

Jesus Christ Historical Facts

Pastor Dean Odle

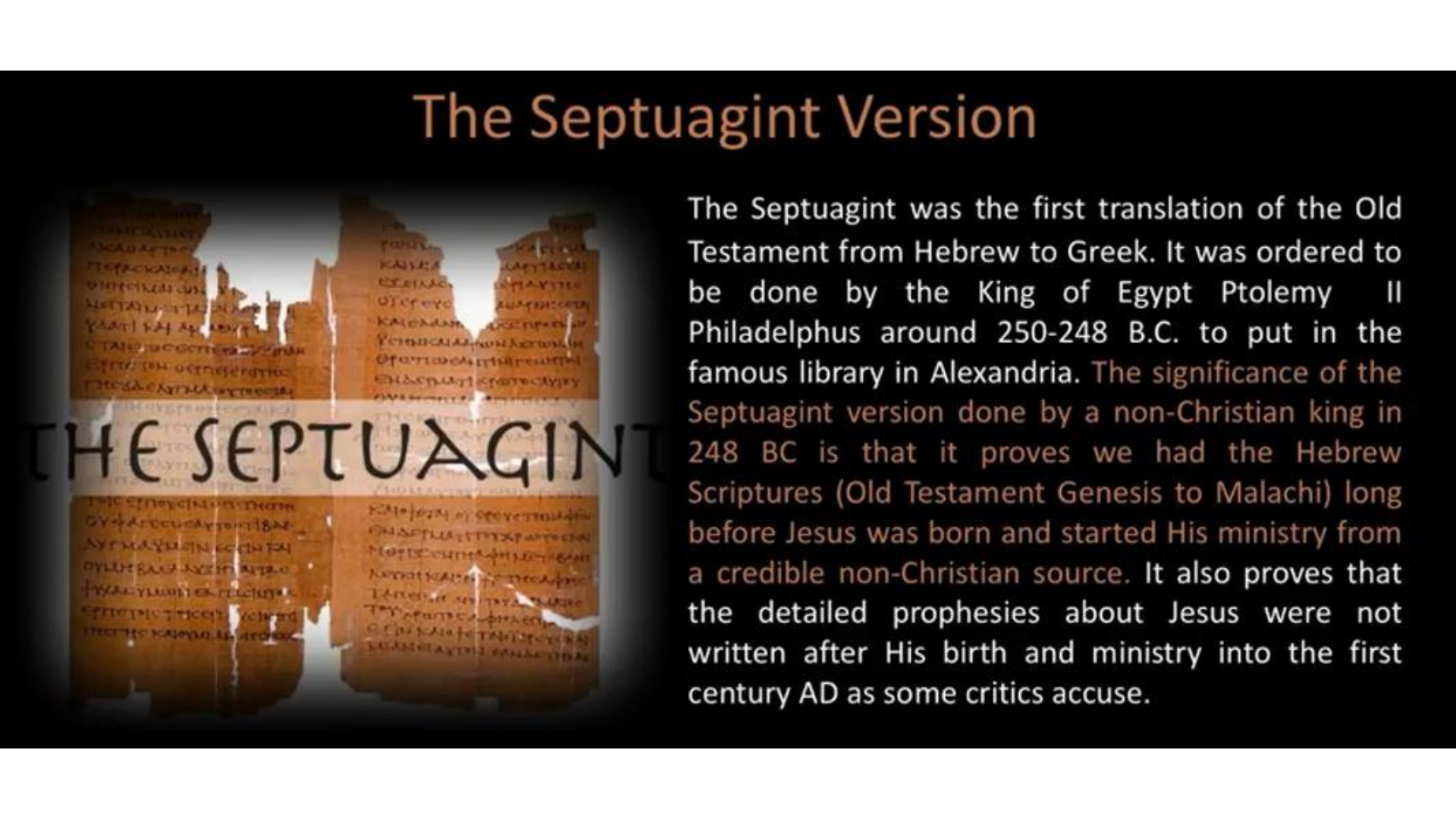
The Bible is unique & above ALL other religious texts:



1. The Bible has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of ancient literature combined. There are more than 24,000 copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today some of which date back to the first century AD. In comparison, The Iliad by Homer only has 643 surviving manuscripts.
2. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, contains all books of the Old Testament except Esther and includes a copy of the Book of Enoch. These manuscripts (some dating back to 300 BC) confirmed that the Old Testament Scriptures were translated accurately for the last 2,300 years. The Isaiah Scroll was compared to the Isaiah we have today and found to be identical.

The Septuagint Version

The Septuagint was the first translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek. It was ordered to be done by the King of Egypt Ptolemy II Philadelphus around 250-248 B.C. to put in the famous library in Alexandria. The significance of the Septuagint version done by a non-Christian king in 248 BC is that it proves we had the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament Genesis to Malachi) long before Jesus was born and started His ministry from a credible non-Christian source. It also proves that the detailed prophecies about Jesus were not written after His birth and ministry into the first century AD as some critics accuse.




THE SEPTUAGINT

- **Massacre of infants prophesied**—Jeremiah 31:15 ****
Matt.2:16-18
- **Jesus would spend time in Egypt**—Hosea 11:1 ****
Matt. 2:14-15
- **Messiah would minister in Galilee**—Isaiah 9:1-2 **** Matt.
4:12-16
- **He would be a prophet** —Deut. 18:15 **** John 6:14;1:45
- **He would be a priest like Melchizedek** —Psalm 110:4 ****
Hebrews 6:20; 5:5-6

The quantity & specificity of fulfilled Bible prophecy is the
“DNA” evidence of the God of the Bible being the True Creator...

One very outstanding and undeniably unique aspect of Jesus' life is that it fulfilled literally hundreds of predictions and prophecies written in the Bible. Made by ancient prophets and seers--many of them centuries before He was born--these prophecies gave specific details regarding His birth, life, and death that no mere mortal could possibly have fulfilled.

An open ancient scroll with Hebrew text, likely a Bible manuscript, is shown in the lower-left corner of the image. The scroll is made of parchment and has a dark cover. The text is written in a cursive script.

In the first books of the Bible, over 300 such predictions about the "Messiah" or "Savior" can be found. Twentieth-century archaeological discoveries of hundreds of ancient Old Testament manuscripts have proven without a doubt that these prophecies were indeed written centuries before Jesus was born.

- **Jesus was to be rejected by his people**—Isaiah 53:3; Ps. 2:2 **** John 1:11, 5:43
- **Characteristics of Jesus were prophesied**—Isaiah 11:2; Ps. 45:7 **** Lk. 2:52; 4:18
- **Triumphal entry** to Jerusalem prophesied—Zech. 9:9; Isa. 62:11 **** John 12:13-14
- **Messiah to be betrayed by a friend**—Psalm 41:9 **** Mark 14:10
- **Messiah to be sold** for thirty pieces of silver— Zech. 11:12-13 **** Matt. 20:15; 27:3-10

- **Silver to be returned for a Potter's Field—Zech. 11:13 ******
Matt. 27:3-10 **Judas' office to be taken over by another—**
Psalm 109:7-8 **** Acts 1:16-20
- **False witnesses to accuse Messiah —Psalm 27:12; 35:11**
**** Matt. 26:60-61
- **Messiah would be silent when accused—** Isaiah 53:7;
Ps. 38:13 **** Matt 26:62-63
- **He would be smitten and spat upon—**
Isaiah 50:6 **** Mark 14:65; 15:17; Jn. 19

- **Messiah would be hated without a cause**—Psalm 69:4; 109:3-5 **** John 15:23-25
- Messiah was to **suffer** for the sins of others— Isaiah 53:4-12 **** Matt. 8:16-17; Rom. 4:25
- Immanuel would be **crucified** with sinners Isaiah 53:12 **** Matt. 27:38; Luke 23:33
- **Messiah's hands and feet to be pierced** Psalm 22:16; Zech. 12:10 **** Jn. 19:17-37



- **Messiah to be given gall and vinegar—**Psalm 69:21
**** Jn. 19:29, Matt. 27:34,48
- **He would hear the Scriptures mocked—**Psalm 22:8
**** Matt. 27:43
- **Messiah would pray for his enemies—**Psa. 109:4;
Isa. 53:12 **** Luke 23:34
- **Messiah's side was to be pierced—**Zechariah 12:10
**** John 19:34
- **Soldiers would cast lots for his coat—**
Psalm 22:18 **** Mark 15:24, John 19:24

King David prophesied in 1,000 BC in Psalms 22 that His hands and feet would be pierced.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn.”

“I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws....”

“They pierced my hands and my feet.”

The Son (Messiah) would be God in the Flesh

“For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given: and
the government shall be upon
his shoulder: and his name
shall be called Wonderful
Counsellor, the mighty God,
the everlasting Father, the
Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).



Reasons the New Testament can be trusted:



1. There are more than 24,000 copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today some of which date back to the first century AD. In comparison, The Iliad by Homer only has 643 surviving manuscripts.
2. The Early Church Fathers confirmed the writings of the Apostles aka the New Testament canon in their writings long BEFORE the corrupt Roman Catholic Church came into existence in 313 AD.
3. Archaeological discoveries have confirmed specific New Testament people, places, and events.
4. First Century historians confirm the existence of Jesus Christ, His miracles, His crucifixion under Pontus Pilate, His resurrection from the dead, Christian disciples continuing His teachings.

Manuscript Evidence for Ancient Writings

Author	Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# Mss.
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs	10
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs	7
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs	8
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs	20
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643
New Testament	40-100 A.D.	125 A.D.	25-50 yrs	24,000

~ John Rylands MS (AD 130) ~

This papyrus fragment, also known as "P52," is encased within a climate-controlled cabinet located inside the John Rylands Library of Manchester, England. The manuscript fragment was among a group acquired on the Egyptian market in 1920, but not translated until 1934. The fragment contains words from the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate. As the papyrus contains writing on both sides, it must be from a codex, a type of book, rather than a scroll. **This portion of the Gospel of John is so old that it helps to confirm the traditional date of the composition of the Gospel to be about the end of the first century.**

As writer Tim Challies says in his blog post *The History of Christianity in 25 Objects*, "*Of the manuscripts that remain to us today, no two are exactly the same. How then can we have confidence that the Bible we possess today is the Bible as God inspired and intended it? This is where we are grateful for the discipline of textual criticism. Textual critics are scholars who examine and evaluate all the surviving manuscripts in order to accurately reproduce the original text. And here we begin to see the importance of this little fragment of papyrus encased in glass in John Rylands Library. **From this fragment we know that already in the first half of the second century there were Christians along the Nile and these Christians were reading the very same words of God that we read today.***"

~ Bodmer Papyrus II (AD 150-200) ~

Martin Bodmer, who began amassing his collection of the world's best books and early writings at the age of 16, died in 1971. He turned down an offer to sell his expansive collection. In 2003 the present Bodmer Library of World Literature opened in Cologne, near Geneva, Switzerland. Among the approximate 160,000 items is a copy of the Guttenberg Bible, and a group of manuscripts — “P66,” “P72,” and “P75,” some of the world's earliest Christian writings.

“P66,” dating from AD 200 or earlier, contains most of John's gospel. This codex is just one century removed from the time of the autograph (original text). “P72” is the earliest copy of the epistle of Jude and the two epistles of Peter. “P75,” which scholars date between AD 175 and 225, is the earliest known copy of the Gospel according to the Luke and one of the earliest of the Gospel according to John.

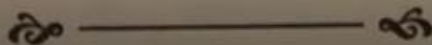


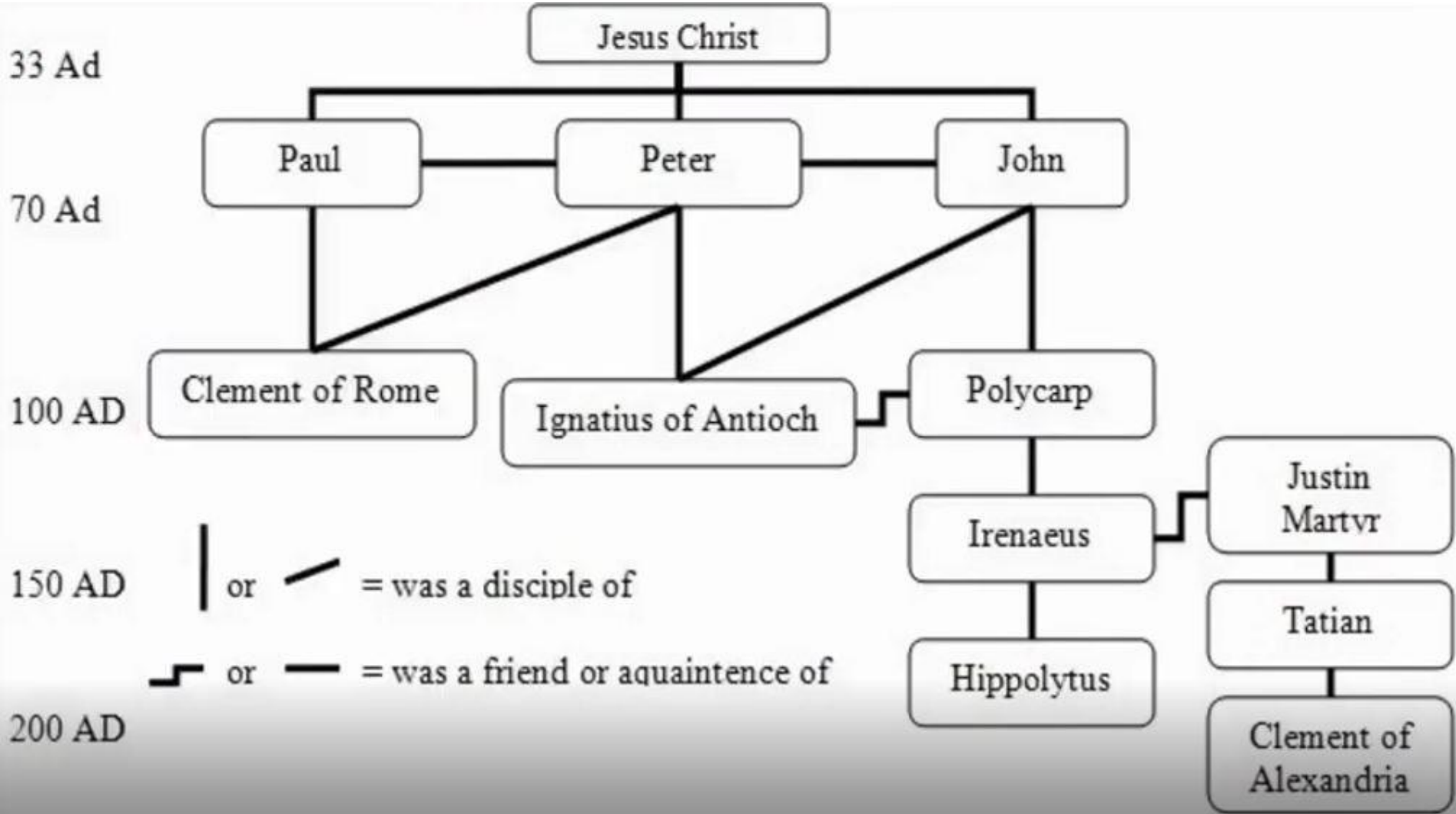
The Muratorian Canon Fragment.

It is widely thought that Caius, a disciple of Irenaeus, wrote the Muratorian Canon Fragment, abbreviated MCF. This is dated to about AD 175. The fragment is named after Muratori, the man who discovered it. Both the beginning and end are missing.

The important points to note are:

1. There have always been only four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. There was one book of church history, called the Acts of the Apostles.
3. Then the MCF mentions thirteen of the fourteen books written by Paul.
4. There is one real epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans, but there are forged epistles to Laodicea and Alexandria.
5. It mentions Jude, and two epistles of John, and the Revelation of John.
6. It fails to mention Hebrews, James, 3 John, and the epistles of Peter (That fact does not mean they were disputed by this manuscript, just not mentioned).
7. It notes some accepted the Revelation of Peter and the book of Wisdom.
8. It accepts none of the Gnostic books.





The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

The **Greek & Latin Text** of the Epistle, verse by verse,
with an English translation in between, verse by verse.

Compiled by David Robert Palmer

May 2015 Edition

First Ed. January 2010

<http://bibletranslation.ws/palmer-translation/>

Citing the Gospel of Mark and 1 Peter, St Polycarp argues that one's perseverance as a Christian is rooted and grounded in Christ, Who is the pledge of our righteousness. Such perseverance is motivated by the hope which such a marvellous pledge inspires. Christ, Who is the pledge of righteousness, in His sufferings is the model of perseverance as well. Christian endurance of suffering is properly an imitation of Christ's sufferings. Christ Himself, therefore, not only inspires perseverance, but is the ideal model of it as well. The Christian's life is both to be inspired by Christ and an imitation of His patient endurance.

At the beginning of his *Epistle*, St. Polycarp, making the first literary citation of the Book of Acts known, rejoices that the church at Philippi has a firmly rooted faith which "*still flourishes and bears fruit unto our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured for our sins, even to the suffering of death, 'whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of Hades, in whom, though you did not see him, you believed in unspeakable and glorified joy.'*"²⁸ In short, this community is still persevering in the faith. Here St. Polycarp cites Acts 2:24, 1 Peter 1:8, and Ephesians 2:8. Endurance in such faith brings joy, both to the faithful at Philippi and to St. Polycarp who addresses them. Likewise, wives are to be taught to *abide* in the faith given to them, and in love and purity. Widows are to pray *ceaselessly*, i.e., persevere in prayer, which reminds on of 1 Timothy 5:5 wherein the prayerfulness of the widow is a qualification for the receipt of aid from the local congregation.²⁹ Perseverance in fasting together with watchfulness in prayer also guards against the scourge of heresy.³⁰ Toward the end of his epistle, St. Polycarp, in a parting benediction, wishes their faith to be edified in faith, truth, and in many virtues, in which patient endurance and longsuffering figure prominently. "*Now may God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the 'eternal Priest' himself, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, build you up in faith and truth, and in all gentleness, and without wrath, and in patience, and in longsuffering, and endurance, and purity, and may he give you lot and part with his saints, and to us with you, and to all under heaven who shall believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ and in his 'Father who raised him from the dead.'*"³¹ Persever-

What stands out about the *Epistle*, however, is the utter frequency with which St. Polycarp cites Holy Writ, especially the New Testament. His citations are so extensive that the *Epistle* reads almost like a pastiche of New Testament citations. He claims not to know the Old Testament well, and this is reflected in his relatively sparse citation of it.⁶⁹ He holds the writings of St. Paul in very high esteem as he writes in *Epistle* 3:2, "*For neither am I, nor is any other like me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he was among you in the presence of the men of that time taught accurately and steadfastly the word of truth, and also when he was absent wrote letters to you, from the study of which you will be able to build yourselves up into the faith given you ...*"⁷⁰ One sees this reflected in his frequent usage of Pauline and Pastoral New Testament literature. These texts, as well as 1 Peter are what he cites most. St. Polycarp's relation to and usage of the Pauline tradition have entire studies dedicated to them and are beyond the scope of this introductory study.⁷¹ But given St. Irenaeus' assertion of the personal familiarity of St. Polycarp with the disciple John, it is surprising that Johannine literature is cited so little. This study has found no citations from the Gospel of John. Yet St. Polycarp finds 1 John very useful in his vilification of docetic teachings since this epistle itself seems also to attack docetic tendencies.⁷² If the extent of his citations is anything to go by, theologically speaking, St. Polycarp stands more in the Pauline than in the Johannine tradition. Such frequent citation of New Testament literature also shows St. Polycarp to be less interested in developing his own theological maxims than in handing down what he had received from the Apostles. Marcion, Valentinus, et alia might express new thoughts, but for St. Polycarp the height of Christian theology was to persevere in and pass on Apostolic truth.



The last of the Old Testament prophets was Malachi. His book is dated between 433-400 B.C. The writings of the first century Romano-Jewish historian Josephus (37-100 A.D.) confirm this and also let us know that the Old Testament canon was in place for 400 years before Jesus came on the scene.

For those of you who have never heard of Titus Flavius Josephus, he was law observant Jew of priestly and royal ancestry who recorded Jewish history such as the First Jewish-Roman War. That war (which he witnessed) resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He also recorded some of the earliest history of Jesus Christ outside the gospels and he was not a Christian.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JOSEPHUS



Flavius Josephus

Enlarged-type Edition / Illustrated
Translated by Wm. Whiston/Foreword by Wm. S. LaSor

"At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But 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 reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day." *Josephus—The Antiquities of the Jews (Book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3).*

The Pilate Stone



The Pilate stone is a damaged block (82 cm x 65 cm) of carved limestone with a partially intact inscription attributed to, and mentioning, Pontius Pilate, a prefect of the Roman province of Judaea from AD 26 to 36. It was discovered at the archaeological site of Caesarea Maritima in 1961. The artifact is particularly significant because it is an archaeological find of an authentic 1st-century Roman inscription mentioning the name "Pontius Pilatus". It is contemporary to Pilate's lifetime, and accords with what is known of his reported career. In effect, the writing constitutes the earliest surviving record and a contemporaneous evidence for the historical existence of this person; otherwise known from the New Testament, Jewish literature and brief mentions in retrospective Roman histories, which have themselves survived in still-later copies.

The Annals of Imperial Rome



Tacitus

Cornelius Tacitus (AD 56- AD 117) was a senator and a historian of the Roman Empire. In 115 A.D. Tacitus wrote the following in book 15 and chapter 44 of *The Annals*:

“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 (or Christ) 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 Pilate...”



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.

One tomb contained the bones of two generations of a family who lived in the century before the time of Jesus. One member of that family was Yehohanan, who was between 24 and 28 years old when he died. He had been crucified. His bones were discovered in an 18-inch long limestone ossuary (or bone-box), and a seven-inch nail had been driven through the heel bone of his left foot. Fragments of olive wood were found at the point of the nail, revealing the wood of the cross on which he died. To date, this is the only archaeological discovery from Roman times of a crucifixion victim. And it demonstrates that crucifixion victims were buried, just as the Gospel accounts suggest.

Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus

Earliest archaeological evidence of Jesus found in Jerusalem

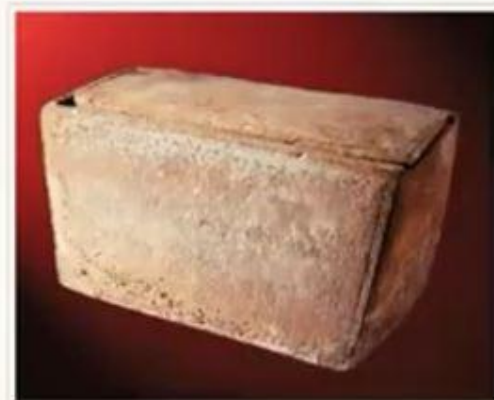
By André Lemaire



Amazing as it may sound, a limestone bone box (called an "ossuary") has surfaced in Israel that may once have contained the bones of James, the brother of Jesus. We know this because an extraordinary inscription incised on one side of the ossuary reads in clear Aramaic letters: **"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."**

But is this the same James who was the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, or was this another James, whose father happened to be called Joseph and who happened coincidentally also to have a brother named Jesus?

The ossuary is one of many now in a private collection in Israel. I have been permitted to study and photograph it. Very likely, it was found in Jerusalem or its environs. We know of hundreds of such ossuaries that have been recovered in the Holy City. Unfortunately, as is almost always the case



The purported ossuary (bone box) of James, the brother of Jesus, is back in the news, as questions concerning its authenticity continue to plague the world-famous relic. The James Ossuary, as it's come to be known, is a limestone bone box that bears an **Aramaic** inscription reading "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." Controversy—including charges of forgery—has surrounded this ossuary since the *Biblical Archaeology Review* first reported on the artifact in 2002. The saga of the James Ossuary culminated in 2012 with the acquittal of Israeli antiquities collector (and owner of the ossuary) Oded Golan in a seven-year "forgery trial of the century," but the story isn't over yet. In "**Predilections—Is the 'Brother of Jesus' Inscription a Forgery?**" in the September/October 2015 issue of **BAR**, Hershel Shanks reviews the latest argument against the authenticity of the inscription.



Although the famous "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" inscription on an ancient ossuary (bone box) has been authenticated by two world-class paleographers, not everyone is convinced that the inscription is authentic.

The antiquity of the 20-inch-long James Ossuary itself is not questioned—it dates between the first century B.C.E. and 70 C.E., a period when the practice of ossilegium (the collection of the bones of a deceased person) was prevalent among the Jewish population. It is the inscription on the James Ossuary—a mere 20 letters written in **Aramaic**—that has incited years of debate. If real, the inscription would be the earliest written reference to Jesus. Because the ossuary was purchased with an unknown provenance from an antiquities dealer, the authenticity of the "brother of Jesus" inscription needed to be verified by experts.

The Discovery of Nazareth

Despite its fame today in the phrase 'Jesus of Nazareth', the town where Jesus was brought up was so insignificant in biblical times that it isn't mentioned in any surviving literature until after the time of Jesus. Because of the lack of mention of Nazareth in the historical record, some critics have argued that the village didn't exist until after the time of Jesus. That said, indirect mention of Nazareth is contained in Jewish sources from the end of the first century AD.

Archaeology has also added to this literary evidence. The evidence on the ground in Nazareth gives a good indication of the ancient date of the village. For example, archaeological digs in the vicinity of Nazareth have discovered tombs dating from the first century AD confirming the village was a strongly Jewish settlement. Then, in December 2009, archaeologists from the Israeli Antiquities Authority, excavating in the grounds of a former convent, unearthed a house from first century Nazareth. According to excavation director Yardenna Alexandre: "The discovery is of the utmost importance since it reveals for the very first time a house from the Jewish village of Nazareth and thereby sheds light on the way of life at the time of Jesus. The building that we found is small and modest and it is most likely typical of the dwellings in Nazareth in that period."



Peter's House in Capernaum



Capernaum contains the remains of a church from the fifth century AD which is octagonal in shape. In 1968, archaeologists discovered the remains of an earlier church underneath it. This had been built around what was originally a private house, which was apparently used by Christians as a meeting-place during the second half of the first century. Today a modern church exists, suspended above the site, with the excavation site visible through a glass floor.

Peter Walker, professor of Biblical Studies at Trinity School for Ministry, says: "Graffiti that referred to Jesus as Lord and Messiah...provides strong evidence that the room was used as a place of Christian worship – almost certainly

because it was believed to be the room used by Jesus, perhaps the home of Simon Peter (Luke 4:38)... Given that the early tradition goes back to the first century, this is almost certainly the very place where Jesus stayed – the home of his chief apostle, Peter."

Confirming the places in the New Testament

4. The Pool of Siloam



In John 9 we read the story of Jesus healing a man who was born blind. Christ spits on the ground, makes some mud and puts it on the blind man's eyes. He then instructs the blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The blind man does so, and is healed. Critics of scripture often assume that John's Gospel contains fictional accounts of Christ's actions. But the existence of the pool of Siloam and the accuracy of the biblical account contradicts the view that such stories were later inventions.

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."

The Shroud of Turin

