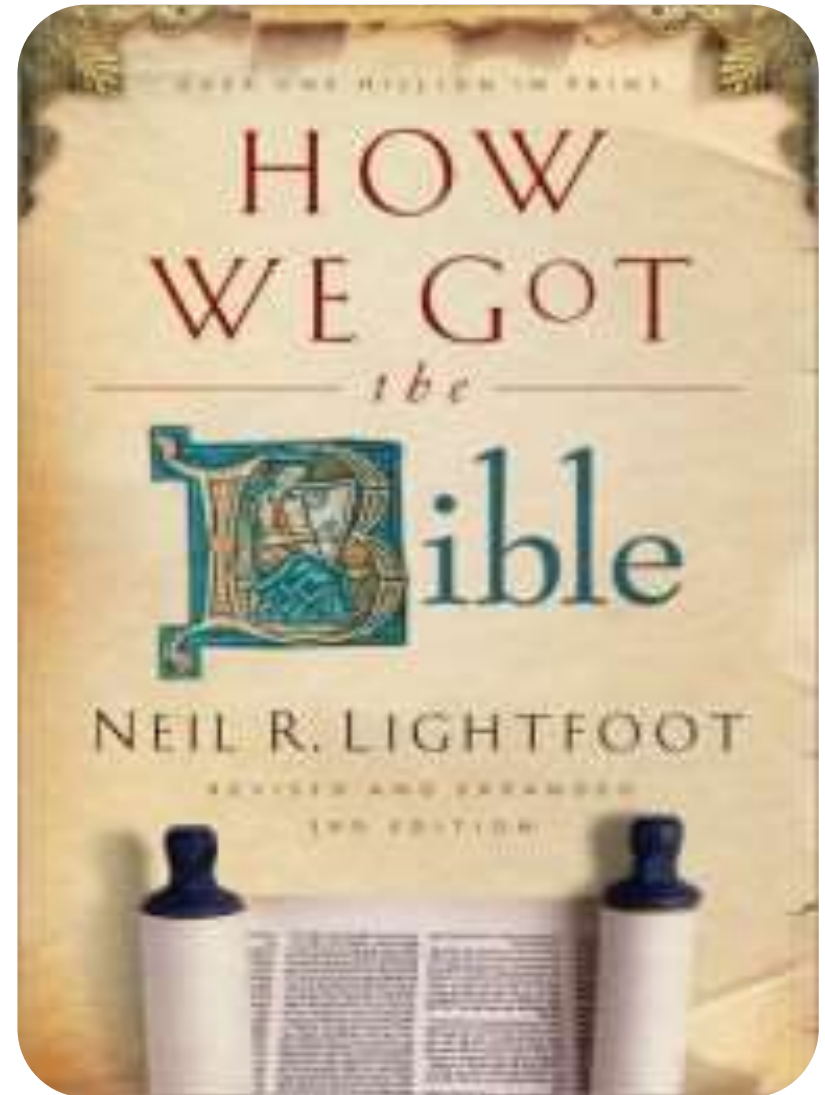
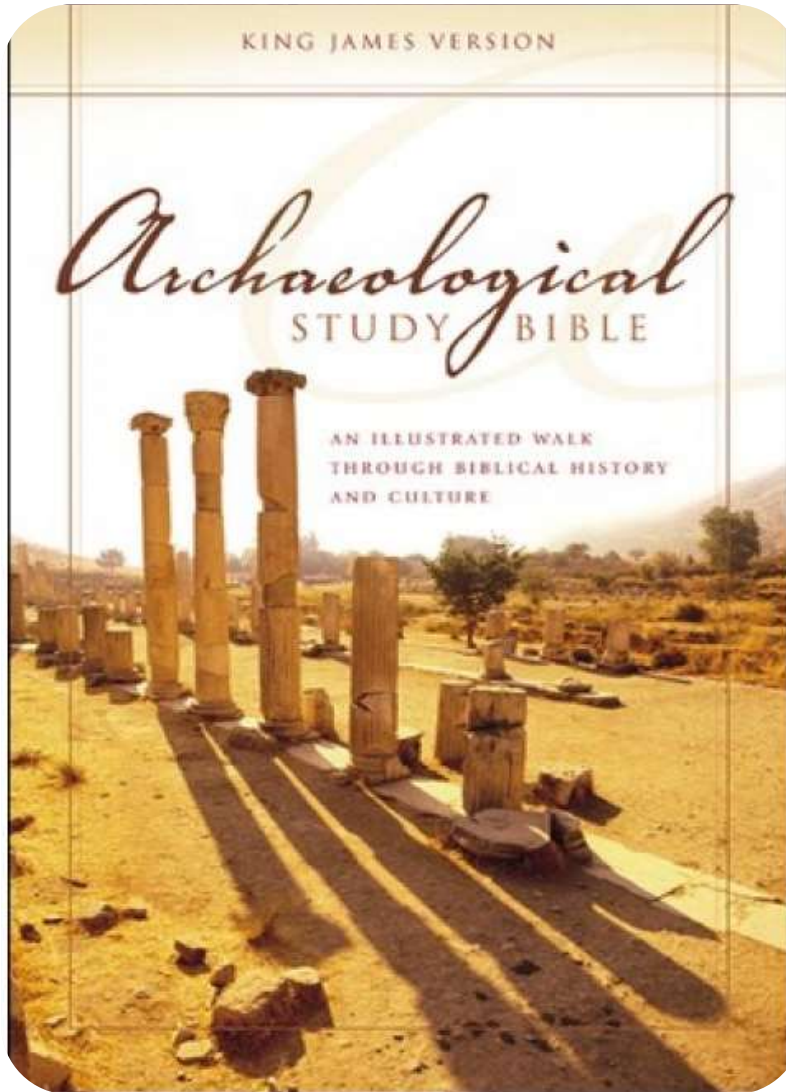
## ABOUT THESE VARIANTS

1. They concern minute details, not touching the core of the text.
2. They are the *exceptions*, not the *rule*. The rule is that the text has remained relatively stable throughout its history.
3. No doctrine of the Christian faith is dependent upon a text with variants in it.

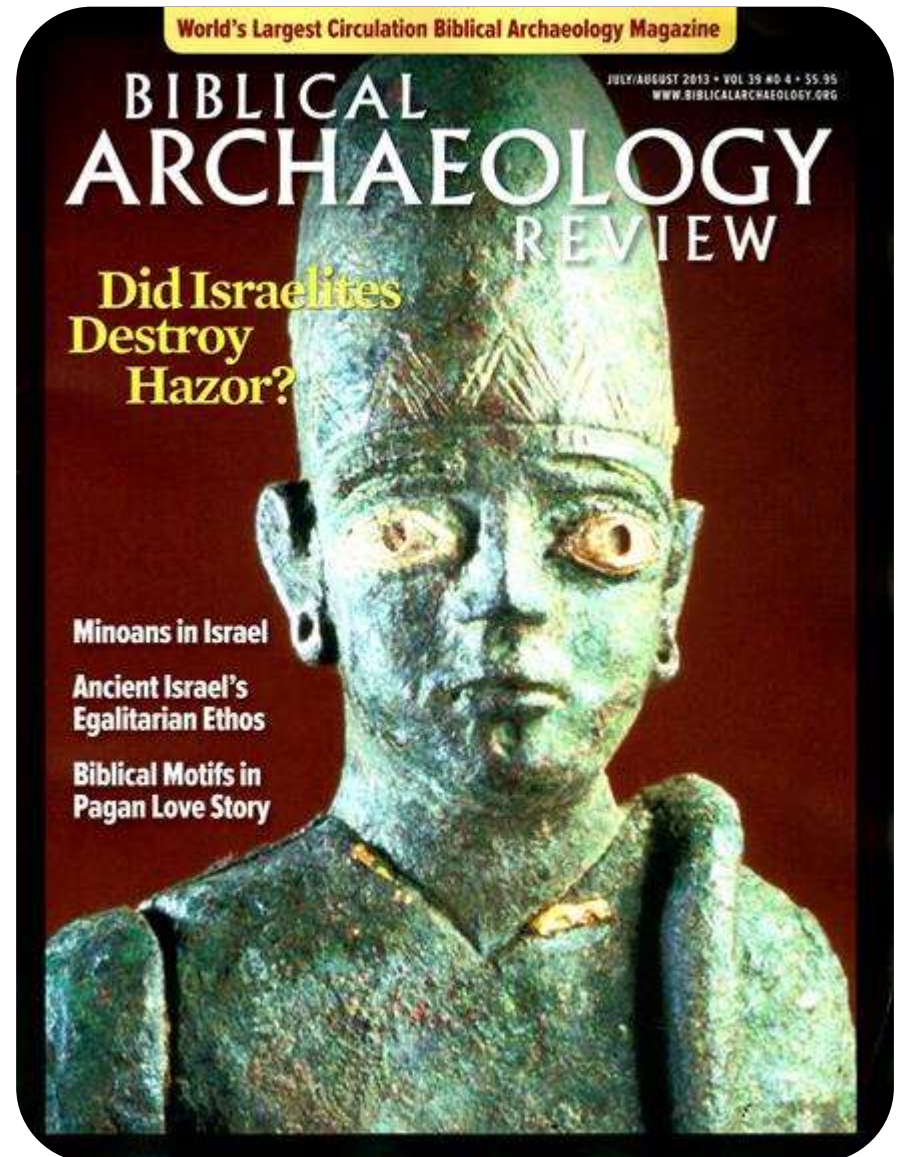
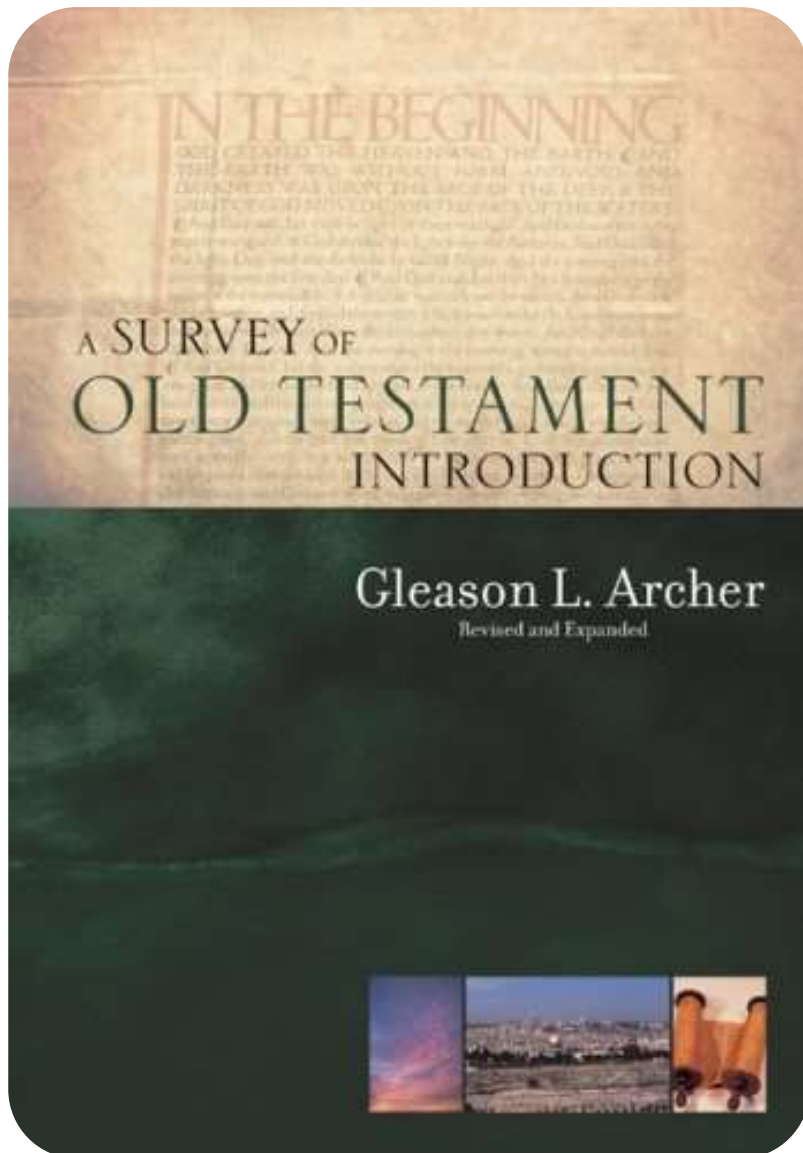
# THE IMPLICATIONS

1. We cannot understand history and archaeology apart from the Biblical worldview
2. While archaeology doesn't "prove" the Bible, it does bear witness to its truthfulness
3. We must not be daunted by skeptical appropriations of these disciplines—either the evidence is misinterpreted, or new evidence is still waiting to be discovered

# RECOMMENDED READING



# RECOMMENDED READING





## RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- *The Biblical Archaeological Society* (<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org>)
- *Tekton Education and Apologetics Ministries* (<http://www.tektonics.org>)
- *NET Bible Online* (<https://net.bible.org>)

# THE END

**TO OBTAIN THESE POWERPOINT SLIDES AND  
THEIR CORRESPONDING NOTES, EMAIL ME AT:  
[LUISDIZON219@YAHOO.COM](mailto:LUISDIZON219@YAHOO.COM)**