

The Claims of Christ and the Reliability of the Gospels

TALK POWER POINT PRESENTATION

BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH “Woman’s Seed” - Genesis 3:15 “born of a virgin” - Isaiah 7:14	CALLED KING Psalm 2:6, Zechariah 9:9
BIRTHPLACE Born in Bethlehem - Micah 5:1-2	PRAISED BY CHILDREN Psalm 8:2
DESCENDANT OF... Abraham - Genesis 12:3, 22:18 Isaac - Genesis 17:19, 21:12 Jacob - Numbers 24:17	BETRAYED Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13
TRIBE Judah - Genesis 49:10	BLOOD MONEY PURCHASES A POTTER’S FIELD Zechariah 11:12-13
HEIR OF DAVID 2 Sam. 7:12-13, Isaiah 9:7	FALSELY ACCUSED Psalm 35:11
CALLED IMMANUEL Isaiah 7:14 , Matthew 1:23	ACCUSERS USE DEATH TO DISCREDIT HIM Wisdom 2:17-18
COME OUT OF EGYPT Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:14-15	GIVEN VINEGAR TO DRINK Psalm 69:21
DEATH OF HOLY INNOCENTS Jeremiah 31:15	DIE BEFORE TEMPLE DESTROYED Malachi 3:2
MESSENGER WILL PREPARE THE WAY Isaiah 40:3-5, Micah 4:5	DISCIPLES SCATTERED Zechariah 13:7
REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE Psalm 69:8, Isaiah 53:3	HANDS AND FEET PIERCED Psalm 22:16, Zechariah 12:10
BE A PROPHET LIKE MOSES Deuteronomy 18:15	MOCKED AND REVILED Psalm 22:7-8
DECLARED SON OF GOD Psalm 2:7	GARMENTS TAKEN BY LOT Psalm 22:18
CALLED A NAZARENE Isaiah 11:1	NO BONES BROKEN Exodus 12:46, Ps. 34:20
PREACH IN GALILEE Isaiah 9:1-2	FEEL FORSAKEN OF GOD Psalm 22:1
TEACH IN PARABLES Psalm 78:2-4, Isaiah 6:6-10	SIDE PIERCED Zechariah 12:10
PRIEST ACCORDING TO MELCHIZEDEK	BURIED WITH RICH Isaiah 53:9

Psalm 110:4	
HEALINGS Isaiah 29:18	RESURRECTION Isaiah 53:8, 11

MESSIAH AND LORD

Daniel 7:13-14	Matthew 26:64-65
"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man , and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." ¹	"Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. ' Then the high priest tore his robes, and said, ' He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. '"

THE MESSIAH KING AS THE NEW ADAM²

1. The Kingship of Adam

a. Given dominion (power to rule) over the works of God's hand.

- i. "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).
- ii. " And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill the earth and subdue it**; and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28)

¹ All Scriptural quotations are taken from the New Revised Version - Catholic Edition (2006).

² Gary Michuta, Making Sense of Mary (Grotto Press, 2013), p. 97-122.

- iii. **"You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet**, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea" (Psalm 8:7-8).

b. Adam was crowned with God's glory

- i. "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:2-5).

c. Dominion extended through righteous children.

- i. "Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion...**" (Genesis 1:28).

2. God's Original Design

- a. Adam and the Woman reign forever in Paradise.
- b. Their dominion spreads over the earth through righteous children.
- c. God's will shall be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

3. The Devil's Usurpation

- a. The Serpent (Devil) enticed Adam and the Woman to sin and join his rebellion.
- b. The Serpent's (Devil's) dominion now extends over the earth through the fallen children of Adam and Eve.
- c. The Devil becomes the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31, 16:11) who "reigns" through sin and death.

4. The First Gospel - The First Promise of the Messiah King

- a. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).
 - i. "The serpent will be defeated 'in the day of King Messiah" (*Targum Neofiti*)

5. The Kingship of the New Adam

- a. Receives dominion

- i. "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God" (Revelation 12:10)
- b. Crowned
 - i. "For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, '*What is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man, that you care for him? you made him for a little while lower than the angels, you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.*' Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor ..." (Hebrews 2:5-9). [Hebrews applies Psalm 8:5-8 to Christ]
- c. Reigns forever in the true Paradise in Heaven
 - i. "...To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the **tree of life, which is in the paradise of God**" (Revelation 2:7).
 - ii. "[T]hrough the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, **the tree of life** with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2).
 - iii. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have **the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates**" (Revelation 22:14).
 - iv. "...and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his **share in the tree of life and in the holy city**, which are described in this book" (Revelation 22:19).
- d. Dominion extended by the members of His body who are "born again" or "born from above" and keep His commandments.

- i. "For while **your obedience is known to all**, so that I rejoice over you, I would have you wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil; **then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet**" (Romans 16:19-20)
 - ii. "... **“Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come**, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. **And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death**" (Revelation 12:10-11).
 - iii. "Then the dragon was angry with the woman, **and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus**" (Revelation 12:17).
- e. He will reign, "until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25-27).
- i. **"For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.** The last enemy to be destroyed is death. **“For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.”** But when it says, "All things are put in subjection under him," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him" (1 Corinthians 15:25-27).

COULD THE GOSPELS BE WORKS OF FICTION?

ARGUMENT 1: "BIG FOOT" ARGUMENT

The Public Nature of the Claims of the Gospels

- A fiction would minimize the opportunity for rebuttal (a small historical footprint).
 - “Not write checks that can’t be cashed” that is not make claims that would be easily investigated and rebutted.
 - A fiction should claim a small number of private miracles.
 - Raises the possibility of collusion.
 - Would be difficult, if not impossible, to refute or find rebuttal testimony.

Fiction / Hoax = CLAIMS A SMALL HISTORICAL FOOTPRINT

THE MIRACLES PRESENTED IN THE GOSPELS / ACTS CLAIMS AND EXTREMELY LARGE HISTORIC FOOTPRINT

- **Multiple Locations**

Cana (2), Capernaum (3), Jerusalem, Sychar (1), Galilee (multiple), Nain (1), Gersenses (2), Bethsaida (multiple), Gennesaret (multiple), Tyre and Sidon (1), the Decapolis (ten cities) (multiple), Jericho (1), Emmaus (1), Damascus .

- **Miracles seen by a large audiences / crowds**

- Matthew 2:3, 16, 4:23, 25, 5:1, 7:28, 8:1, (5), 16, 18, 34, 9:2, 8, 36, 11:4-6, 11:20, 12:15, 22-23, 46, 13:2, 34, 54, 14:13-14, 21, 15:33, 38, 19:2-3, 13, 20:29-30, 21:9, 23:1, 27:55; Mark 1:33, 45, 2:2, 4, 13, 15, 3:7, 9-10, 21, 31-32, 4:1, 5:21, 24, 27-31, 35, 37, 6:2, 31, 33-34, 7:17, 8:1, 9, 34, 9:25, 10:1, 13, 46, 11:32, 12:12, 14:2, 15:6, 40-41; Luke 1:1-2, 21, 24, 3:7, 4:16, 5:1, 6:19, 7:21-22, 8:4, 19, 35-37, 9:12-

14, (18), 10:23, 11:14, 12:1, 15, 54, 13:1, 15:1-2, 11-12, 18:15, 35-36, 43, 19:47-48, 21:37-38, 22:4; 52-53, 23:1, 24:18-20; John 2:23, 3:39-42, 5:1-3, 15-16, 6:1-2, 14-24, 7:14, 31-32, 8:2, 9:8-9, 13-14, 40, 10:19-21, 11:31-33, 45, 56-57, 12:9-11, 12-13, 34, 37, 19:20, 20:25, 30-31.3, Acts 3:17-18, 4:1-2.

- **Claims that Jesus' works were well known**

Matthew 4:24, 8:33, 9:10, 14, (18), 25-26, 31, 33, 12:14, 13:55-56, 14:1, 34-35, 15:39-16:1, 13, 17:14, 24, 21:3, 10-11, 14-16, 26:59, 73, 27:39-40, 57; Mark 1:28, 3:8, 5:15-20, 6:14, 54-55, 7:24, 36, 8:27, 11:5-6, 14:14, 66-67, (69-70), 15:29-30; Luke 1:65-66, 2:8-9, 2:15, 20, 46-47, 4:36-37, 7:1-2, 16-18, 8:40, 19:1-2, 22:56; John 1:10-11, 19, 3:1-2, 3:32, 3:44-45, 4:1, 7:11-13, 28, 12:17-19, Acts 1:18-19, 22, 32.

AFTERMATH / REACTION TO THE NT CLAIMS?

- **No dispute over WHETHER a miracle occurred, but HOW it was performed.**
 - **...by the power of the Devil** (Matthew 9:34, 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:51)
 - **...LATER MAGIC** (Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 43a, Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book 2, 48-53, etc.).

ARGUMENT 2: THE AFTERMATH OF THE RESURRECTION

- "When Jesus was crucified... his followers were discouraged and depressed. They no longer had confidence that Jesus had been sent by God because anyone crucified was accursed by God. They also had been taught that God would not let his Messiah suffer death...**Then after a short period of time**, we see them abandoning their occupations, regathering, and committing themselves to spread a very specific message-- that Jesus Christ was the Messiah of God who died on a cross, returned to life, and was seen alive by them" (J. P. Moreland in Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*, p. 246-247).

ARE THE GOSPELS ACCURATE?

RABBI / DISCIPLE TRAINING

From E. Schurer's work *History of the Jewish People*, Volume 2, p. 324-325

- [The rabbis' training was so]...that the pupils **should remember with accuracy the entire matter with its thousands upon thousands of minutiae**...The teacher was obliged to repeat his matter again and again with his pupils. Hence the Rabbinic diction "to repeat" means exactly the same as 'to teach.'"
- "This repetition was not however performed by the teacher only delivering his matter. The whole proceeding was, on the contrary, disputational. The teacher brought before his pupils several legal questions for their decision and let them answer them, or [he would] answer them himself. The pupils were allowed to propose questions to the teacher."
- "[The disciple]... had only two duties. **One was to keep everything faithfully in memory**... 'He who forgets a tenet of his instruction in the law, to him the Scripture imputes the willful forfeiture of his life.' **The second duty was never to teach anything otherwise than it had been delivered to him. Even in expression he was to confine himself to the words of his teacher:** 'Everyone is bound to teach with the expressions of his teacher. It was the highest praise of a pupil to be "like a well, lined with lime, which loses not one drop.'"

IS THE GOSPEL OF MARK A LIVE SPEECH?

- In 1991, E. R. Richards demonstrated the widespread use of Greek and Latin shorthand at public meetings before and during the New Testament period.

- "...[By] the time the Latin system became fully functional around 52 BC, a proper Greek system, from which it was derived, had already long been in existence...It is therefore certain that in Peter's lifetime both systems were flourishing side by side for use as required since both languages were in active use in the capital..."
- Bernard Orchard persuasively argues that the Gospel of Mark, which was written in Rome, has all the earmarks of a live speech taken down in shorthand.³

EVIDENCE OF MNEMONIC TECHNIQUES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 16:15-19

"Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, **Simon Bar-Jona!** For **flesh and blood** has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, **you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church,** and the **gates of Hades** shall not prevail against it. I will give you the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven,§ and whatever you **bind on earth** shall be **bound in heaven**, and whatever you **loose on earth** shall be **loosed in heaven.**"

Luke 1:68-75 (Prayer of Zechariah / The Benedictus)⁴

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people. He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant, even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old: salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father, and to grant us that, rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."

72 To show mercy to our fathers	To show mercy = Hebrew <i>hanan</i> same root as in <u>Yohanan</u> (John)
and to be mindful of his holy covenant	To remember = Hebrew <i>zakar</i> same root as <u>Zakaryah</u> (Zechariah).
73 and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father grant us that...	To swear an oath = Hebrew <i>shaba</i> same root as <u>Elishaba</u> (Elizabeth)

³ See Bernard Orchard, "The Making and Publication of Mark's Gospel: An Historical Investigation" *Annales Theologici* (vol. 7, fasc. 2, 1993), at www.churchinhistory.com

⁴ Jean Carmignac, *The Birth of the Synoptics* (Franciscan Herald Press, 1987) p.28

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

- **"For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: THAT** Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; **THAT** he was buried; **THAT** he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures; **THAT** he appeared to Kephas, then to the Twelve. **AFTER THAT**, he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **AFTER THAT** he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me."

DR. GARY HABERMAS' MINIMALIST FACT ARGUMENT⁵

- **CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED ca. AD 30**

1 CORINTHIANS was written between AD 53-57

23 to 27 years after the crucifixion

- **PAUL RECEIVED THIS CREEDAL STATEMENT FROM PETER AND JAMES (GALATIANS 1:18) THREE YEARS AFTER CONVERSION**

Paul's conversion AD 35, received creed AD 38

8 years after crucifixion

- **TIME TO BE FORMALIZED INTO A CREEDAL STATEMENT**

One to two years after the crucifixion

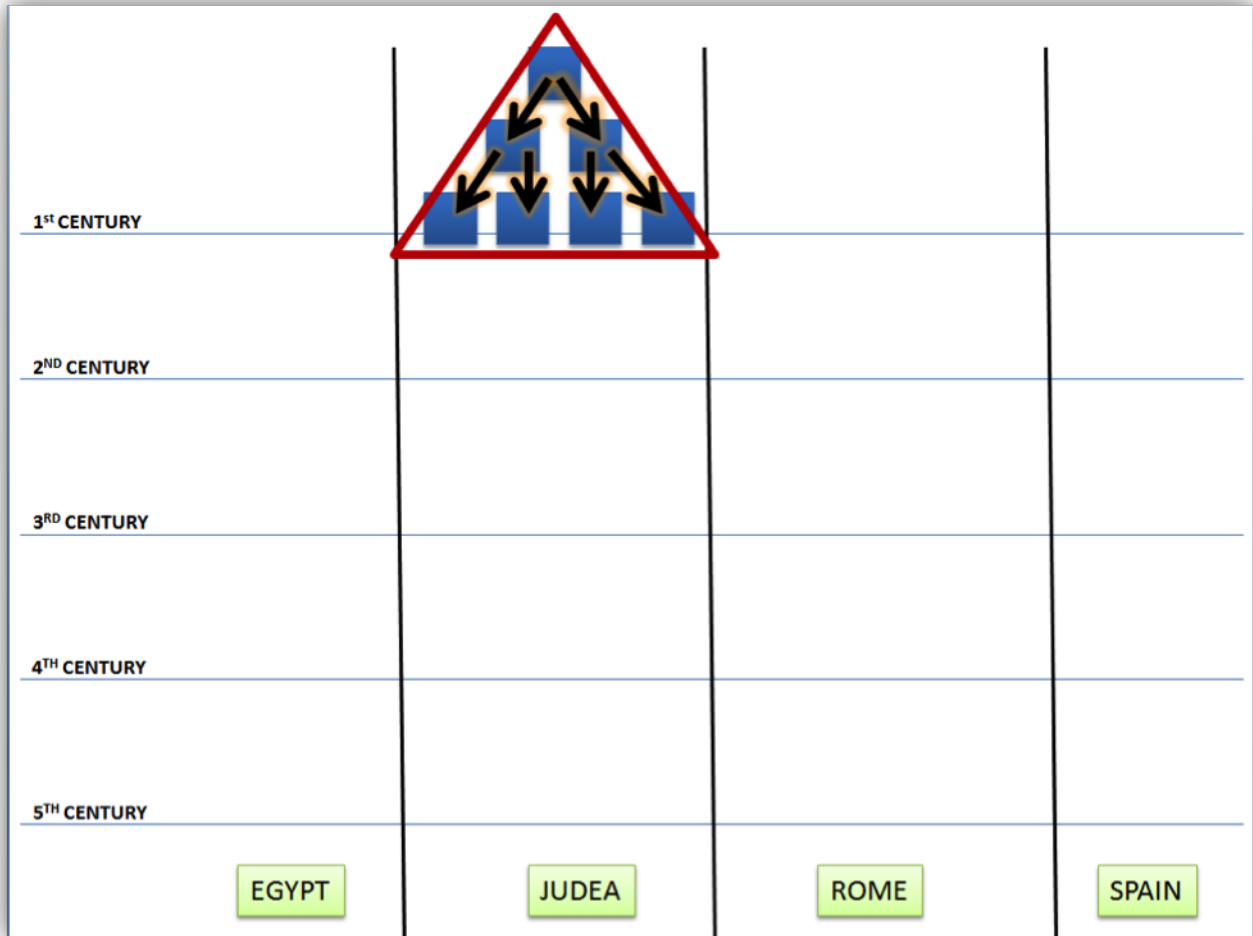
When compared to ancient histories, a work composed three or four decades after the event it records is considered quite good. The data contained in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which contains the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ, is extremely close to the events it records. Therefore, its accurately cannot be legitimately doubted.

⁵ See Dr. Gary Habermas, *The Minimalist Fact Argument for the Resurrection*, www.garyhabermas.com

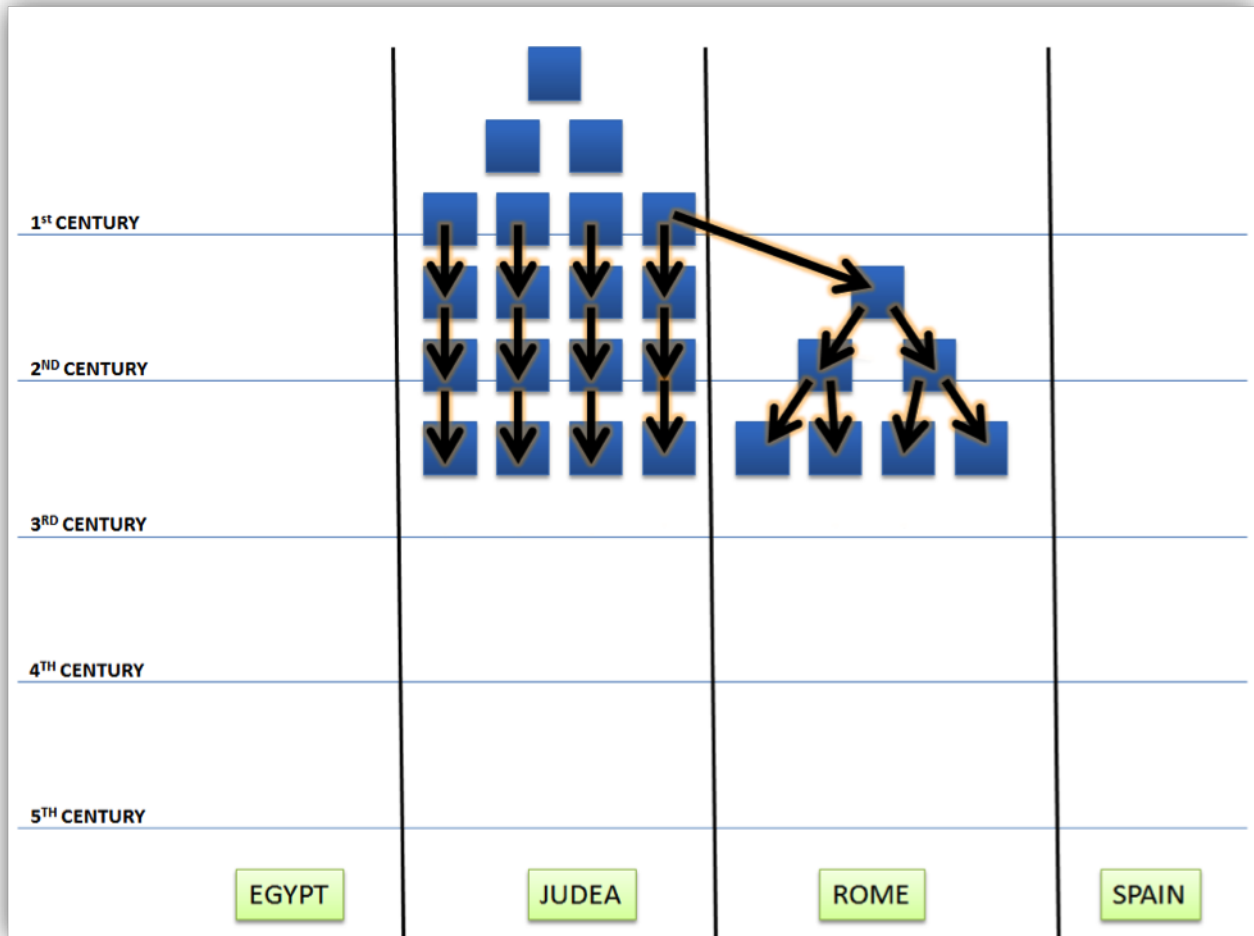
TRANSMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

The following slides are given simply for illustration. They represent an idealized version of the mechanics of manuscript copying and they are not meant to represent the reproduction of any particular manuscript.

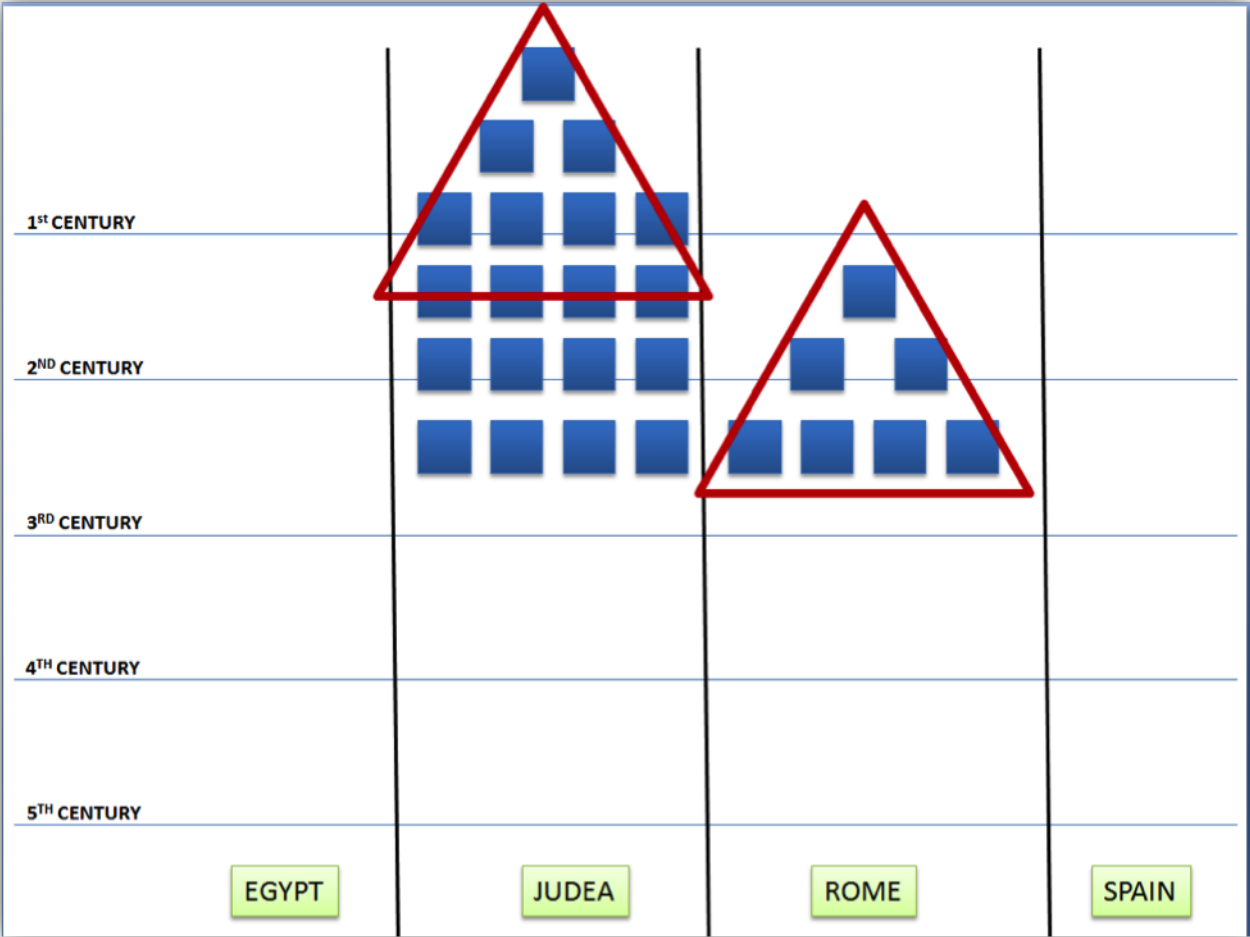
Slide 1 - The original manuscript begins at the top. It is twice copied. These copies, being made after the composition of the original is set slightly lower on our timeline. From them, four more copies are made forming a triangle.



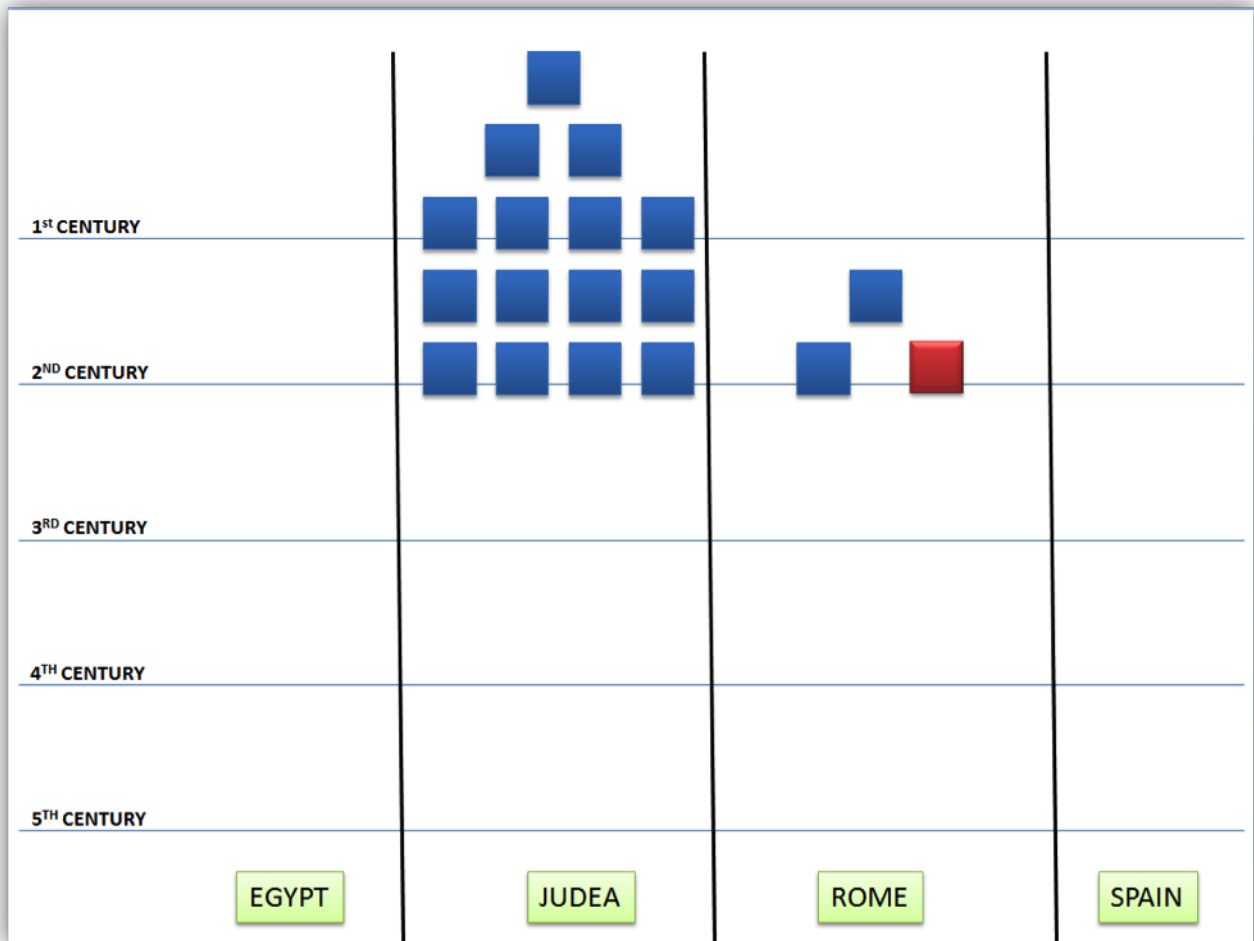
Slide 2 - One copy is made and taken to Rome where two copies are made followed by four additional copies.



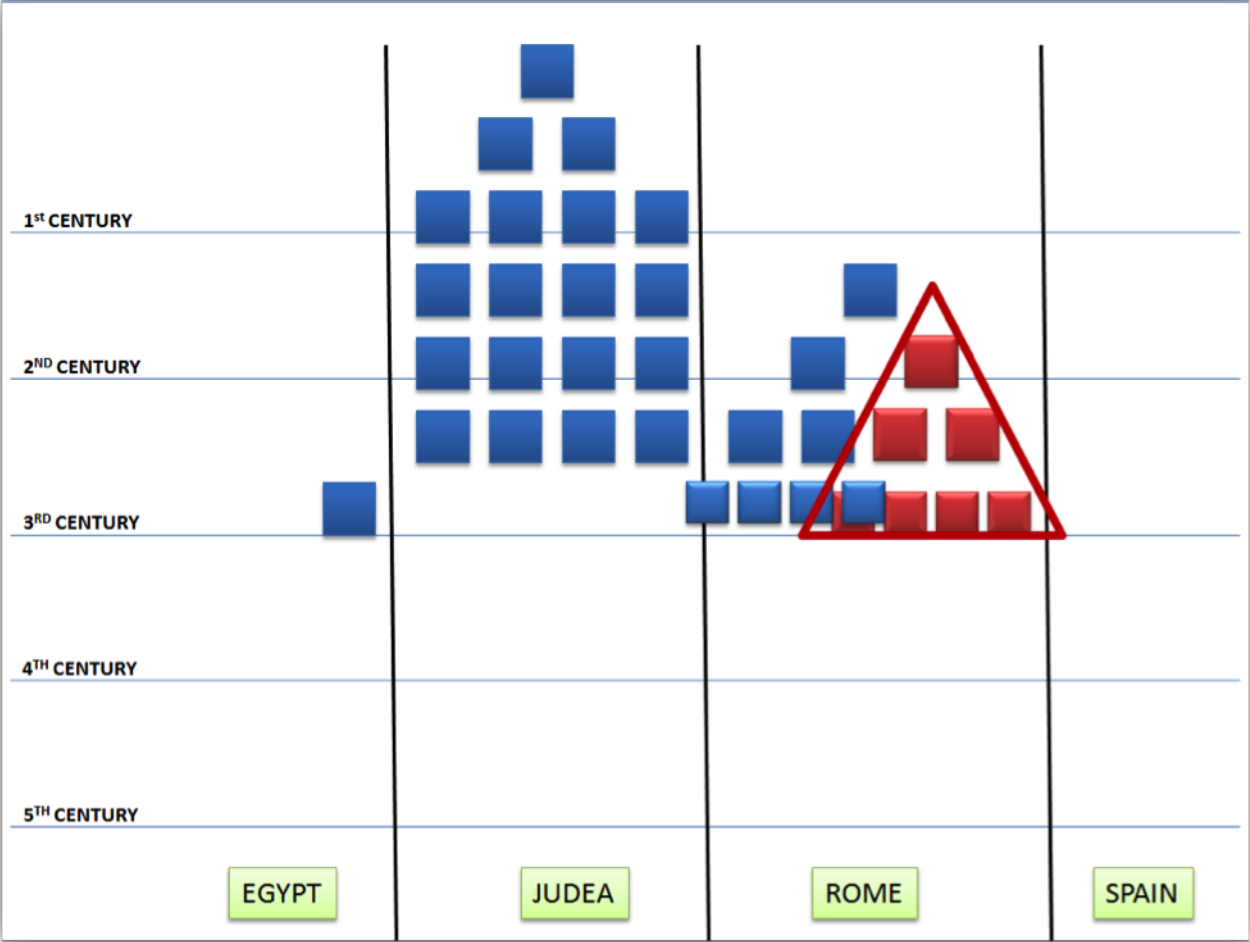
Slide 3 - Since from the one copy, two, and then four copies are made, the manuscripts also forms a triangle on the timeline.



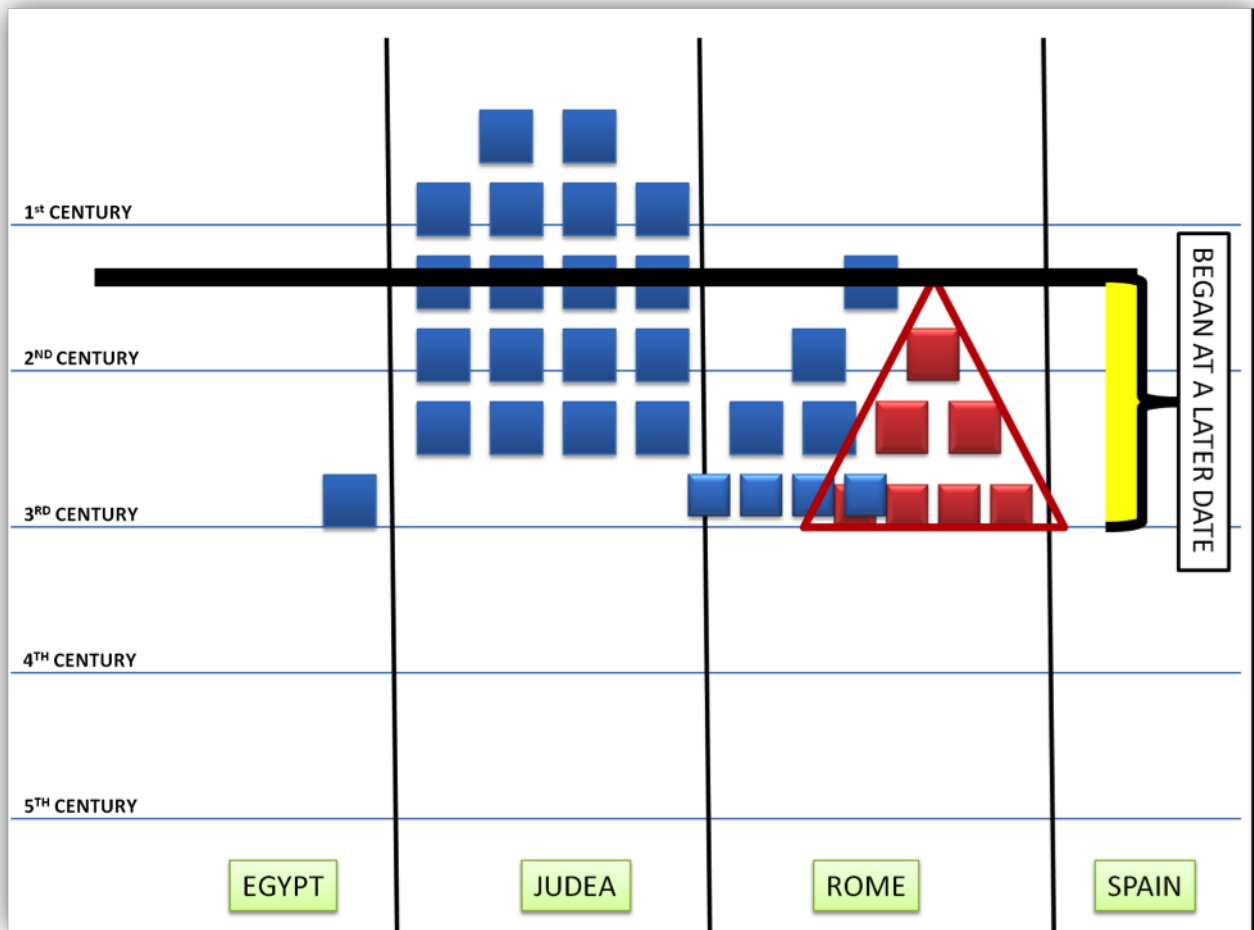
Slide 4 - What if a copyist in Rome made a mistake? How would the mistake look on our timeline? For our purposes, we will color the copy containing the error in red so as to distinguish it from the original (blue) copy.



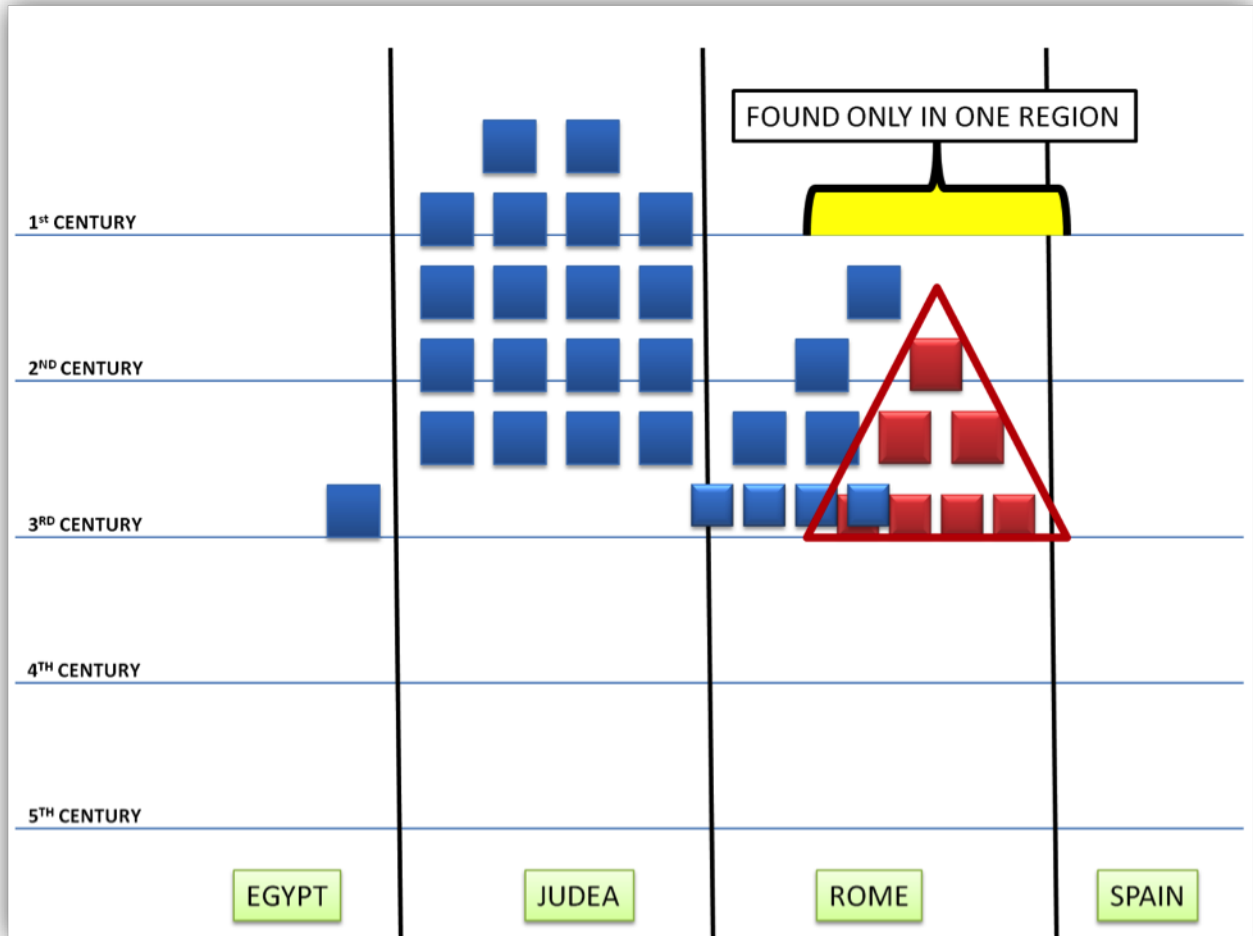
Slide 5 - The error is duplicated and re-duplicated forming its own triangle within the Roman triangle.



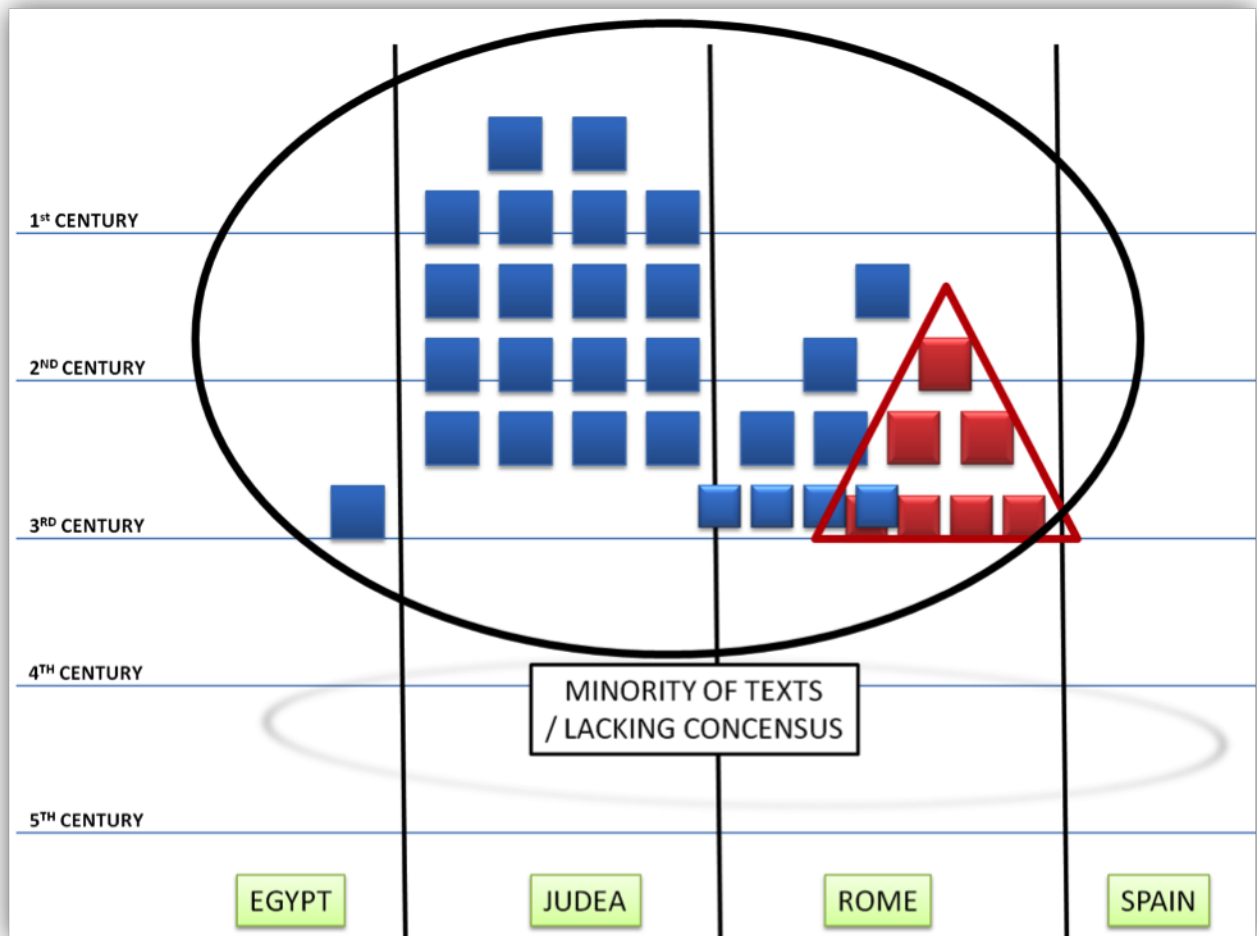
Slide 6 - If the original (or autograph) is lost, how would we be able to determine which color is an error and which color is identical to the original? There are three ways. The first way is to see look at when the colors appear. An error would necessarily be introduced after the composition of the original, like much later. It will not be able to be traced back to the beginning. Therefore, an error would begin at a later date.



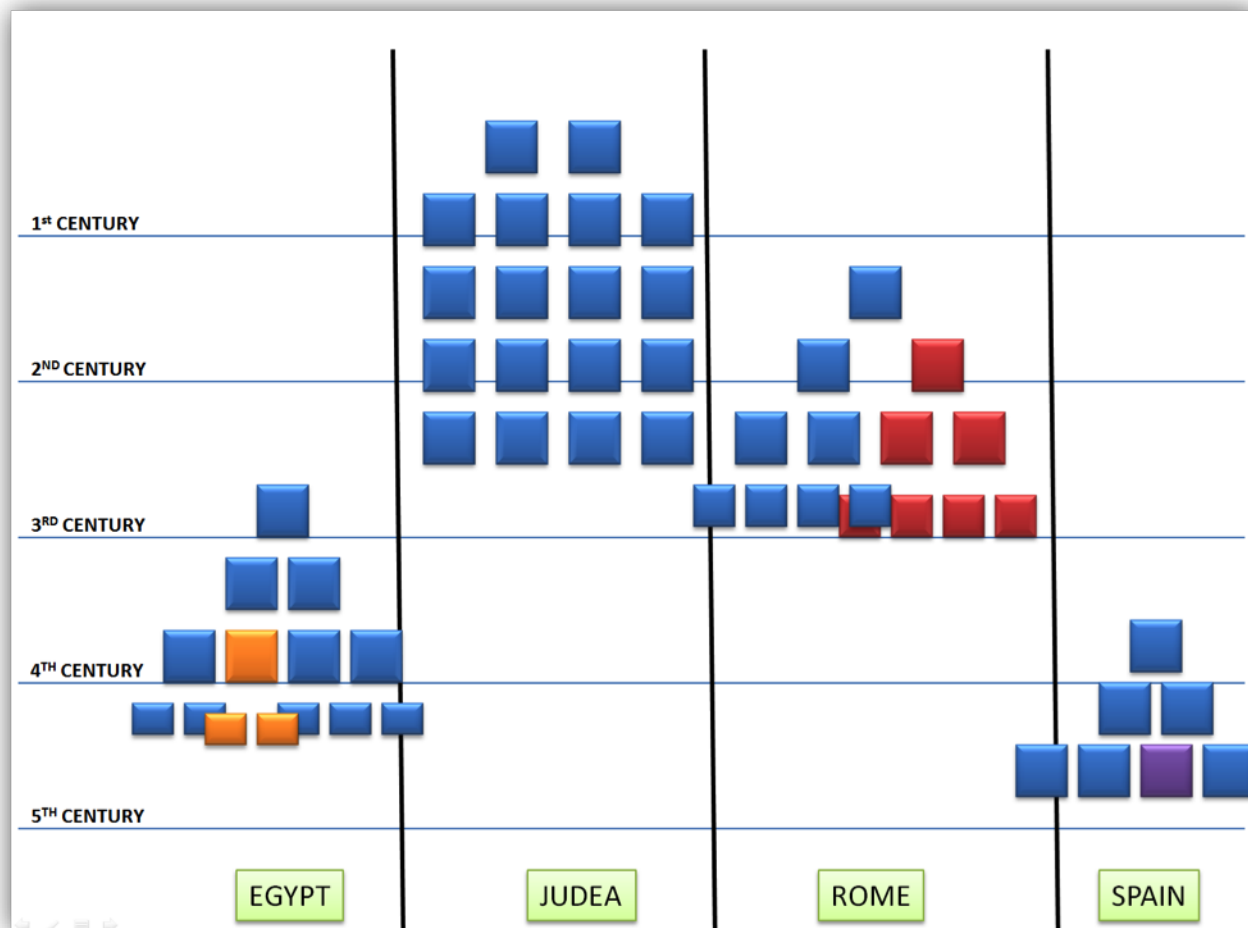
Slide 7 - The second way is to look for ubiquity. Authentic copies of the original should spread to all regions. In other words, authentic copies should be found everywhere or nearly everywhere. An error would be introduced in a single location and spread from there just as our illustration shows the "red" error is confined to Rome where the error started.



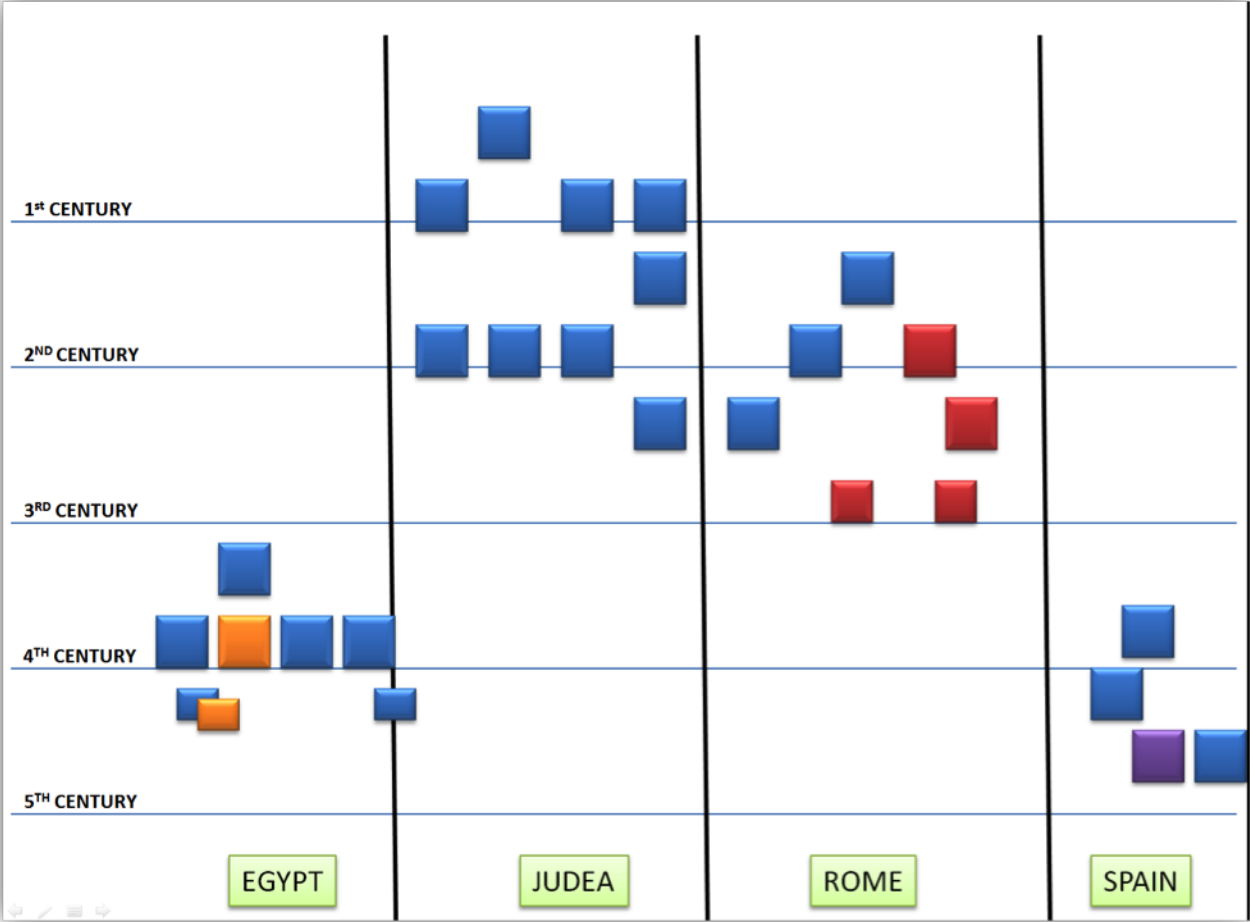
Slide 8 - Since the original circulated from the earliest date, it should be represented by the consensus of manuscripts. An error, starting after the original and in a different location, should be attested by a minority of the manuscripts.



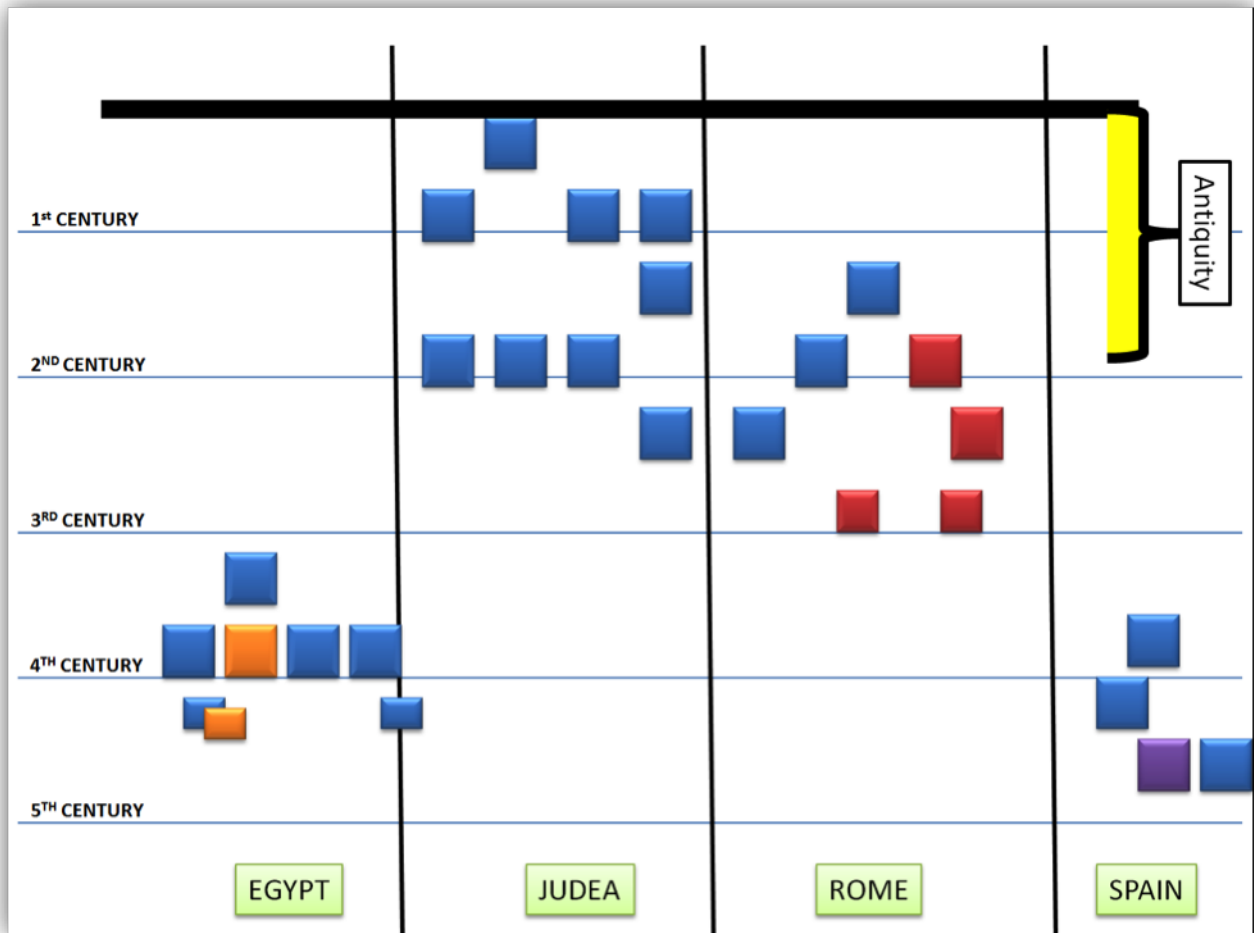
Slide 9 - What if several errors were introduced? How would you be able to determine which manuscripts are identical to the original?



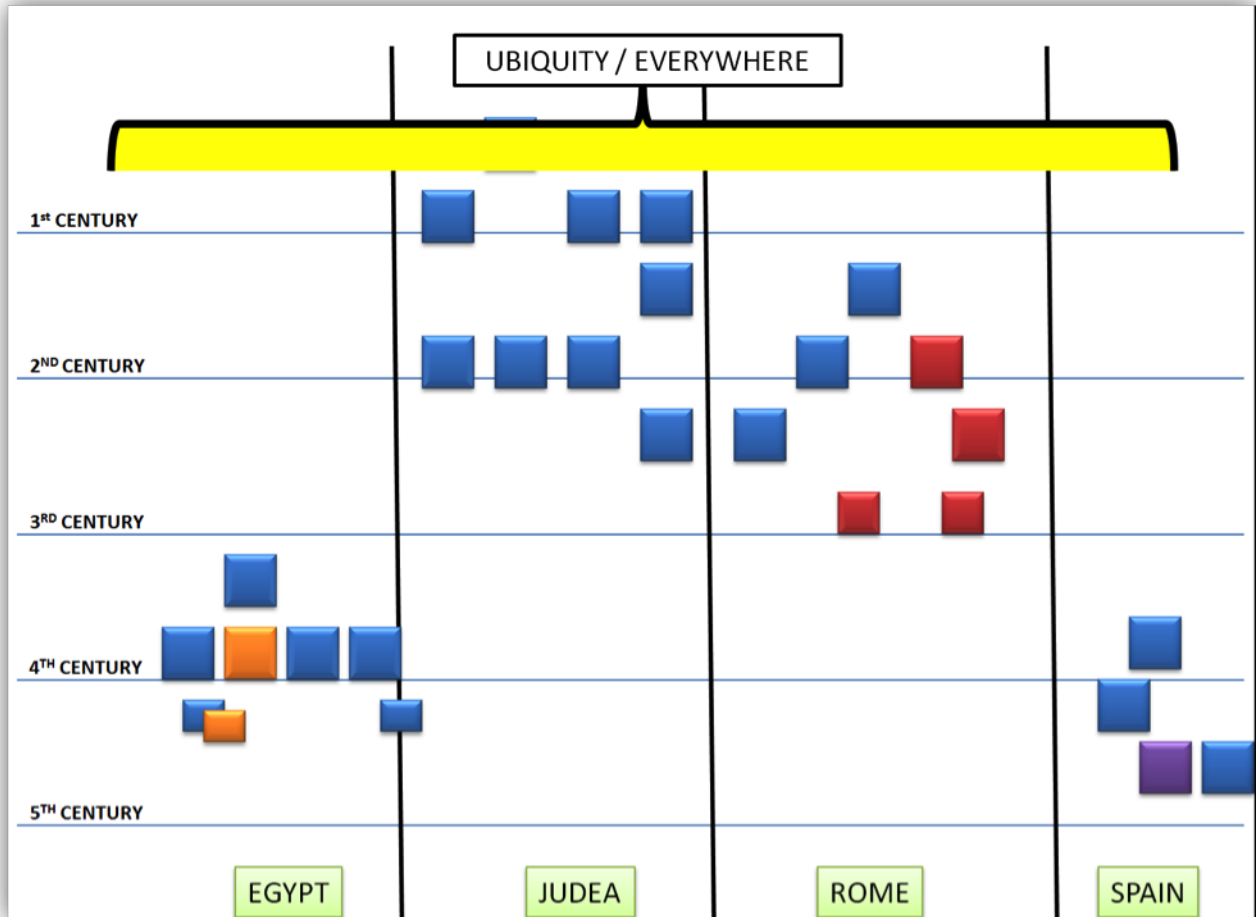
Slide 10 - What if a majority of the manuscripts were lost or destroyed? Could you still determine the color of the original?



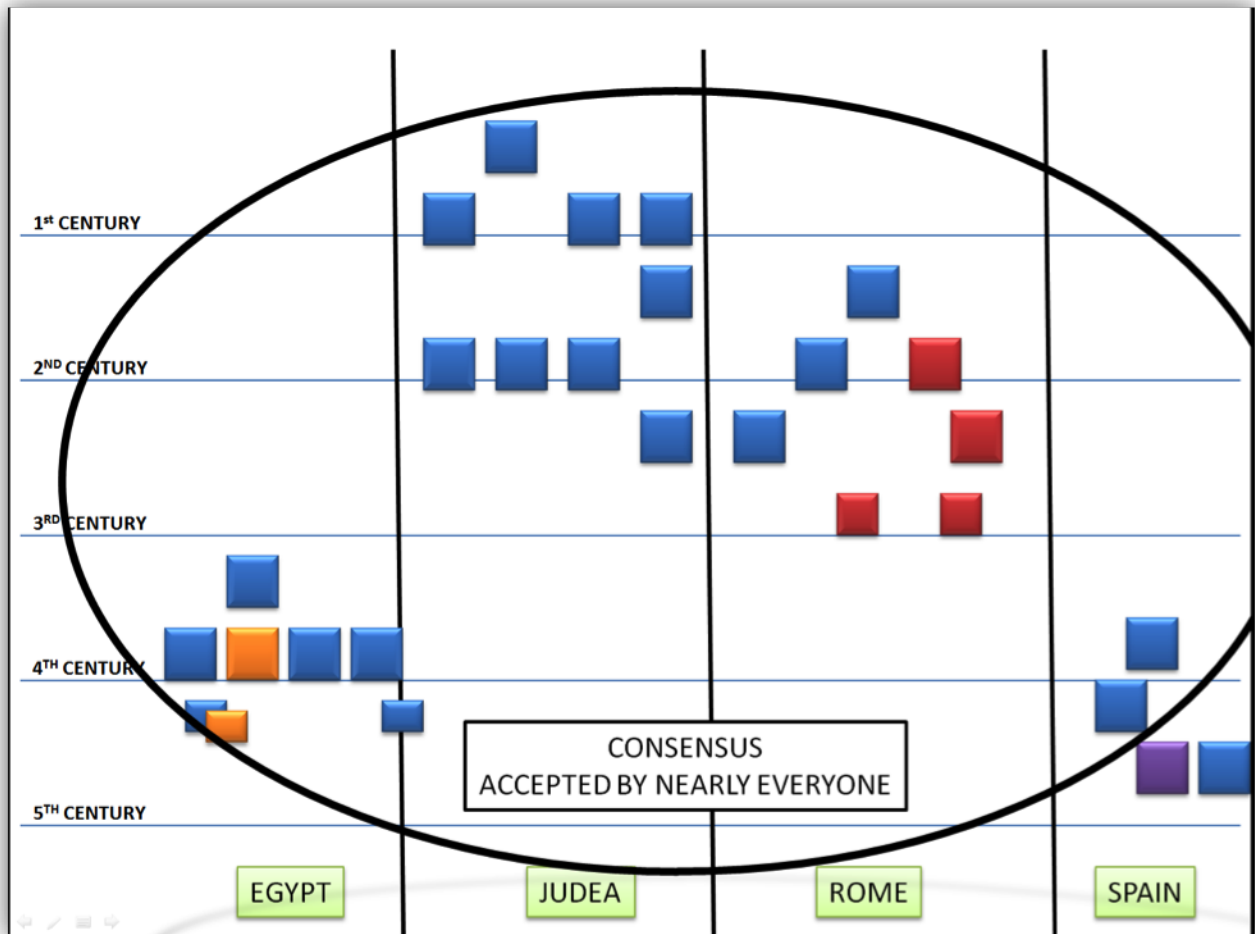
Slide 11 - The original copies would extend as far back as you could trace it. In this case the most ancient copies are blue.



Slide 12 - The original would be found everywhere or nearly everywhere. The error would start and spread from one location. The blue is found in every region.



Slide 13 - The original manuscript should be represented by the consensus. In this case, although the margin is slim, the consensus of manuscripts are blue. Since blue is represented as far back as we can trace it. It is found everywhere and it the consensus is blue. The original must have been blue.

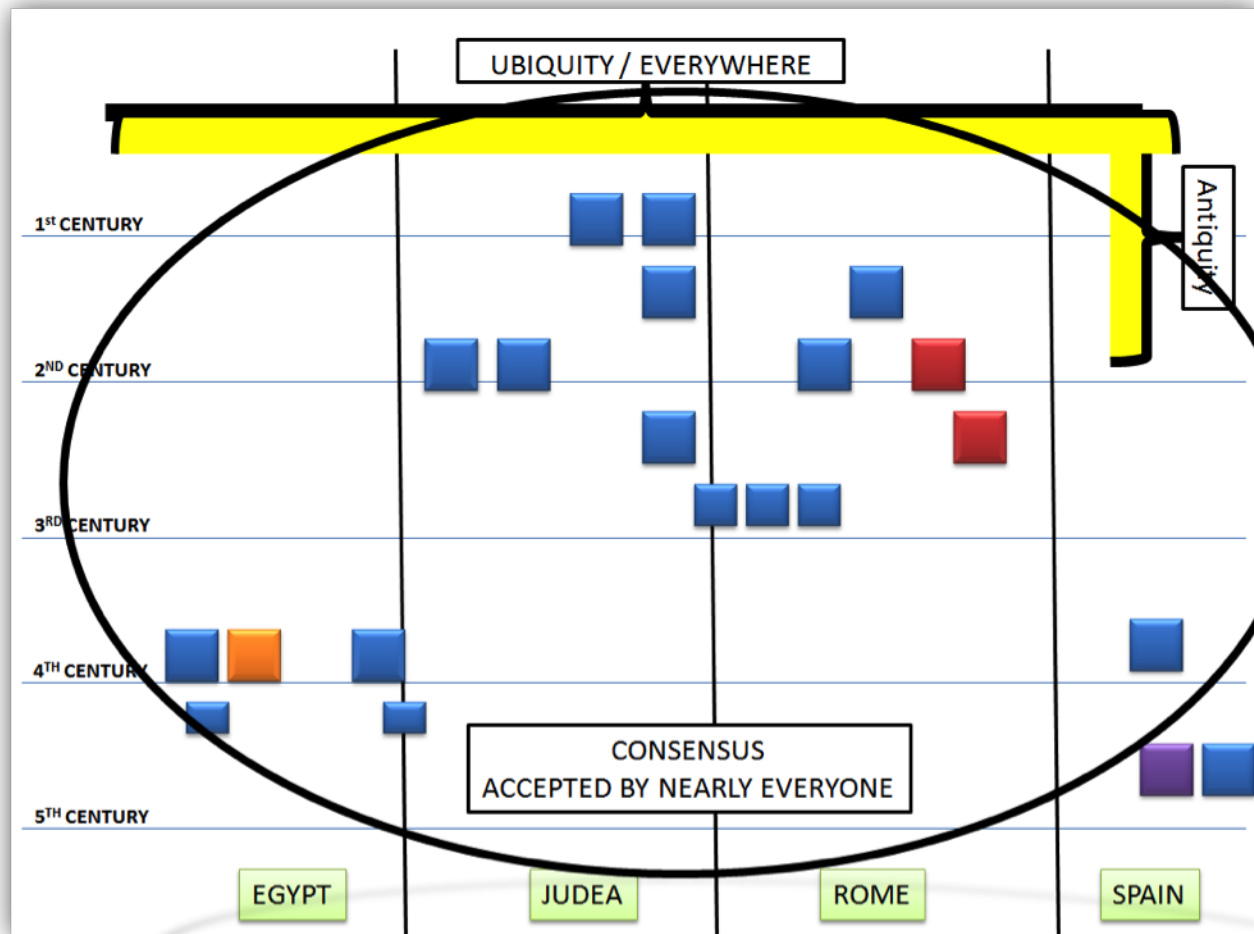


“LOST” BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

- **“How do you know that the Gospel of Judas or some other Gnostic gospel, wasn’t originally part of the New Testament only to be removed later on?”**
- **The same question could be asked concerning the seven Old Testament books, the Deuterocanon, that is not part of the Protestant or Jewish Old Testament.⁶**

We answer these questions by looking for antiquity (always), ubiquity (everywhere or nearly everywhere), and consensus (by all or nearly all).

⁶ See Gary Michuta, *Why Catholic Bibles Are Bigger* (Grotto Press, 2008)



ST. VINCENT OF LERIN, 5TH CENTURY

- "But here someone perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church's interpretation? For this reason—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that **it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters.**"
- Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been **believed everywhere, always, by all.** For that is truly and in the strictest sense Catholic, which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing

declare, comprehends all universally. **This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent.**

- Vincent of Lerin, *Commonitory*, Chapter 2, 5-6

BOOKS MENTIONED DURING THIS TALK:

Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Zondervan)

Emil Schurer, *History of the Jewish People at the Time of Christ* (Charles Scribner and Sons), 3 vols.

Stanley Jaki, *And On This Rock* (Trinity Communications)

Jean Carmignac, *The Birth of the Synoptics* (Franciscan Press)

Gary Habermas, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Kregel)

Gary Michuta, *Making Sense of Mary* (Grotto Press), *Why Catholic Bibles Are Bigger* (Grotto Press)