

New Testament." 115/95

With the arrival of Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* (1976) which pays greater attention to historical evidence than did the form critics, the date has been pushed back to as early as circa A.D. 40 for a possible first draft of Matthew. Most scholars who do not presuppose an antisupeanatural bias date the synoptic Gospels generally in the 60s, some a little earlier. Those who accept the existence of a Q source document behind Matthew and Mark usually date it from before A.D. 50. There is, then, strong evidence that the formative period was no more than seven-teen to twenty years in length, possibly as little as seven to ten years for an Aramaic or Hebrew version of Matthew spoken of by Papias.

This conclusion is corroborated by several pieces of converging evidence. First, it is evident that the Book of Acts was written in approximately A.D. 62. It does not mention the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, an event which would have been impossible to omit since Jerusalem is central to much of Acts. Nothing is mentioned of Nero's persecution of A.D. 64. The book ends with Paul in Rome under the confinement of Nero. Neither does Acts mention the martyrdoms of three central figures of the book: James (A.D. 62), Paul (A.D. 64), and Peter (A.D. 65). Why aren't their deaths mentioned when Acts does record the deaths of Stephen and James, the brother of John?

If the book of Acts was written by Luke in A.D. 62, then the Gospel of Luke must be dated earlier, probably in the late 50s.

The early church fathers affirm that Matthew wrote his account first. Many modern critics say Mark wrote his first. In either case almost everyone agrees that they both wrote before Luke, which puts their dates of composition no later than the late 50s. Earlier drafts, partial written drafts or collections of things Jesus said or did were likely in circulation for years prior to being used in the Gospel accounts as we know them. These reports probably circulated in the 40s and 50s. Thus again, the formative period could have been no longer than seventeen to twenty years.

The formative period should not be construed as that period of time in which the content of the Gospels was being formed by some "creative community." It is rather that period of time when the form of the material was in transition from an oral to a written medium.

Analyzing the critics' conclusions of late authorship, Albright wrote: "Only modern scholars who lack both historical method and perspective can spin such a web of speculation as that with which critics have surrounded the Gospel tradition."

He added that the period is "too slight to permit any appreciable corruption of the essential center and even of the specific wording of the sayings of Jesus." 2/297-98

*A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell*

Howard Vos, researcher, declares, "From the standpoint of literary evidence the only logical conclusion is that the case for the reliability of the New Testament is infinitely stronger than that for any other record of antiquity." 130/176

## » Evidence for Reliability From Historical Geography (HW/198-209)

Unlike the mythical accounts of various alleged gods of pagan mystery religions, the Gospel narratives describe Jesus as a man of flesh and blood who traveled to actual geographic locations and interacted with known historical persons. That He occupied a specific place in time and space becomes clearer as one studies the historical geography of Jesus' day. The details of history and geography in the Gospel accounts yield clear evidence that the writers were not making up their story.

Rudolf Bultmann, who viewed the New Testament as an historically flawed document, had never visited the sites in Israel and had never considered the influence of Jewish culture on Jesus. Martin Hengel of the University of Tübingen in West Germany said of the lack of considering the cultural element that it was a "bad old German tradition with dangerous results." 66/38

Historical geography seeks to relate events in history to geographic locations. Knowing what has happened in a certain location in the past reveals why Jesus would do something at that location when He was there. Since it would be practically impossible for a later Gentile writer to have knowledge of the historical-geographical context surrounding an event in Jesus' life, these incidents provide good evidence that what the Gospel writers describe actually happened. A few examples:

In the city of Nain, Jesus raised the widow's dead son. Nain sits on the north side of a hill in southern Galilee. Just over the hill, on the south side, is the place where Elisha resuscitated the dead son of the Shunemite woman. Because the people of this locality were especially attuned to that miracle, Jesus was able to establish His authority by performing a similar miracle in the nearby town. The people of Nain responded, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"

Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt with the infant Jesus was not an odd move. Eighty-five percent of all Jews lived outside Israel, and Alexandria, Egypt, contained a large and old Jewish population. Joseph and Mary may have had friends or relatives there.

Jesus' home town of Nazareth is significant for several reasons. First, it was an obscure village "out in the sticks" with perhaps only 20 to 30 families living there. This is confirmed by the discovery of 23 tombs, believed to be the first-century cemetery for the entire town. Nazareth

does not appear in any of the lists of cities found in Josephus, in the Old Testament, or in the *Talmud*. No wonder Nathanael, when Philip first told him about Jesus, responded, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

**Second**, Nazareth sits on the side of a high ridge overlooking the Jezreel Valley. The geography fits well with Luke's description of the city when he reports, "They rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff" (Luke 4:29).

**Third**, the Jezreel valley, also called the Plain of Megiddo or Armageddon, was literally the front yard of Nazareth. More than 250 battles in history have been fought at this location, and the prophets predict the final battle will be waged here as well. Armies can enter the valley through seven major passes, making it an ideal battleground. As Jesus was growing up, He must have walked across this valley many times and perhaps here reflected often that "all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:25). It is ironic and yet typical of the way God often works, that the one called "the Prince of Peace" should grow up looking out over "the battleground of history."

The Gospel writers often casually refer to geographical features which indicate how familiar they are with the land. More important, Jesus seems to have done and said certain things in relationship to His surroundings with the purpose of leaving behind unforgettable messages vividly imprinted on the minds of the disciples. For example, at the base of the 9,000-foot high "rock" of Mt. Hermon, Jesus says to Peter, "You are Peter [Greek *Petros*, a stone], and upon this rock [Greek *petra*, large rock, bedrock] I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18). "Gates of Hades" was a rabbinic term referring to Gentile cities. Jesus was predicting that the mission entrusted to His apostles would one day overpower the Gentiles. Again, Jesus made His prediction in an appropriate place as the base of Mount Hermon at Caesarea-Philippi contains numerous large niches, carved into the cliff, which housed statues of the Greco-Roman pantheon of gods.

Later, in Jerusalem, the disciples would be reminded again of Mt. Hermon when Jesus cried out, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:38). Most rivers begin with a trickle . . . but not the river Jordan. When the snows on Mount Hermon melt, the water seeps down through the mountain and then gushes full force from the base of the mountain. From personal observation, we can verify that some of these springs are more than ten feet across at the point where they flow out from under Mount Hermon.

The countryside around the Sea of Galilee, made Jesus' teaching even more vivid by the way He incorporated the surroundings into that teach-

ing. For example, from Capernaum on the northwest shore of the sea, one could see several cities on top of hills all around the sea. Directly opposite, on the southeast shore lay Hippus, the largest city visible to those in Capernaum. Its primary location was not down by the water but high on a hill overlooking the sea. Several other cities and villages perched on hilltops around the Sea of Galilee. For example, Gamala was the zealot stronghold to the east. The lights of these cities would often remind the apostles of the time Jesus gestured toward them as He said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14).

John states that Jesus "came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). This statement is certainly borne out by a list of towns Jesus did and did not visit. The towns He did visit consisted mainly of religious Jews: Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Gennesaret, Cana and Nazareth. By curious contrast, there is no record of Jesus having entered the larger cities where Hellenized Jews mingled with Gentiles: Hippus, Gadara, Julias (next to Bethsaida), Sepphoris (less than five miles from Nazareth), Tiberias, Scythopolis, and Caesarea Philippi (though He did visit the countryside around Caesarea Philippi). Jesus indicated on various occasions that His mission went beyond the Jews, yet He carried out His ministry almost exclusively among the religious or orthodox Jews.

Even some of Jesus' strangest miracles are at home in the setting around the Sea of Galilee. One kind of fish dwelling in this sea belongs to the Cichlidae family and is sometimes called the "mouth breeder." It is found only in Lake Victoria (Uganda), along the Nile River, and in the Sea of Galilee. Cartographer Dr. Jim Fleming, who teaches classes in archaeology and historical geography at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, explains its significance:

The female keeps the eggs in her mouth until they hatch. As the brood begins to grow she lets them out from time to time on an "outing," but quickly scoops them up when danger is near. The mother will fast until near starvation in order not to swallow her young. These strong instincts have given the Hebrew name of the fish "The Mother-Fish." After the young are off on their own the mother often keeps a substitute in her mouth. They are sometimes caught today with pebbles or coke bottle caps in their mouths! The popular name for the fish is "St. Peter's fish" because of the gospel story in Matthew 17:24-27 about Peter catching a fish with a shekel coin in its mouth. 48/6

Galilee is a volcanic area. Volcanic rock is everywhere, and thorns grow there rapidly during the summer months. When Jesus told His parable of the four soils, His listeners would have related well to what He said. Later, His disciples would recall the parable easily whenever they visited the area.

The things Jesus did and said in and around Jerusalem likewise fit well with what is known of the local geography. The small town of Bethphage sits on the side of the Mount of Olives facing away from Jerusalem. It takes its name from a pre-season fruit which grows on the fig

trees of the area. The fruit is called *phage* (fah-gay) in Hebrew, and appears in the early spring with the first leaves. Did you ever wonder why Jesus was looking for figs on the fig tree when the text specifically says, "It was not the season for figs"? The answer is that even though it was not the season for figs (Gr. *sukon* meaning ripe figs), the fact that the tree had leaves indicated that it also should have had the pre-season figs (*phage*), which were edible. Since the tree contained no fruit, Jesus seems to have used it as an object lesson to warn against professing something by our appearance but having no fruit to back it up. (See Mark 11:12-14 and Matthew 21:18,19.)

From this same area one can look off to the south and see the Herodium with the Dead Sea shimmering in the distance behind it. Herod had this palatial fortress built between 24 and 15 B.C. The small mountain on which it sits was heightened by using part of another nearby mountain. Immediately after cursing the fig tree at Bethphage, Jesus commented, "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen; it shall be granted him" (Mark 11:23). Jesus was probably pointing at the Herodium and the Dead Sea as He spoke, indicating that not even the power of Herod (or other kings and authorities) could prevent the establishment of His kingdom.

Mustard trees still grow in Israel, and one can readily see that their minute seeds (hundreds can fit on the tip of a finger) and 15-foot height fit precisely with Jesus' parable:

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed . . . and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches (Matthew 13:31,32).

In Jerusalem, from the steps on the southern side of the Temple where rabbis often addressed their pupils, the chalk-white tombstones that cover the Mount of Olives are clearly visible. Jesus probably looked in that direction as He proclaimed:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matthew 23:27,28).

### » Fulfilled Prophecy in the New Testament (E/309-11)

Most readers are familiar with Jesus' pronouncements against Jerusalem:

For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank

before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation (Luke 20:43,44).

This prophecy was fulfilled literally in A.D. 70 when the Romans decimated Jerusalem. Nothing was left of the Temple except its foundation.

Lesser known is the fulfillment of Jesus' predictions concerning Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. George Davis comments:

We read in the New Testament of four ancient cities which were beautifully situated near or in the shores of the Sea of Galilee. These four cities were Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Tiberias. Three of these cities have perished. Only the last named is standing today. 37/33

In Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus predicts that Chorazin and Bethsaida will incur a greater judgment than Tyre and Sidon, and that Capernaum will suffer a worse fate than the city of Sodom.

Though there is recorded no specific prophecy on how the cities were to be destroyed, the unmistakable mark of God's judgment and displeasure is on the brow of the three cities. History records a distinct story for these cities.

George Davis in his *Bible Prophecies Fulfilled Today* records that "an earthquake destroyed Capernaum about A.D. 400 and doubtless Chorazin and Bethsaida perished at the same time." 37/36

Davis expands:

Ancient Bethsaida's situation on the shore of the Sea of Galilee had been so beautiful that about A.D. 700, King Albalid I of Damascus decided to build a magnificent winter palace on the site of the ruined city. For fifteen years his workmen labored erecting the palace. Then King Albalid died, and the great palace was never completed. As the centuries rolled by, the palace became mere ruins. Today about all that remains of its former grandeur are some foundation stones and some unfinished mosaic flooring. Archaeologists have covered up this mosaic with sand, lest it too should be carried away by vandals, and thus all traces of the palace should be lost. 37/36-37

Davis explains the situation of Capernaum:

For long centuries the synagogue lay buried under the earth like the rest of the destroyed city. . . . A man conceived the idea of restoring the ancient synagogue from its ruins. At length part of the walls of the building were re-erected, and a number of the pillars were put in their places.

Then the unexpected happened. The architect of the partly restored synagogue suddenly died—just as King Albalid had died centuries ago before his palace in Bethsaida was completed. 37/38

*Unger's Bible Dictionary* sums up the plight of the three doomed cities:

The doom pronounced against Capernaum and the other unbelieving

cities (Matthew 11:23) has been remarkably fulfilled. Tell Hum, its now generally accepted site, is a mass of ruins adjacent to Bethsaida and Tabgha, and yielded a third century A.D. synagogue when excavated. 126/180

Davis concludes the prophecy with these comments: "Not one word of judgment was pronounced on the city of Tiberias by our Lord. It has been partly destroyed several times but it has always been rebuilt." 37/40

Davis adds:

Each time we have visited Tiberias and the area around the Sea of Galilee we have been impressed anew with the truthfulness and the supernatural inspiration of the Word of God. There are the ruins of three cities, destroyed exactly as foretold by our Lord, and one city, Tiberias, upon which no word of judgment was uttered, still standing and flourishing after nineteen long centuries. 37/41

### » Jewish Cultural Evidence for Reliability of the Gospels (HW/243-45)

The setting of all four Gospel accounts is unmistakably first-century Hebrew. Some events seem strange to us but are perfectly natural in the Jewish culture of Jesus' day. For example, Luke 7:38 speaks of a woman weeping and wetting Jesus' feet with her tears. Weeping was an important part of Jewish culture. Professional mourners were hired for funerals, and many Jews had "tear vases" where they collected the tears of their grief. The woman described by Luke may have been literally pouring out the tears from her tear vase to indicate to Jesus her sorrow for her sins. The present day visitor to Israel may observe many of these ancient tear vases in museums there.

Luke 2:24 speaks of another of many cultural practices mentioned in the Gospel narratives. In obedience to Leviticus 12:2,6,8, Joseph and Mary brought the sacrifice required after the birth of a child. Their offering of two turtledoves or pigeons indicates that they were among the poor of the land.

Hebrew marriage customs help to explain what otherwise appears to be a contradiction in Matthew 1:18,19. In verse 18, Mary is only betrothed to Joseph, whereas in verse 19, Joseph is called her "husband." The Reverend James Freeman, who compiled a vast collection of Bible customs, explains:

Esposal among the Hebrews was something more than what a mere marriage engagement is with us. It was considered the beginning of marriage, was as legally binding as marriage itself, and could not be broken off save by a bill of divorce. Hence we find that Joseph is called the "husband" of Mary. 53/330

Jesus' confrontation with the Sadducees in Mark 12 accords with what

we know about the Sadducees' attitude toward Levirate marriage. In Yehamoth 4.6b of the *Palestinian Talmud*, the Sadducees again use Levirate marriage, this time to mock the Pharisees. They pose the hypothetical problem of one of thirteen brothers who is required to be joined in Levirate marriage with the widows of his twelve deceased brothers.

The account of the woman with the hemorrhage becomes much more meaningful and realistic in light of the Jewish laws of purity (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). The woman's condition meant that she had been continuously ceremonially impure for twelve years, and that by the law, her touching Jesus' garments would defile Him. She is understandably frightened when she learns that Jesus detected her act. And can you imagine the rare sense of compassion she must have felt when Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace"? (Luke 8:48).

The synoptic Gospels speak of Jesus cleansing the Temple at the beginning of His last week in Jerusalem. John indicates that He had previously performed the same operation at the beginning of His ministry. It was not that Jesus objected to the exchanging of money. Roman coins, which most of the people carried and which were stamped with the image of Caesar, could not be used in the Temple under the Mosaic prescription against graven images. Therefore there was a legitimate need for money-changers – the people needed the Jewish coins because they contained only geometric, floral, or ceremonial decorations. Jewish sources suggest that some of the priestly families probably made personal profits on those money-changing dealings. (See top of page 89 for one such source.) What incensed Jesus was the corruption and commotion going on in a place that represented God's majesty and purity, a place that was to be used for prayer.

One striking feature of the Gospel narratives is that they speak of Jesus going almost exclusively to Jewish towns in order to carry out his ministry. The accounts record that Jesus entered only two cities which were not primarily orthodox Jewish: the Gentile city of Sidon and the Samaritan city of Sychar. Since we are told of no incident occurring in Sidon, we have no report of any ministry performed by Jesus inside a Gentile city. It is striking that the Gospels report Jesus going into Bethsaida, but not Julius, probably 100 yards away. He goes into obscure Nazareth, but not the major city of Sepphoris approximately three miles away. He goes into the country or regions of Decapolis, Caesarea Philippi and Tyre, but not into the Gentile cities themselves. Everything in the historical geographical situation is thoroughly Jewish – orthodox Jewish.

The Gospels make comments in a number of places which show that Jesus was very pro-Semitic; some even sound strongly anti-Gentile. In Matthew 15:26 and Mark 7:27, Jesus refers to Gentiles as "dogs" after stating, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." In

Matthew 10:5,6, Jesus instructs His disciples not to go "in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans." In John 4:22, Jesus, speaking as a Jew to a Samaritan, says, "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews."

### » Are Accounts of the Trial of Jesus Anti-Semitic? (HW/259-61)

While we're on the subject of the Jewish flavor of the Gospel accounts, we need to answer one objection. The charge is repeatedly made that the accounts represent the anti-Semitic attitude of later Gentile Christians who redacted the writings. Maurice Goguel, for example, believes that the Romans collaborated with the Jews in order to arrest Jesus, and concludes: "The Gospel narrative which attributes this initiative wholly to the Jews is a biased perversion of the primitive tradition." 56/469

It is important, whenever someone claims a particular statement is anti-Semitic, to know whether the person making the statement is Jewish or non-Jewish. In teaching his class on New Testament to Jewish students at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Professor Fleming says he begins by saying "I don't know why some Jews are so sensitive about the supposed anti-Semitism of the New Testament. How can anyone say, 'I will vomit you out of the land' is anti-Semitic? How can anyone say, 'Your prayers are a stench to the nostrils of God' is anti-Semitic?" And of course they all get upset. "How could you say that isn't anti-Semitic?" Then I remind them it's Isaiah and Jeremiah that I am quoting. 47

If the Gospel writers wanted to whitewash the Romans and defame the Jews, it is impossible to explain many statements in their narratives. Why would they have Pontius Pilate scourging Jesus? Why wouldn't they have Pilate taking responsibility and putting an end to the whole thing? Certainly he had the authority to do so.

And what about all the pro-Jewish statements in the Gospel accounts? John, for example, supposedly the most anti-Semitic of the Gospel writers, has Jesus saying, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Or why does Luke have Jesus saying regarding those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). That doesn't sound like someone trying to heap condemnation on the Jews.

When the gospel writers (remember, they are Jewish too) say negative things about the Jewish leaders, they are saying nothing that other Jews were not already saying. Excavations in the upper city of old Jerusalem, which uncovered the large homes of the more wealthy and aristocratic Jews, discovered dishes with the family name "Kathros" on them. The name also appears in a Baraita which reveals the character of the ruling priestly families of Jesus' day:

Woe to me because of the house of Hannan [Annas] because of their whispers! Woe to me because of the house of Kathros, because of their pens! [a probable reference to the forging of illegal documents] . . . For they are high priests and their sons are treasurers, and their sons-in-law [Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas] are overseers, and their servants beat the people with rods. 17

Are the Gospel reports anti-Semitic? Judging by the rabbinic reflection above, it appears that more than just the Gospel writers were concerned about corruption in the high court. It is known that Sanhedrin members in the Herodian period were appointed for political favors, and it is not likely that such a Sanhedrin would act in the most just and pious manner. The Gospel writers were not anti-Semitic. They simply reported what others of their fellow Jews had already observed.

New Testament writers often use the term "the Jews." It is a general term referring to a group of Jewish people, most often Jewish leaders and their employees or servants, who are involved in a particular action. When a New Testament writer states that "the Jews" did such and such, he does not mean the entire race of Jews. He means simply the Jews who were there. Was it, for example, all the Jews in Jerusalem who called for Jesus to be crucified? Of course not. Jesus' own disciples were Jews. It was simply the crowd of Jews who were there. And as Ian Wilson brings out, "With twenty thousand Temple servants and eighteen thousand workmen on their payroll, the Temple's controllers would scarcely have had any difficulty in finding a mob to perform to whatever tune they called." 129/126 In fact, the gospel writers never once say "the Jews" crucified Jesus. They refer to the mob simply as "they." Further, Luke, writing in Acts, demonstrates conclusively that the very earliest church did not see the Jews as "Christ-killers." When Peter and John return to their friends after being jailed and interrogated, they all agree in prayer:

O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say,

Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together, against the LORD, and against His Christ.

For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur (Acts 4:24-26).

The point of the Gospel accounts is not to assign blame. The message the New Testament wants its readers to get is simply: "It was people like me who killed Jesus; it was my sin that put Him on the cross." Thus Paul would write, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 1:3, emphasis ours).

Likewise, Peter recorded, "And He Himself bore *our* sins in His body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24, emphasis ours).

**NOTE:** If you have never discovered how to appropriate Christ's forgiveness for your sins, please turn to the section "Would You Like to Know God Personally?" on page 467.

### » Evidence for Reliability From the Apostle Paul (HW/168-70)

When we come to the apostle Paul, we find what some would say is the greatest evidence for the truth of the Christian faith. Here is a man cut completely from the cloth of Jewish culture. Fashioned by it and steeped in it, he was probably one of the most intense protagonists of the day for rabbinic Judaism. In his own words, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions" (Galatians 1:14). Paul's sudden conversion from persecutor of the church to its foremost early missionary is one of the most difficult challenges to a skeptic of biblical Christianity. Phillip Schaff remarks that even "Dr. Baur, the master-spirit of skeptical criticism and the founder of the 'Tübingen School,' " felt constrained to admit that in "the sudden transformation of Paul from the most violent adversary of Christianity into its most determined herald' he could see 'nothing short of a miracle.'" 119/315 quoting 20/147

One of the main reasons the evidence from Paul is so strong is that he produced his letters so early. The chart on the next page compares the dates given by three recognized scholars in the field (representing both liberal and moderate views) and helps set the works of Paul in their historical time frame.

As you can see in the chart, even though different scholars vary on specific dates, it is usually by not more than two or three years. (Obviously Kummel does not accept Pauline authorship on some of the New Testament books attributed to Paul.) 70

The dates of Paul's letters become particularly significant in view of objections critics raise against the Gospel accounts. For example, critics are fond of dating the Gospels fairly late because the Gospels supposedly indicate a more sophisticated view of Christ ("high Christology") which would not have existed in earliest Christianity. But one of the chief indicators for a high Christology is the use of the word *Christ* as a name (as in "Jesus Christ") rather than as a title (as in "Jesus the Christ"). It is odd then that Paul, supposedly writing earlier than the gospel writers, exhibits this high Christology.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John combined use the name "Jesus Christ"

Book	Kummel s/n.p.	Guthrie s/n.p.	Robinson
1 Thessolians	50	51	Early 50
2 Thessalonians	50-51	51	50-51
1 Corinthians	54-55	57	Spring 55
1 Timothy	100 +	61-64	Autumn 55
2 Corinthians	55-56	57	Early 56
Galatians	54-55	49-50	Late 56
Romans	55-56	57-58	Early 57
Titus	100 +	61-64	Late spring 57
Philippians	53-58	59-61	Spring 58
Philemon	56-60	59-61	Summer 58
Colossians	56-60	59-61	Late summer 58
Ephesians	80-100	59-61	Late summer 58
2 Timothy	100 +	61-64	Autumn 58

only five times. Paul uses it approximately 125 times. Whereas the gospel writers almost always refer to Jesus by the name "Jesus" alone, Paul almost always uses a term such as "Christ Jesus," "Lord Jesus," "Jesus Christ" or "our Lord Jesus Christ." The Gospel writers only occasionally call Jesus "Christ" as though it were a name.

Why?

There is only one good answer. The Gospel accounts originated earlier than Paul's letters (early as they were) and preserved the wording of the earliest oral traditions through their formative stages to the completed written accounts.

## SECTION 1



## Part I: The Bible — I Trust It!

## 9

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Luke** (He Changes a Critic's Mind) (E/70-73; RE/35)

**S**ir William Ramsay is regarded as one of the greatest archaeologists ever to have lived. He was a student in the German historical school of the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, he believed that the Book of Acts was a product of the mid-second century A.D. He was firmly convinced of this belief. In his research to make a topographical study of Asia Minor he was compelled to consider the writings of Luke. As a result he was forced to do a complete reversal of his beliefs due to the overwhelming evidence uncovered in his research. He spoke of this when he said:

I may fairly claim to have entered on this investigation without prejudice in favor of the conclusion which I shall now seek to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavorable to it, for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the Tübingen theory had at one time quite convinced me. It did not then lie in my line of life to investigate the

subject minutely; but more recently I found myself brought into contact with the Book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth. In fact, beginning with a fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations. 25/36

Concerning Luke's ability as a historian, Ramsay concluded after 30 years of study that "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy . . . *this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.*" 110/222

Ramsay also says: "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness." 109/81

It was at one time conceded that Luke had entirely missed the boat in the events he portrayed as surrounding the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-3). Critics argued that there was no census, that Quirinius was not governor of Syria at that time and that everyone did not have to return to his ancestral home. 41/159-60; 51/285

First of all, archaeological discoveries show that the Romans had a regular enrollment of taxpayers and also held censuses every 14 years. This procedure was indeed begun under Augustus and the first took place in either 23 — 22 B.C. or in 9 — 8 B.C. The latter would be the one to which Luke refers.

Second, we find evidence that Quirinius was governor of Syria around 7 B.C. This assumption is based on an inscription found in Antioch ascribing to Quirinius this post. As a result of this finding, it is now supposed that he was governor twice — once in 7 B.C. and the other time in 6 A.D. (the date ascribed by Josephus). 41/160

Last in regard to the practices of enrollment, a papyrus found in Egypt gives directions for the conducting of a census. It reads:

Because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their homes should at once prepare to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment and that the tilled lands may retain those belonging to them. 41/159-60; 51/285

Archaeologists at first believed Luke's implication wrong that Lystra and Derbe were in Lycaonia and Iconium was not (Acts 14:6). They based their belief on the writings of Romans such as Cicero who indicated Iconium was in Lycaonia. Thus, archaeologists said the Book of Acts was unreliable. However, in 1910, Sir William Ramsay found a monument that showed Iconium as a Phrygian city. Later discoveries confirm this. 51/817

Among other historical references of Luke is that of Lysanias the

Tetrarch of Abilene (Luke 3:1) at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry in 27 A.D. The only Lysanias known to ancient historians was one who was killed in 36 B.C. However, an inscription found near Damascus speaks of "Freedman of Lysanias the Tetrarch" and is dated between 14 and 29 A.D. 27/321

In his Epistle to the Romans written from Corinth, Paul makes mention of the city treasurer, Erastus (Romans 16:23). During the excavations of Corinth in 1929, a pavement was found inscribed:

ERASTVS PRO-AED.S:P-STRAVIT

("Erastus, curator of public buildings, laid this pavement at his own expense"). According to Bruce, the pavement quite likely existed in the first century A.D. and the donor and the man Paul mentions are probably one and the same. 29/95; 130/185

Luke writes of the riot of Ephesus and represents a civic assembly (*Ecclesia*) taking place in a theater (Acts 19:23ff.). The facts are that it did meet there as borne out by an inscription which speaks of silver statues of Artemis (Diana in KJV) to be placed in the "theater during a full session of the *Ecclesia*." The theater, when excavated, proved to have room for 25,000 people. 27/326

Luke's accuracy is attested by another discovery associated with the Temple. In Acts 21 he speaks of Paul going through the Temple purification process. When some Jews from Asia saw him there, they descended on him seeking to kill him and shouting out, "This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." They had previously seen Paul with a Gentile, Trophimus, and "supposed that Paul had brought him into the Temple." Speaking of the Jewish law prohibiting Gentiles from entering the inner courts of the Temple, Bruce relates the following discovery:

That none might plead ignorance of the rule, notices in Greek and Latin were fastened to the barricade separating the outer from the inner courts, warning Gentiles that death was the penalty for trespass. One of these Greek inscriptions, found at Jerusalem in 1871 by C. S. Clermont-Ganneau, is now housed in Istanbul, and reads as follows:

NO FOREIGNER MAY ENTER WITHIN THE BARRICADE  
WHICH SURROUNDS THE TEMPLE AND ENCLOSURE.  
ANYONE WHO IS CAUGHT DOING SO WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO THANK  
FOR HIS ENSUING DEATH. 29/98

Also in doubt were Luke's usages of certain words. Luke refers to Philippi as a "part" or "district" of Macedonia. He uses the Greek word *meris* which is translated "part" or "district." F. J. A. Hort believed Luke wrong in this usage. He said that *meris* referred to a "portion" not a

"district," thus, his grounds for disagreement. Archaeological excavations, however, have shown that this very word, *meris*, was used to describe the divisions of the district. Thus, archaeology has again shown the accuracy of Luke. 51/320

Other poor word usages were attached to Luke. He was considered not technically correct in referring to the Philippian rulers as *praetors*. According to the "scholars" two *dumvirs* would have ruled the town. However, as usual, Luke was right. Findings have shown that the title of *praetor* was employed by the magistrates of a Roman colony. 51/321

His choice of the word *proconsul* as the title for Gallio (Acts 18:12) is correct as evidenced by the Delphi inscription which states in part, "As Lucius Junius Gallio, my friend, and the Proconsul of Achaia . . ." 130/180

Luke gives to Publius, the chief man in Malta, the title "first man of the island" (Acts 28:7). Inscriptions have been unearthed which do give him the title of "first man." 27/325

Still another case is his usage of *politarchs* to denote the civil authorities of Thessalonica (Acts 17:6). Since *politarch* is not found in the classical literature, Luke was again assumed to be wrong. However, some nineteen inscriptions have been found that make use of the title. Interestingly enough, five of these are in reference to Thessalonica. 27/325

It is no wonder that E. M. Blaiklock, professor of Classics in Auckland University, concludes that "Luke is a consummate historian, to be ranked in his own right with the great writers of the Greeks." 23/89

F. F. Bruce, of the University of Manchester, notes: "Where Luke has been suspected of inaccuracy, and accuracy has been vindicated by some inscriptional evidence, it may be legitimate to say that archaeology has confirmed the New Testament record." 27/831

Bruce comments on the historical accuracy of Luke:

A man whose accuracy can be demonstrated in matters where we are able to test it is likely to be accurate where the means for testing him are not available. Accuracy is a habit of mind, and we know from happy (or unhappy) experience that some people are habitually accurate just as others can be depended upon to be inaccurate. Luke's record entitles him to be regarded as a writer of habitual accuracy. 30/90

### Pilate (HW/215)

Until 1961 the only historical references to Pontius Pilate were secondary. That is, they referred to Pontius Pilate, it was thought, only because the Gospels referred to him. Then two Italian archaeologists excavated the Mediterranean port city of Caesarea that served as the Roman capital of Palestine. During the dig they uncovered a two-by-three-foot inscription in Latin. Antonio Frova was able to reconstruct the inscription. To his surprise it read: "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea, has presented the

Tiberium to the Caesareans." This was the first archaeological discovery of a historical reference to the existence of Pilate.

### Nazareth (HW/216-217)

Joshua 19:10-15 lists the towns of the tribe of Zebulun. The city of Nazareth does not appear among them. Josephus gives the names of forty-five towns and villages in Galilee, but Nazareth is not among them. The *Talmud* names sixty-three towns and villages. Again, the name of Nazareth does not appear. You can understand why some critical scholars questioned the existence of a "city called Nazareth" in New Testament times.

In 1962, during Michael Avi-Yonah's excavations at Caesarea, the last two fragments of a three fragment inscription were found. It is known as the Nazareth inscription since it is the first known inscription citing the name "Nazareth." It provides incontestable evidence of the existence of the town of Nazareth in the first century A.D.

Excavations at modern-day Nazareth show that it had been inhabited long before Roman times, but was, as we indicated earlier, an insignificant and very small village. Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, had a church built over the site that had been indicated as the dwelling of Jesus' family. It was her practice to erect churches over sites mentioned in the Gospels in order to preserve their memory. Through the ages, the Roman Catholic Church has continued the tradition, whenever a church is destroyed, by building a succeeding church where the previous one stood.

Excavations under the present Church of Annunciation gave further indication of the site's authenticity. A pedestal of the earliest church bore the words "Hail Mary," the greeting of Gabriel to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Remains of a ritual bath or *mikveh* indicate the early presence of orthodox Jews, possibly Jewish Christians who built their own synagogue. This should not be surprising as James 2:2 says, "If a man comes into your synagogue . . ." referring to a gathering of Christians.

It is a common rule of thumb that traditions from before Constantine's Edict of Milan (A.D. 313) are considered reliable since official nontolerance of Christians before 313 removed all material motivation for preservation of Christian sites. The findings at Nazareth definitely place the traditions associated with it in the "reliable" category.

A mosaic inscription reading "Offering of Conon, Deacon of Jerusalem" preserves the memory of the famous martyr of Nazareth killed under Decius (249-51). Conon is reported to have claimed that he was a direct descendant of the family of Joseph and Mary. 92/131 A third-century plaster with an inscription petitioning "Christ Lord" indicates Christian veneration of the site prior to Queen Helena's visit to it. Though tourists to the present city of Nazareth may feel it has been commercialized, the

archaeological evidence strongly supports the authenticity of the site.

### Capernaum (HW/217-18)

Mark tells us that when Jesus "had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home." Then Jesus healed the paralytic lowered through the roof. From Mark 1:29-34, it seems most likely that Jesus' "home" was the insulus (a complex of many rooms, often used for extended families) of Peter's mother-in-law. We would expect it to be larger than normal by the inferences of Peter's prosperous fishing business and the number of people who apparently stayed there.

Just such an insulus has been preserved and excavated in Capernaum. It was customary in the Byzantine period for Christians to build an octagon-shaped church over a *loca sancta*, a holy place. The remains of such a church from the fourth and fifth century have been excavated at Capernaum. Directly beneath the church are the remains of an insulus which revealed continuous occupation from the time of Jesus to the time the church was built. (Eleven levels of floors were revealed.) Additional walls and rooms were added to the first insulus to form what apparently was a house-church. Excavation of the Byzantine church foundation revealed a reverence for the earliest structure in that its walls sometimes arched over those of the early insulus so as not to destroy them. The careful scholars of archaeology, Drs. Eric Meyers and James Strange, report:

The church in question was centered on one room of the block beneath. This room is 7.0 by 6.5 meters, large for an ancient house. (The synagogue at Magdala measures 8.17 by 7.25 meters.) The lowest floors of this room had early Roman pottery and coins sealed between them, which must mean that the founding and earliest use of this room, and therefore of the entire block of houses, was in the first century B.C.E. Either late in the first century or early in the second century C.E. this room received extensive interior remodeling: The floors were renewed several times and plastered, as were the walls. 92/60

They continue:

The excavators conclude that the house was founded circa 100 B.C.E. Sometime near the end of the first century C.E., someone plastered it three times, which may suggest conversion to a public building rather than merely the remodeling of a house. . . . Furthermore, the absence of plain pottery correlates with a public rather than a private use for this part of the building. 92/129

During the second and third centuries, Christian pilgrims incised graffiti into the plaster walls of the house-church. Writing, including the name of Peter and invocations to Jesus, was found on 134 fragments of plaster recovered from these walls. The expanded house church was apparently the one Egeria saw in approximately A.D. 380 when he reported, "At Capernaum the house of [the prince of the apostles] has been made

into a church, with its original walls still standing." 48/18

### The Pool of Bethesda (HW/219)

The northeast quarter of the old city of Jerusalem was called Bezetha ("New Town") in the first century A.D. Some significant excavations near St. Anne's Church in that quarter were conducted a hundred years ago. These excavations uncovered the remains of an ancient church which marked the site of Bethesda.

F. F. Bruce describes later excavations which identified the pool itself or rather twin pools, lying north and south, with a rock partition between them. Porticoes evidently occupied the four sides and the partition. One of the first visitors to Jerusalem after it came under Christian control, the "Bordeau pilgrim" (A.D. 333), saw and described the twin pools. The "Copper Scroll" from Qumran gives the name in the Hebrew dual number, Beth-esh-dathain, "the place of the two outpourings." There are few sites in Jerusalem, mentioned in the gospels, which can be identified so confidently. 30/94

### Millstones (HW/219)

The excavations at Capernaum also unearthed a significant number of first-century millstones. In fact, so many were recovered that it appears the inhabitants took advantage of the plentiful volcanic rock to make and export mills to other areas. Handmills could be turned by two women. Jesus referred to these smaller mills in Luke 17:35, "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left." Earlier here, He said, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in Me to stumble," and here he probably gestured toward a larger mill turned by a donkey when he warned, "it is better for him that a heavy millstone [literally, 'millstone turned by a donkey'] be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Luke 17:2).

### Galilean Boat (HW/220)

Moshe and Yuval Lufan, brothers from Kibbutz Ginosar, "lovers of archaeology" but not professional archaeologists, have a feel for the land that has led them to some important discoveries. In January 1986, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, between Kibbutz Ginosar and Moshava Migdal, they discovered an early Galilean boat dating from the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. It was apparently used for fishing, transporting goods, and ferrying people.

The boat measures almost 27 feet in length and about 7-1/2 feet in width, certainly large enough for a crew of thirteen. Its discovery was made possible by the low level of the lake due to the lack of rain.

### Seat of Moses (HW/220-21)

The seat of Moses was not just a figurative term referring to the authority of Moses. At Chorazin, En-Gedi and Delos, carved stone seats of Moses have been found. The teacher in a synagogue would teach from this chair. The seat at Chorazin has an Aramaic inscription on its facade indicating the most common language of the town during the second and third centuries A.D.

### The Temple (HW/221-22)

And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" (Mark 13:1)

Jesus' disciples were not the only ones who were in awe of the Temple. One rabbi, as recorded in the *Talmud*, remembered, "It used to be said: He who has not seen the temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building." 14

The Temple Mount is the largest site of its kind in the ancient world, covering an area about the size of 25 to 30 football fields. The retaining walls rose approximately the height of a ten-story building above the outside street level. The smallest stone blocks used for constructing the walls weighed from two to five tons. Some of the largest stones are without equal anywhere in the ancient world. One measures 40 feet in length, 13 feet in width, 10 feet in height, and weighs close to 400 tons! Josephus speaks of the magnificence of the Temple in the fifteenth book of *Antiquities*. He tells, for example, of 162 columns in four rows, each column 27 feet high and "the thickness of each pillar was such that three men might, with their arms extended, fathom it round." 75

### The Empty Tomb (HW/224-25)

Matthew writes that some of the guards around Jesus' tomb came into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. After counseling together, the chief priests and the elders

gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day (Matthew 28:11-15).

Apparently word did reach the governor's ears, or by some other means, reached all the way to Rome. The emperor, probably Claudius, sent word back to Palestine. His "decree," originally written in Latin and translated into Greek, was posted in, of all places, the obscure village of

Nazareth, home of "the Nazarene." In 1878, a white marble slab, inscribed with the following words, was found in Nazareth:

ORDINANCE OF CAESAR. IT IS MY PLEASURE THAT GRAVES AND TOMBS REMAIN PERPETUALLY UNDISTURBED FOR THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THEM FOR THE CULT OF THEIR ANCESTORS OR CHILDREN OR MEMBERS OF THEIR HOUSE. IF, HOWEVER, ANYONE CHARGES THAT ANOTHER HAS EITHER DEMOLISHED THEM, OR HAS IN ANY OTHER WAY EXTRACTED THE BURIED, OR HAS MALICIOUSLY TRANSFERRED THEM TO OTHER PLACES IN ORDER TO WRONG THEM, OR HAS DISPLACED THE SEALING ON OTHER STONES, AGAINST SUCH A ONE I ORDER THAT A TRIAL BE INSTITUTED, AS IN RESPECT OF THE GODS, SO IN REGARD TO THE CULT OF MORTALS. FOR IT SHALL BE MUCH MORE OBLIGATORY TO HONOR THE BURIED. LET IT BE ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN FOR ANYONE TO DISTURB THEM. IN CASE OF VIOLATION I DESIRE THAT THE OFFENDER BE SENTENCED TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ON CHARGE OF VIOLATION OF SEPULCHRE. 85/119

Because the inscription contains lettering belonging to the first half of the first century, scholars place the date of its composition before A.D. 50. And since the central Roman government did not assume the administration of Galilee until after the death of Agrippa, the inscription must date from some time after A.D. 44. Claudius was emperor from A.D. 41-54 and is therefore the only candidate for the inscription's originator. In A.D. 49, Claudius expelled all Jews (and Jewish Christians) from Rome. He appears to have studied the Jewish situation, at least to a certain degree, and found it displeasing. In one of his extant letters of A.D. 41, he expressly forbids the Alexandrian Jews "to bring or invite other Jews to come by sea from Syria. If they do not abstain from this conduct," Claudius threatens, "I shall proceed against them for fomenting a malady common to the world." 24/81

Many scholars believe Claudius' phrase, "a malady common to the world," is a specific reference to the growing Christian community across the empire.

The evidence, given in more detail by Blaiklock, therefore suggests that Claudius must have received a letter from the Procurator of Judea or Syria regarding the expansion of the Christian religion. The Jewish authorities had contended it all began when the disciples stole the body of Jesus the Nazarene from its grave. Irritated, Claudius issued his directive with instructions that it be posted in the town of Nazareth. His irritation can especially be seen in the fact that this type of offense did not previously carry anything near the extreme penalty of capital punishment.

### John, Greek Gnosticism and the Scrolls

The Gospel account most criticized as being least reflective of the true historical Jesus has been the Gospel of John. Critics have often charged

that the Gospel and Epistles of John draw heavily on Greek thought. A recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, for example, speaks of "its modest biographical content and its overlay of seemingly Hellenistic philosophy." 98/42 The Dead Sea Scrolls, however, shed a different light on this issue. Allegro states:

It is a fact that the Qumran library has profoundly affected the study of the Johannine writings and many long-held conceptions have had to be radically revised. No longer can John be regarded as the most Hellenistic of the evangelists; his "gnosticism" and the whole framework of his thought is seen now to spring directly from a Jewish sectarianism rooted in Palestinian soil, and his material recognized as founded in the earliest layers of gospel traditions. 10/142-43

Thus scholars were forced to recognize that John's imagery arose out of Jewish, not Greek (Hellenistic) or gnostic roots. In addition, scholars had to reckon with John's "detailed and accurate references to geographical features of Jerusalem and its environs before the city and its Temple were destroyed in 70 A.D." 134/44 It is John, for example, who pinpoints the location of John the Baptist as being in Aenon (meaning "spring," the one near Salim), approximately a mile away (3:23). John distinguishes Cana as the one in Galilee as opposed to the Cana near Sidon (2:1). John not only says that Jesus took His disciples through Samaria, but also specifies the city of Sychar, and even more specifically, "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there," as it still is today (4:5,6). Only John mentions the Pool of Siloam (9:7) and the Pool of Bethesda with its five porches (5:2). Remains of both pools have been uncovered in Jerusalem. Also, only John distinguishes "Bethany beyond the Jordan" (1:28) from Bethany near Jerusalem, "about two miles off" (11:18). There is no doubt that John, like the other gospel writers, had definite theological purposes for his writing. Yet recognizing this point, Myers and Strange conclude:

These examples could be multiplied many times and supplemented with examples of lore, customs, and other bits of information known to the author of this Gospel. The point we wish to make, however, is simply that an unprejudiced reading of the Gospel of John seems to suggest that it is in fact based on a historical and geographical tradition, though not one that simply repeats information from the synoptics. In other words, this Gospel, as well as Matthew, Mark and Luke, firmly anchors its tradition in the land, not in an ideal, heavenly Israel. 92/161

All of this evidence affirms what John himself claimed: "This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true" (John 1:24).

25. Blaiklock, Edward Musgrave. *Layman's Answer: An Examination of the New Theology*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968.
26. Boutflower, Charles. *In and Around the Book of Daniel*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923.
27. Bruce, F. F. "Archaeological Confirmation of the New Testament." *Revelation and the Bible*. Edited by Carl Henry. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969.
28. Bruce, F. F. *The Books and the Parchments*. Rev. ed. Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963.
29. Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1964.
30. Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5th rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985.
31. Burrows, Millar. *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Viking, 1958.
32. Burrows, Millar. *What Mean These Stones?* New York: Meridian Books, 1956.
33. Collett, Sidney. *All About the Bible*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, n.d.
34. Curtius, Quintus. *History of Alexander*, 2 vol. Translated by John C. Rolfe (from the Loeb Classical Library, edited by T. E. Page). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946.
35. Davidson, Samuel. *Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1859.
36. Davis, George T. B. *Fulfilled Prophecies That Prove the Bible*. Philadelphia: The Million Testaments Campaigns, Inc., 1931.
37. Davis, George T. B. *Bible Prophecies Fulfilled Today*. Philadelphia: The Million Testaments Campaigns, Inc., 1955.
38. Dougherty, Raymond P. *Nabonidus and Belsazzar*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929.
39. Durant, Will. *Caesar and Christ*. In *The Story of Civilization* series, vol. 3. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944.
40. Earle, Ralph. *How We Got Our Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.
41. Elder, John. *Prophecies, Idols and Diggers*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1960.
42. *Encyclopedia Britannica* 3 (1970).
43. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1970.
44. Eusebius. *The History of the Church*.
45. Finegan, Jack. *Light From the Ancient Past*. London: Oxford Press. Distributed in the U.S. by Princeton University Press, 1946.
46. Finkelstein, Louis, ed. *The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960.
47. Fleming, Jim. Lecture at the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, January, 1987.
48. Fleming, Jim. Lecture on cassette tape and booklet entitled, "Jesus Around the Sea." P.O. Box 71065, Jerusalem, Israel.
49. Fodor, Eugene. *Fodor's Israel*. New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1974.
50. Frank, Henry Thomas. *Bible, Archaeology and Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.
51. Free, Joseph P. *Archaeology and Bible History*. Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press Publications, 1950, 1969.
52. Free, Joseph P. "Archaeology and the Bible." *HIS* magazine 9 (May 1949).

## SECTION 1

## Part I: Bibliography

1. Albright, William F. *Archaeology and the Religions of Israel*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956.
2. Albright, William F. *From Stone Age to Christianity*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1946.
3. Albright, William F. *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1955.
4. Albright, William F. "Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament Archaeology." *The Teacher's Year*. Ed. E. Jerry Vardaman. N.d.
5. Albright, William F. *The Archaeology of Palestine*. Rev. ed. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1960.
6. Albright, William F. "The Bible After Twenty Years of Archaeology." *Religion in Life* 21 (1952).
7. Albright, William F. *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra*. New York: Harper, 1960.
8. Albright, William F. "The Oldest Hebrew Letters: Lachish Ostraca." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 70 (April 1938).
9. Albright, William F. "Toward a More Conservative View." *Christianity Today*, January 18, 1963.
10. Allegro, John. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Reappraisal*. New York: Penguin Books, 1964.
11. Amiot, Francois; Brunot, Amecée; Daniélou, Jean; and Daniel-Rops, Henri. *The Sources for the Life of Christ*. Translated by P. J. Hepburne-Scott. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962.
12. Archer, Gleason L. *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1964.
13. Archer, Gleason L. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1973.
14. *Babylonian Talmud*. Daba Bathra 4a.
15. *Babylonian Talmud*. Berakhoth 13a.
16. *Babylonian Talmud*. Megillah 7b, Ketuboth 50a, and elsewhere.
17. *Babylonian Talmud*. Pesahim 57a.
18. *Babylonian Talmud*. Sanhedrin 99b.
19. Barton, G. A. *Archaeology and the Bible*. 7th ed. Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1937.
20. Baur, Ferdinand C. *Church History of the First Three Centuries*. 2nd ed. Tübingen. English translation by Allan Menzies. London, 1878.
21. Beck, John Clark, Jr. *The Fall of Tyre According to Ezekiel's Prophecy*. Unpublished master's thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1971.
22. Blaikie, William G. *A Manual of Bible History*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1904.
23. Blaiklock, Edward Musgrave. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: William D. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959.
24. Blaiklock, Edward Musgrave. *The Archaeology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.

53. Freeman, James M. *Manners and Customs of the Bible*. Reprint ed. Plainfield, IL: Logos International, 1972.
54. Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968.
55. Gerhardsen, Birger. *Memory and Manuscript*. Translated by Eric J. Sharpe. Copenhagen: Viladsen og Christensen, 1964.
56. Goguel, Maurice. *The Life of Jesus*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1944.
57. Gordon, C. H. "Biblical Customs and the Nuzi Tablets." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 3 (February 1940).
58. Gordon, Cyrus. "The Patriarchal Age." *Journal of Bible and Religion* 21, no. 4 (October 1955).
59. Gottschalk, Louis R. *Understanding History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.
60. Greenlee, J. Harold. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964.
61. Greenslade, Stanley Lawrence, ed. *Cambridge History of the Bible*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
62. Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1970.
63. Guthrie, Donald. "Canon of the New Testament." In *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenny, gen. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975.
64. Guthrie, Donald. "Canon of Scripture." In *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Rev. ed. J. D. Douglas, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.
65. Hamilton, Floyd E. *The Basis of Christian Faith*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927.
66. Harris, Michael P.; Levin, Marlin; and Wilwerth, James. "Who Was Jesus?" *Time*, August 15, 1968.
67. Haupt, R. S. "Lachish - Frontier Fortress of Judah." *Biblical Archaeologist* vol. 1, no. 4 (December 1938).
68. Higgins, David C. *The Edomites Considered Historically and Prophetically*. Unpublished master's thesis. Dallas Theological Seminary, 1960.
69. Hoehner, H. W. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977.
70. Hoehner, Harold W. Class notes.
71. Horn, S. H. "Recent Illumination of the Old Testament." *Christianity Today* 12 (June 21, 1968).
72. Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*.
73. Jamieson, Robert; Faussett, A. R.; and Brown, David. *A Commentary: Critical, Exegetical and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961.
74. Jidejian, Nina. *Tyre Through the Ages*. Beirut: Dar El-Mashreq Publishers, 1969.
75. Josephus, *Antiquities*. 15. 11. 5.
76. Josephus, Flavius. "Flavius Josephus Against Apion." *Josephus' Complete Works*. Translated by William Whiston. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960.
77. Kenyon, Frederic G. *The Story of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967.
78. Kenyon, Frederic G. *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941.
79. Kenyon, Frederic G. *The Bible and Archaeology*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1940.
80. Kenyon, Frederic G. *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1901.

81. Kitchen, K. A. *The Ancient Orient and the Old Testament*. Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1966.
82. Kimmel, Werner Georg. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Rev. ed. Howard Clark Kee, translator. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975.
83. Lea, John W. *The Greatest Book in the World*. Philadelphia: n.pub., 1929.
84. Leach, Charles. *Our Bible: How We Got It*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1898.
85. Maier, Paul. *First Easter*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973.
86. McAfee, Cleland B. *The Greatest English Classic*. New York: n.pub., 1912.
87. McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Vol. I. San Bernardino, CA: Here's a Life Publishers, 1979.
88. McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Vol. II. San Bernardino, CA: Here's a Life Publishers, 1981.
89. McDowell, Josh and Wilson, Bill. *He Walked Among Us: Evidence for the Historical Jesus*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's a Life Publishers, 1988.
90. Metzger, Bruce M. *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963.
91. Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.
92. Meyers, Eric M., and Strange, James F. *Archaeology, the Rabbinic and Early Christianity*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981.
93. *Mishnah*, Aboth 3. 9.
94. Montgomery, John W. (ed.). *Christianity for the Tough Minded*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1973.
95. Montgomery, John Warwick. *History and Christianity*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971.
96. Montgomery, John Warwick. *History and Christianity*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971 (summarizing Aristotle, *Art of Poetry*, 1460b-61b).
97. Morris, Henry M. *The Bible and Modern Science*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966.
98. Murphy, Cullen. "Who Do Men Say That I Am?" *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1986.
99. Myers, Philip Van Ness. *General History for Colleges and High Schools*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1889.
100. Nelson, Nina. *Your Guide to Lebanon*. London: Alvin Redman, Ltd., 1965.
101. Orr, James, ed. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960.
102. Peters, F. E. *The Harvest of Hellenism*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971.
103. Pinnock, Clark. *Set Forth Your Case*. New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1968.
104. Price, I. M. *The Monuments and the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1925.
105. Rackl, Hans-Wolf. *Archaeology Underwater*. Translated by Ronald J. Floyd. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968.
106. Radmacher, Earl. Conversation with Dr. Radmacher. Dallas, Texas, June 1972.
107. Ramm, Bertrand. "Can I Trust My Old Testament?" *The King's Business*, February 1949.
108. Ramm, Bertrand. *Protestant Christian Evidences*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957.
109. Ramsay, W. M. St. *Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962.

110. Ramsay, W. M. *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953.
111. Raven, John H. *Old Testament Introduction*. London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1910.
112. Reicke, Bo. *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.
113. Rhodes, A. B. "The Book of Daniel." In *Interpretation* 4. 1952.
114. Riesefeld, Harold. *The Gospel Tradition*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970.
115. Robinson, John A. T. *Time*, March 21, 1977.
116. Robinson, George Livingston. *The Sarcophagus of an Ancient Civilization*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1930.
117. Rowley, H. H. *The Growth of the Old Testament*. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950.
118. Sanders, C. *Introduction to Research in English Literary History*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1952.
119. Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882.
120. Sherwin-White, A. N. *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963.
121. Smith, Wilbur M. *The Incomparable Book*. Minneapolis: Beacon Publications, 1961.
122. Smith, George. *The Book of Prophecy*. London: Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1865.
123. Stewart, Herbert. *The Stronghold of Prophecy*. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Publications, Ltd., 1941.
124. Stoner, Peter W. *Science Speaks: An Evaluation of Certain Christian Evidences*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1963.
125. Turner, E. G. *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
126. Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Rev. ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.
127. Unger, Merrill F. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954.
128. Urquhart, John. *The Wonders of Prophecy*. New York: Charles C. Cook, n.d.
129. Vos, Howard Frederick. *Genesis and Archaeology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1963.
130. Vos, Howard Frederick. *Can I Trust My Bible?* Chicago: Moody Press, 1963.
131. Vos, Howard Frederick. *Fulfilled Prophecy in Israel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1950.
132. Wilson, Robert Dick. Quoted in "The Incomparable Wilson: The Man Who Mastered Forty-Five Languages and Dialects" by H. W. Coray. *Which Bible?* Ed. by David Otis Fuller. Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publishers, 1971.
133. Wilson, Joseph D. *Did Daniel Write Daniel?* New York: Charles C. Cook, n.d.
134. Wilson, Ian. *Jesus: The Evidence*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984.
135. Wright, G. Ernest. "The Present State of Biblical Archeology." *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*. Edited by Harold R. Willoughby. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.
136. Young, Edward J. "The Authority of the Old Testament." *The Infallible Word* (a symposium). Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1946.

## SECTION 1

o o o

## Part II: Answering the Bible's Critics

## 10

HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE  
THE MIRACLES  
IN THE BIBLE?

(RF/16-19, A/80)

One attitude surfaces repeatedly when we explore history. It is what I call the "Hume hangover." It is the argument by David Hume that belief can be justified by probability and that probability is based upon the uniformity or consistency of nature. In other words, we are right to believe an experience that conforms to normal, ordinary human experiences. Anything that is unique so far as normal human experience is concerned — such as a miracle — "should be rejected."

For example, which is more probable: The witnesses of Christ's resurrection were mistaken, or Jesus was raised from the dead?

According to Hume's "modern scientific attitude" the answer is obvious, because miracles simply can't happen.

Another way of expressing this biased view of history is that we live in a closed universe in which every event (past, present and future) must have a natural explanation. This rules out totally the intervention of the supernatural. No matter what happens or how strong the evidence, the miraculous must be rejected.