

# Investigating Christianity

## Week Four

Why Believe the Bible?

# Outline

- Week 1: Investigative Framework
- Week 2: Christianity and Other Religions
- Week 3: Science and Christianity
- Week 4: Why Believe the Bible?
- Week 5: The Problem of Evil

# Outline

- Week 1: Investigative Framework
- Week 2: Christianity and Other Religions
- Week 3: Science and Christianity
- Week 4: Why Believe the Bible?
- Week 5: The Problem of Evil

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

2 Timothy 3:16

# Why Believe the Bible?

# Why Believe the Bible?

“The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven. The Bible is the product of man, my dear. Not of God...man created it... and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.”

The DaVinci Code, chapter 55

“Jesus Christ was a historical figure of staggering influence, perhaps the most enigmatic and inspirational leader the world has ever seen. Understandably, His life was recorded by thousands of followers across the land. More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John among them. The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.”

The DaVinci Code, chapter 55

“Jesus did not ask us to believe that his death was a blood sacrifice, that he was going to die for our Sins. Jesus did not ask us to believe that he was the messiah. He certainly never suggested that he was the second person of the trinity. In fact, he rarely referred to himself at all. Jesus did not call upon people to repent, or fast, or observe the sabbath. He did not threaten with hell or promise heaven. Jesus did not ask us to believe that he would be raised from the dead. Jesus did not ask us to believe that he was born of a virgin. Jesus did not regard scripture as infallible or even inspired.”

Robert W. Funk, Architect and Founder of the Jesus Seminar, Keynote Address to the Jesus Seminar Fellows in the spring of 1994.

- Prophetic statements. Predictions by Jesus of such things as the destruction of the Temple, or of Jerusalem, or His own resurrection are later literary additions or interpolations. How do we know this? Because no one can predict the future. So they MUST have been added later by zealous followers.
- Miracles. Since miracles are not possible, every recorded miracle in the Gospels must be a later elaboration by an admiring disciple or follower, or must be explained on the basis of some physical or natural cause.
- Claims of Jesus. Christ claimed to be God, Savior, Messiah, Judge, Forgiver of sin, sacrificial Lamb of God, etc. All of these, say the Jesus Fellows, are the later work of His devoted followers...on the basis of this philosophical presupposition, the Jesus Seminar considers itself... free to select or discard any statement of the Gospels which is philosophically repugnant

	Naturalism	Theism	Pantheism	Polytheism	Spiritual Relativism
Is Reality Personal?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes/No
Is Reality Infinite?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes/No
Does God Exist?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/No
Does Truth Exist?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Is There A Personal Afterlife?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes/No
Meaning of Human Life	Not significant	Very significant	Individuals not significant	Depends on the gods	Varies

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
  - Why these books?

# How Were These Books Chosen?

- This topic is called “Canonicity”
- Old Testament: Prophetic Authorship
- New Testament: Apostolic Authorship

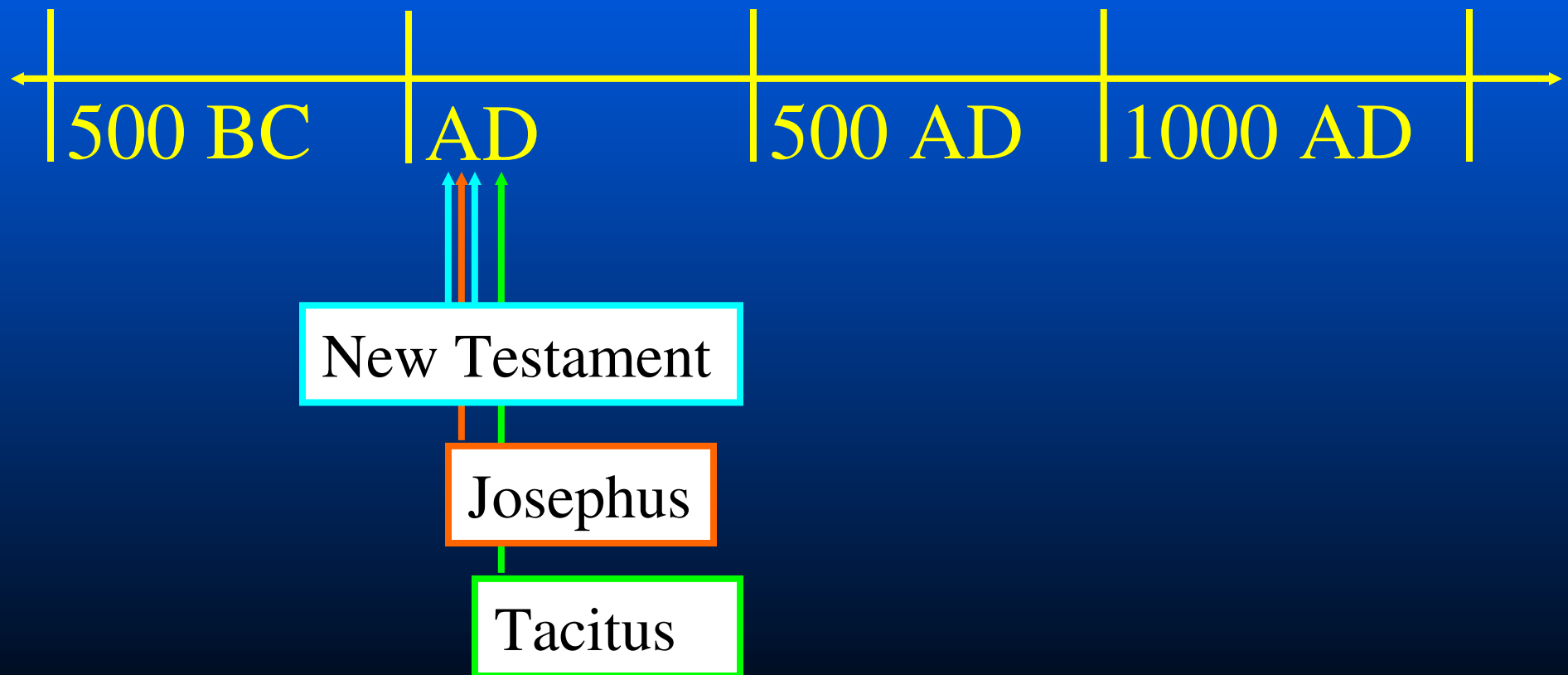
# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
  - Why these books: prophetic or apostolic authorship

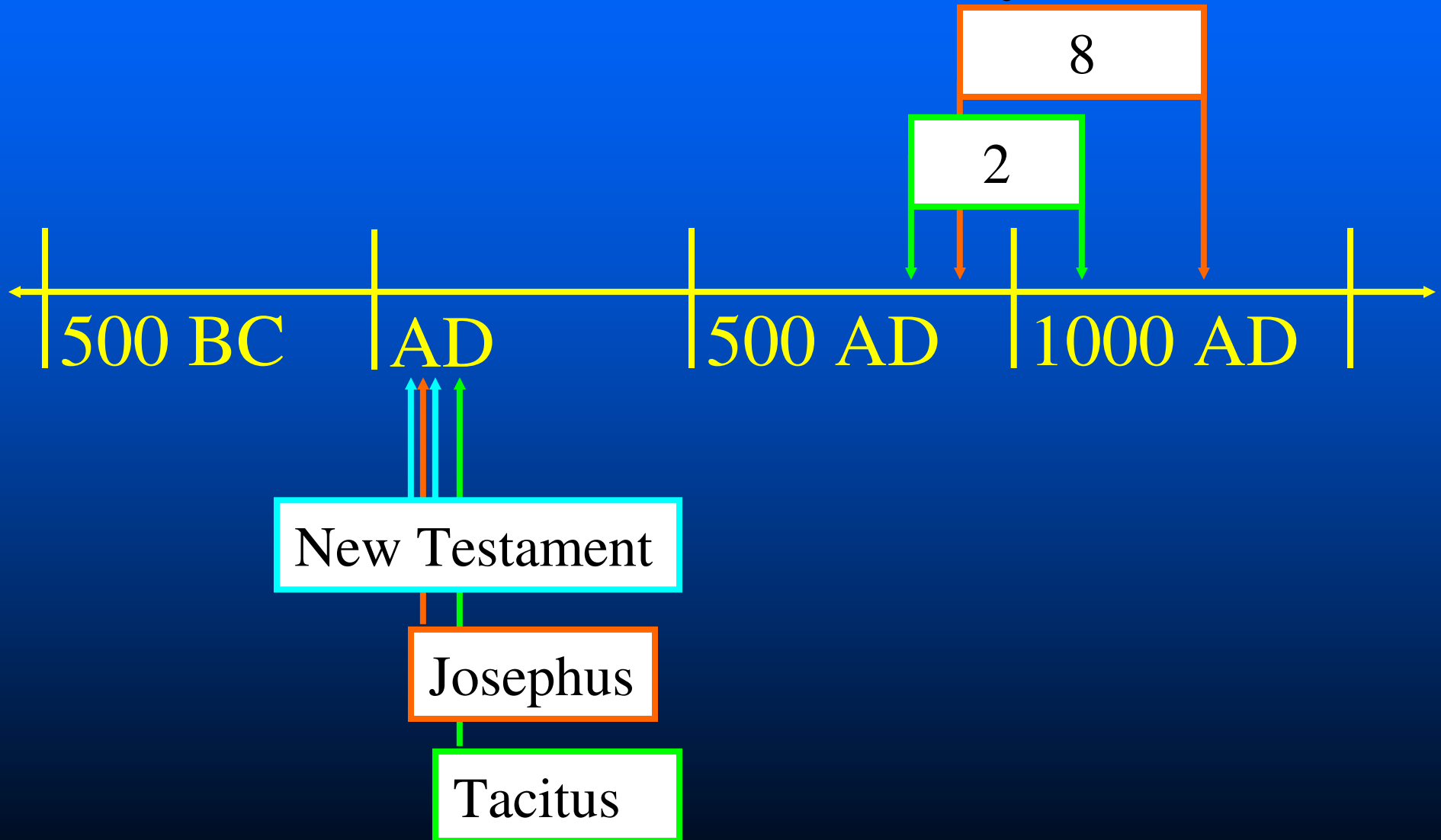
# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
  - Why these books: prophetic or apostolic authorship
  - Were these books written when and by whom they say they were?

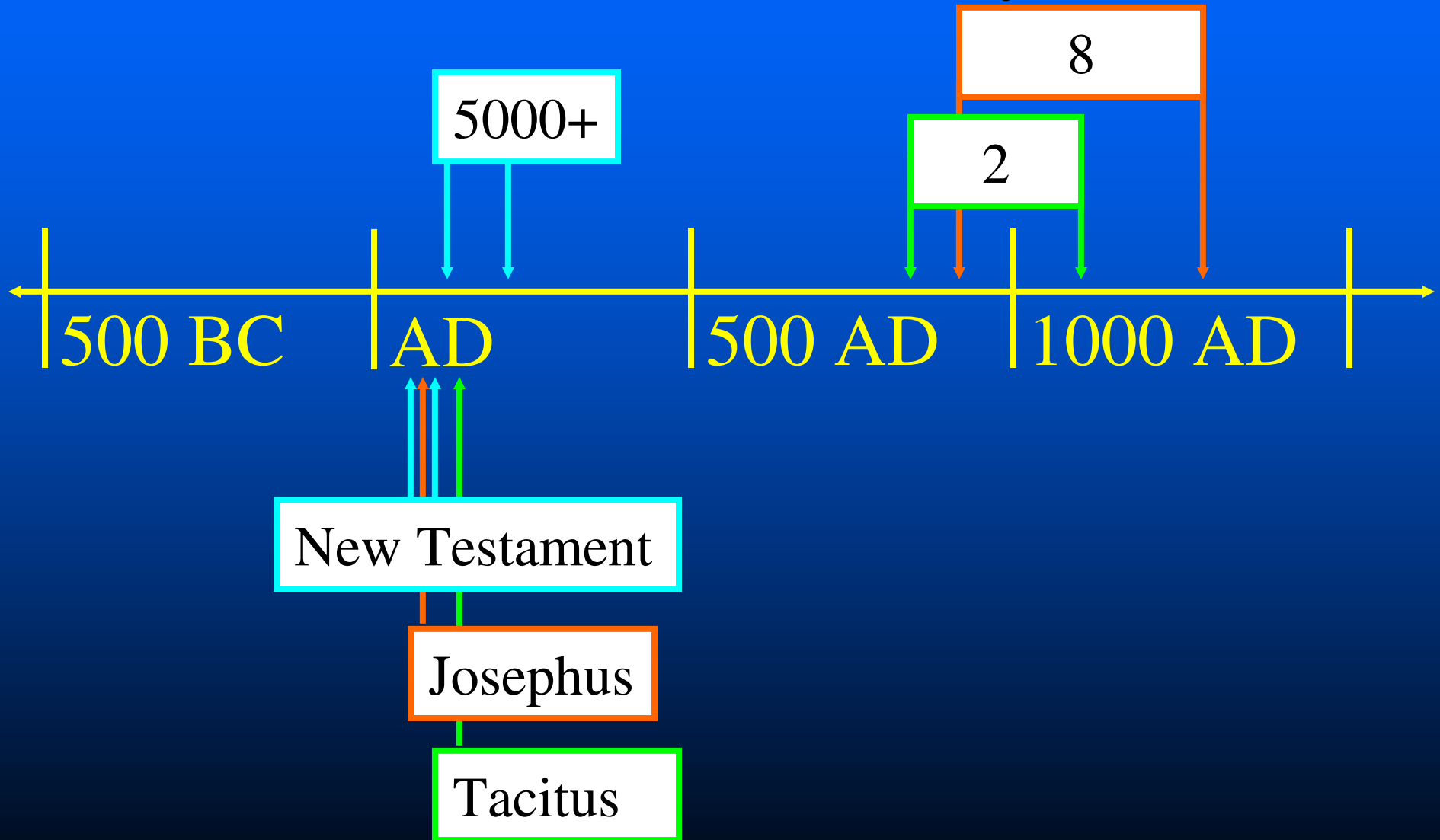
# Earliest Manuscripts: NT vs. well-regarded non-biblical history



# Earliest Manuscripts: NT vs. well-regarded non-biblical history



# Earliest Manuscripts: NT vs. well-regarded non-biblical history



# Earliest Manuscripts: NT vs. well-regarded non-biblical history



“The interval between the date of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed.”

Kathleen Kenyon

Tacitus

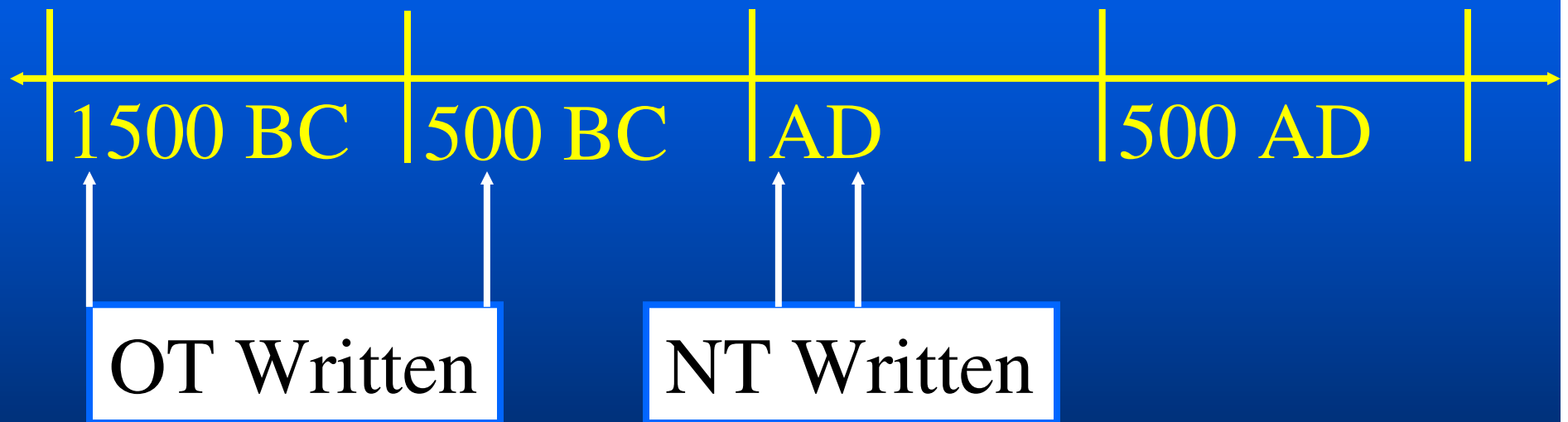
# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
  - Why these books: prophetic or apostolic authorship
  - Were these books written when and by whom they say they were?

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
  - Why these books: prophetic or apostolic authorship
  - Were these books written when and by whom they say they were?
  - What about copying errors?

# Chronology: Writings of Christianity



# What About Copying Errors?

- Masoretic scribes
  - Old Testament copyists
  - Extreme techniques for ensuring accuracy

# What About Copying Errors?

- Masoretic scribes
- Dead Sea Scrolls
  - Found in 1945
  - Nearly complete Old Testament
  - Dated 200 BC-70 AD



"Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only 17 letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The three remaining letters comprise the word LIGHT, which is added in verse 11 and which does not affect the meaning greatly. Furthermore, this word is supported by the LXX. Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission - and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage." (Norman Geisler & William Nix, "A General Introduction to the Bible", Moody Press, Page 263)."

# What About Copying Errors?

- Masoretic scribes
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- Early New Testament copies
  - Sloppier copying, but much earlier copies
  - Rylands fragment of John, 110 AD
  - “Church Fathers” cite almost entire New Testament

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
- How Does the Bible Justify Its Claim to be Revelation?

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

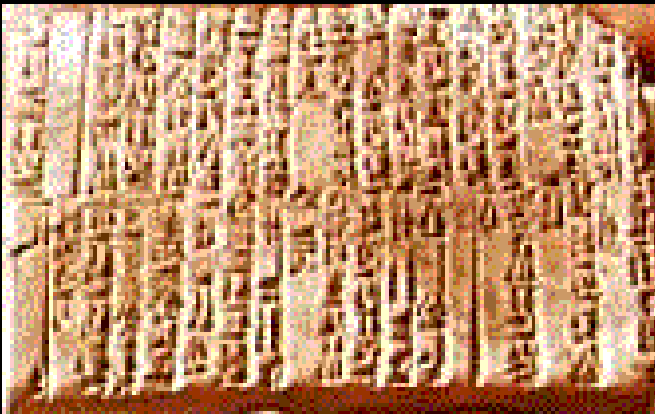
## ■ Historical Verification

- Archeology: Ebla, Amarna, Sergius Paulus
- History and Jesus: Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus
- New Testament author's historical care: 2 Peter 1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

## ■ Historical Verification

- Archeology: Ebla, Amarna, Sergius Paulus
- History and Jesus: Tacitus
- New Testament author's  
1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4



One of the Ebla tablets



One of the Amarna tablets

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

## ■ Historical Verification

- Archeology: Ebla, Amarna, Sergius Paulus
- History and Jesus: Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus
- New Testament author's historical care: 2 Peter 1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

## ■ Historical Verification

- Archeology: Ebla, Amarna, Sergius Paulus
- History and Jesus: Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus
- New Testament author's historical care: 2 Peter 1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4

“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.”

2 Peter 1:16

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

## ■ Historical Verification

- Archeology: Ebla, Amarna, Sergius Paulus
- History and Jesus: Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus
- New Testament author's historical care: 2 Peter 1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
  - Jesus is then Lord, Liar, or Lunatic
  - The resurrection of Christ validates Christ's authority...regarding himself, and scripture

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic...or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
  - Jesus is then Lord, Liar, or Lunatic
  - The resurrection of Christ validates Christ's authority...regarding himself, and scripture

# The Resurrection of Christ

## ■ Historical Facts:

- Jesus died by crucifixion
- His tomb was empty
- Christ's disciples died claiming he resurrected
- The early church was founded on the resurrection

# The Resurrection of Christ

## ■ Historical Facts:

– Jesus died by crucifixion

“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...and last of all...he appeared to me.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

# The Resurrection of Christ

## ■ Historical Facts:

- Jesus died by crucifixion
- His tomb was empty
- Christ's disciples died claiming he resurrected
- The early church was founded on the resurrection

## ■ Possible Explanations:

- Jesus revived
- The body was stolen by the disciples
- Jesus is who he claims to be: God, the Messiah, who conquered death and offers us reconciliation with God through his death and resurrection

# The Resurrection of Christ

“...if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. But Christ has been raised from the dead...when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’”

1 Corinthians 15:14, 16-20, 54

who conquered death and offers us reconciliation with God through his death and resurrection

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
  - Jesus is then Lord, Liar, or Lunatic
  - The resurrection of Christ validates Christ's authority...regarding himself, and scripture

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Deut. 18:14-22; Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 44:6-7
  - Examples: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24-27

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- “I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth...and you may say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”  
Deuteronomy 18:18-22

## Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

“‘Present your case,’ the Lord says. ‘Bring forward your strong arguments,’ the King of Jacob says. Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; as for the former events, declare what they were, that we may consider them, and know their outcome; or announce to us what is coming. Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods; indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. Behold, you are of no account, and your work amounts to nothing; he who chooses you is an abomination.”

Isaiah 41:21-24

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Deut. 18:14-22; Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 44:6-7
  - Examples: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24-27

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Deut. 18:14-22; Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 44:6-7
  - Examples: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24-27

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”

Micah 5:2

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we did not esteem him. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his scourging we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:3-5

“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, yet he was with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”

Isaiah 53:7-9

“But the Lord was pleased to crush him, putting him to grief; if he would render himself as a guilt offering, he will see his offspring, he will prolong his days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand. As a result of the anguish of his soul, he will see it and be satisfied; by his knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as he will bear their iniquities.”

Isaiah 53:10-11

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Deut. 18:14-22; Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 44:6-7
  - Examples: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24-27

# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two sevens the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing...”

Daniel 9:25-26

# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two sevens the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing...”

Daniel 9:25-26

# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy



The diagram illustrates the Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy. It features a central yellow double-headed arrow representing the duration of the prophecy. Below the arrow, a yellow-bordered box contains the text 'Elapsed Time: 69 "Sevens"'. To the left of the arrow, an orange-bordered box describes the 'Beginning Point: Issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem, with defenses'. To the right, another orange-bordered box describes the 'End Point: Messiah comes and is killed'. Two vertical orange arrows point upwards from the beginning and end boxes to the ends of the horizontal arrow.

Elapsed Time:  
69 "Sevens"

Beginning Point:  
Issuing of a decree  
to rebuild Jerusalem,  
with defenses

End Point:  
Messiah comes  
and is killed

# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

Nissan 1,  
444 BC

Elapsed Time:  
69 “Sevens”

Beginning Point:  
Issuing of a decree  
to rebuild Jerusalem,  
with defenses

End Point:  
Messiah comes  
and is killed



# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

Nissan 1,  
444 BC

483 lunar years =  
173,880 days =  
476.0676744 solar years

Elapsed Time:  
69 “Sevens”

Beginning Point:  
Issuing of a decree  
to rebuild Jerusalem,  
with defenses

End Point:  
Messiah comes  
and is killed



# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

Nissan 1,  
444 BC

483 lunar years =  
173,880 days =  
476.0676744 solar years

33 AD,  
Perhaps 3/30

Elapsed Time:  
69 “Sevens”

Beginning Point:  
Issuing of a decree  
to rebuild Jerusalem,  
with defenses

End Point:  
Messiah comes  
and is killed

# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

Nissan 1,  
444 BC

483 lunar years =  
173,880 days =  
476.0676744 solar years

33 AD,  
Perhaps 3/30

Elapsed Time:  
69 "Sevens"

Beginning Point:  
Issuing of a decree  
to rebuild Jerusalem,  
with defenses

Jesus Christ  
enters Jerusalem

End Point:  
Messiah comes  
and is killed



# The Daniel 69 Weeks Prophecy

Nissan 1,

483 lunar years =  
173 880 days –

33 AD,

“And as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!’ And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.’ And He answered, ‘I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!’”

Luke 19:37-40

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Deut. 18:14-22; Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:8-9; 44:6-7
  - Examples: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Daniel 9:24-27

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
- Internal Consistency and Continuity

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- H
- D
- F
- In



n

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
- Internal Consistency and Continuity

# Can the Bible Justify Its Claim of Revelation?

- Historical Verification
- Deduction Based on Historical Verification
- Fulfilled Prophecy
- Internal Consistency and Continuity
- These Evidences Are Unique

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
- How Does the Bible Justify Its Claim to be Revelation?

# Why Believe the Bible?

- Has the Text Been Corrupted Over the Centuries?
- How Does the Bible Justify Its Claim to be Revelation?
- Next Week: The Problem of Evil