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Are The New Testament Documents Early?

Excerpt From Chapter Nine (Pages 235 - 248) of the Book *I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist* by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek.

Quotations of the Bible From Early Christian Literature

The number of such quotations of the Bible known from early Christian literature is vast - over 36,000 quotes are known from before the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. (McDowell, p. 52). Sir David Dalrymple once asked himself the question, "Suppose that the New Testament had been destroyed, and every copy of it lost by the end of the 3rd century, could it have been collected together again from the writing of the Fathers of the second and third centuries?" His answer? "...as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses." (McDowell, pp. 50-51)

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was martyred around 180 A.D. He was a student of Polycarp, the long-lived disciple of St. John himself. Extant quotes of Irenaeus' writings include quotes from Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, I Corinthians, I Peter, Hebrews and Titus (By the time of Irenaeus the Gospels had clearly been around a good while, and all four were well known and recognized among Christians.).

Ignatius (70-110 A.D.) quoted from Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians, Phillipians, Galatians, Colossians, James, I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, and I Peter.

Barnabas quoted from the N.T. around 70 A.D., **Hermas** 95 A.D., and **Tatian** 170 A.D.

Clement of Alexandria, who lived 150-212 A.D., quoted from all but three books of the NT.

Justin Martyr, in 133 A.D., quoted from the Gospels, Acts, Revelation, and both Pauline and the other epistles. (McDowell, pp. 51-52). (History and the Bible)

All the New Testament books were written before A.D. 100 (About 70 years after the death of Jesus)

"... in letters written between A.D. 95 and 110, three early church fathers – Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp – quoted passages out of 25 of the 27 books in the New Testament. Only the short books of Jude and 2 John were not referenced, but they certainly had been written. (Jude had written his short letter by this time, because, being Jesus' half brother, he was almost certainly dead by A.D. 100; and 2 John had been written because it came before 3 John, which was one of the 25 books quoted.)

Since Clement was in Rome and Ignatius and Polycarp were hundreds of miles away in Smyrna, the original New Testament documents had to have been written significantly earlier; otherwise they could not have circulated across the ancient world by that time. Therefore, it is safe to say that all of the New Testament was written by A.D. 100.

But that's just the latest that they could have been written. Most were written much earlier. How much earlier? Most, if not all, before 70.

Most if not all of these books were written before A.D. 70 (about 40 years after the death of Jesus)

Imagine this. You are devout Jew in the 1st Century. The center of your national, economic, and religious life is Jerusalem, and especially the temple. It has been that way in your nation, your family, and almost every Jew's family for a thousand years, ever since Solomon built the first temple. Most of the newest temple, constructed by King Herod, was completed when you were a child, but portions of it are still under construction and have been since 19 B.C. For your entire life you have attended services and brought sacrifices there to atone for the sins you've committed against God. Why? Because you and your countrymen consider this temple the earthly dwelling place of the God of the universe, the maker of Heaven and Earth, the very Deity, whose name is so holy you dare not utter it.

As a young man you begin following a Jew named Jesus who claims to be the long awaited Messiah predicted in your Scriptures. He performs miracles, teaches profound truths, and scolds and befuddles the priests in charge of the temple. Incredibly, he predicts his own death and resurrection. He also predicts that the temple itself will be destroyed before your generation passes away (Mark 13:2, 30).

Jesus is convicted of blasphemy by your temple priests and is crucified on the eve of the Passover, one of your holiest holidays. He's buried in a Jewish tomb, but three days later you and his other followers see Jesus alive just as he predicted. You touch him, eat with him, and he continues to perform miracles, the last being his ascension into heaven. Forty years later your temple is destroyed just as Jesus had predicted along with the entire city and thousands of your countrymen.

Question: If you and your fellow followers write accounts of Jesus after the temple and city were destroyed in A.D. 70, aren't you at least going to mention that unprecedented national, human, economic, and religious tragedy somewhere in your writings, especially this risen Jesus had predicted it? Of course! Well, here's the problem for those who say the New Testament was written after 70. There's absolutely no mention of the fulfillment of this predicted tragedy anywhere in the New Testament documents. This means most, if not all, of the documents must have been written prior to 70.

Some may object, "That's an argument from silence, and that doesn't prove anything." But in fact it is not an argument from silence, for the New Testament documents speak of Jerusalem and the temple, or activities associated with them, as if they were still intact at the time of the writings. But even if this were an argument from silence that doesn't mean it's wrong. Consider these modern parallels. If a former aboard the USS Arizona wrote a book related to the history of that ship, and the book ends with no mention of the ship being sunk and 1177 of its sailors being killed at Pearl Harbour, do you have any doubt that the book must have been written prior to December 7th 1941? Or, if a former tenant of the World Trade Center wrote a book related to the history of those buildings, and the book ends with the towers still standing, there's absolutely no mention of the Towers being destroyed and nearly three thousand people being murdered by Muslim terrorists, do you have any doubt that the book must have been written prior to September 11th 2001? Of course not.

Well, the disaster in A.D. 70 in terms of lives, property, and national scope, was many magnitudes greater than Pearl Harbour and 9/11. It marked the end of such a terrible war that Josephus, who himself surrendered to the Romans in 67, called it the "greatest" war of all time. The Jews didn't lose just one ship or a couple of prominent buildings; they lost their entire country, their capital city, and their temple, which had been the center of their religious, political, and economic life for the last thousand years. In addition, tens of thousands of their countrymen were dead and hundreds of the villages burned to the

ground.

So if we could expect tragedy such as Pearl Harbour to be mentioned in the relevant writings of today, we certainly should expect the events of A.D. 70 to be cited somewhere in the New Testament (especially since the events were predicted by Jesus). But since the New Testament does not mention these events anywhere and suggests that Jerusalem and the temple are still intact, we can conclude reasonably that most, if not all, of the New Testament documents must have been written prior to 70

How much earlier?

Many New Testament books were composed before A.D. 62 (about 30 years after the death of Jesus)

Imagine this: You're a first century medical doctor who was embarked on a research project to record the events of the early church. This research will require you to interview eye witnesses of the early church and to travel with the Apostle Paul as he visits new churches across the ancient world. You record prominent events in the life of the church such as the early work of John and Peter, as well as the martyrdom of Stephen and James (the brother of John). IN Paul's life you record everything from sermons, beatings, and trials to shipwrecks and imprisonments. You also record his theological summit with Peter and James, who is Jesus' brother and the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

As you described many of these events, your narrative is so filled with details that every informed reader will know that either you must have access to eyewitness, testimony or you are an eyewitness yourself. For e.g., as you follow Paul on his travels you shift from using the pronoun "they" to "we", and you correctly record their names of local politicians, local slang, local weather patterns, local topography, local business practices; you even record the right depth of water about a quarter mile off Malta as your ship is about to run aground in a storm! In fact, you record at least 84 such details in the last half of your narrative.

Question: Since you obviously find it important to record all of the minor details, if your main subject, the apostle Paul, was executed at the hands of the Roman emperor Nero, do you think you would record it? Or, If Jesus' brother, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, was killed at the hands of the Sanhedrin, the same Jewish body that sentenced Jesus to die, do you think you would record it? Of Course! And if you failed to record such momentous events, we would rightly assume that you wrote your narrative *before their deaths*.

This is the situation we find in the New Testament. Luke, the medical doctor, meticulously records all kinds of details in Acts, which chronicles the early church (a listing of 84 historically confirmed details in the next chapter). Luke records the deaths of two Christian martyrs (Stephen and James the brother of John), but his account ends with two of its primary leaders (Paul, and James the brother of Jesus) still living. Acts ends abruptly with Paul under house arrest in Rome, and there's no mention of James having died. We know from Clement of Rome, writing in the late first century, and from other early church fathers, that Paul was executed during the reign of Nero, which ended in A.D. 68. {2} And we know from Josephus that James was killed in 62. So we can conclude, beyond reasonable doubt that the book of Acts was written before 62.

If you're still not convinced, consider this modern parallel: suppose someone wrote a book recording the events surrounding the main figures of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. The book begins with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and includes the Civil Rights legislation of 1964, the marches and protests of Martin Luther King Jr, including his arrest and imprisonment, and his great "I have a dream" speech on the mall in Washington D.C.

Question: If the book ends with of Martin Luther King Jr, the very leader of the movement, still alive, when would you conclude the book was written? Obviously before his assassination in April of 1968. This is the same situation we have with Luke's narrative. His book ends with the main leaders still alive, which means it was written no later than 62. (Classical scholar and historian Colin Hemer gives thirteen additional reasons why Acts was written by 62.) {3}.

If Acts was written by 62, then the Gospel of Luke was written before that. How do we know? Because Luke reminds the original recipient of Acts, Theophilus (who was probably an important Roman official), that he had written to him earlier. The first verse of Acts says, "in my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach.." The 'former book' must be the Gospel of Luke, because Luke addresses that to Theophilus as well (Luke 1:1-4, see citation below).

How much earlier is Luke? It would seem reasonable to place Luke at or before A.D. 60. Why? Because 62 is the *latest* Acts was written, and there had to be some time between Luke's first writing to Theophilus

and his second. If Acts is no later than 62 (and quite possibly earlier), then Luke is realistically 60 or before.

This date also makes sense in light of Paul's quotation of Luke's gospel. Writing sometime between A.D. 62-65. Paul quotes from Luke 10:7 and calls it 'scripture' (1Timothy 5:18). Therefore, Luke's gospel must have been in circulation long enough before that time in order for both Paul and Timothy to know its contents & regard it as scripture. (By the way, this was no minor claim for Paul to make. In effect, he was making the bold assertion that Luke's gospel was just as inspired as the Holy Jewish Bible. The Old Testament he treasured so much!)

If Luke was written by A.D. 60, then Mark must have been written in the mid-to-late 50's if not earlier. Why question because Luke says that he got his facts by checking with eyewitness sources:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seems also good to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things that you have been taught. (Luke 1-4)

Most scholars believe Mark's gospel was one of those eye witness sources. And if those Dead Sea Scrolls fragments we mentioned above are really from A.D. 50-70, then certainly Mark is earlier. But even if Mark isn't before Luke, the very fact that we know beyond reasonable doubt that Luke is before 62 and probably before 60 means that we have meticulously recorded eye witness testimony written between 25 or 30 years of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection. This is far too early to be legendary. It also means that the eyewitness sources go back even earlier. How much earlier?

Some New Testament Book's Were Penned In The 40s And 50s A.D., With Sources From The 30s (Only The A Few Years After The Death Of Jesus)

As certain as we are about the date of Luke's records, there is no doubt from anyone, including the most liberal of scholars, that Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth (which is in modern day Greece) sometime between 55 and 56. In this letter, Paul speaks about moral problems in the church, and then proceeds to discuss controversies about tongues, prophecies, and the Lord Supper. This, of course, demonstrates that the church in Corinth was experiencing some kind of miraculous activity and was already observing the Lord's Supper with in 25 years of the Resurrection.

But the most significant aspect of this letter is that it contains the earliest and most authenticated testimony of the Resurrection itself. In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul writes down testimony he received from others and the testimony that was authenticated when Christ appeared to him:

For I delivered to you what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all of the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also (1 Cor. 15:3-8, NASB).

Where did Paul get what he 'received'? He probably received from Peter and James when he visited them in Jerusalem three years after his conversion (Gal. 1:18). Why is this important? Because, as Gary Habermas points out, most scholars (even liberals) believe that this testimony was part of an early creed that dates right back to the Resurrection itself, eighteen *months* to eight *years after*, but some say even earlier. {4} There is no possible way that such testimony could describe a legend, because it goes right back to the time and place of the event itself. {5} If there was ever a place that a legendary Resurrection could *not* occur it was Jerusalem, because the Jews and the Romans were all too eager to squash Christianity and could have easily done so by parading Jesus' body around the city.

More over, notice that Paul cites fourteen eyewitnesses whose names are known: the twelve apostles, James, and Peter himself ("Cephas" is the Aramaic for Peter), and then references an appearance to more than 500 others at one time. Included in those groups was one skeptic, James, and one outright enemy, Paul himself. By naming so many people who could verify what Paul was saying, he was, in effect, challenging his Corinthian readers to check him out. Bible scholar William Lillie puts it this way:

What gives a special authority to the list as historical evidence is the reference to most of the five hundred brethren being still alive. St. Paul says, in effect: "If you don't believe me, you can ask them." Such a statement in an admittedly genuine letter written within 30 years of the event is

almost as strong evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly two thousand years ago. {6}

If the Resurrection had not occurred, why would Paul give such a list of supposed eyewitnesses? He would have immediately lost all credibility with his Corinthian readers by lying so blatantly.

In addition to 1 Corinthians, there are numerous other New Testament documents that were written in the 50s or earlier. Galatians (A.D. 48), 1 Thessalonians (50-54), and Romans (57-58) are all in this category. In fact (and we know we may be going out on a limb here!) all of Paul's works had to have been written before he died, which was sometime in the mid-60s.

But it's not just conservative scholars who believe these early dates. Even some radical critics, such as atheist John A. T. Robinson, admit the New Testament documents were written early. Known for his role in launching the "Death of God" movement, Robinson wrote a revolutionary book titled *Redating the New Testament*, in which he posited that most New Testament books, including all four Gospels, were written sometime between A.D. 40 and 65.

The great and once-liberal archaeologist William F. Albright, after seeing how well the New Testament fit with the archaeological and historical data, wrote, "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80." {7} Elsewhere Albright said, "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the 40s and the 80s of the first century (very probably sometime between about A.D. 50 and 75)." {8}

So we know beyond a reasonable doubt that most if not all the New Testament documents are early. But skeptics have a couple of objections.

SKEPTIC'S ADVOCATE

The Documents Are Not Early Enough

Some skeptics may think that a 15- to 40-year gap between the life of Christ and the writings about him is too wide for the testimony to be reliable. But they are mistaken.

Think about events that occurred 15 to 40 years ago. When historians write about those events, we don't say, "Oh, that's impossible! No one can remember events from that long ago! Such skepticism is clearly unwarranted. Historians today write accurately about events in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s by consulting their own memories, those of other eyewitnesses, and any written sources from the time.

This process is the same one the New Testament writers used to record their documents. Like a good reporter, Luke interviewed eyewitnesses. {9} And as we'll see in the next chapter, some New Testament writers were eyewitnesses themselves. They could remember 15- to 40-year-old events quite easily, just as you can. Why can you remember certain events vividly from 15 to 40 years ago and (if you're old enough) even further back? You may be able to remember certain events because they made a great emotional impact on you. (In fact, those of us who are "over the hill" can remember some events from 30 years ago better than those from 30 minutes ago!)

Where were you and what were you doing when President Kennedy was assassinated? When the *Challenger* exploded? When the second plane hit the tower? Why can you remember those events so well? Because they made a deep emotional impact on you. Since an event like the Resurrection certainly would have made a deep emotional impact on the New Testament writers and the other eyewitnesses they may have consulted, it's easy to see why the history of Jesus could be easily recalled many years later, especially in a culture with an established reliance on oral testimony (more on this below).

Furthermore, if the major works of the New Testament are eyewitness accounts written within two generations of the events, then they are not likely to be legend. Why? Because historical research indicates that a myth cannot begin to crowd out historical facts while the eyewitnesses are still alive. For this reason, Roman historian A. N. Sherwin-White calls the mythological view of the New Testament "unbelievable". {10} William Lane Craig writes, "The tests show that even two generations is too short to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard core of historical fact." {11} Inside of those two generations, eyewitnesses are still around to correct the errors of historical revisionists.

We are seeing this tendency right now with regard to the Holocaust. In early twenty-first century, we've begun to see some people claim that the Holocaust never happened. Why are the revisionists trying this now? Because most of the eyewitnesses have now died. Fortunately, since we have written eyewitness testimony from the Holocaust, the revisionists are not successful in passing off their lies as the truth. The

same holds true for the New Testament. If the New Testament was written within 60 years of the events it records, it is highly unlikely those events could be legendary. And as we have seen, all of the New Testament documents were written within 60 years of the events, and many much earlier.

Why Not Earlier?

At this point the skeptic may say, "Okay, fine. The New Testament is early, but it's not as early as I would expect. Why didn't they write down their testimony earlier? If I saw what they said they saw, I wouldn't wait 15 or 20 years to write it down." There are a number of possible reasons for the wait.

First, since the New Testament writers were living in a culture where the vast majority of people were illiterate, there was no initial need or utility in writing it down. A first-century people in Palestine, by necessity, developed strong memories in order to remember and pass on information. Craig writes,

In an oral culture like that of first-century Palestine the ability to memorize and retain large tracts of oral tradition was a highly prized and highly developed skill. From the earliest age children in the home, elementary school, and the synagogue were taught to memorize faithfully sacred traditions. The disciples would have exercised similar care with the teachings of Jesus. {12}

In such an oral culture, facts about Jesus may have been put into a memorable form. There's good evidence for this. Gary Habermas has identified forty one short sections of the New Testament that appear to be creeds, compact sayings that could easily be remembered and that were probably passed along orally before they were put into writing (one of these creeds we've already mentioned. I Cor. 15: 3-8.) {13}

Second, since some of the New Testament writers may have had high hopes that Jesus was going to come backing their lifetime, they saw no immediate need to write it down. But as they aged, perhaps they thought it wise to put their observations down on Papyrus.

Third, as Christianity spread all over the ancient world, writing became the most efficient means to communicate with the rapidly expanding church. In other words, time and distance forced the New Testament writers to write it down.

On the other hand, there may not have been a gap for at least one Gospel. If those fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls are really from Mark (and they most likely are), then that Gospel might have been written in the 30s. Why? Because the fragments are of copies, not of the original. If we have copies from the 50s, then the original must have been earlier. {14}

Moreover, many scholars believe there actually were written sources that predate the Gospels. In fact, Luke, in the first four verses of his Gospel, says that he checked with other sources, though some of these may have been earlier Gospels (e.g., Matthew and Mark). {15} Was one of his sources Mark's Gospel? We don't know for sure. It certainly seems like Luke is speaking of *several other written* sources, because he says, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us..." (Luke 1:1). Luke may have referenced Mark's Gospel and other written testimonies including public court records from Jesus' trial.

In the end, it doesn't really matter whether or not there were written sources that predate the New Testament. Nor does it matter if Mark was written in the 30s A.D. Why? Because the documents we do know about are early enough and contain early source material. As we'll see in the next chapter, many if not all of the New Testament documents were written by eyewitnesses or their contemporaries within 15 to 40 years of Jesus, and some contain oral or other written testimony that goes back to the Resurrection itself. In other words, *the real issue isn't so much the date of writings, but the date of the sources used in the writings.*

Why Not More?

Skeptics may ask, "If Jesus actually did **rise from the dead**, shouldn't there be more written about Him than there is?" In response, we actually have more testimony that we might expect, and certainly more than enough to establish beyond a reasonable doubt what happened. As we have seen, Jesus is referenced by far more authors than the Roman emperor at the time (Jesus' 43 authors to Tiberius's 10 to 150 years of their lives). Nine of those authors were eyewitnesses or contemporaries of the events, and they wrote 27 documents, the majority of which mention or imply the Resurrection. That's more than

enough to establish historicity.

For those who still think there should have been even more written about Jesus, New Testament scholar Craig Blomberg offers four reasons why that's not a reasonable expectation: 1) the humble beginnings of Christianity; 2) the remote location of Palestine on the eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire; 3) the small percentage of the works of ancient Graeco-Roman historian that have survived (this could be due to loss, decay, destruction, or all of the above); and 4) the lack of attention paid by surviving historical documents to Jewish figures in general.{16}

Nevertheless, some skeptics still think there should be testimony from some of the 500 people who allegedly saw the risen Christ. Skeptic Farrell Till is one of them. During a debate on the Resurrection that I (Norm) had with him in 1994, Till demanded, "Trot out one of those 500 witnesses or give us something that they wrote, and we will accept that as reliable proof or evidence."{17}

This is an unreasonable expectation, for a number of reasons.

First, as we have already pointed out, first-century Palestine was an oral culture. Most people were illiterate and remembered and passed on information orally.

Second, how many of those predominately illiterate eyewitnesses would have written something even if they could write? Even today, with a much higher literacy rate and all the conveniences of modern writing and research tools, how many people do you know who have written a book or even an article on any subject? How many do you know who have written a book or article on a contemporary historical event, even a significant event like 9/11? Probably not many, and certainly fewer than one out of 500. (Has Farrell Till ever written an article on a major historical event he witnessed?)

Third, even if some of those 500 average people did write down what they saw, why would skeptics expect their testimony to survive for 2,000 years? The New Testament survives intact because of the thousands of manuscripts copied by scribes for a growing church over the centuries. Historical works from the major ancient historians such as Josephus, Tacitus, and Pliny survive in just a handful of copies, and those copies are hundreds of years from the originals. Why do the skeptics think anything is going to be written, much less survive, from an ancient group of illiterate Galilean peasants?{18}

Finally, we do know the names of many of the 500, and their testimony is written down in the New Testament. They include Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, and James – plus nine who are named elsewhere as apostles (Matthew 10 and Acts 1).

So we shouldn't expect more testimony than what we have about Jesus. And what we do have is more than enough to establish historicity.

EndNotes

{00} Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament Reliable?* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 38-40.

{0} See John 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:4; Heb. 5:1-3; 7:23, 27; 8-3-5; 9:25; 10:1, 3-4, 11; 13:10-11; Rev. 11:1-2.

{1} See Barnett, *Is the New Testament Reliable?* 65.

{2} See Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 343.

{3} Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 375-382. For a summary of Hemer's reasons. See Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 528

{4} Most, if not all, scholars date the origin of this material prior to A.D. 40. See Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1996), 152-157; See also Habermas and Licona, *Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, forthcoming), chapter 7.

{5} In addition, by writing "I delivered to you," Paul was reminding them that he had already given them that testimony earlier. So while he wrote them in, say, 56, he must have verbalized it to them during an

earlier visit to Corinth, probably in A.D. 51. This also means Paul must have received it prior to 51, which means this information was in existence prior to then.

{6} William Lillie, "The Empty Tomb and the Resurrection," in D. E. Nineham, et al., *Historicity and Chronology in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1965), 125.

{7} William F. Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1956), 136

{8} William F. Albright, "William Albright: Toward a More Conservative View," *Christianity Today*, January 18, 1963, 3.

{9} If Luke really did interview eyewitnesses as he claims, then his Gospel contains early eyewitness testimony that should be considered just as reliable as if Luke had seen it himself. Eyewitness testimony is primary source material even if it was recorded later by someone else.

{10} A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 189.

{11} William Lane Craig, *The Son Rises* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 101.

{12} William Lane Craig, "The Evidence for Jesus." Posted online at <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/rediscover2.html>. Accessed August 10, 2003.

{13} Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* (Joplin, Mo.; College Press, 1996), chapter 7.

{14} Some scholars think there's other circumstantial evidence that Mark was written in the 30s. Mark mentions the high priest five times but doesn't name him. The three other Gospels identify him as Caiaphas. Why doesn't Mark identify him? Perhaps because Caiaphas was still the high priest when Mark writing, so there was no need to name him. If this is true, then Mark was written by A.D. 37 because that's when Caiaphas's high priesthood ended (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:43).

{15} Some scholars believe New Testament writers used written records that predate the Gospels. Luke 1:1 seems to confirm this. However, many liberal scholars suggest that the Gospels are not eyewitness accounts but were derived from one yet undiscovered source known as "Q". For an outstanding critique of biblical criticism and the idea that there was a "Q" source from which the New Testament writers drew, see former "Q" proponent Eta Linnemann, *Biblical Criticism on Trial* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2001); see also Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 618-621.

{16} Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Ill.; InterVarsity Press, 1987), 197.

{17} For the debate on audiotape, see www.impactapologetics.com.

{18} Incidentally, while we may not have documents from the 500, their inclusion with fourteen eyewitnesses identified by name makes their seeing the risen Christ an unlikely invention of Paul.



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