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# CAN WE TRUST THE GOSPELS?

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# OUTLINE

1. Earliest records
2. Writers' knowledge
3. Handing down
4. Scepticism
5. Contradictions / something else



TRUSTING NOT PROVING



WE TRUST BECAUSE OF RELATIONAL TESTIMONY

ANTARCTICA

# CLEAR EVIDENCE CAN BE DEBATED

- John 12:28 “Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said “An angel has spoken to him.”
- The Cross
- Evidence is morally structured
- Inconsistency reveals our hearts

Tiberius	Words	Earliest copy	Written
Velleius	6,489	C16	30
Paterculus			
Tacitus	48,200	C9	After 110
Suetonius	9,310	C9	After 120
Cassius Dio	14,293	C9	After 200
Jesus	Words	Earliest copy	Written?
Matthew	18,347	C2/3	80–90
Mark	11,303	C3	65–70
Luke	19,463	C3	End C1
John	15,445	C2	70–130

# SOURCES FOR ALEXANDER THE GREAT (356–323 BC)

Writer	Approximate date	Gap
Diodorus Siculus	C1 BC	>250 years
Quintus Curtius Rufus	C1 AD	>350 years
Plutarch	AD 46–119	>400 years
Arrian	AD 86–146	>450 years
Marcus Junianus Justinus Frontinus	Early C2	>450 years

THE BEST SOURCE  
FOR AUGUSTUS

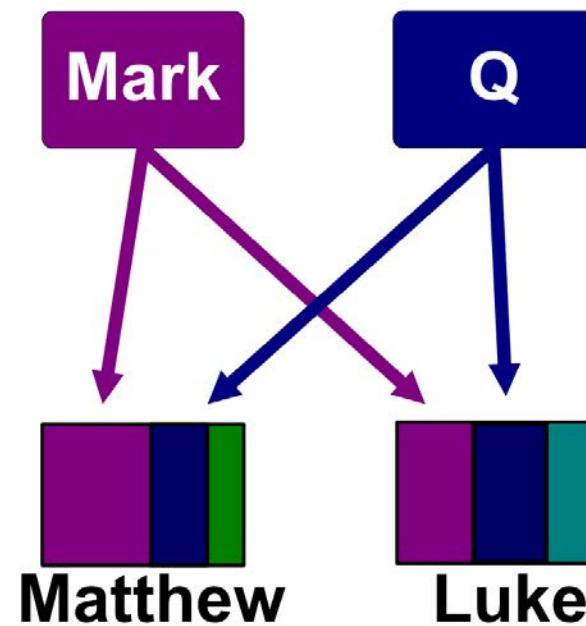
THE MONUMENTUM  
ANCYRANUM  
(ANKARA)

■Image: Wikipedia



# SYNOPTICS HAVE 4 TYPES OF MATERIAL

Two-source Hypothesis



Credit: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Synoptic\\_problem\\_two\\_source\\_colored.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Synoptic_problem_two_source_colored.png)

# OPTIMISING 4 GOSPELS

- Synoptics and John:  $3 + 1$
- $A + B + C + D = 4$
- $A + B + C + c = 3$
- $A + a + B + b = 2$
- MQmar + Mark + LQmar + John = 5

# GOSPELS CLAIM TO BE SCRIPTURE

- Matthew: ch. I like Genesis 5; *Biblos geneseōs* < Genesis 5:1
- Mark: Isaiah is now being fulfilled; Elijah is back
- Luke: begins rather like I Samuel 1–2
- John: “In the beginning” < Genesis 1:1

# 3 NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES

Tacitus: Christus, time of origin, geographical origin, spread, persecution

Pliny: logic of worshipping Emperor as test for Christian. Worshipping Christ *quasi deo.*

Josephus: people close were prepared to die.

## TACITUS, ANNALS 15.44

- But neither human help, nor gifts from the emperor, nor all the ways of placating Heaven, could stifle scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order [of Nero]. Therefore, to scotch the rumour, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd called **Christians**.

## TACITUS, ANNALS 15.44

- Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital [Rome] itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and become fashionable.

# SOURCES WITH 'E' FOR CHRIST / CHRISTIANS

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Tacitus, Codex Laurentianus Mediceus 68.2

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Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 4

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Tertullian, *Apology* 3 (Chrestiani)

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Lactantius, *Divine Institutions* 4.7 (Chrestus)

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No clear majority for /i/ in Christ before fifth century

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Vaticanus chreistianos, antichreist etc. χρειστιανος, ψευδοχρειστος, αντιχρειστος, χρειστος

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Sinaiticus chrestianos χρηστιανος

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Earliest Coptic chrestianos χρηστιανος

Q & A



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# SESSION 2: DID THE GOSPEL WRITERS KNOW THEIR STUFF?



# GOSPEL REFERENCES TO TOWNS

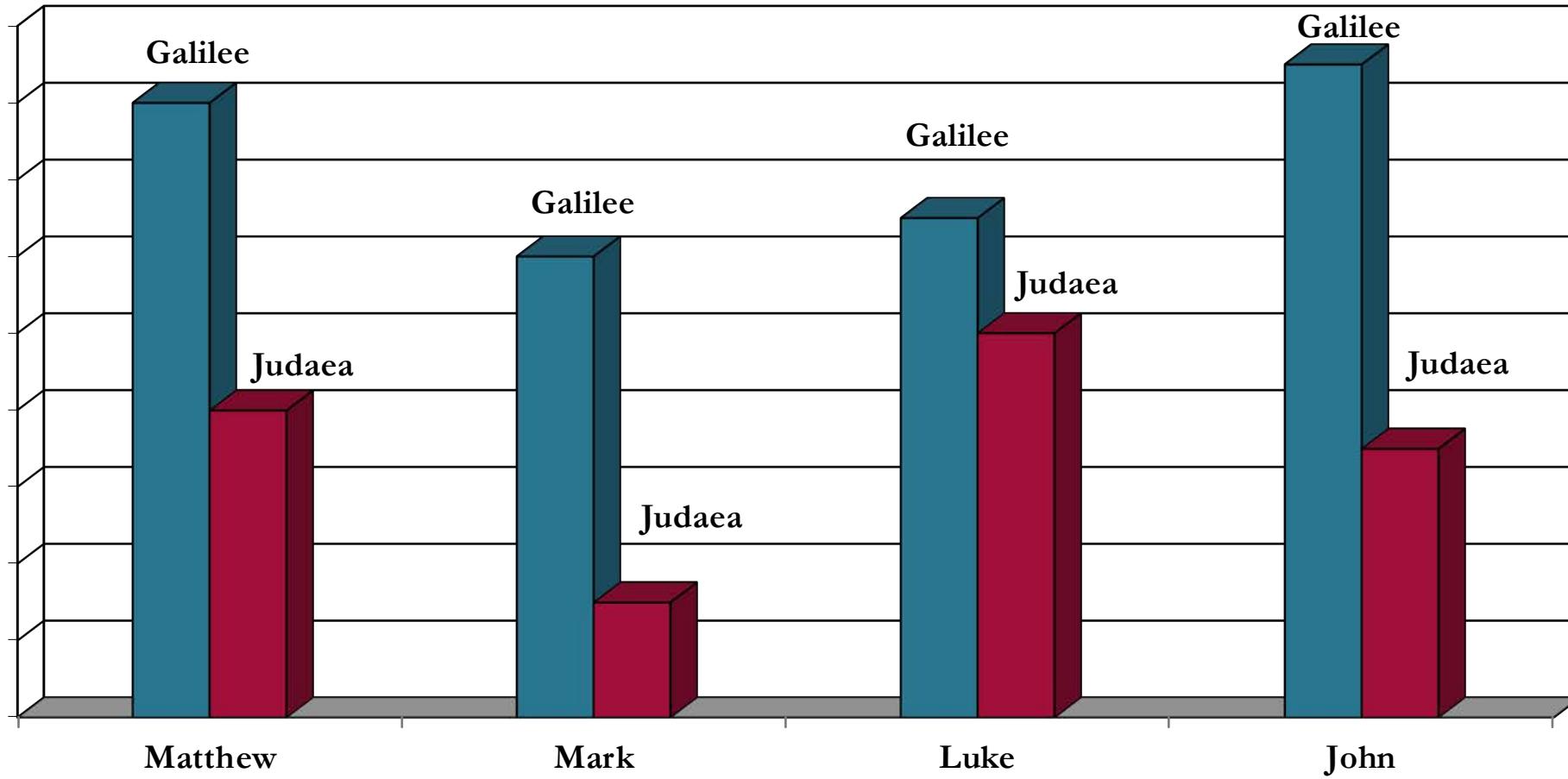
Towns	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Aenon				✓
Arimathea	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bethany	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bethlehem	✓		✓	✓
Bethphage	✓	✓	✓	
Bethsaida	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caesarea Philippi	✓	✓		
Cana				✓
Capernaum	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chorazin	✓		✓	
Dalmanutha		✓		
Emmaus			✓	
Ephraim				✓

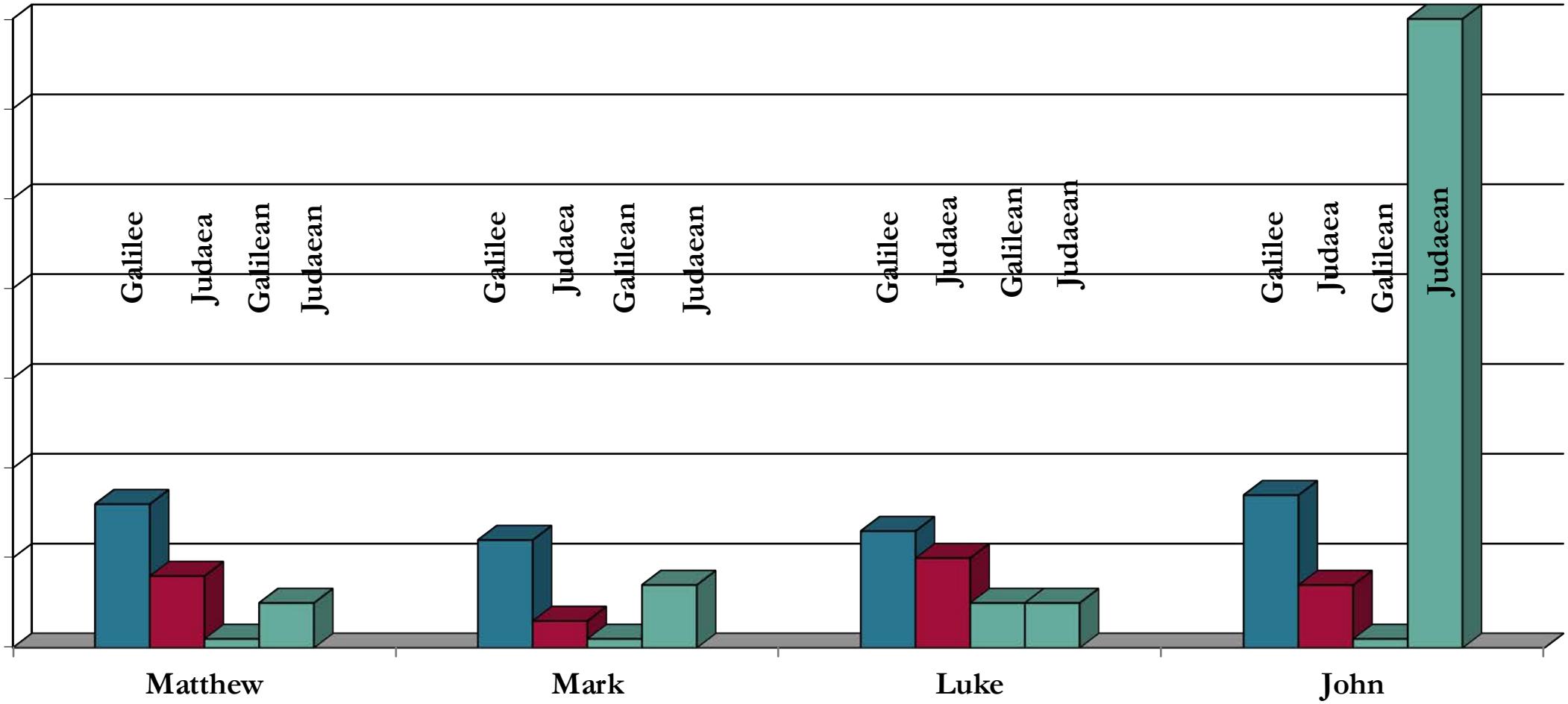
Towns	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Gennesaret	✓	✓	✓	
Jericho	✓	✓	✓	
Jerusalem (or Zion)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magadan	✓			
Nain				✓
Nazareth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rama	✓			
Salim				✓
Sidon	✓	✓	✓	
Sychar				✓
Tiberias				✓
Tyre	✓	✓	✓	
Zarephath				✓

# FREQUENCY OF GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Total Greek words*	18,347	11,103	19,463	15,445
Total places (towns, regions, bodies of water, and other places)	90	60	99	76
Locations mentioned per 1,000 words	4.905	5.404	5.087	4.921

\* According to *The Greek New Testament*, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge (Wheaton IL: Crossway; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), omitting Mark 16:9-20.





# JERUSALEM (+750M)

- **Go up** to Jerusalem (Matthew 20:17, 18; Mark 10:32, 33; Luke 2:4, 42; 18:31; 19:28; John 2:13; 5:1; 7:8, 10, 14; 11:55; 12:20)
- **Go down** from Jerusalem (Mark 3:22; Luke 2:51; 18:14)
- “A man was **going down** from Jerusalem to Jericho (–250m), and he fell among robbers.... Now by chance a priest was **going down** that road ...” (Luke 10:30–31)

# NAZARETH AND CANA TO CAPERNAUM

Nazareth 350m; Cana >200m; Capernaum –200m

From Nazareth: “He went down to Capernaum” (Luke 4:31)

From Cana: “He went down to Capernaum” (John 2:12)

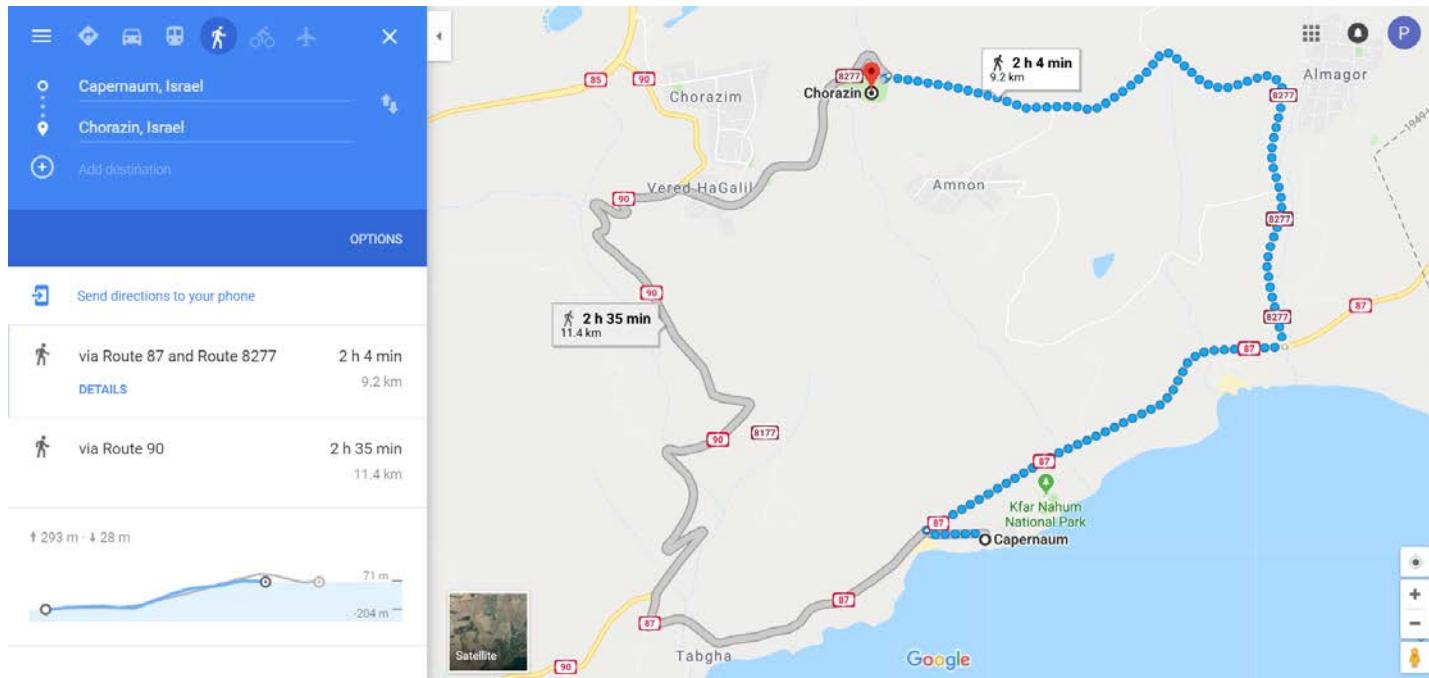
# CANA TO CAPERNAUM

- He came again to Cana in Galilee where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to **come down** and heal his son... (4:46–47)
- “Sir, **come down** before my child dies” (4:49)
- “And as he was **going down**” (4:51)

- Woe to you, *Chorazin*! Woe to you, *Bethsaida*! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, *Capernaum*, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. (Luke 10:13–15; cf. Matthew 11:21–23)

## GALILEE CONNECTIONS

# GALILEE CONNECTIONS



# POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR THE GOSPELS?

- No first-hand acquaintance, not enough info: Strabo (ca. 64 BC–AD 20), Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), Tacitus (ca. AD 56–117)
- Little first-hand acquaintance, not enough info: Philo (25 BC–AD 50), Ptolemy (d. AD 160)
- First hand acquaintance, not enough info: Josephus (ca. AD 37–100)
- Too late: Babylonian Talmud (ca. AD 500)

# CONTEMPORARY TOWN NAMES IN GOSPELS

- 4 gospels:
  - 12–14 towns each
  - Total > 23
- Gospel of Philip:
  - 2 (Jerusalem and Nazareth)
- Gospels of Peter and The Saviour:
  - 1 town each
  - Total = 1 (Jerusalem)
- Others 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century gospels:
  - None



# TAX SYSTEM

- Matthew and Mark place a whole group of toll collectors in Capernaum (Matthew 9:9–10; Mark 2:14–15)
  - Land border of Galilee (Herod Antipas) and Gaulanitis (Philip)
  - Sea border of Galilee (Herod Antipas) and Decapolis (autonomous Roman cities)
- Luke: Zacchaeus = *chief* toll collector in Jericho (Luke 19:2)
  - Border between Judaea (Pilate) and Peraea (Herod Antipas)

# MATTHEW AND FINANCE

- The magi, with their rich gifts (2:11)
- The parable about hidden treasure (13:44)
- The parable about the discovered pearl (13:45–46)
- Scribe bringing out old and new treasures (13:52)
- Approach to Peter of temple tax collectors (17:24–27)
- Servant forgiven 10,000 talents who refused to forgive 100 denarii (18:23–35)
- Workers grumbling at pay of one denarius (20:1–16)
- The parable about talents (25:14–30)
- Judas's betrayal money (27:3) and it bought (27:7)
- Bribe given to the guards at Jesus's tomb (28:12)

# WHO MENTIONS NUMBERS THE MOST?

Number	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
2	35	15	26	13
3	11	5	10	4
4	1	2	0	2
5	12	3	9	5
6	1	1	2	2
7	8	9	6	0
8	0	0	2	1
9	0	0	1	0
10	3	1	10	0
11	1	1	2	0
12	13	15	12	6
13, 15-17, 19-20	0	0	0	0
14	3	0	0	0
18	0	0	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Words</b>	18345	11304	19482	15635
<b>Per 1000</b>	<b>4.79695</b>	4.60014	4.26034	2.11065

# DID JESUS TELL HIS SHORTEST PARABLE?

- “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in **three measures of flour**, till it was all leavened.” (Matthew 13:33, 19 words)
- “It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in **three measures of flour**, until it was all leavened.” (Luke 13:21, 15 words)
- “measure”
  - Greek *saton* (σάτον)
  - Hebrew *seah* (סָעֵה)
- Josephus: “The *saton* is equivalent to one and a half Italian modius” (ἰσχύει δὲ τὸ σάτον μόδιον καὶ ἡμισυ Ἰταλικόν, *Antiquities* 9.85)

# SEAH ONLY IN 6 OT PASSAGES

- Genesis 18:6 And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick! **Three seahs of fine flour!** Knead it, and make cakes.”
- I Samuel 25:18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and **five seahs of parched grain** and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.
- I Kings 18:32 And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain **two seahs of seed**.
- 2 Kings 7:1 But Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord: thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time **a seah of fine flour** shall be sold for a shekel, and **two seahs of barley** for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.”
- 2 Kings 7:16 Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Syrians. So **a seah of fine flour** was sold for a shekel, and **two seahs of barley** for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.
- 2 Kings 7:18 For when the man of God had said to the king, “**Two seahs of barley** shall be sold for a shekel, and **a seah of fine flour** for a shekel, about this time tomorrow in the gate of Samaria,”

# ONLY ONCE WITH BAKING, WITH SAME NUMBER

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## LUKE 16:5–9

■ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” 6 He said, “A hundred **baths** [βάτος] of oil.” He said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.” 7 Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?” He said, “A hundred **cors** [κόπος] of wheat.” He said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.” 8 The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than **the sons of light**. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of **unrighteous mammon** [μαμωνᾶς], so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

# WAR OF THE SONS OF LIGHT AGAINST THE SONS OF DARKNESS

■Image: Wikipedia



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# MAMMON

- Greek *mamōnās* (μαμωνᾶς) = Aramaic *māmōnā* = Jewish word for money
- Mammon of Unrighteousness = *hōn hārish'āh* (הון הרשעה in CD 6.14–16) = Palestinian Jewish combination

# CONCLUSION

- 2 Palestinian dry measures + Aramaic + Palestinian Jewish phraseology
- Palestinian flavour more likely early
- Simple explanation: Gospels record what Jesus said

Q & A



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# SESSION 3: HOW WERE JESUS'S TEACHINGS HANDED DOWN?



# JESUS = TEACHER

195 references to disciples

45× Jesus teaches

40× Jesus = teacher

12× Jesus = rabbi

Tannaitic age

# TEACHING IN MATTHEW

- Teaching
  - 4:23, 5:2; 7:28; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 21:23; 22:33; 26:55
- Teacher
  - 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 17:23; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36; 26:18
- Disciples teach
  - 5:19; 28:20

# MATTHEW CLAIMS JESUS REPEATED HIMSELF

- Divorce and adultery (5:32 and 19:9)
- Bodily self-mutilation vs sinning (5:29–30 and 18:8–9)
- Good vs bad fruit (7:15–20 and 12:33–35)
- “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (9:13 and 12:7)
- Being hated and betrayed for Jesus’s sake (10:21–22 and 24:9–10)
- The sign of Jonah (12:38–39 and 16:1–4)
- Binding and loosing (16:19 and 18:18)
- Moving mountains (17:20 and 21:21)
- The greatest is the servant (20:26 and 23:11)
- False Christs and false prophets (24:5, 11 and 24:23–24)
- Weeping and gnashing of teeth (8:11; 13:42; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30)

# MARK CLAIMS JESUS REPEATED HIMSELF

- “Whoever/if someone wants to be 1st, will be [last +] servant/slave of all” (Mark 9:35; 10:44)
- Listening / having ears and not listening (Mark 4:12 // 8:18)
- Ears to hear, let him hear (Mark 4:9, 23)
- Passion predictions (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34)

# LUKE CLAIMS JESUS REPEATED HIMSELF

- Your faith has saved you (Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42)
- Show yourself/selves to the priest(s) (Luke 5:14; 17:14)
- No one lights a lamp... (Luke 8:16; 11:33)
- People who love the first seats (Luke 11:43; 20:46)
- Don't worry what you will say (Luke 12:11–12; 21:14–15)
- He who has ears to hear (Luke 8:8; 14:35)
- Everyone who has, more will be given (Luke 8:18; 19:26)
- Passion predictions (Luke 9:22; 9:43b–44; 18:31–33)

# JOHN CLAIMS JESUS REPEATED HIMSELF

- The hour is coming (4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 16:2, 25, 32)
- I am the bread of life (6:35, 48; cf. 6:51)
- I am the door (10:7, 9)
- I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
- I am going to the father (14:12, 28; 16:10, 17, 28) + I am going up to my father (20:17)
- I in the father and the father in me (14:10, 11)

# JESUS TAUGHT MEMORABLY

- Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (Luke 15:1–2)
- 3 Stories:
  - 1/100 sheep lost going away
  - 1/10 coins lost at home
  - Two sons, one lost going away, the other lost at home.

## DETAILS FOR THE OT EXPERTS

- Luke 15:11–12 There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, “Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.” And he divided his property between them.
- Who had two and only two sons?
- Jacob (younger) cheats Esau (elder) out of inheritance
- Older brother is angry

# JACOB AND ESAU

- But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and **ran** and **embraced him** and **kissed him**. (Luke 15:20)
- But Esau **ran** to meet him and **embraced him** and fell on his neck and **kissed him**, and they wept. (Genesis 33:4)

# ESAU

- Esau stayed at home waiting for his father to die.
- Genesis 27:41 Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

# OT CONTRASTS

- Younger brother goes into far country with nothing, comes back with lots
- Older brother who thinks he's dying of hunger

# A SIMPLE VIEW

- Jesus set up teaching programme
- He used repetition
- He used mnemonics
- He was a great teacher

Q & A, THEN SHORT BREAK

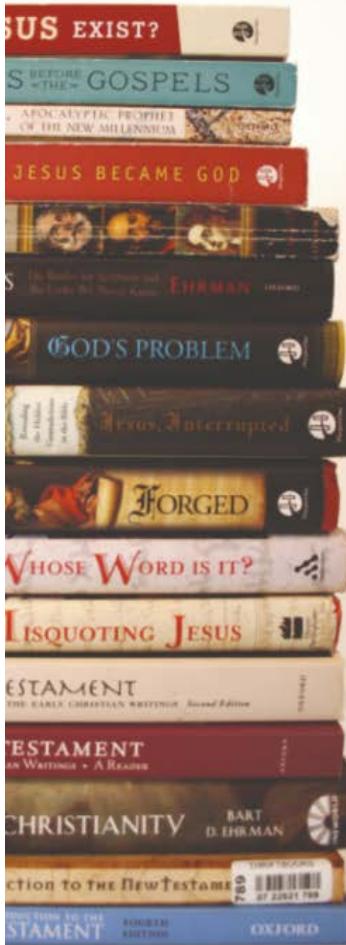


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## 4. HOW DO SCEPTICS EXPLAIN THE DATA?



# How scepticism became a bestseller

Prof Bart D Ehrman has sold millions of books questioning the reliability of the Bible. Read beyond the dramatic titles, though, and his arguments are far from irrefutable, says Dr Peter J Williams

**B**art D Ehrman is arguably the world's most influential Bible sceptic. As the James A Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he is a gifted communicator widely sought as a speaker and debater.

His Bible scepticism gains persuasiveness through the story of his own deconversion from Christianity, after studying at two well-known American Evangelical institutions (Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College) before going on to Princeton. He developed a highly credible publishing profile by beginning with obscure technical work before proceeding to college textbooks and then six New York Times bestsellers, the first of which, *Misquoting Jesus*, came out when Ehrman was 50.

Thus unlike many popular sceptics who take swipes at the Bible, Ehrman has a weight of scholarship behind him when he speaks. He gains further weight through avoiding many of the most extreme sceptical positions — he even wrote a book against those sceptics who argue that Jesus didn't exist — and through the fact that so much of what he says is supported by a host of other scholars who are equally sceptical of the Bible, though less vocal.

No wonder some of his 30 or so books have been translated into nearly as many languages and his books have sold more than two million copies. All this might make Ehrman's arguments sound unassailable, but they're not. They're simply a well presented case for Bible

scepticism. I want here just to point out two notable characteristics of his writings.

#### Sensationalist titles

Ehrman is master of the sensational (sub) title. Often his titles stress that he's revealing information which has been kept from us (note the word "we" in all three titles):

*Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (2003)

*Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)* (2009)

*Forging: Writing in the Name of God — Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are* (2011)

Though titles need to aim to grab attention, we still have to ask whether the impression given in the title is true. Consider Ehrman's first bestseller:

*US title: Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the New Testament and Why*

*UK title: Whose Word Is It? The Story Behind Who Changed the New Testament and Why*

In marketing terms, the US title is certainly snappier, but we can see from the UK title that it's knowingly

inaccurate. The book is purely about the New Testament, but the US title gives the impression that the whole Bible has been substantially changed.

When we open up the book we find that by far the biggest "changes" Ehrman writes about are the end of Mark (Mark 16:9–20) and the passage about the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11), which are of course points of manuscript variation noted in most modern Bible translations (and probably circulated in hundreds of millions of copies). Based on the content provided in the book Ehrman could equally well have entitled it "The Glory Behind Who Changed Small Parts of the New Testament and Why", though I guess that might not sell so well.

The ideas of change, deceit and cover-up in early Christianity are regular themes as we see from other titles by Ehrman:

*Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (2003)

*Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (2012)

*How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (2014)

*Jesus Before the Gospels: How the Earliest Christians Remembered, Changed, and Invented Their Stories of the Savior* (2016)



# EHRMAN'S DISTANCE CREATORS

- Evangelists vs manuscripts
- Jesus vs evangelists
- Rural Jesus vs Urban evangelists
- Aramaic Jesus vs Greek evangelists
- Illiterate disciples vs literate evangelists
- Oral tradition vs written source
- Early first century Jesus vs late first century gospels
- Jesus in Galilee vs Gospel writers across Roman Empire
- 7,000–10,000 Christians by AD 100
- Implicit: Jesus wasn't effective teacher

# MARKAN PRIORITY

- I can accept it; Ehrman *needs* it
- No birth narrative
- Limited resurrection account
- Less explicit “high Christology”

# EVIDENCE FOR GREEK SPEAKING

- Greek gospels
- Greek speakers in church in Jerusalem
- Andrew, Philip
- Nicodemus, Herod, Timaeus
- Sanhedrin
- Itinerant preaching
  - “She was a Greek, ethnically Syrophoenician” (Mark 7:26)
  - “Is he going to go and teach the Greeks?” (John 7:35)

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# BEATITUDES

MATTHEW 5:3–10



# BEATITUDES BEGIN WITH Π (MATTHEW 5:3–10)

- 3 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἐνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

# REPEATED BEGINNINGS

3 μακάριοι οί πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

4 μακάριοι οί πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αύτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

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10 μακάριοι οί δεδιωγμένοι ἐνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

# REPEATED SOUNDS

3 μακάριοι οί πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

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# FOR THEY / FOR THEIRS

3 μακάριοι οί πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

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# REPEATED VERB ENDING

3 μακάριοι οί πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

4 μακάριοι οί πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

5 μακάριοι οί πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.

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# PLURAL TYPES GROUPED

3 μακάριοι οι πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

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# MATTHEW 7:15

- Beware (prosechete) from false prophets (*pseudoprophētōn*), who come to you in clothing of sheep (probatōn)
- προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασι προβάτων

# MATTHEW 4:24–25

- So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains those oppressed by demons epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. 25 And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.



NOT A SERMON MEMORIZED,  
BUT A LESSON TAUGHT

# SAME PATTERN IN LUKE 6:20–26

- **The Beatitudes**
- 20 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί, ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἔστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ.
- 21 Μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες νῦν, ὅτι χορτασθήσεσθε.
- Μακάριοι οἱ κλαίοντες νῦν, ὅτι γελάσετε.
- ... ἵδοὺ γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ γὰρ ἐποίουν τοῖς προφήταις οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν.
- **The Woes**
- 24 Πλὴν οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς πλουσίοις, ὅτι ἀπέχετε τὴν παράκλησιν ὑμῶν.
- 25 Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν οἱ ἐμπεπλησμένοι νῦν, ὅτι πεινάσετε.
- Οὐαὶ οἱ γελῶντες νῦν, ὅτι πενθήσετε καὶ κλαύσετε.
- 26 Οὐαὶ ὅταν καλῶς ὑμᾶς εἴπωσιν πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι· κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ γὰρ ἐποίουν τοῖς ψευδοπροφήταις οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν.

Q & A



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## 5. WHAT ABOUT CONTRADICTIONS?



# ARE WE JUSTIFIED BY WORKS?

- **James 2:24** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. (ESV)
- **Galatians 2:16** yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (ESV)

# DID JESUS ABOLISH THE LAW?

- **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (ESV)
- **Ephesians 2:14-15** For he [Jesus] himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace ... (ESV)

# DOES GOD THINK THAT LOVING THE WORLD IS GOOD?

- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (ESV)
- **I John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (ESV)

## DID PEOPLE BELIEVE WHEN THEY SAW THE SIGNS JESUS DID?

- **John 2:23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. (ESV)
- **John 12:37** Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him ... (ESV)

## DO THE PEOPLE KNOW JESUS AND WHERE HE'S FROM?

- **John 7:28** So Jesus called out, as he taught in the temple, “*You know me, and you know where I come from.*”
- **John 8:14** Jesus answered, “Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but *you do not know where I come from or where I am going.*” (ESV)
- **John 8:19** They said to him therefore, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “*You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.*” (ESV)
- Compare also 1:10; 6:42; 9:29–30

## ARE THE CROWD IN JOHN 8 OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM?

- **John 8:37** ‘I know that you are offspring of Abraham, but you are seeking to kill me.’
- **John 8:39–40** Jesus said to them, ‘If you are children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham, but now you are seeking to kill me.’

## IS JESUS' WITNESS TRUE IF HE BEARS WITNESS TO HIMSELF?

- **John 5:31** “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.” (NKJV)
- **John 8:13–14** The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.” 14 Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.” (NKJV)

# DOES JESUS JUDGE?

- **John 8:15** “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” (ESV)
- **John 8:16** “Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.” (ESV)
- **John 8:26** “I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” (ESV)

# DID JESUS COME TO JUDGE THE WORLD?

- **John 12:47** “If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.” (ESV)
- **John 3:17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (ESV)
- **John 9:39** Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” (ESV)

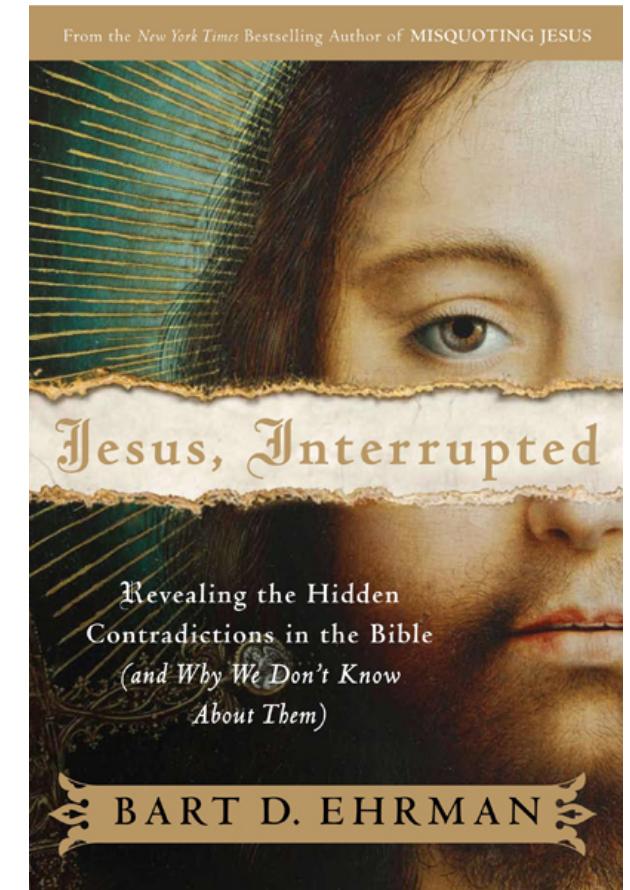
# A FAVOURITE CONTRADICTION OF BART EHRMAN

- “One of my favorite apparent discrepancies—I read John for years without realizing how strange this one is—comes in Jesus’ ‘Farewell Discourse,’ the last address that Jesus delivers to his disciples, at his last meal with them, which takes up all of chapters 13 to 17 in the Gospel according to John. In John 13:36, Peter says to Jesus, ‘Lord, where are you going?’

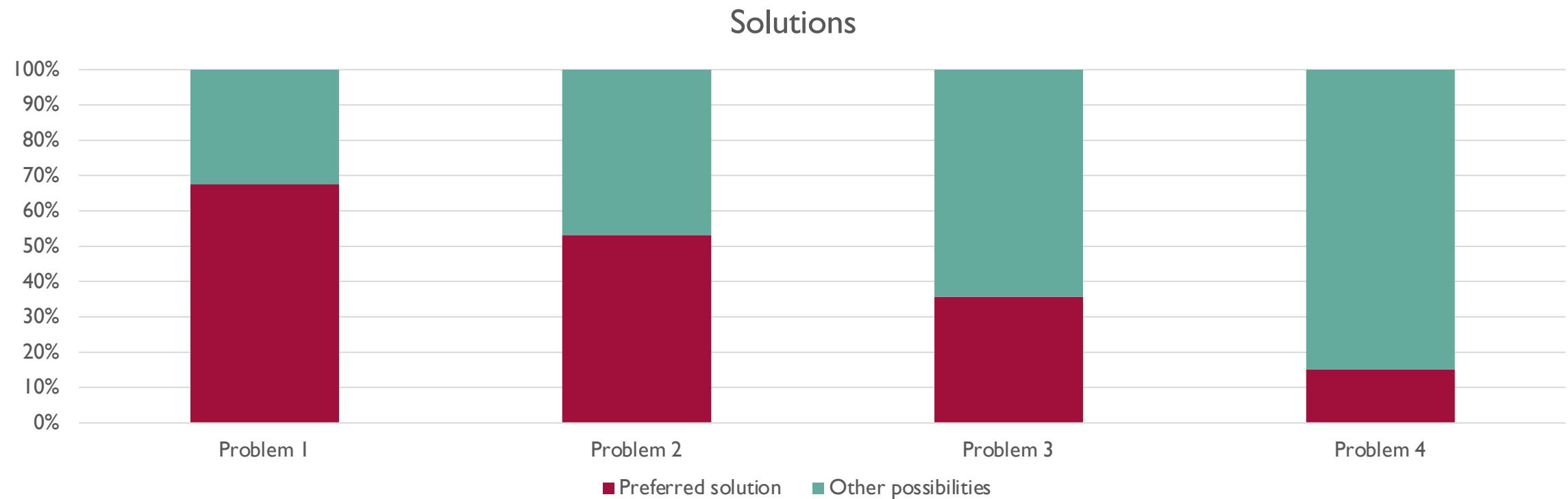


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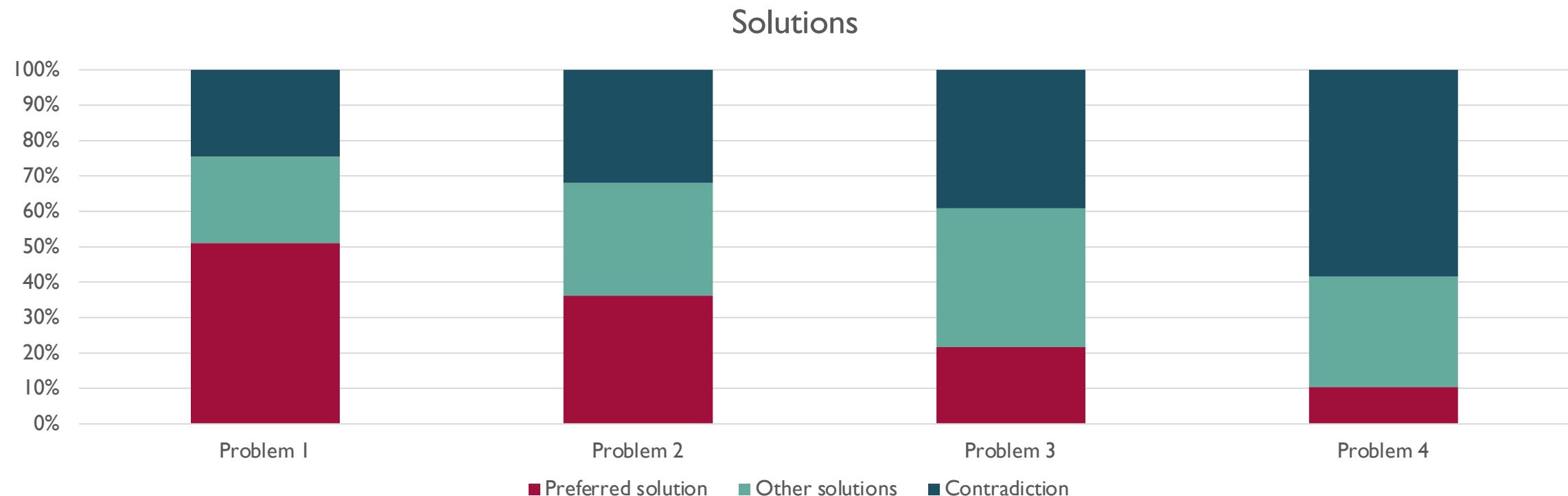
- “A few verses later Thomas says, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going’ (John 14:5). And then, a few minutes later, at the same meal, Jesus upbraids his disciples, saying, ‘Now I am going to the one who sent me, yet none of you asks me, “Where are you going?”’ (John 16:5). Either Jesus had a very short attention span or there is something strange going on with the sources for these chapters, creating an odd kind of disconnect.”



# PREFERRED SOLUTIONS TO BIBLICAL PROBLEMS



# YOU DON'T NEED A PREFERRED SOLUTION





# STORIES THAT NEED TO BE EXPLAINED



# PRODIGAL SON AND JOSEPH

- Great famines
- The only two instant rags to riches stories in the Bible
- Then Pharaoh took his **signet ring** from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in **garments of fine linen** and put a gold chain about his neck. (Genesis 41:42)
- ‘Quick! Bring the **best robe**, and put it on him, and put a **ring** on his hand, and shoes on his feet. (Luke 15:22)

**Contrast:** No one gave food to Prodigal / Joseph gave food to everyone



# PRODIGAL SON AND JOSEPH

- Went to a far country
- Was thought dead
  - Genesis 37:33 And he [Jacob] identified it [Joseph's robe] and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him."
  - Genesis 46:28 And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive."
  - Luke 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. (Also, 15:32)

**Contrast:** Joseph forgave / Older Brother doesn't

# FATHER AND ABRAHAM

- A man had two sons, but younger son inherits everything
- Abraham, the archetypal father (mentioned 3× in Luke 16)
- Abraham = only father to give away inheritance while still alive: “Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.”  
(Genesis 25:5–6)
- Luke 15:22 “Quick.”
- And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, “**Quick! Three seahs of fine flour!** Knead it, and make cakes.” And Abraham ran to the herd and **took a calf, tender and good**, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly.  
(Genesis 18:6–7)



# OLDER BROTHER AND ISHMAEL

- **Genesis 21:8** And the child [Isaac] grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. 9 But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. 10 So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”

# JACOB AND LABAN

Genesis 31	Luke 15
Rachel and Leah claim Laban “has indeed devoured our money” (Genesis 31:15)	Older Brother to Father: “But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes ...” (Luke 15:30)
Laban says he would have wanted to mark Jacob’s departure “with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre” (Genesis 31:27)	Older Brother “heard music and dancing.” (Luke 15:25)
“Then Jacob became angry” (Genesis 31:36)	Older Brother “was angry and refused to go in.” (Luke 15:28)
Jacob to Laban: “These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock” (Genesis 31:41; compare 31:38)	“These many years I have served you” (Luke 15:29)
Laban to Jacob: “all that you see is mine” (Genesis 41:43)	Father to Older Son: “all that is mine is yours” (Luke 15:31)

# CONCLUSIONS

- Jesus knows the Old Testament really well
- Jesus is the author of Genesis
- The parable has been handed down with integrity

# SIMPLE EXPLANATION

- “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God ... and the word became flesh and dwelt among us.”  
(John 1:1, 14)

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