



# BibleTalk



AT THOMAS ROAD

CORE Apologetics:  
Majoring on the Majors

# Apologetics

Apologetics (ἀπολογία) or *apologia* is a weird word. Where are some places we find the term?

**Primary NT text is 1 Peter 3:15: but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.**

1. Acts 22:1 – “defense”
2. Acts 25:16 – “defense”
3. 1 Corinthians 9:3 – “defense”
4. 2 Corinthians 7:11 – “vindication” (ἀπολογία)
5. Philippians 1:7 – “defense”
6. Philippians 1:16 – “defense”
7. 2 Timothy 4:16 – “defense”

So what does it mean and do we need to use the term “apologetics”?

## Important Questions Related to Apologetics

1. Do you know the hope within you? What are some important texts you can point to that describe the Gospel and how to respond to the Gospel?
  - 1 Corinthians 15:1ff.
  - Romans 1:3-4
  - Acts 17:30-31
  - Romans 10:9-13
  - Ephesians 2:1-10
2. Are you prepared to give a reason for your commitment to that hope?



# Reasons for Reliability

There are several reasons to believe that the NT is reliable. These reasons occur at different levels and could be compared with zooming in and out on Google Earth. Though there are more, the six considerations we will be giving are the following:

1. Textual Evidence
2. Genre
3. Dating
4. Authorship
5. Archaeology
6. Non-Christian Sources

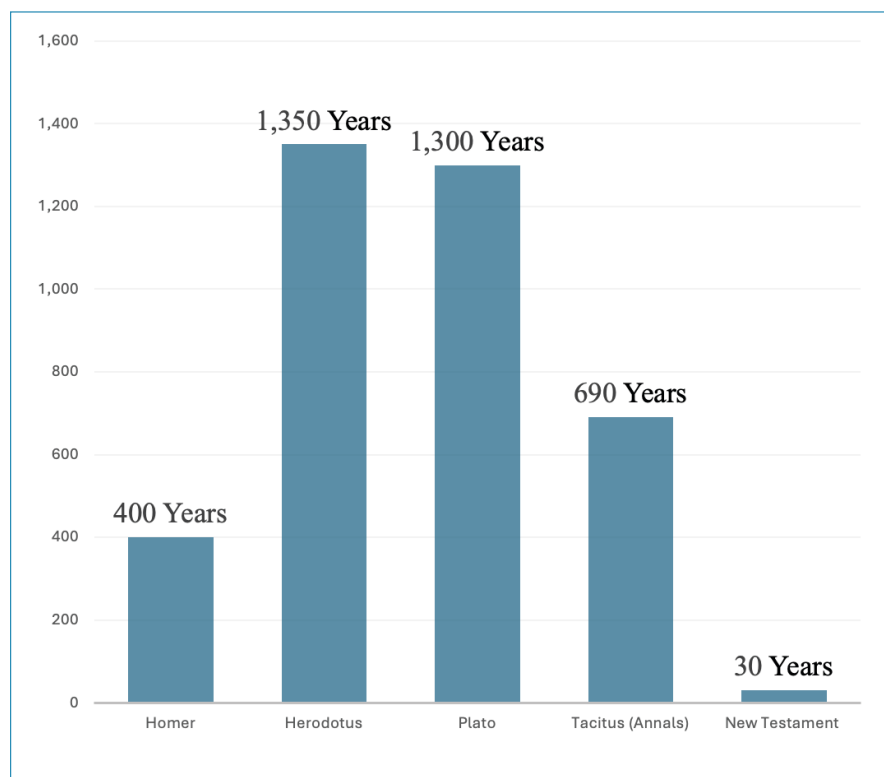
## Textual Evidence

What is textual evidence and what does it prove?

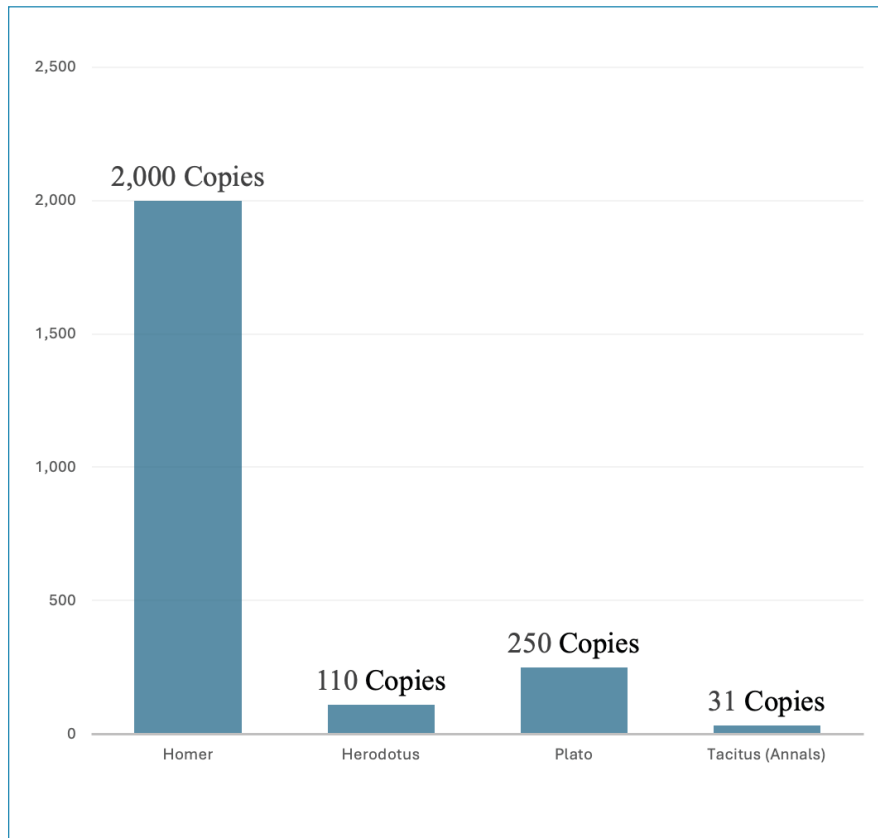
What does it *not* prove?

What are two general principles of aspects of textual evidence and why are they important?

**Date:** The earlier the better.



**Quantity:** The more the merrier. More manuscripts means more texts to compare.



**NT Manuscripts 5,000+ (in Greek alone!)**

Types of differences in the manuscripts.

**1. Not Meaningful/Viable**

- Spelling, grammar, etc.

**2. Meaningful, Not Viable**

- Luke 6:22 (10/11<sup>th</sup> Century)
- ‘Blessed are you when you are persecuted’

**3. Meaningful and Viable**

- Mark 16:9-20
- John 7:53-8:11

**Who said it?**

“[T]he text is certain in all essentials, and even in most particulars we can be relatively sure what the autographs said. Further, in the passages in which the text is in doubt, no cardinal doctrine is at stake.” – Dan Wallace

“The position I argue...does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger’s position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.” – Bart Ehrman

**We can be confident that the writings we have in the NT were the same things that were in the originals.**

**Genre**

Genre is important since it helps guide us in our understanding of a text. For example, we interpret a fictional movie quite different from a news report. That same is true in the ancient world.

*Gospels (and Acts)*

“In contrast to novels, the Gospels do not present themselves as texts composed primarily for entertainment, but as true accounts of Jesus’ ministry.” – Craig Keener

Many today recognize that the Gospels are biographies that are consistent with other biographies written at that time. Biographies can be considered a subset of a historical writing.

Two additional significant takeaways from the Gospels being biographies.

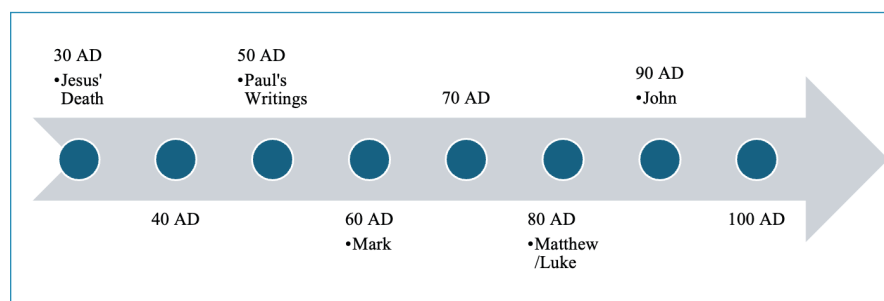
1. Historical: They were concerned with the truth, especially considering that they were written within the lifetime of eyewitnesses.
2. Theological: Christological takeaways?

*Paul’s Writings*

Paul’s writings are in-house letters written to those who already believe and so are considered to provide important insight into the beliefs of the early church.

These writings provide insight and are considered to be devoid of propaganda. Virtually no other “holy books” contain in-house letters as part of their written collection.

## Dating



### “Late Dates”

Even on these “late dates” the NT writings fit comfortably within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses.

### Buddha

“For *four hundred years* during and after the Buddha’s lifetime, his teachings were transmitted only orally....[By the time they came to be written] it is said that there was only one monk who had memorized the whole canon and that he was somewhat arrogant. The other monks had to persuade him to recite the discourses so they could write them down. *When we hear this, we feel a little uneasy knowing that an arrogant monk may not have been the best vehicle to transmit the teachings of the Buddha.*”

Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of Buddha’s Teachings*, 13

### Alexander the Great

Our earliest biographies are centuries after his lifetime. Diodorus (+300), Plutarch, and Arrian (+400).

## Authorship

**Intentionally Anonymous:** The work was intended to be anonymous and the author unknown.

**Functionally Anonymous:** The work does not contain the author’s name, but the author was known. Examples from outside the NT include Plutarch and Lucian as well as works today.

### Gospel Authorship

- Simon Gathercole points out that our 16 earliest sources that provide the authorship of a Gospel all attest to the four authors we have.
- There was never any dispute about the authors of the four Gospels.

Say we grant the argument for a moment, notice the problem that arises as the Gospels spread.



### Paul's Undisputed Letters

1. Romans
2. 1 Corinthians
3. 2 Corinthians
4. Galatians
5. Philippians
6. 1 Thessalonians
7. Philemon

### Archaeology

#### Major Discoveries:

1. Pool of Siloam
2. Yehohanan Heel
3. Shroud of Turin
4. Temple Warning

5. Alexamenos Graffiti

6. New Mosaic Discovery

## Non-Christian Sources

### Major Comments:

1. Josephus

2. Tacitus

3. Mara bar Serapion

4. Pliny the Elder (and Emperor Trajan's response)

## Recap

1. Textual Evidence

- Evidence
- Significance

2. Genre

- Evidence
- Significance



# Reality of the Resurrection

## Minimal Facts Approach

### 2 Key Criteria

1. Highly Attested
2. Widely Accepted

### The Minimal Facts:

1. Jesus' death
2. Proclaimed early
3. Disciples' transformation and willingness
4. Conversion of James
5. Conversion of Paul

Differences between the Reliability and MFA for demonstrating Jesus' resurrection.

## Alternative Theories

How do you respond to these 5 alternative theories?

1. Jesus' Didn't Actually Die
2. Disciples Stole the Body
3. Someone Else Stole the Body
4. It was a Legend
5. They had Hallucinations



## Alternative Theories Pt. 2

Respond to these Alternative Theories and Start by utilizing the Minimal Facts

1. Jesus' Didn't Actually Die
2. Disciples Stole the Body
3. Someone Else Stole the Body
4. It was a Legend
5. They had Hallucinations

## Significance of Resurrection for Us Today

### Gospel

### Hope

- **Philippians 3:20–21** <sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13** <sup>13</sup> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.





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