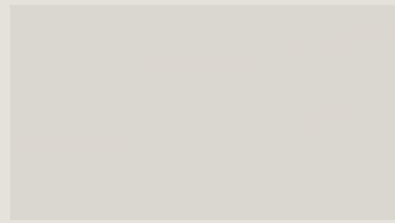




THINK
THEISM

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RATIO
CHRISTI

The Structure of Classical Apologetics

God is the best explanation for...

- the beginning of the universe
(Cosmological Argument)
- the fine-tuning of the universe
(Teleological Argument)
- the foundation of morality
(Axiological Argument)



1

**Natural Theology
Arguments for God**

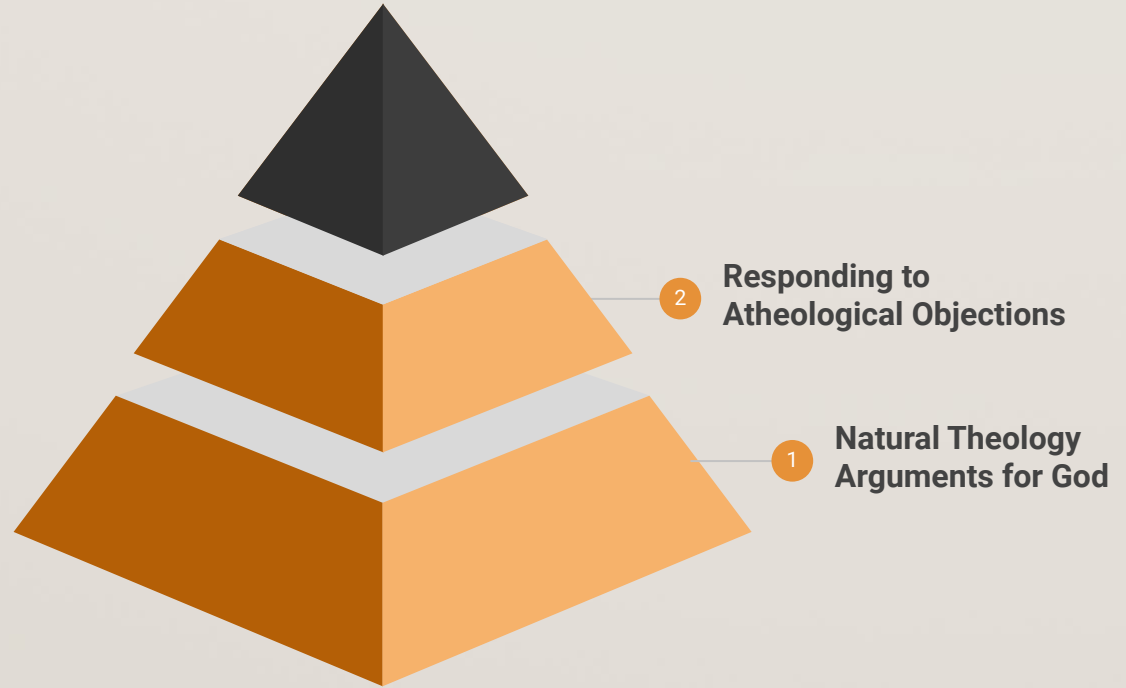
The Structure of Classical Apologetics

If evil exists, then it is impossible that God exists

- Response: This is a strong claim that fails if it is merely *possible* there is a morally sufficient reason for God to allow evil

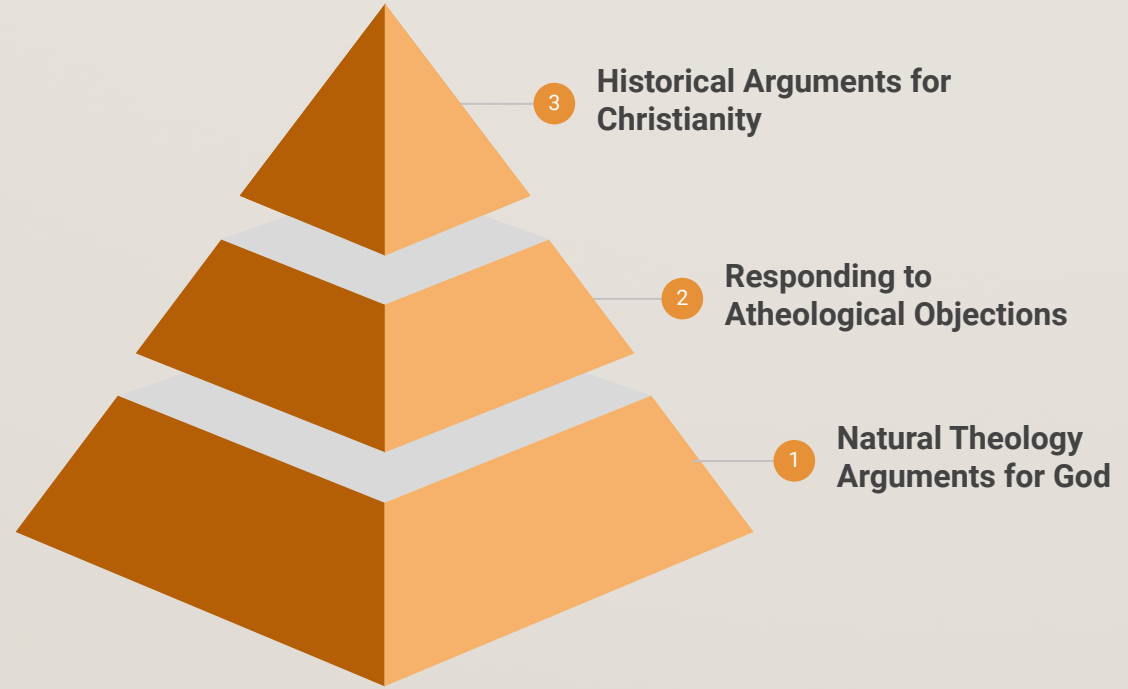
If evil exists, then it is unlikely that God exists.

- Response (1): Evil *could* be evidence against God, but not stronger than the evidence for God.
- Response (2): It's not obvious that it is evidence against God (skeptical theism)
- Response (3): It's not evidence against God because we can have an idea of why God allows evil (theodicy).



The Structure of Classical Apologetics

If the arguments of natural theology are successful in showing the existence of god and responding to counter arguments, the last step is to argue for Christianity in particular.



The background features a dark, starry sky. A large, glowing orange arc, resembling a rising or setting sun or moon, spans across the upper half of the image. Below the arc, the ground is depicted with a jagged, purple, wireframe-like terrain that resembles a mountain range or a rocky landscape.

Did Jesus of Nazareth Exist?

The historical argument for Jesus

Resources

Studying the Historical JESUS

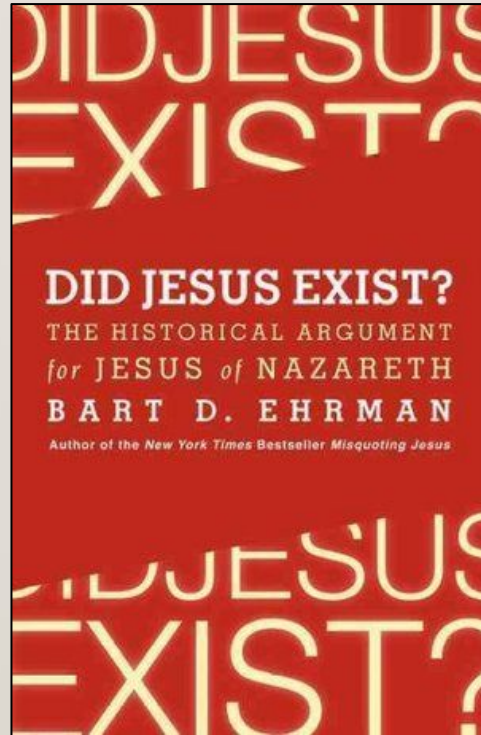
A GUIDE TO SOURCES AND METHODS



DARRELL L. BOCK
Copyrighted Material

Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods

Darrell L. Bock



Did Jesus Exist?

Bart D. Ehrman

The Resurrection of Jesus A New Historiographical Approach



MICHAEL R. LICONA
Copyrighted Material

The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach

Michael Licona



The Historical JESUS

FIVE VIEWS

CONTRIBUTORS:

Robert M. Price

John Dominic Crossan

Luke Timothy Johnson

James D. G. Dunn

Darrell L. Bock

EDITED BY

James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy



The Historical Jesus: 5 Views

“Robert M. Price gets Jesus to the vanishing point [of history] by the simple expedient of denying all the evidence that makes him visible...His writing lacks nothing in clarity or colour. But it does lack the capacity to convince any but those who despair of history altogether...”

- Luke Timothy Johnson

“Where I begin to become irritated by Price’s thesis, as with those of his predecessors, is his ignoring what everyone else in the business regards as primary data and his readiness to offer less plausible hypotheses to explain other data that inconveniences his thesis...In short, if Price’s essay is a true expression of the state of health of the Jesus-myth thesis, I can’t see much life in it. His essay would be better retitled *The Jesus Myth - a Thesis at Vanishing Point*”

- James D.G. Dunn

Q: Did Jesus Exist?

A: Yes, because he is abundantly attested in early sources.

Sources can be useful for one of three questions.

1. **Who was Jesus?** (e.g., his teachings, actions, self-perception)
2. **What was the fate Jesus?** (i.e. what happened to him?)
3. **What was early Christianity?** (i.e. what were the practices, beliefs, and activities of his early followers?)

Roadmap

1

Non-Christian Sources

A survey of important non-Christian attestations to Jesus of Nazareth

2

Extant Christian Sources

A survey of the letters collected into the New Testament


3

Ante-Dated Christian Sources

A survey of the sources which stand behind the final works in the New Testament.



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A stylized digital landscape. The ground is a grid of glowing purple lines that recedes into the distance. On the left, a glowing cyan wireframe object, resembling a helmet or a piece of armor, sits on the ground. In the background, a large orange sun with horizontal stripes is partially obscured by a large black circle containing the white number '1'. The sky is dark purple with scattered white stars.

1

Non-Christian Attestation of Jesus

Roadmap

- I. Did Jesus exist? Yes, because he is abundantly attested in early sources.
- II. Sources are relevant for 3 things: the person of Jesus, the fate of Jesus, the growth and activities of the early church.
- III. Sources

A. Non-Christian Sources

1. Josephus*
2. Tacitus*
3. Pliny the Younger*
4. ~~Suetonius~~
5. ~~Mara bar Serapion~~
6. ~~Thallus~~
7. ~~Lucian~~
8. ~~Celsus~~
9. ~~Rabbinic Sources~~

B. Canonical Gospels+Acts

C. Letters of Paul

D. Sources Behind the NT

1. Q
2. PreMark
3. Speeches in Acts
4. Oral Formulas
 - a) Romans 1:3b-4a
 - b) Luke 24:33-34
 - c) 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Noncanonical Literature (Appendix)

- A. Gospel of Thomas
- B. Gospel of Peter
- C. Gospel of Judas
- D. Pseudo-Mark (long ending)

VI. Apostolic Fathers (Appendix)

- A. Clement
- B. Polycarp

Resurrection Topic

1. Review Fate of Jesus facts
2. Bayesian analysis
3. Were the disciples martyred?
4. Were there group appearances?
5. What are the alternative explanations?

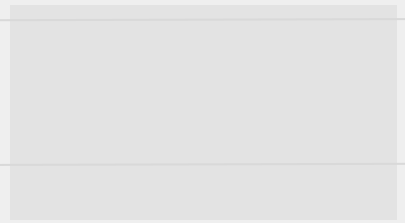
Non-Christian Sources: The Usual Suspects

- I. Josephus, *Ant.* XVIII.63-64, XX.200
- II. Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44
- III. Pliny the Younger, *Epistles* 10.96-97
- IV. Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4
- V. Mara bar Serapion
- VI. Thallus
- VII. Lucian, *Passing of Peregrinus*
- VIII. Celsus,
- IX. Rabbinic Sources, *Sanhedrin* 43a, 107b

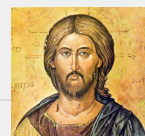
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Pliny the Younger

Pliny the Younger, Roman administrator, wrote a letter to Emperor Trajan describing Christian worship in 112 A.D.

“They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to commit any wicked deeds, but to abstain from all fraud, theft or adultery, never to break their word, or deny a trust when called upon to honor it; after which it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but food of an ordinary innocent kind.”

Person of Jesus: Not useful

Fate of Jesus: Not useful

Practices of early Christians: marginally useful



Tacitus

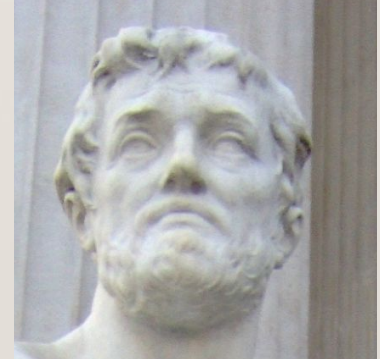
“Therefore, to squelch the rumor, Nero created scapegoats and subjected to the most refined tortures those whom the common people called “Christians”, [a group] hated for their abominable crimes. **Their name comes from Christus, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate.** Suppressed for the moment, the deadly superstition broke out again, not only in Judea, the land which originated this evil, but also in the city of Rome.”

Annals.15.44 translation by John Meier (1991)

Person of Jesus: Not useful

Fate of Jesus: Somewhat useful! Jesus was executed by Pontius Pilate

Practices of early Christians: Not really useful, "superstitious"



Josephus

“Having such a character, Ananus thought that with Festus dead and Albinus still on the way he would have the proper opportunity. Convening the judges of the Sanhedrin, **he brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, whose name was James, and certain others.** He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.”

Antiquities of the Jews, 20.200 (trans. Meier 1994)

Person of Jesus: Somewhat useful, he had a brother

Fate of Jesus: Not useful

Practices of early Christians: Somewhat useful, "law breakers"



Josephus - Infamous *Testimonium*

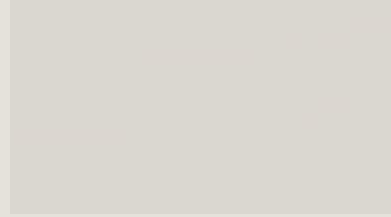
“At this time there appeared **Jesus**, a wise man, [if indeed one should call him a man]. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a **teacher** of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And **he gained a following** both among many Jews and among man of Greek origin. [He was the Messiah]. And when **Pilate**, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, **condemned him to the cross**, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. [For he appeared to them on the third day, living again, just as the divine prophets had spoken of these and countless other wondrous things about him]. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out.”



Antiquities 18.63-64 translation by John Meier (1994).

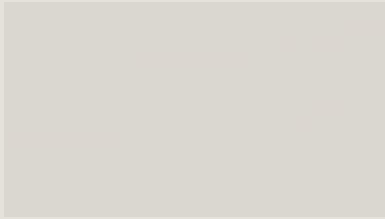
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Neutral Josephus - Removed Interpolations

“At this time there appeared **Jesus**, a wise man, [if indeed one should call him a man]. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a **teacher** of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And **he gained a following** both among many Jews and among man of Greek origin. [He was the Messiah]. And when **Pilate**, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, **condemned him to the cross**, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. [For he appeared to them on the third day, living again, just as the divine prophets had spoken of these and countless other wondrous things about him]. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians, named after him, has not died out.”



Antiquities 18.63-64 translation by John Meier (1994).

Negative Josephus - (Bruce Reconstruction)

“Now there arose about this time *a source of further trouble* in one Jesus, a wise man who performed surprising works, a teacher of men who gladly welcome *strange things*. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. He was the *so-called* Christ. When Pilate, acting on information supplied by the chief men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who attached themselves to him at first did not cease *to cause trouble*, and the tribe of Christians, which has taken this name from him, is not extinct even today.”

Antiquities 18.63-64 translated and reconstructed by F.F. Bruce.
Italicized phrases are proposed reconstruction



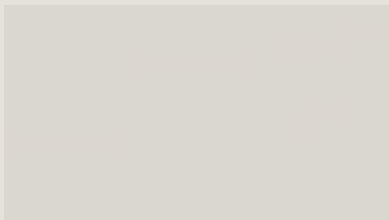
Positive Josephus - (Pines Reconstruction)

“At this time there was a man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified, and he died. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was thought to be the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have related wonders. And the people of Christians, named after him, has not disappeared till *this day*.”

Antiquities 18.63-64 translated and reconstructed by Shlomo Pines using the Arabic translation preserved through Agapius.



Josephus Assessment



1. Jesus had a reputation as a wise man and teacher.
2. Jesus was a man with a reputation for performing unusual works
3. Jesus's significant following led the Jewish leadership to respond against him
4. Jesus was crucified in Judea under Pontius Pilate
5. The movement Jesus started was still going at the end of the 1st century.
6. *If Bruce's or Pines's reconstructions are correct, the Messianic claim is also corroborated.*



Person of Jesus: Somewhat useful!

Fate of Jesus: Somewhat useful!

Practices of early Christians: Somewhat useful!

Suetonius

Suetonius, lawyer and Roman historian most known for his biographies of the Casaers

“[Claudius] expelled the Jews from Rome, since they were always making disturbances because of the instigator Chrestus.”

Claudius.25.4 translation by R.E. Van Voorst (2000)

“Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. He found a Jew named Aquila...recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. ”

Acts 18:1b-2 ESV



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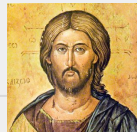
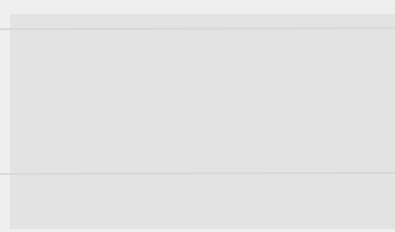
Josephus
94 CE



Tacitus
117 CE



Pliny the Y.
112 CE



Non-Christian Sources: Summary

In sum, most non-Christian sources are not directly useful for the historicity of Jesus's deeds or resurrection. At most, these sources show the existence of a man named Jesus who

- (i) was a rabble-rouser in Palestine
- (ii) had a dedicated group of followers/disciples
- (iii) was executed by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate
- (iv) was claimed to have been risen from the dead

The best use of these sources is for the origin of Christian activity in the 1st-3rd century and less for directly investigating the historical Jesus.



Roadmap

1

Non-Christian Sources

A survey of important non-Christian attestations to Jesus of Nazareth

2

Extant Christian Sources

A survey of the letters collected into the New Testament

3

Ante-Dated Christian Sources

A survey of the sources which stand behind the final works in the New Testament.



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A stylized, low-poly landscape rendered in a vibrant, neon aesthetic. The ground is a grid of glowing blue lines that recedes into the distance. On the left, a large, glowing red rock formation stands prominently. In the background, a large, glowing orange sun with horizontal stripes is partially obscured by a large black circle containing the white number '2'. The sky is a dark, starry space.

2

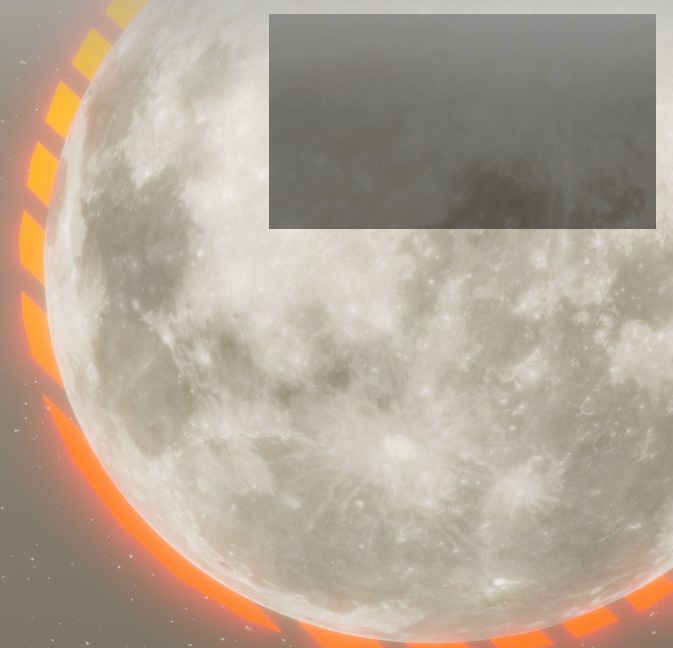
**Extant Christian Sources
(aka the New Testament)**

Extant New Testament Literature

- The Four Gospels
 - gMark (probably written 65-70 C.E.)
 - gMatthew (probably written 65-85 C.E.)
 - gLuke + Acts (probably written 65-85 C.E.)
 - gJohn (probably written 70-90 C.E.)
- Letters of Paul
 - 1 Thess, Gal, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Phil, Phlm, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thess, 1 & 2 Tim, Titus
- Misc. Epistles
 - 1-3 John, James, Jude, Hebrews, 1-2 Peter, Revelation

Canonical Gospels

- Genre is probably ancient biography, per Burridge (2004)
- Many scholars of antiquity assert that the canonical gospels are the best sources for the life and teaching of Jesus, despite hesitations related to the gospels' evangelistic or miraculous flavoring.
- However, the Gospels are not the earliest sources, so, we will give historical priority to the others.



Person of Jesus: Quite useful
Fate of Jesus: Quite useful
Practices of early Christians: Useful

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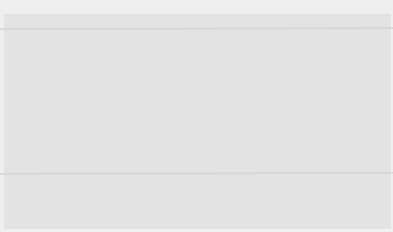
Josephus
94 CE



Tacitus
117 CE



Pliny the Y.
112 CE



gMatt
80 CE



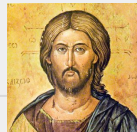
gLuke-Acts
80 CE



gMark
70 CE



gJohn
90 CE



Letters of Paul

- Written between 48-65 C.E. by an associate of the early apostles and (claimed) eyewitness to the risen Jesus. Most historically certain repository of the earliest apostolic teaching.

Authorship

- Undisputed Letters (7)
 - 1 Thess, Gal, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Phil, Phlm, Romans
- Questioned Letters (3)
 - Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thess
- Hotly Debated Letters (3)
 - 1 & 2 Tim, Titus



Person of Jesus: Somewhat useful
Fate of Jesus: Quite useful
Practices of early Christians: Quite useful

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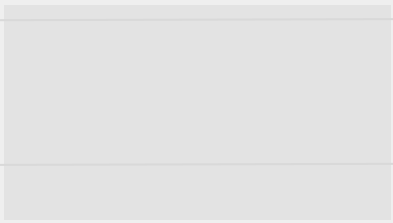
Josephus
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Tacitus
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Pliny the Y.
112 CE



gMatt
80 CE



gLuke-Acts
80 CE



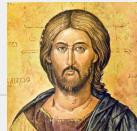
gMark
70 CE



gJohn
90 CE



Pauline Epistles
50-67 CE



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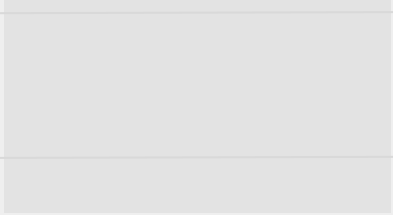
Josephus
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Pliny the Y.
112 CE



gMatt
80 CE



gLuke-Acts
80 CE



gMark
70 CE



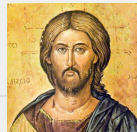
gJohn
90 CE



Misc.
non-Pauline Epistles
70-90 CE



Pauline Epistles
50-67 CE



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3

Ante-NT Christian Sources

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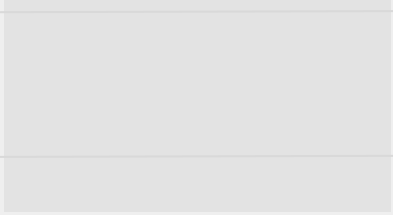
Josephus
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Tacitus
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Pliny the Y.
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gMatt
80 CE



gLuke-Acts
80 CE



gMark
70 CE



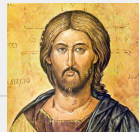
gJohn
90 CE



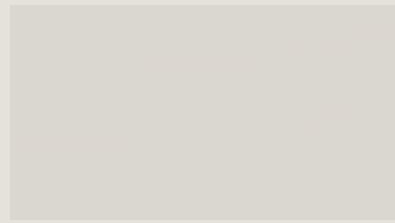
Misc.
non-Pauline Epistles
70-90 CE



Pauline Epistles
50-67 CE



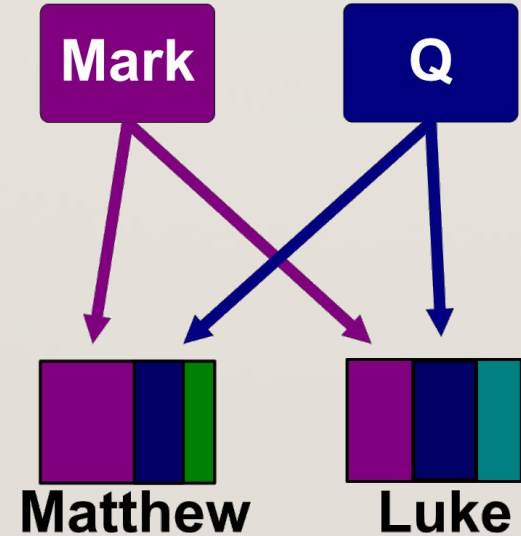
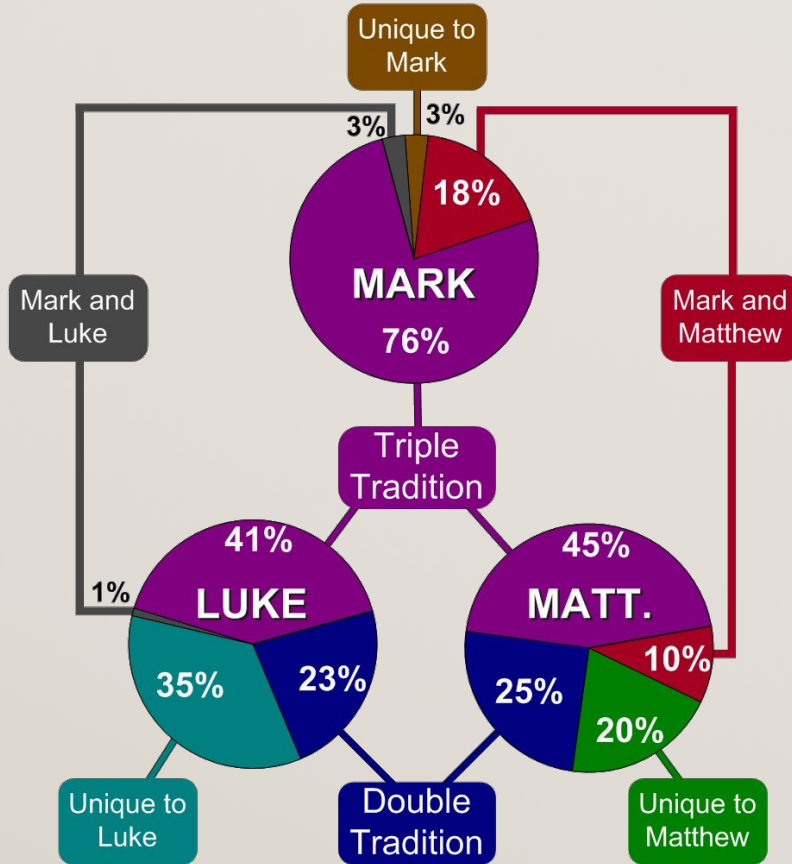
The NT Authors Used Sources

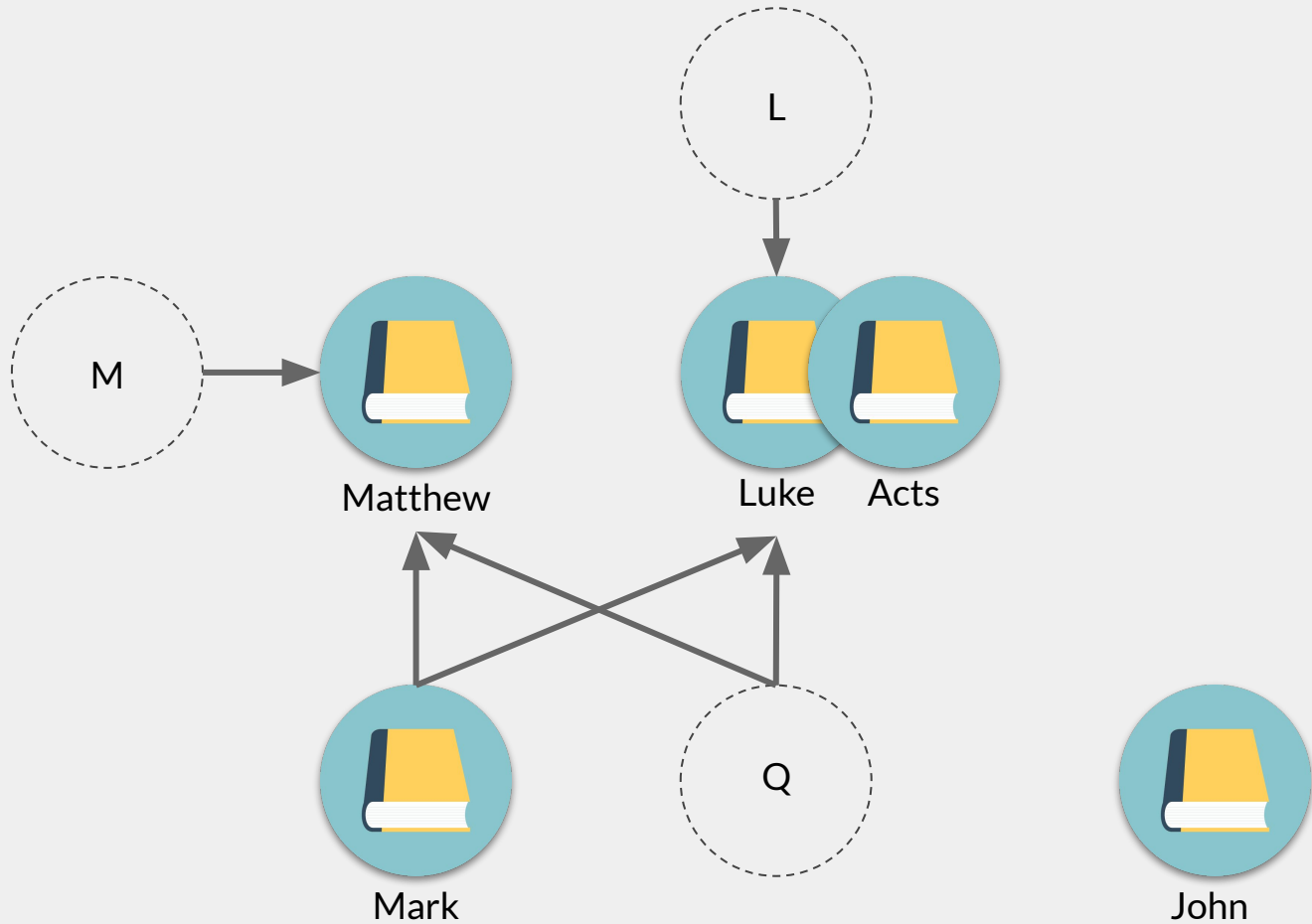


Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

- Luke 1:1-3 (NRSV)

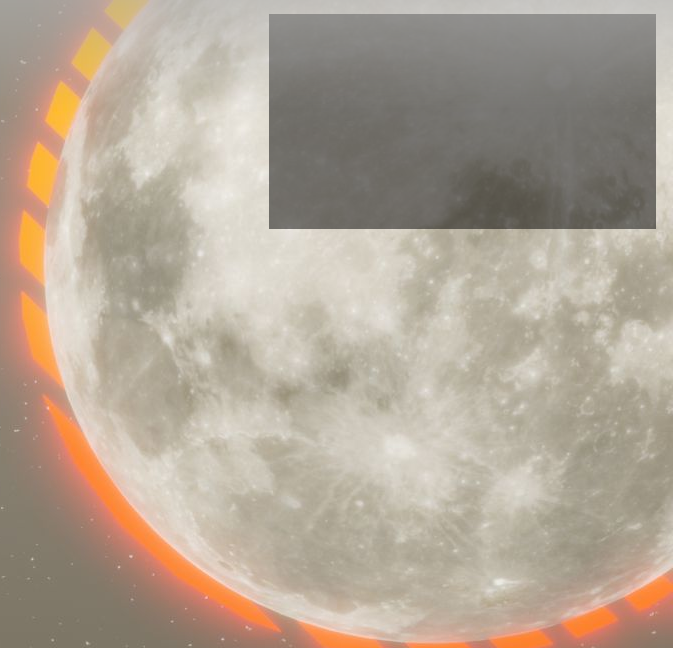
The Synoptic Problem



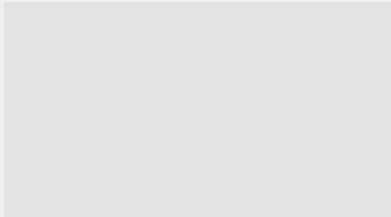
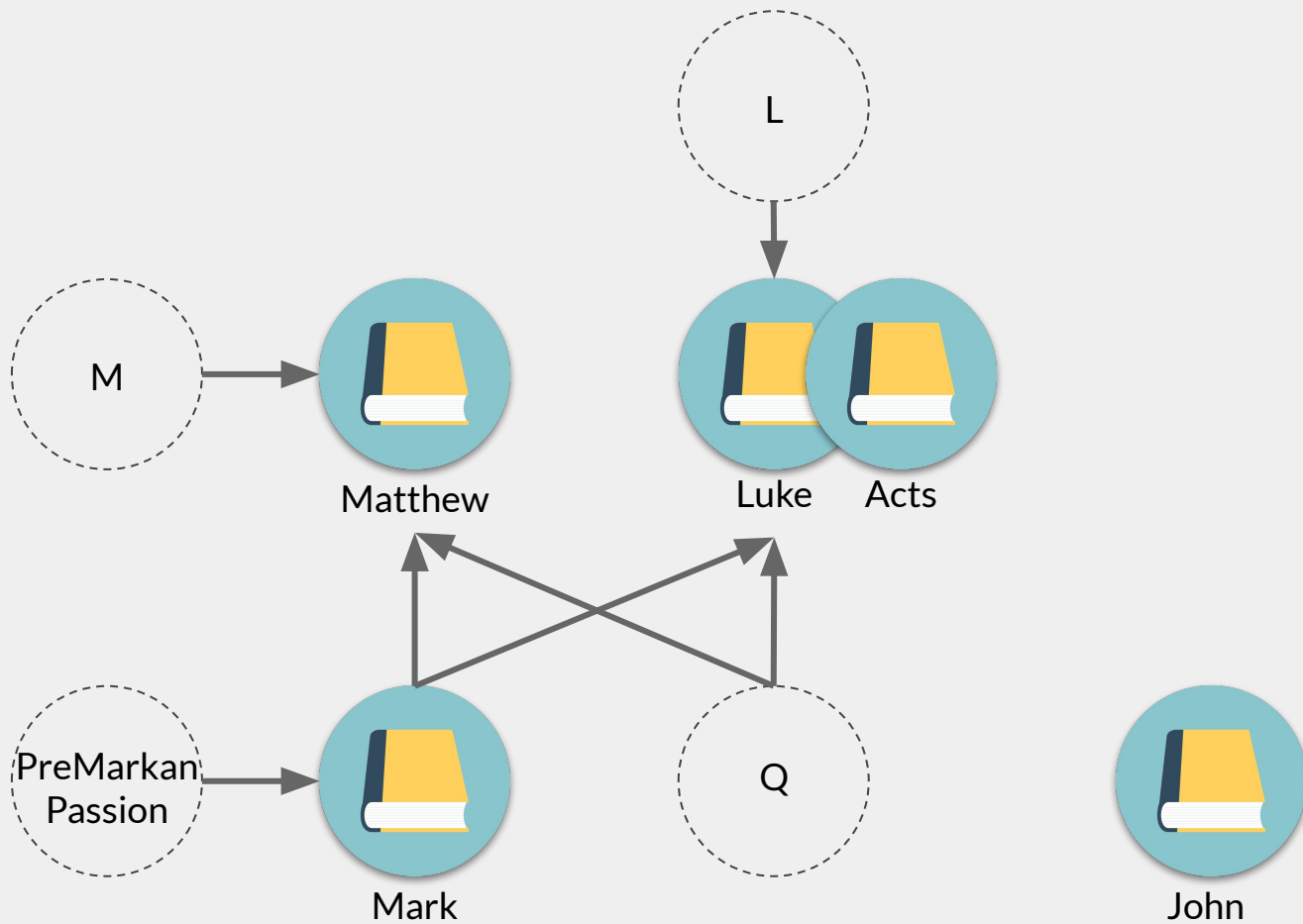


Q or "Sayings Source"

- Hypothetical source (written or oral) postulated to explain the shared material between gMatthew and gLuke
- Most likely a "sayings source" consisting of the teaching of Jesus



Person of Jesus: Useful, contains teachings.
Fate of Jesus: Not useful
Practices of early Christians: Not useful



Pre-Markan Passion Narrative

- Many scholars posit the smooth narrative in Mark from the crucifixion through the burial (Mk. 14:32-15:47) as a single source (Craig, 1989 pg 164)
- There is great disagreement on which particular verses are from the source and which are the author's editing. Per Marion Soards, only eight of the ninety verses enjoy > 70% consensus (14:46, 15:20-24,27,34,37)
- Thus, it is largely indeterminate what the distinction is between gMark and pre-Mark.

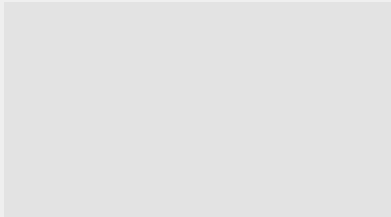
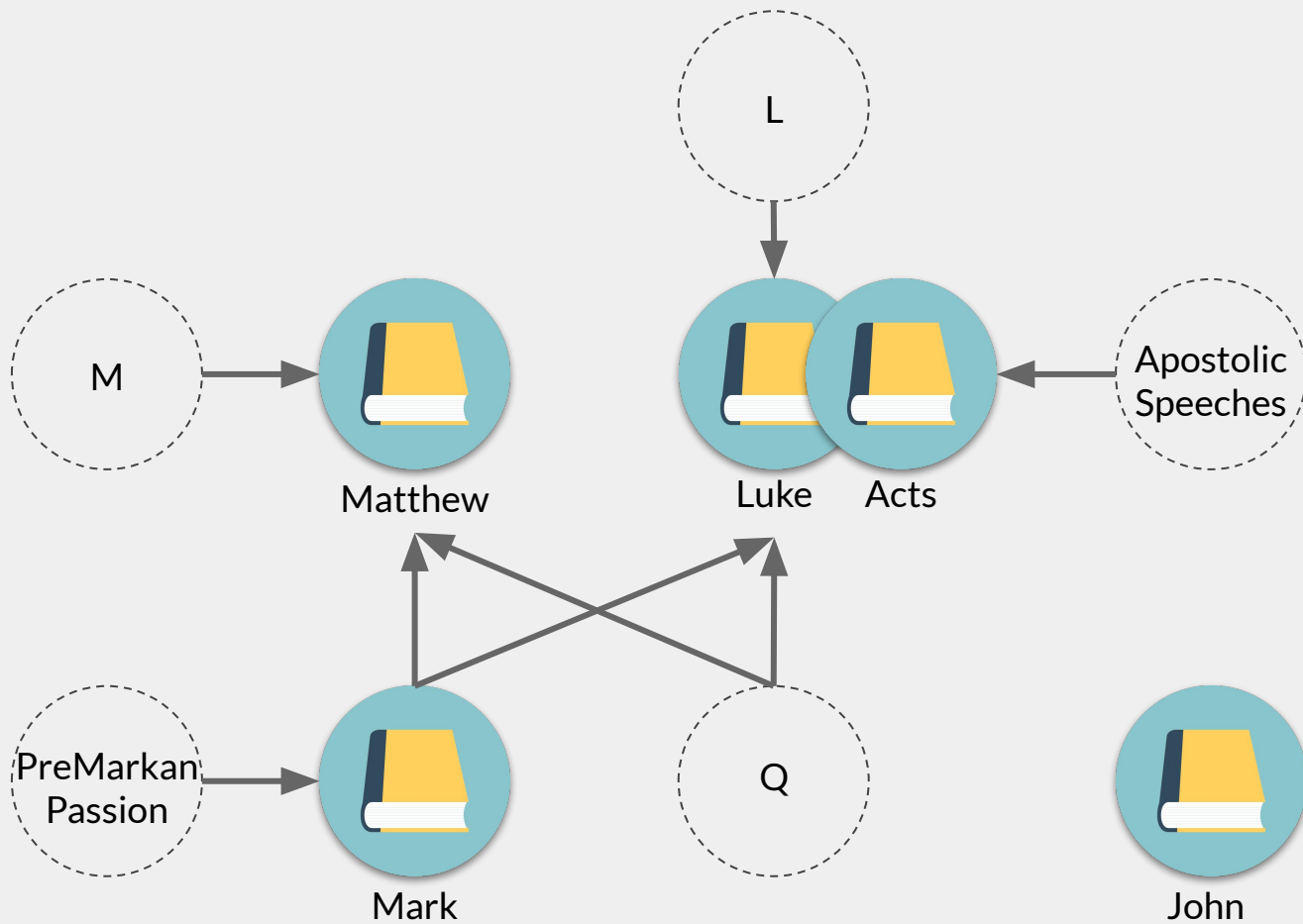


Pre-Markan Burial Narrative

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem. When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

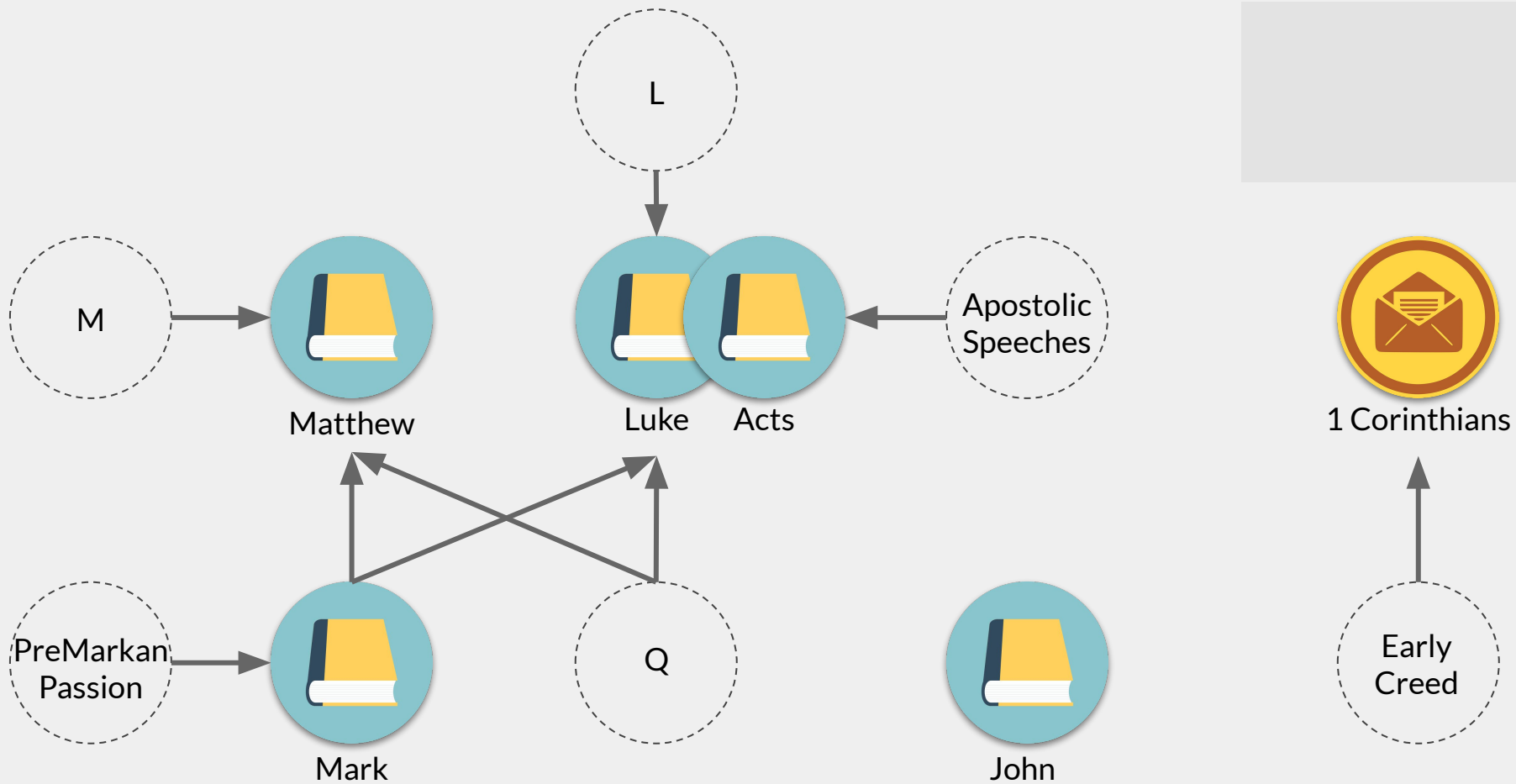
- Mark 15:40ff. (RSV)





Speeches in Acts

- Principal speeches comprise 22% of Acts. All direct speeches take up over half the book (Hemer 1990, pg. 415-6).
- While not direct quotations, these speeches almost certainly contain the *impissima vox* of the early Christian proclamations from the apostles.



Corinthian Creed

For I delivered 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 Cephas, then to The Twelve

then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time

(most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep)

then he appeared to James

then to all the apostles

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.



1 Corinthians 15:3-11

Corinthian Creed

For I delivered 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 Cephas, then to The Twelve

then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time

(most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep)

then he appeared to James

then to all the apostles

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

1 Corinthians 15:3-11



Outline of the Christian Kerygma

I Cor 15.3-5

Christ died ...

he was buried ...

he was raised ...

he appeared ...

Acts 13.28-31

Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death, yet they asked Pilate to have him killed.

they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

But God raised him from the dead ...

... and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.

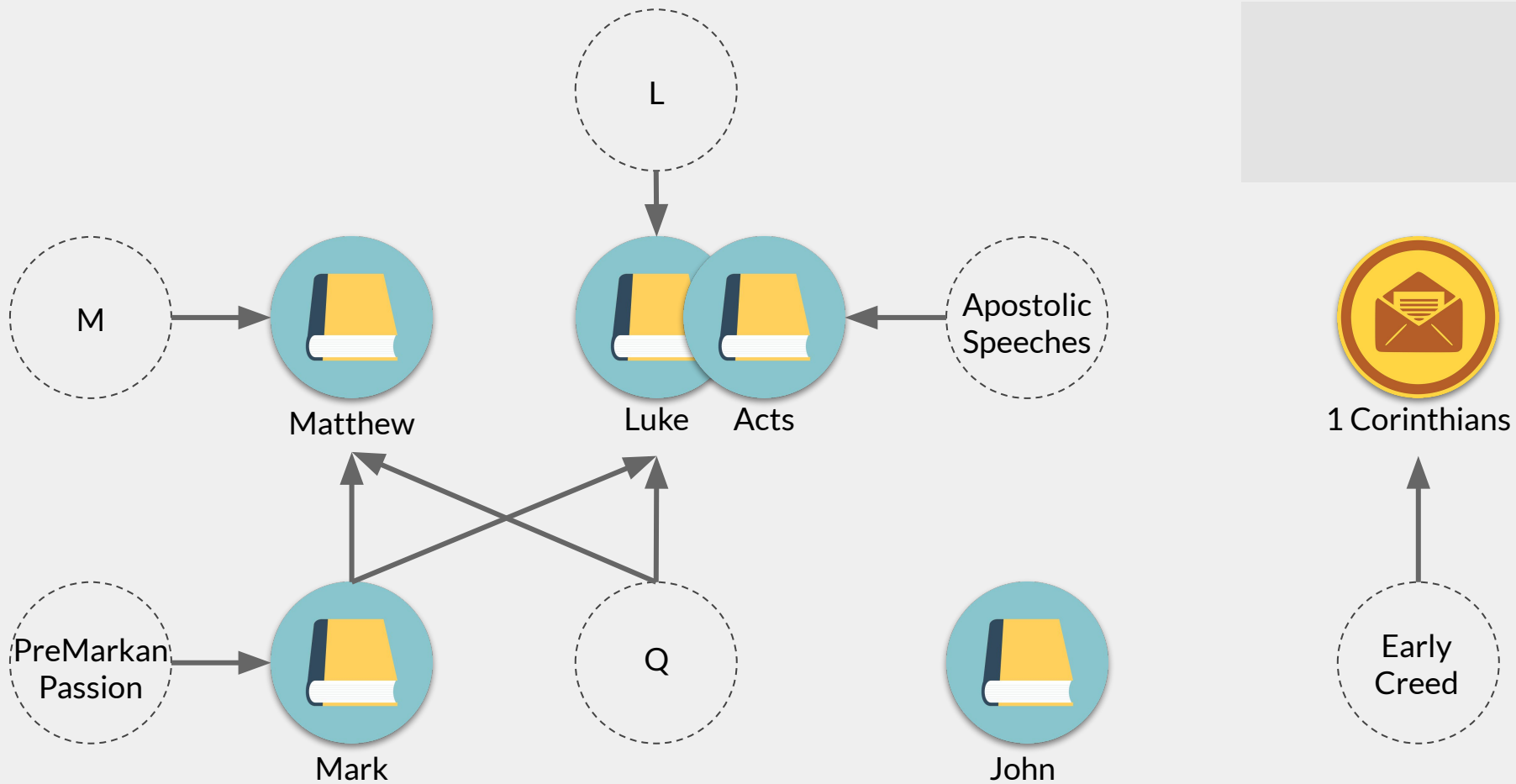
Mk. 15.37-16.7

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

And he [Joseph] bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb.

"He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him."

"But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him."



Q: Did Jesus Exist?

A: Yes, because he is abundantly attested in early sources.

Sources can be useful for one of three questions.

1. **Who was Jesus?** (e.g., his teachings, actions, self-perception)
2. **What was the fate Jesus?** (i.e. what happened to him?)
3. **What was early Christianity?** (i.e. what were the practices, beliefs, and activities of his early followers?)

Further Reading

1. **Surprised by Hope** by N.T. Wright
2. **The Historical Jesus: Five Views** ed. James Beilby
3. **Did Jesus Exist?** By Bart Ehrman
4. **The Resurrection of Jesus: a New Historiographical Approach** by Mike Licona
5. **The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus** by Mike Licona and Gary Habermas
6. **The Resurrection of God Incarnate** by Richard Swinburne
7. “The Argument from Miracles: A Cumulative Case for the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth” in the **Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology** by Tim & Lydia McGrew
8. **The Resurrection of the Son of God** by N.T. Wright
9. **The Historical Argument from the Resurrection During the Deist Controversy** by W.L. Craig
10. **Assessing the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus** by W.L. Craig
11. **Reasonable Faith** by W.L. Craig

