

BANNED

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



LOST CHRISTIANITIES

& Banned Biblical Books



THE. REV. DR. CARL GREGG

Housekeeping

- **Slides:** [frederickuu.org/about/Banned Books of the Bible](http://frederickuu.org/about/Banned_Books_of_the_Bible)
- Add to **email** list?
- **Other?**

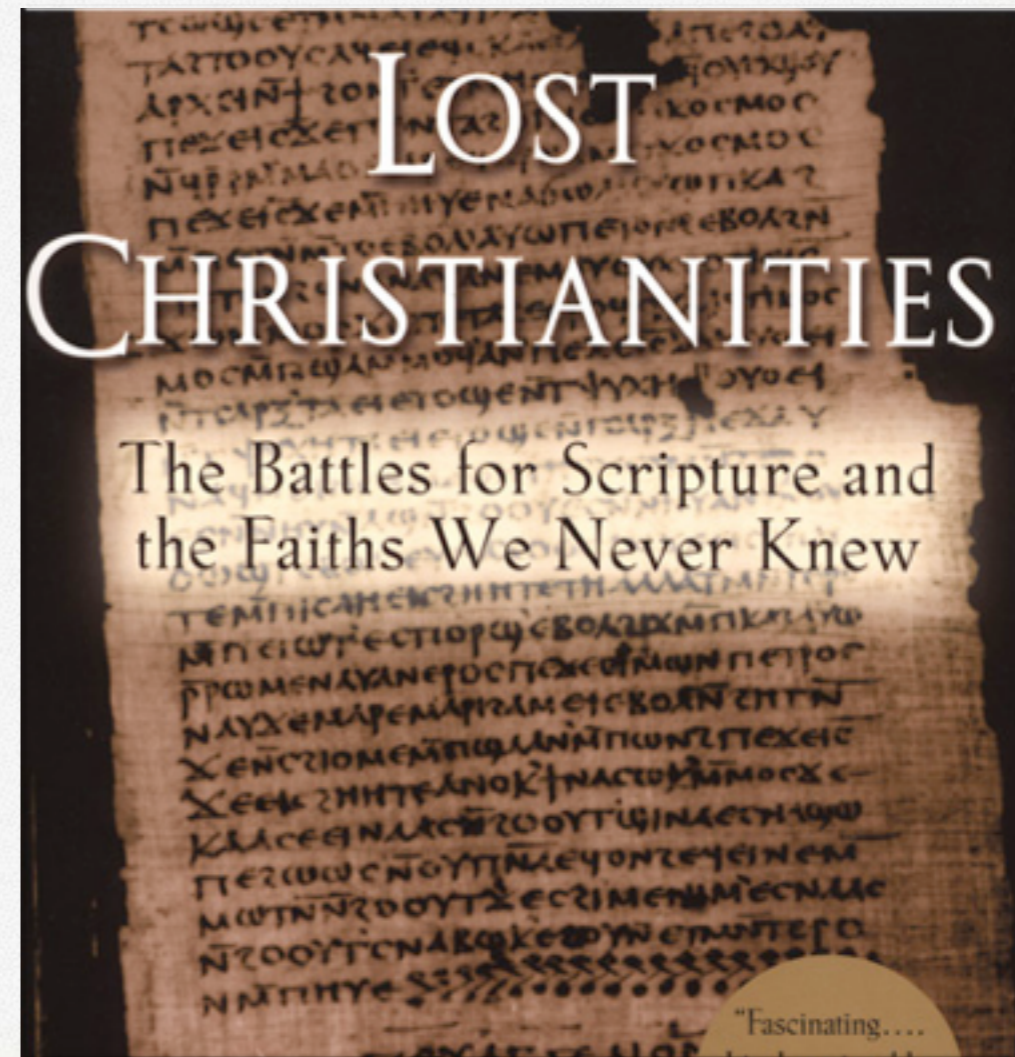
Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: *speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**



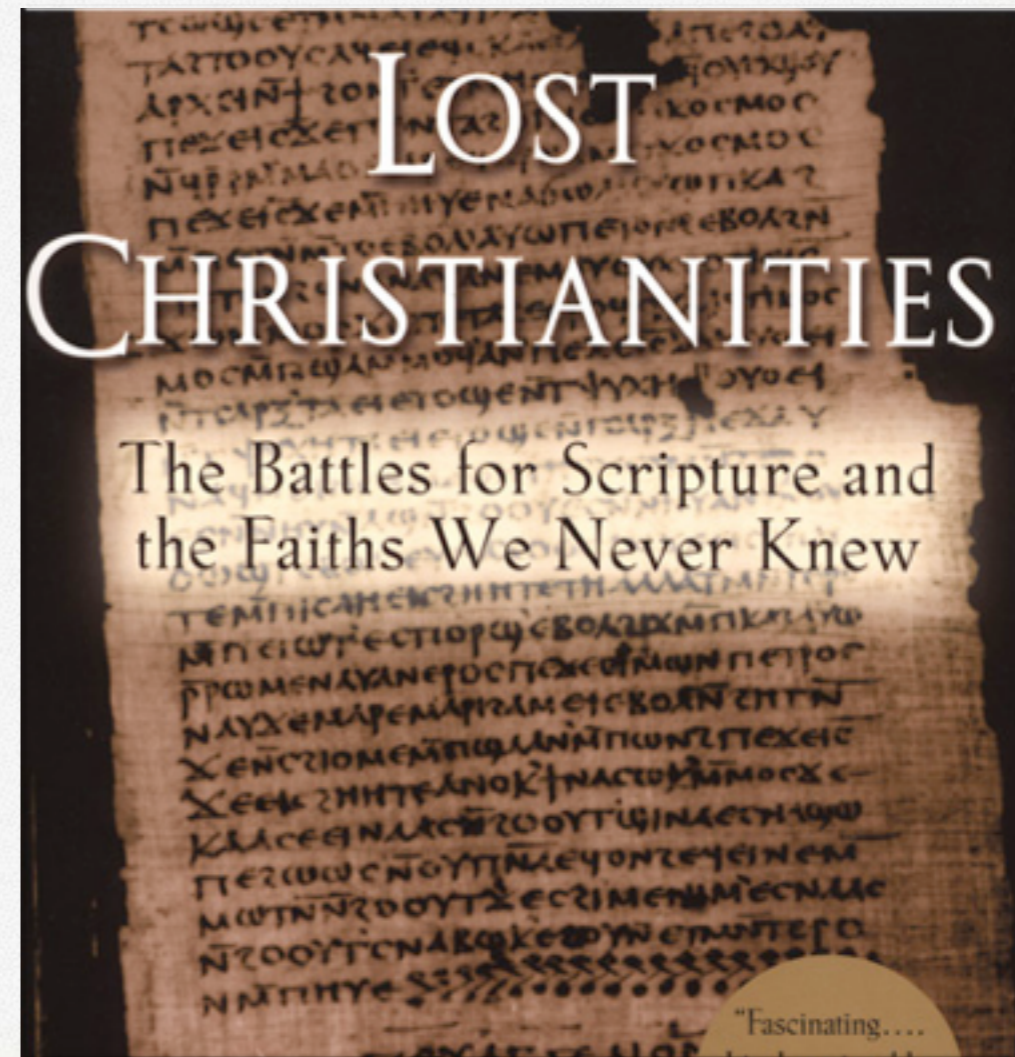
BART EHRMAN

- ✿ Explore the *diversity* of groups and beliefs in early Christianity.
- ✿ Learn how some books were *chosen* for the Bible and others *excluded*.
- ✿ Trace how some early forms of Christianity were *suppressed, reformed, or forgotten*.



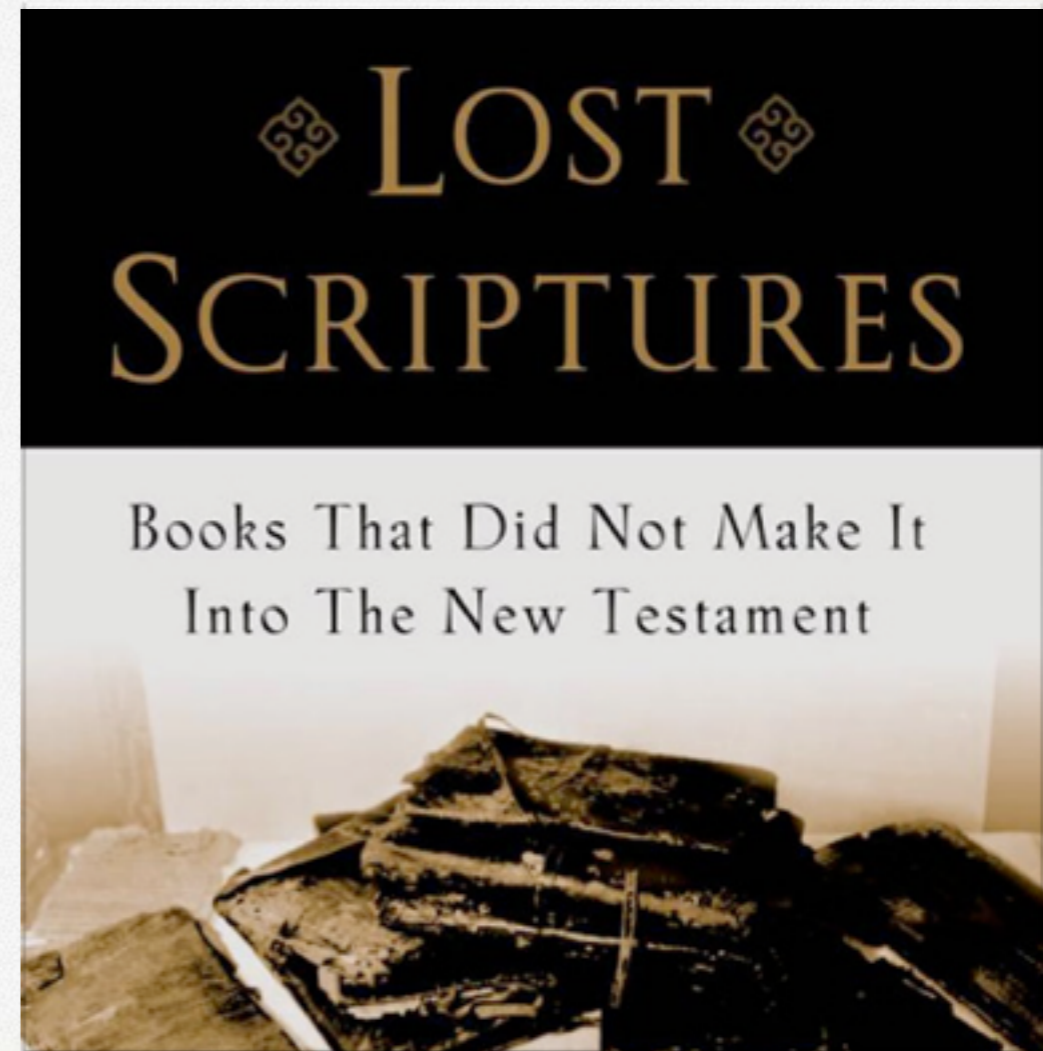
CANONIZATION

- ✿ How the 27 books in our New Testament were chosen
- ✿ Why other Christian writings at the time were excluded
- ✿ Why were some Christian beliefs enshrined as orthodox and other *Christian* beliefs declared heretical?



BART EHRMAN

- ✿ Primary Sources
- ✿ Both “textbooks” from Oxford Press
- ✿ Recommended, not “required” or necessary
- ✿ Popular work with HarperOne



TUESDAYS, 7PM-8:15PM

- * **January 14:** Introduction: “Recouping our Losses”; Chapter 1, “Ancient Discovery of a Forgery: Serapion & the Gospel of Peter”
- * **January 21:** Chapter 2, “Ancient Forgery of a Discovery: The Acts of Paul and Thecla”; Chapter 4, “Forgery of an Ancient Discovery: Morton Smith & the Secret Gospel of Mark”
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DR. BART EHRMAN (1955 -)

- ✿ Iconoclast, Secular,
(Conservative Christian background)
- ✿ Author of more than 20 books, including four *New York Times* bestsellers



MISQUOTING JESUS

The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why



New York Times
Bestselling Author of
*MISQUOTING
JESUS*

GOD'S PROBLEM

How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most
Important Question—Why We Suffer



BART D. EHRMAN

TEXT CRITICISM, THEODICY

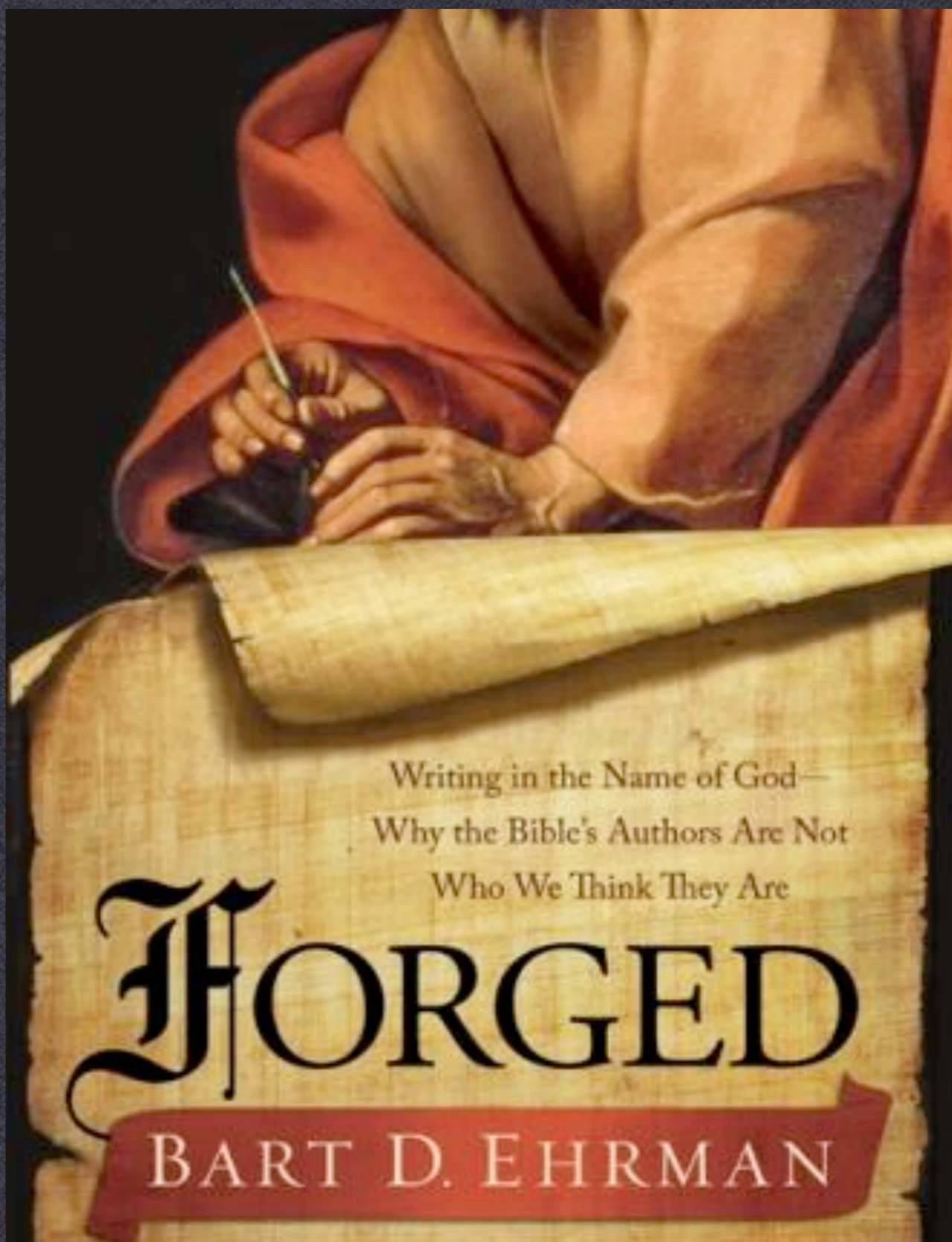
FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF MISQUOTING JESUS

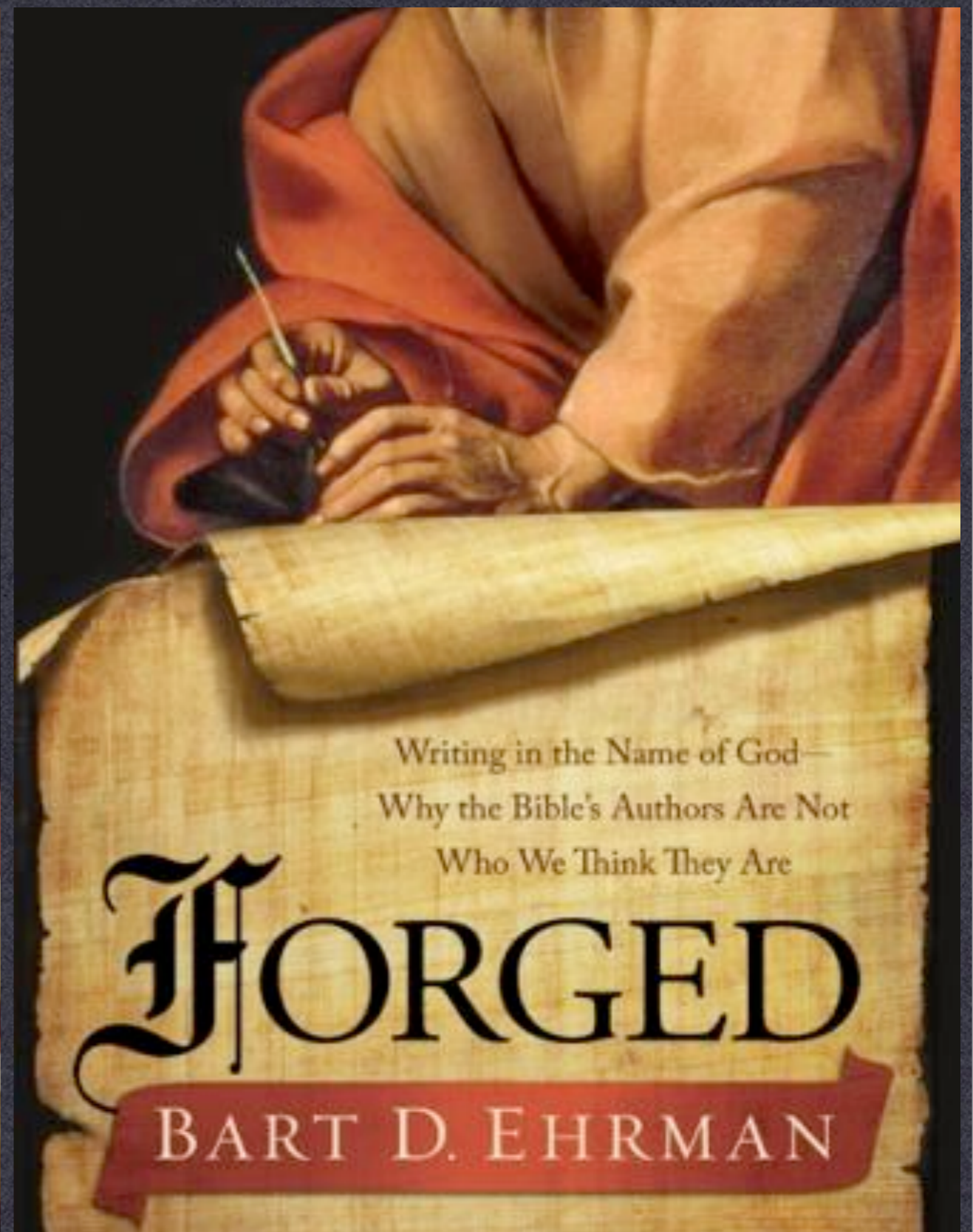
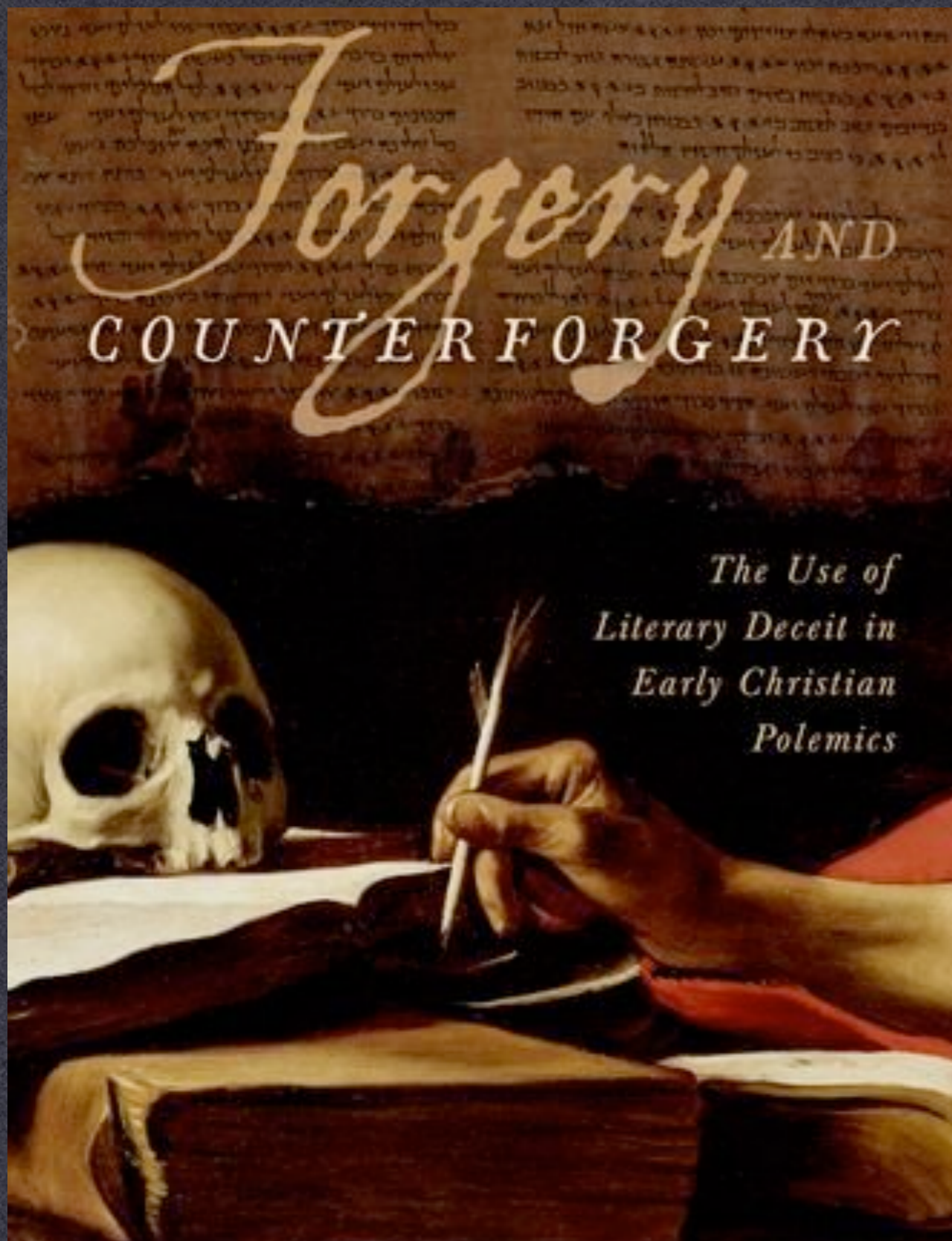
New York
Times
Bestseller

Jesus, Interrupted

Revealing the Hidden
Contradictions in the Bible
*(and Why We Don't Know
About Them)*

BART D. EHRMAN



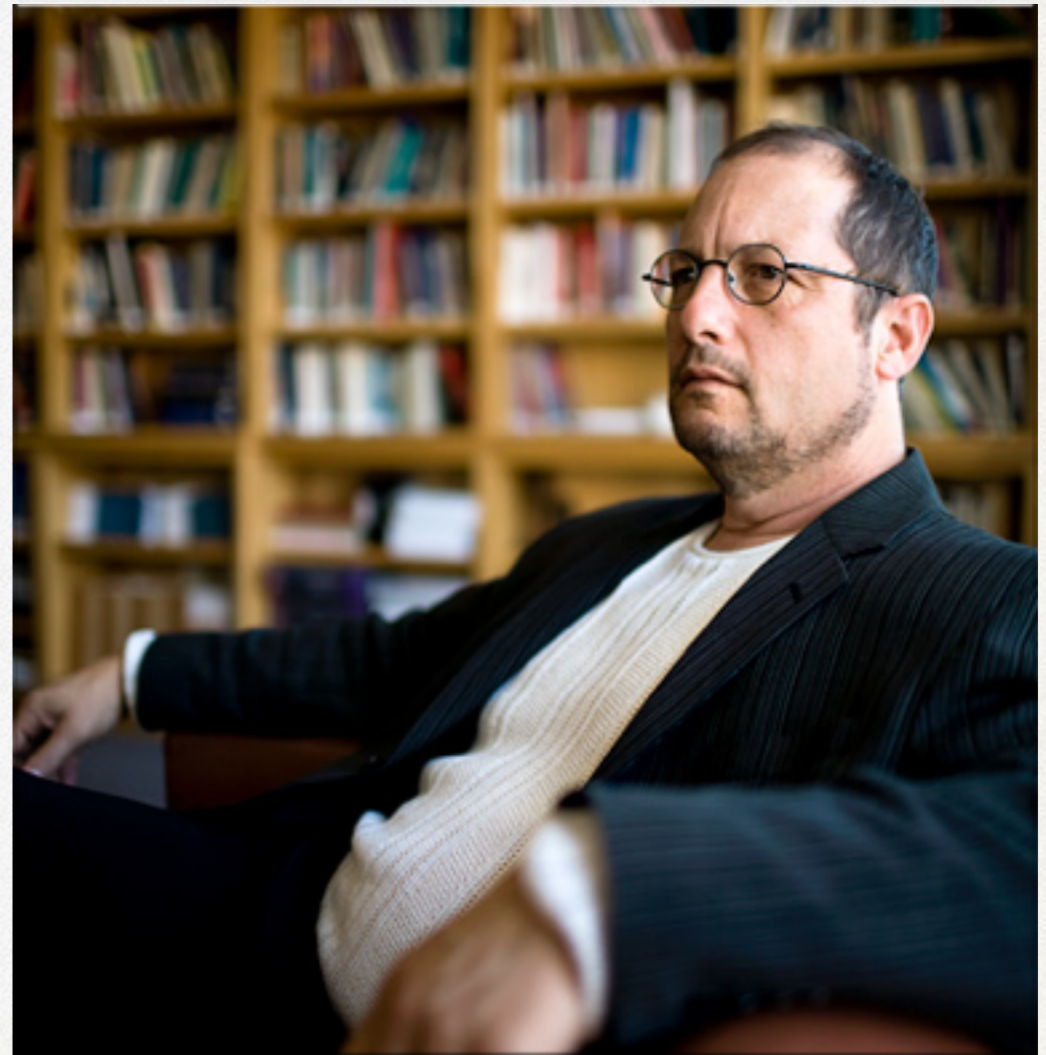


FORGED?

- ✿ “We may never know what drove these people . . .to hide their own identity and to claim, deceitfully, that they were someone else. Their readers, had they known, would probably have called them liars and condemned what they did. But in their own eyes, their conscience may have been free from blame, and their motives may have been as pure as the driven snow. They had a truth to convey, and they were happy to lie in order to proclaim it.”

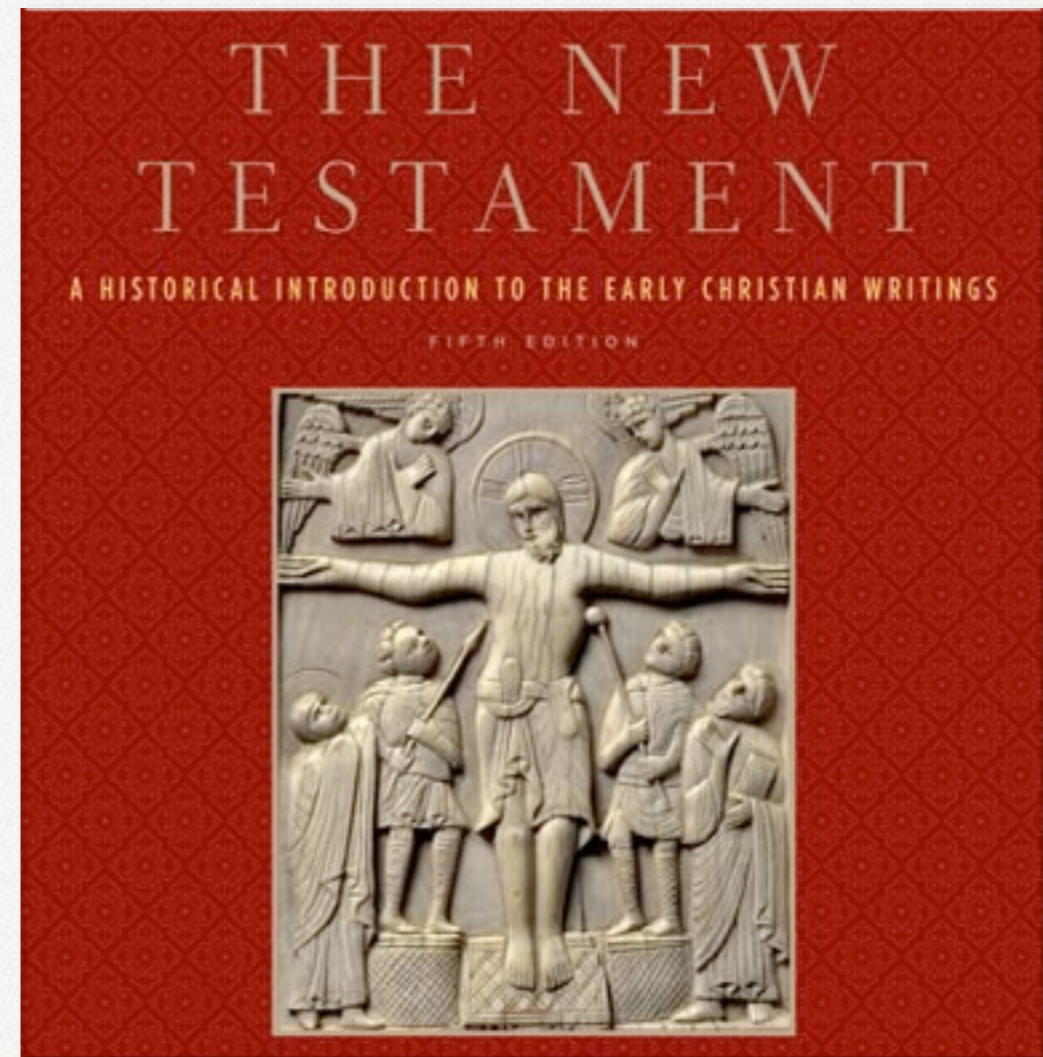
DR. BART EHRMAN

- ✿ James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- ✿ Leading authority on the New Testament and the history of early Christianity.



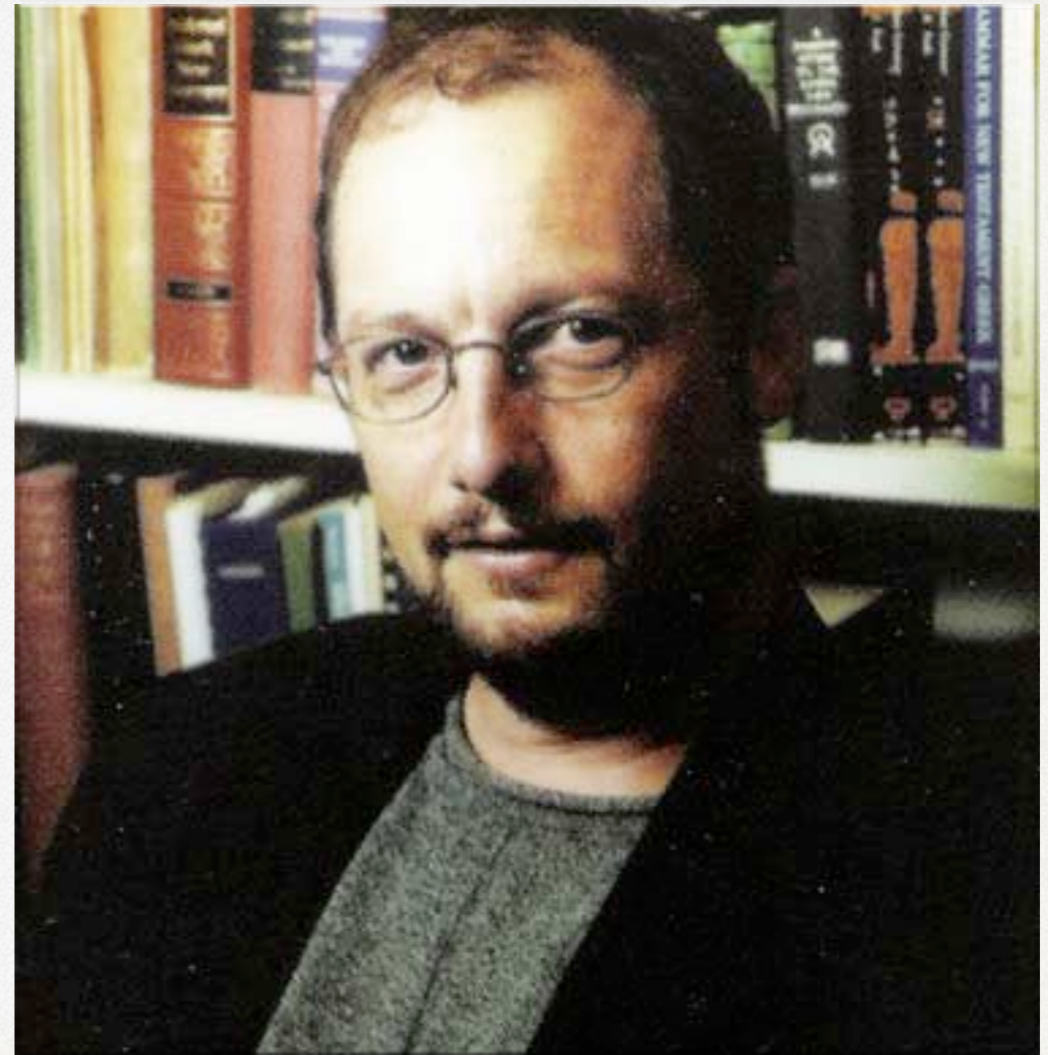
DR. BART EHRMAN

- ✿ Bestselling undergraduate Intro to New Testament



DR. BART EHRMAN

- ❖ Time, the New Yorker, the Washington Post
- ❖ NBC's Dateline, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, CNN, The History Channel, National Geographic, the Discovery Channel
- ❖ the BBC, major NPR shows.



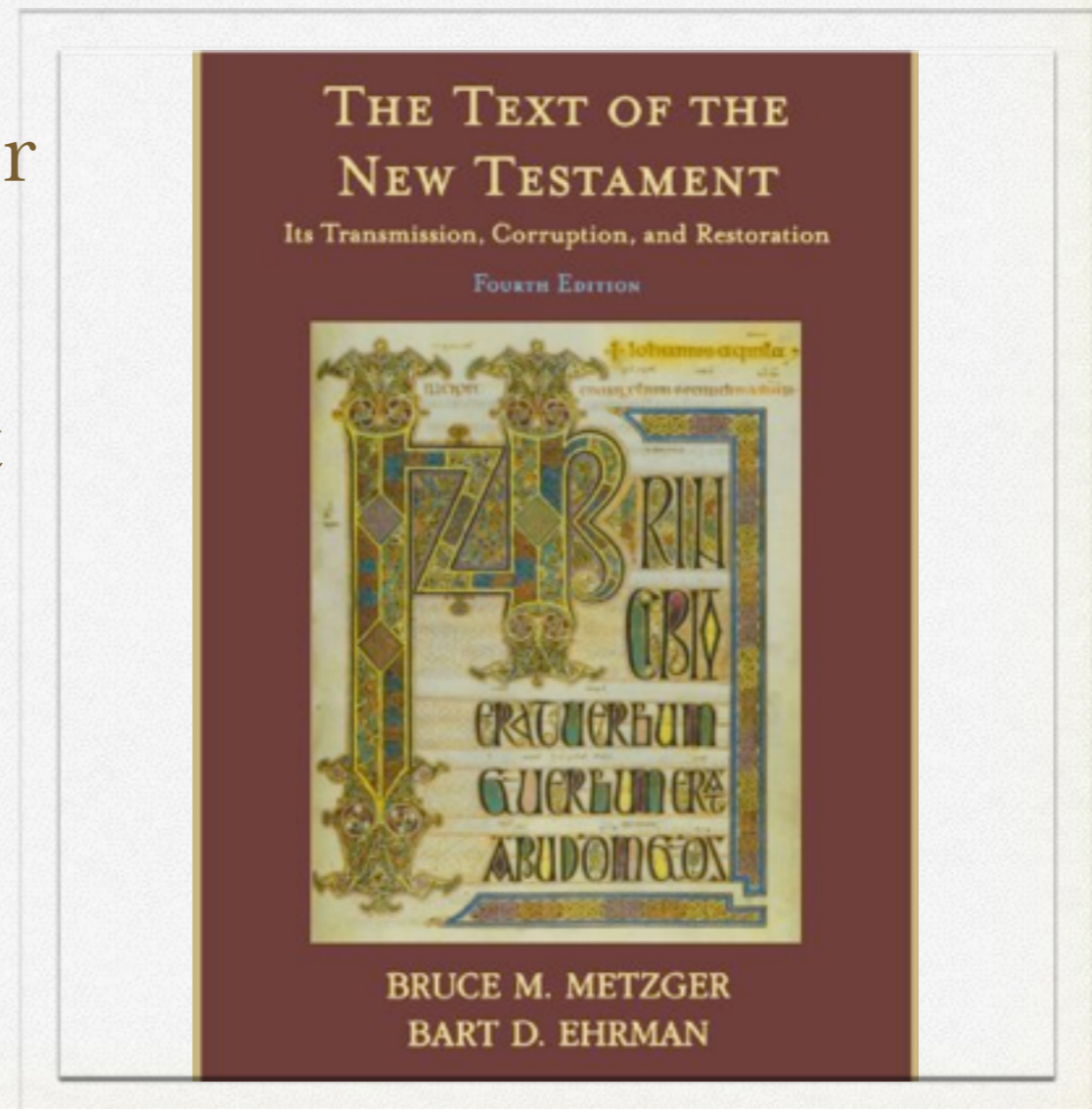
BRUCE METZGER (1914 - 2007)

- ✿ Doktorvater
- ✿ Emeritus professor of New Testament language and literature at Princeton Theological Seminary (taught for 40 years)



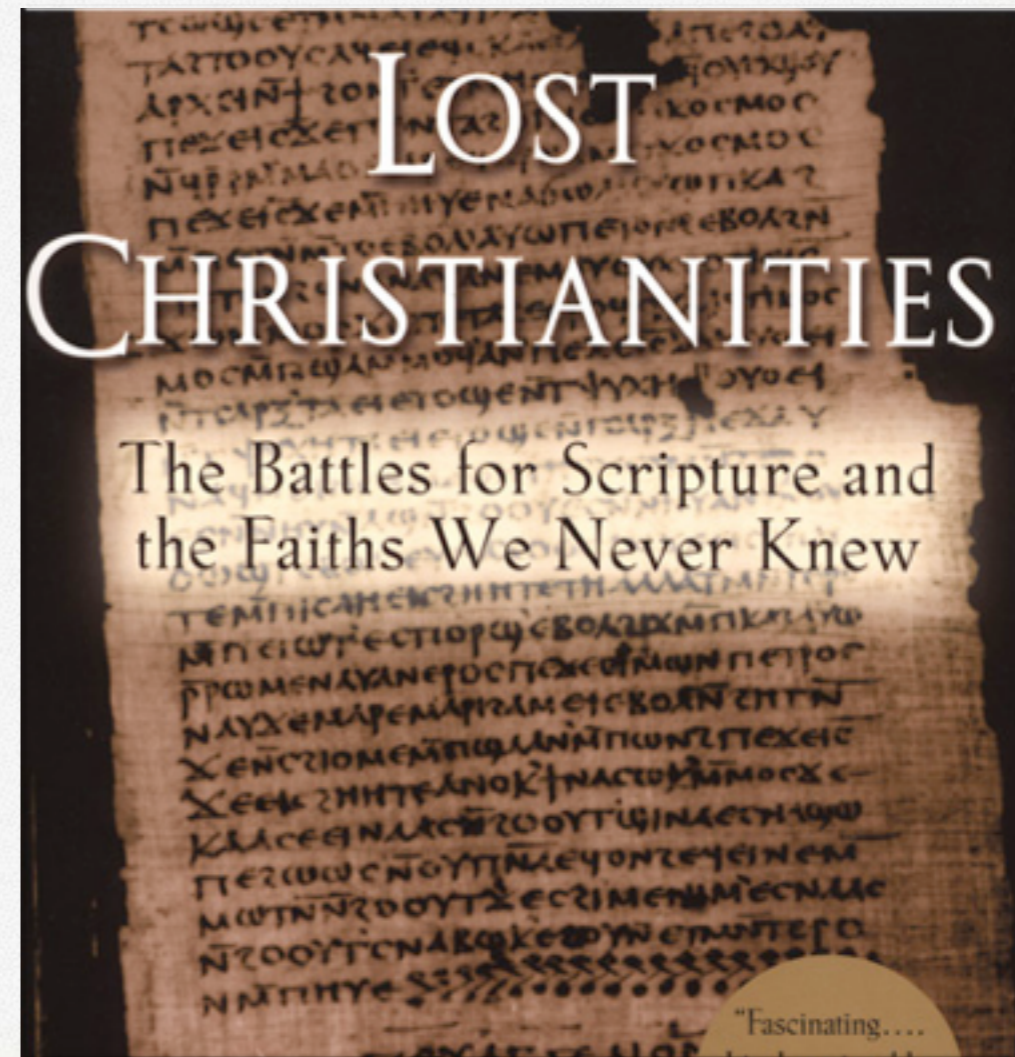
BRUCE METZGER (1914 - 2007)

- ❖ Ordained Presbyterian minister
- ❖ World-renowned authority on translating the New Testament from the original Greek.
- ❖ Supervised the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV)



THESIS

- ✿ Early Christianity was *diverse* not monolithic
- ✿ “Heretics” vs. *Proto-orthodox*
- ✿ Heretic (from Greek *αἵρεσις*, meaning “choice”)
- ✿ *ortho-*



HISTORY WRITTEN BY THE *VICTORS*

- ✿ Proto-orthodox – some beliefs and texts were valorized, canonized, and included in the NT.
- ✿ Heresies – other beliefs and texts were denigrated, rejected, attacked, suppressed, and destroyed.

PEOPLE'S
HISTORY
OF THE
UNITED
STATES
— 1492—PRESENT —

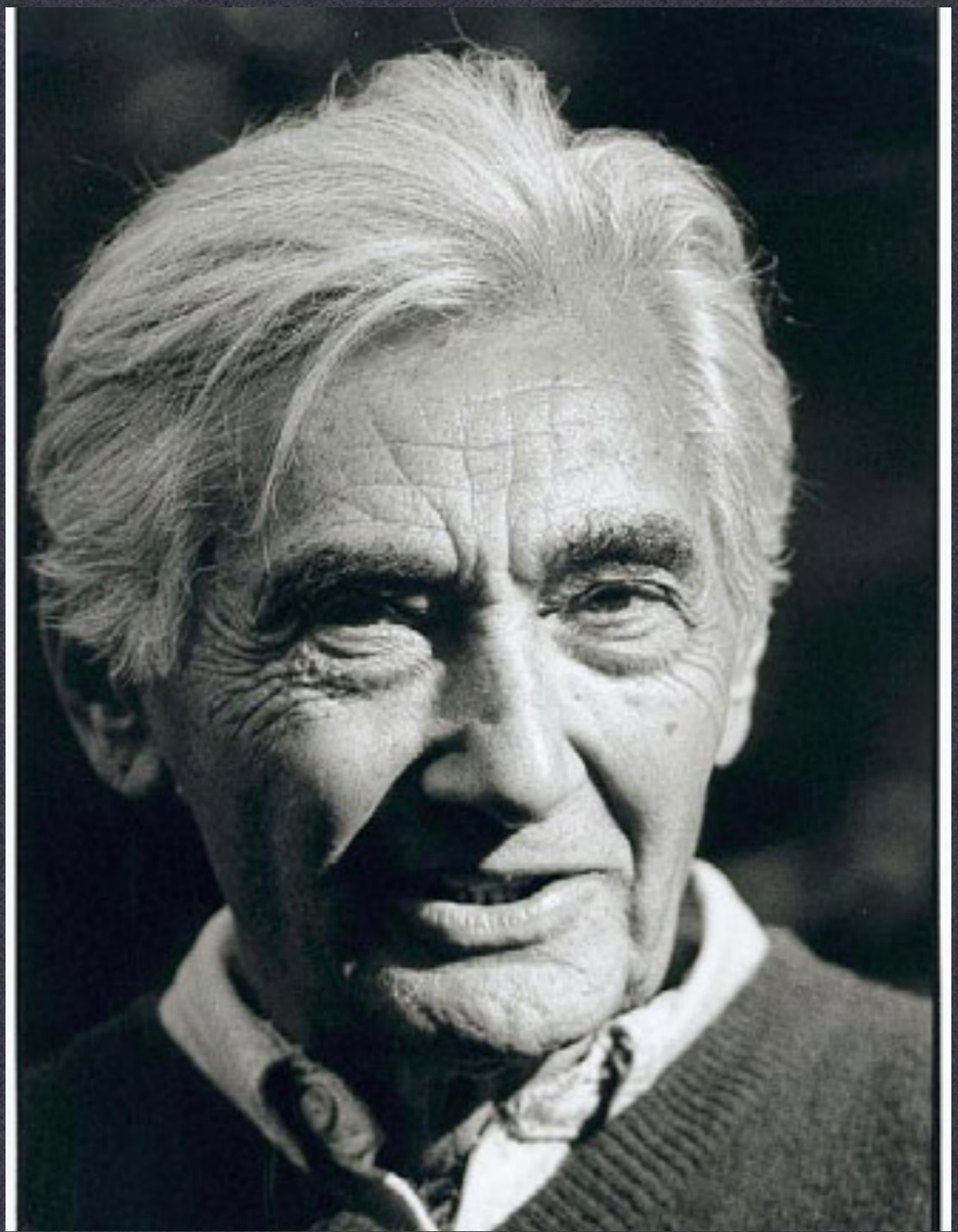
TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

"Historians may well view it as a step toward a coherent
new version of American history."

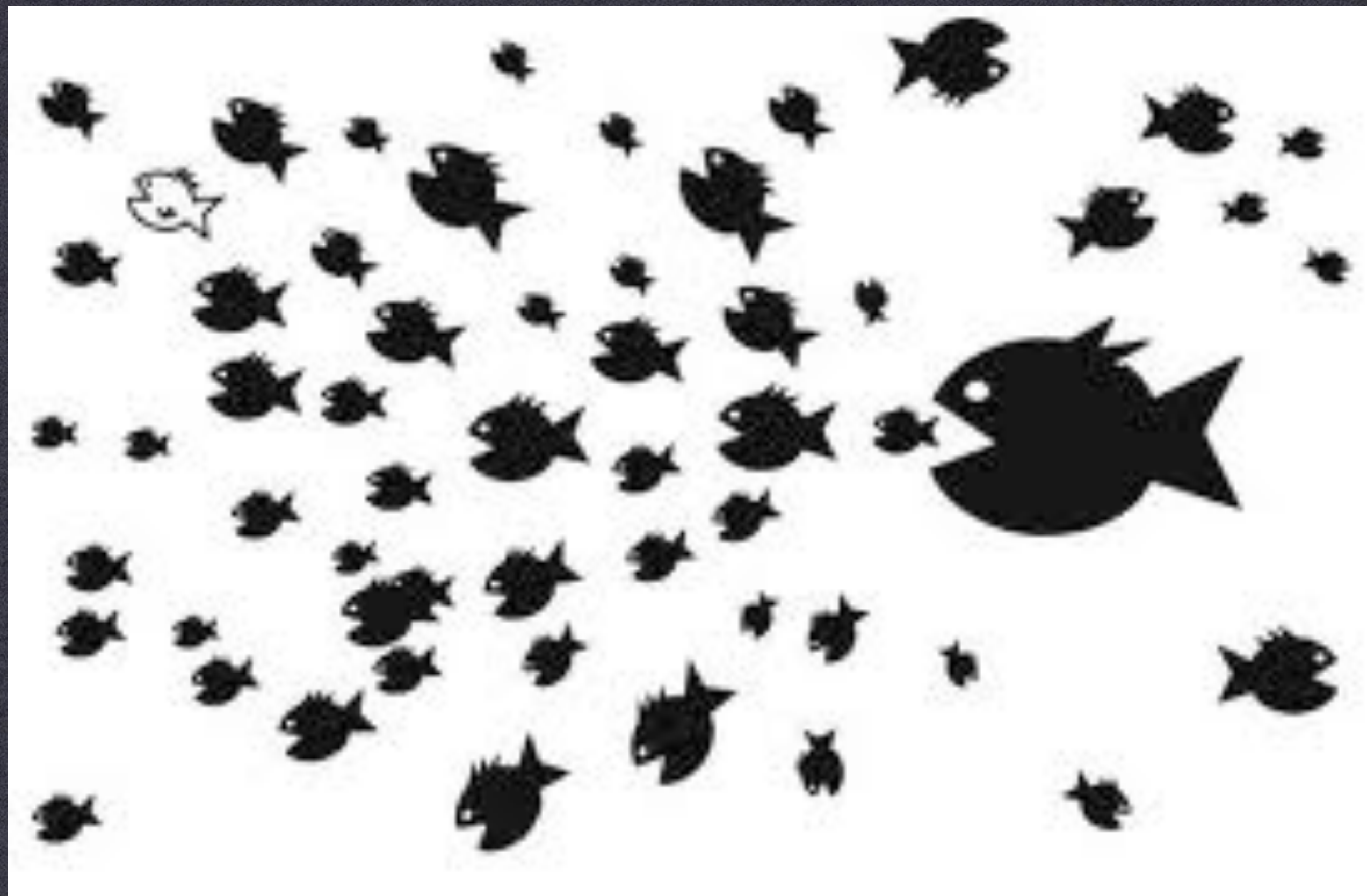
—Eric Foner, *New York Times Book Review*



HOWARD ZINN



HISTORY FROM THE UNDERSIDE

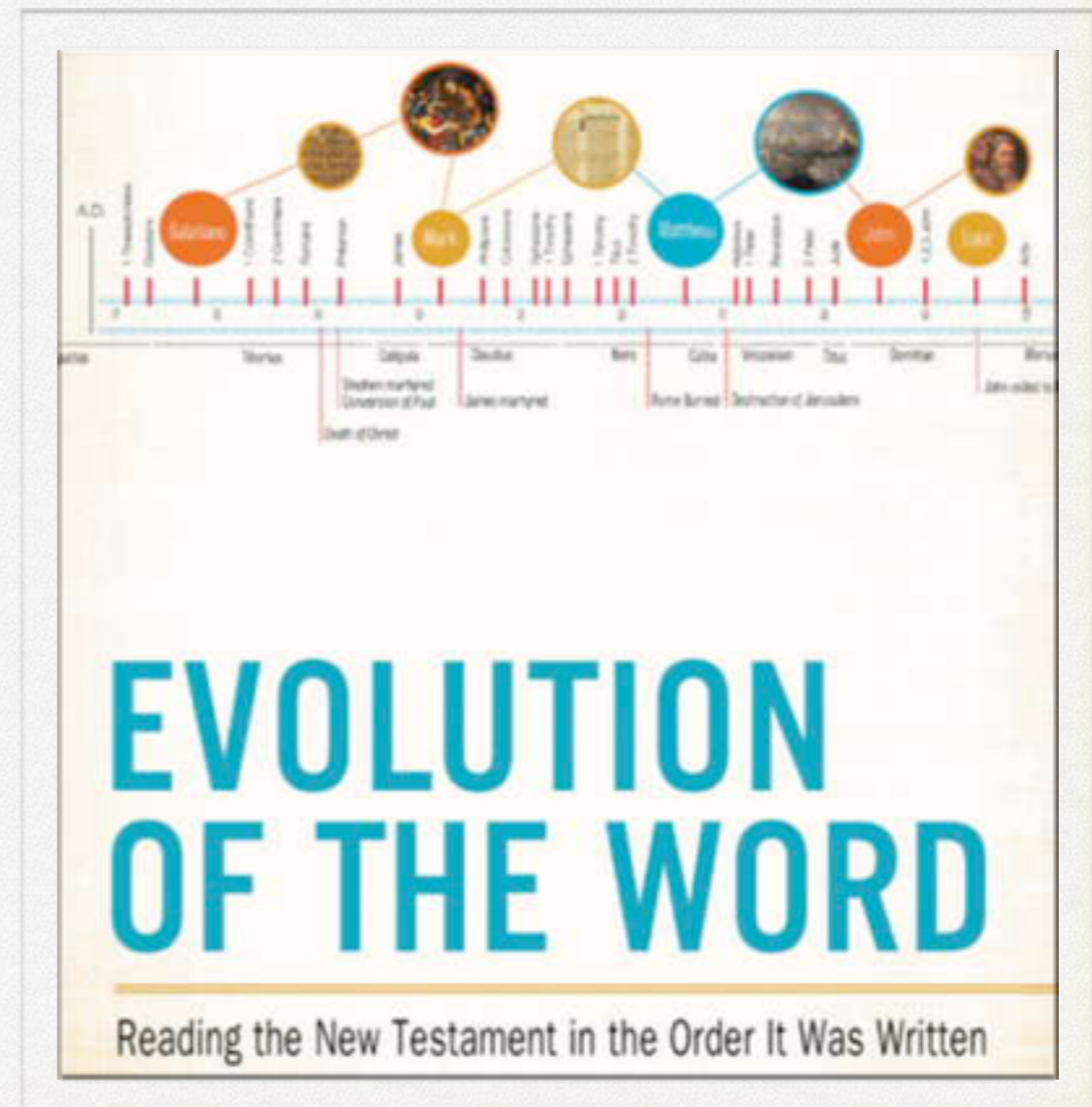


GOALS

- ✿ Explore the diversity of noncanonical scriptures. (*Outside the “official” circle*)
- ✿ Examine variety of Christian faith and practice in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. [*1st century timeline*]
- ✿ Trace the rise of the proto-orthodox: how one (*among many*) became dominant

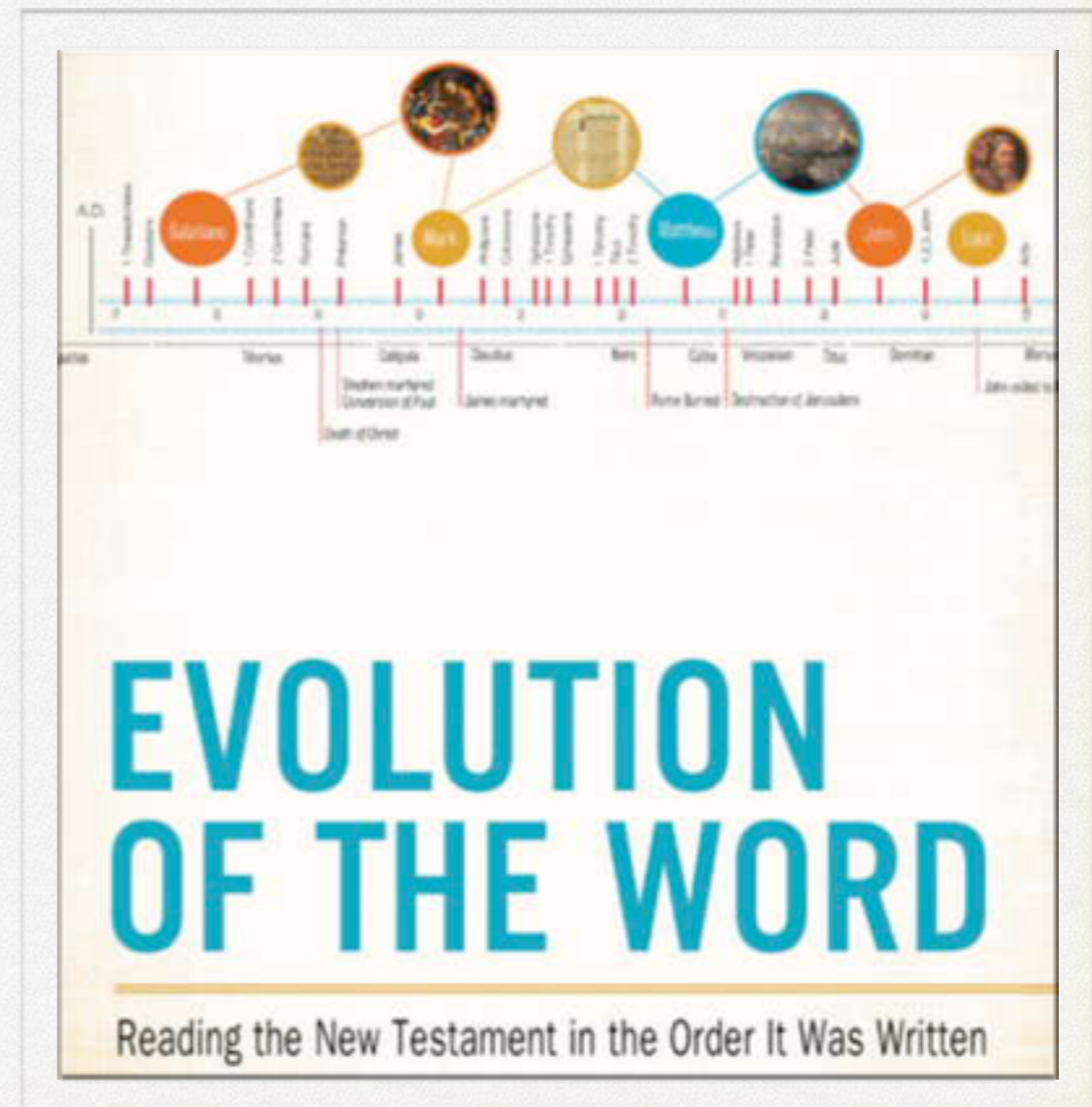
MARCUS BORG

- ✿ Beginning with seven of Paul's letters illustrates that there were vibrant Christian communities spread throughout the Roman Empire before there were written Gospels.



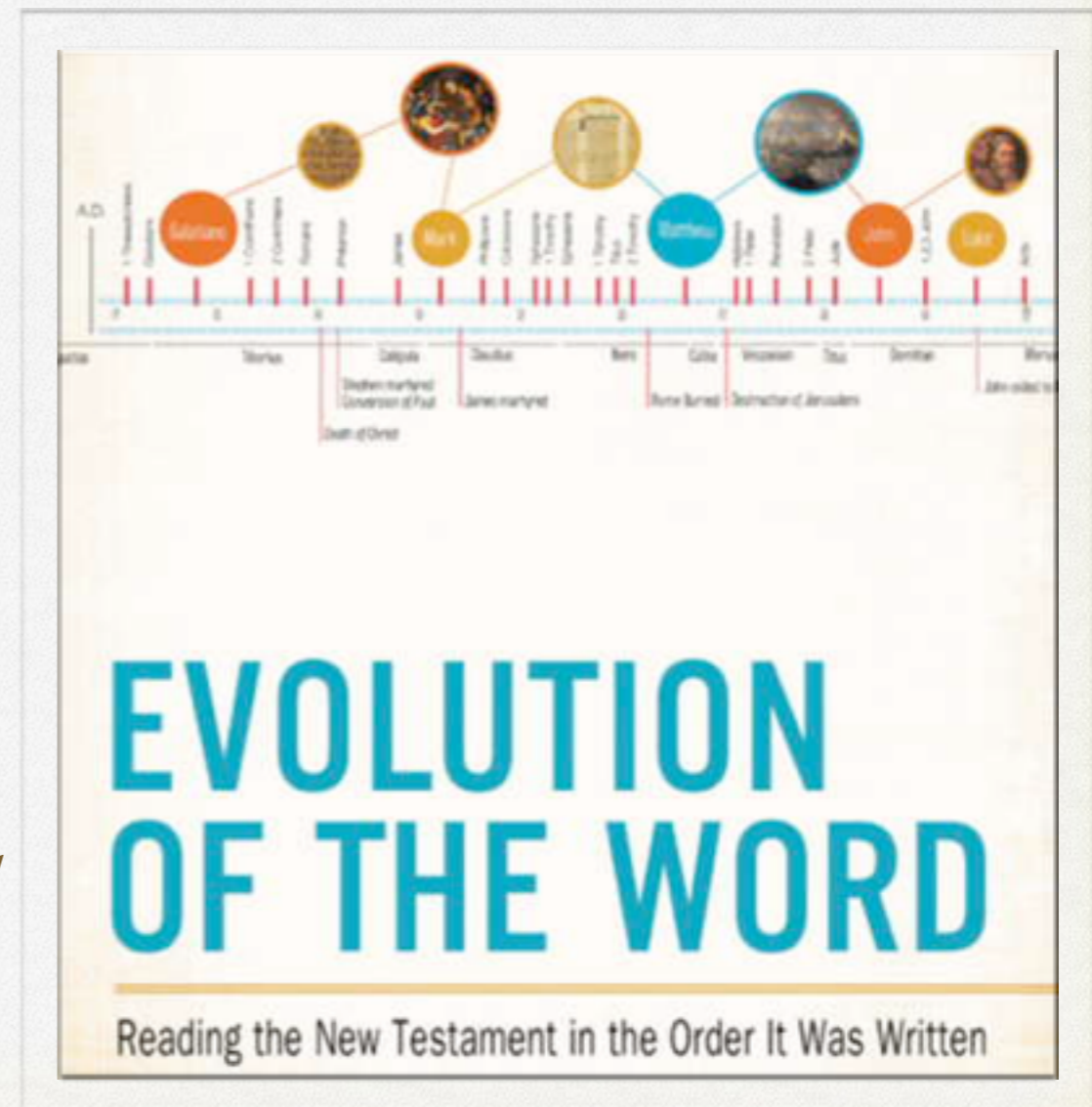
MARCUS BORG

- ✿ Placing the Gospels after Paul makes it clear that as written documents they are not the source of early Christianity but its product. (The “good news” preceded the written Gospels.) They are the products of early Christian communities several decades after Jesus' historical life.



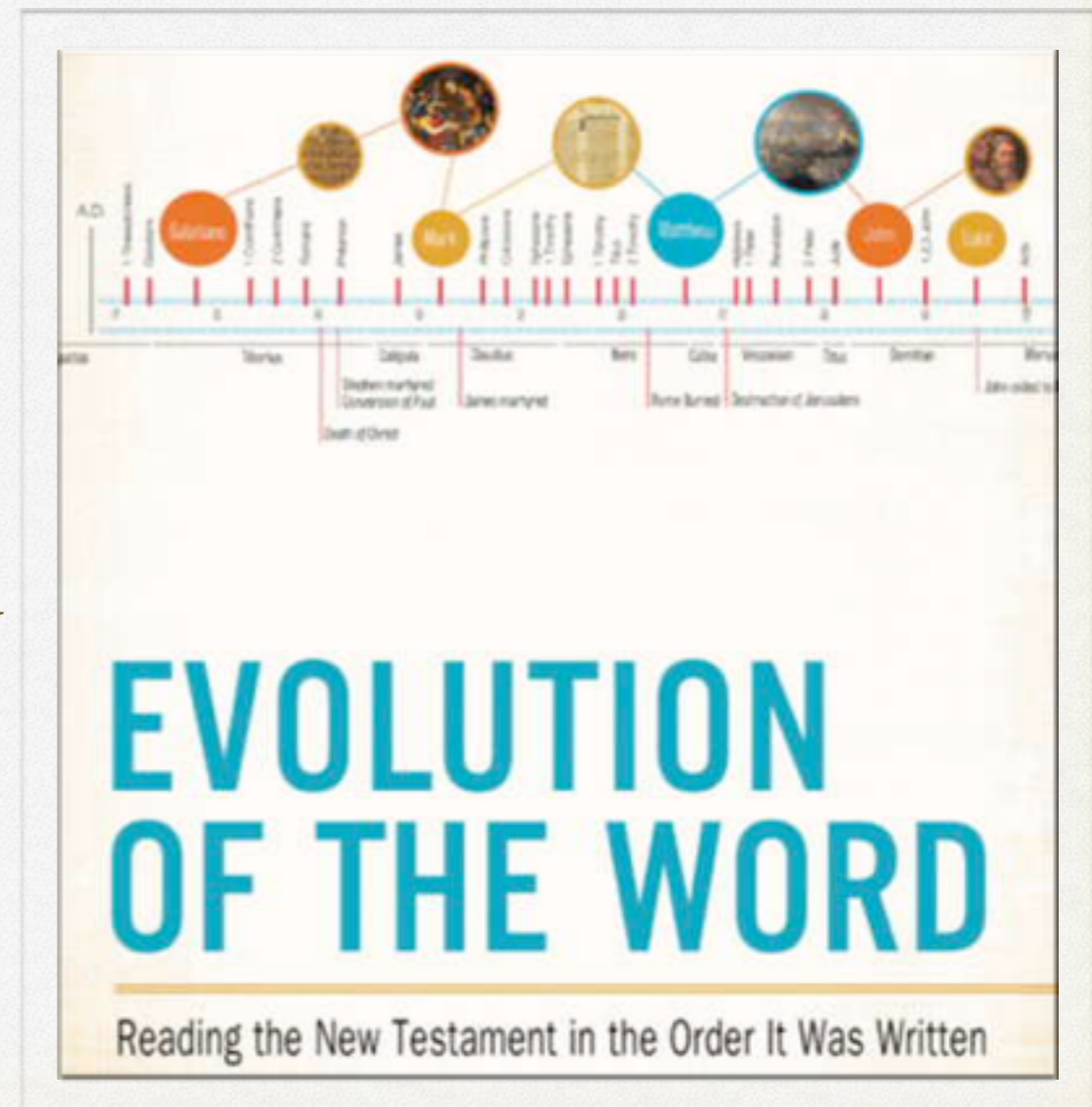
MARCUS BORG

- ✿ Reading the Gospels in chronological order beginning with Mark demonstrates that early Christian understandings of Jesus and his significance developed. (*Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source, adding and modifying.*)



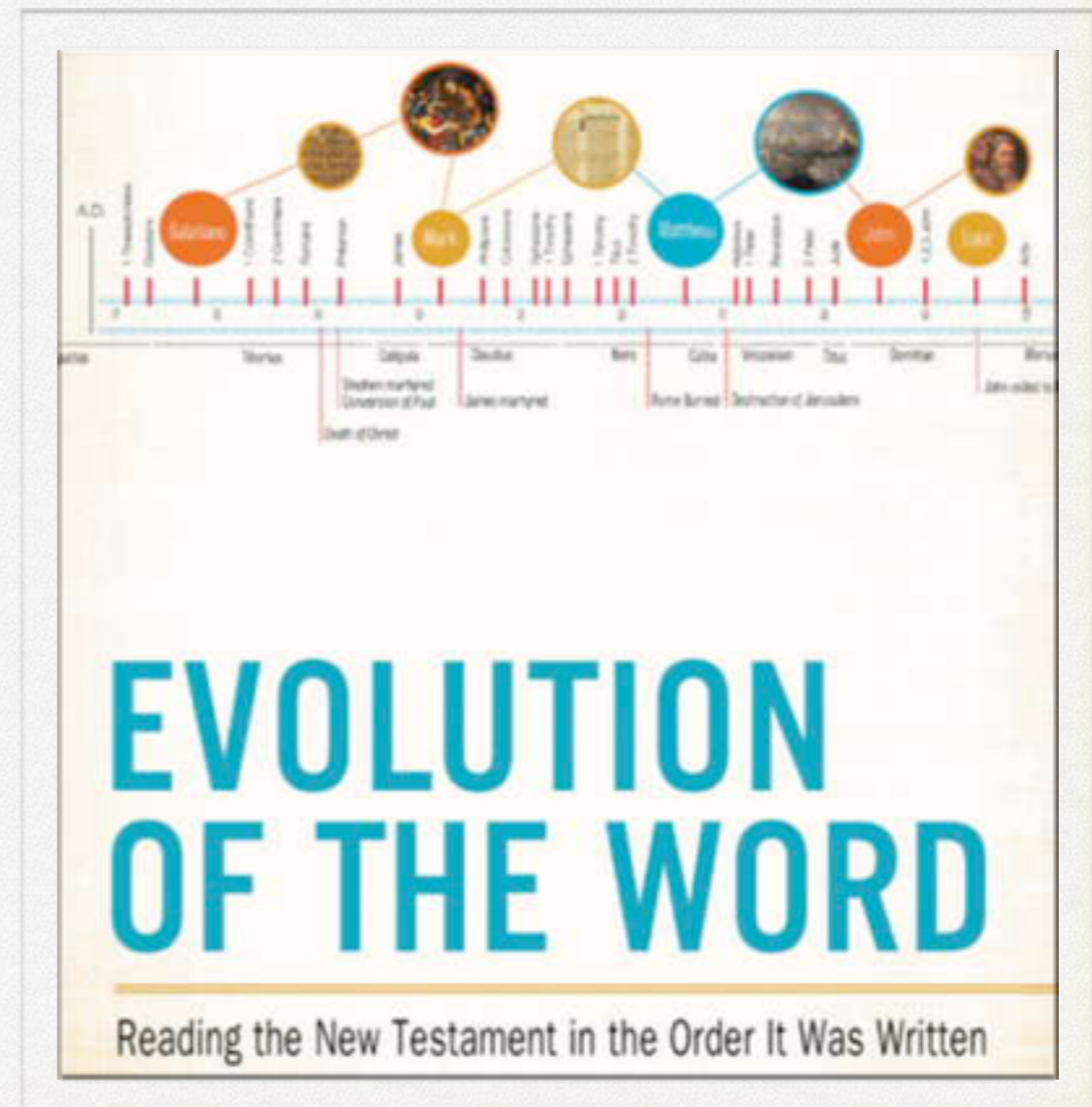
MARCUS BORG

- ✿ Seeing John separated from the other Gospels and relatively late in the New Testament makes it clear how different his Gospel is from the “synoptics.”



MARCUS BORG

- ❁ Realizing that many of the documents are from the late first and early second centuries allows us to glimpse developments in early Christianity in its third and fourth generations.



CLASS 1

✿ Introduction: “Recouping our Losses”

✿ Chapter 1, “Ancient Discovery of a Forgery: Serapion & the Gospel of Peter”

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CHRISTIANITY OR CHRISTIANITIES?

MANY OF THESE CONTEMPORARY GROUPS DON'T CONSIDER THE OTHERS "CHRISTIAN"

WHAT COULD BE MORE DIVERSE?

- ✿ How many God(s)? (*1, 2, 30, 365?*)
- ✿ Who created the world? (*God or subordinate deity?*)
- ✿ Was creation a cosmic mistake?
- ✿ Who was Jesus? (*Divine or Human?*)
- ✿ What did Jesus' death mean? (*The salvation of the world — or, “What? Jesus died?”*)

WHAT COULD BE MORE DIVERSE?

- ✿ Contemporary difference pale in comparison
- ✿ Most of those ancient groups unknown today because reformed or eliminated
- ✿ How could these group be “Christian” (*Remember: these was no “canon”*)
- ✿ *Diverse Genres* [LS ToC} ***

COUNCIL OF NICEA (325CE)

✿ “Virtually all forms of modern Christianity, where they acknowledge it or not, go back to one form of Christianity that emerged as victorious from the conflicts of the second and third centuries” (LC 4).



Emperor Constantine

(RE)WRITING HISTORY

- ✿ “I shall tell you of William Wallace. Historians from England will say I am a liar, but history is written by those who have hanged heroes.”



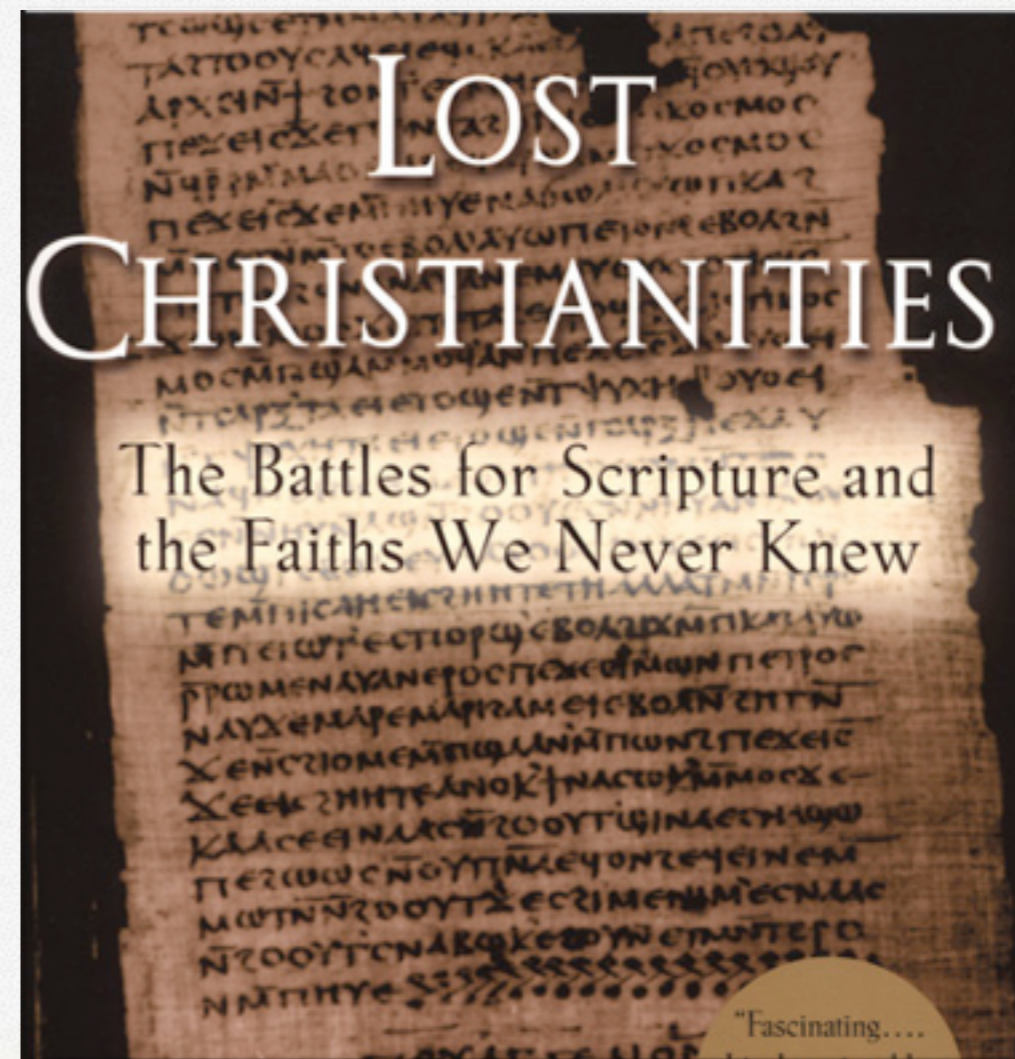
Braveheart

CHAPTER 1

The Ancient Discovery of a Forgery: *Serapion & the Gospel of Peter*

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❁ “Ancient Christians knew of far more Gospels than the four that eventually came to be included in the New Testament. Most of them have been lost to us in all but name. Some are quoted sporadically by early church writers who opposed them. A few have been discovered in modern times” (13).



ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

(184/185 – 253/254)

✿ “The Church has *four* gospels.... The heretics have many.” (*Homily on Luke 1*)

✿ The (Non-extant) Gospel according to...

Egyptians

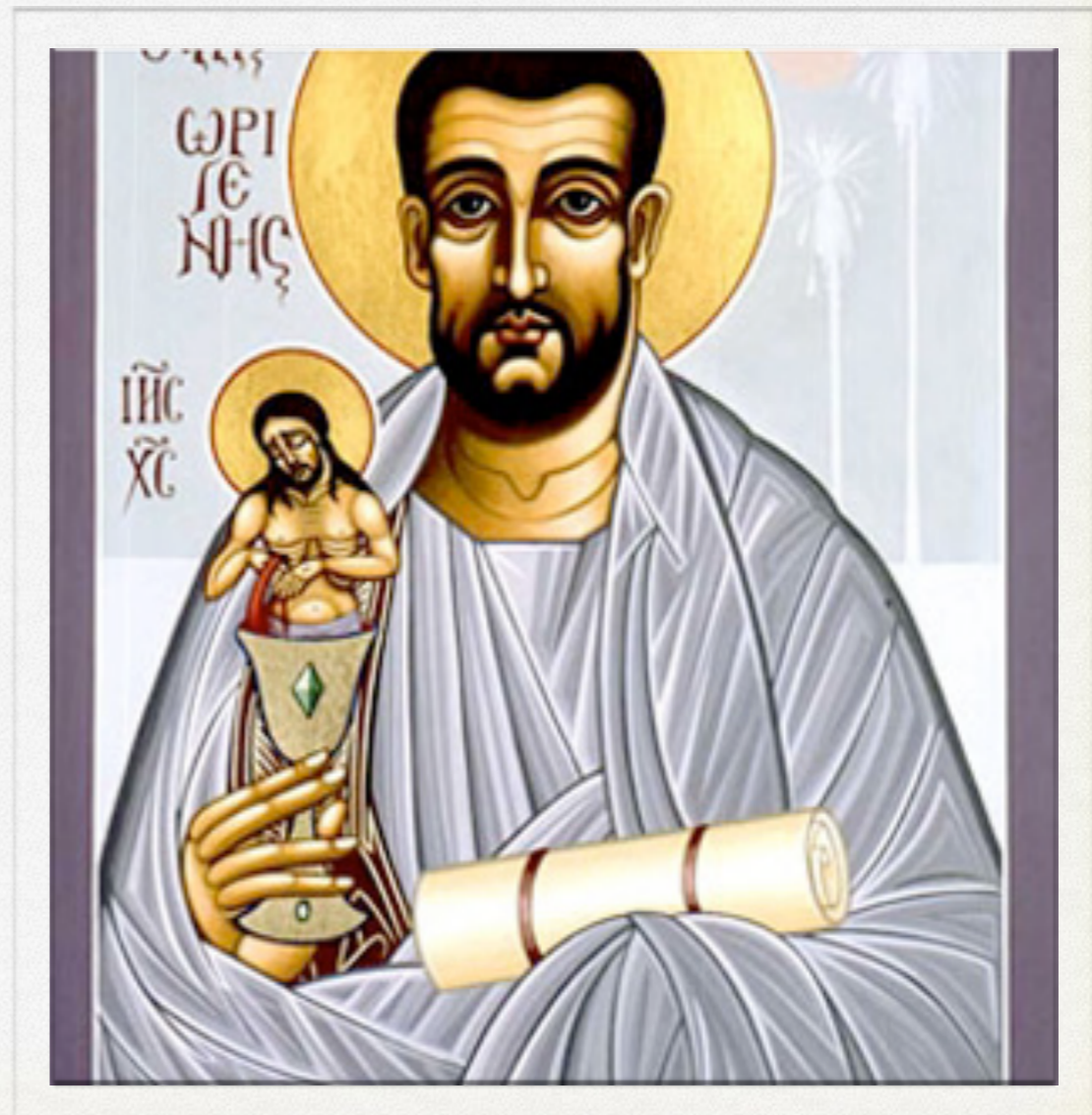
Basilides

Twelve Apostles

Thomas

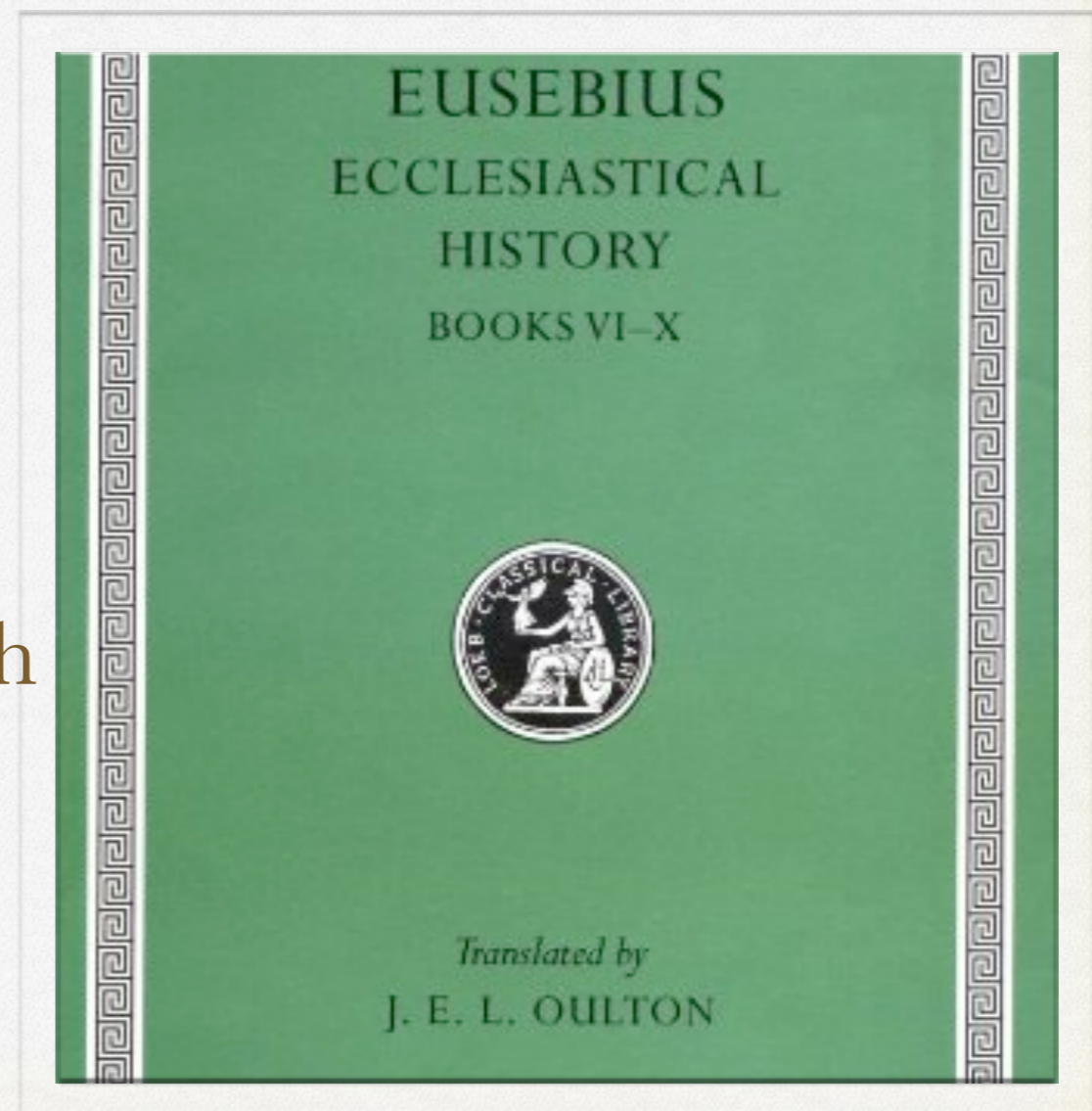
Matthias

Peter



EUSEBIUS (260/265 – 339/340)

- ✿ 10 volume Church History
- ✿ Eusebius' quotations are the only source for many 2nd and 3rd century texts...even though he was biased (pro-Constantine)



SERAPION

BECAME BISHOP OF ANTIOCH (IN SYRIA) IN 199 CE

- ✿ Allowed the use of the Gospel of Peter (but hadn't read it too closely)...trusted that if Peter wrote it, the book must be good/authoritative.



DOCETISM

- ✿ Accusation against Gospel of Peter. (Serapion condemned after read it.)
- ✿ Greek *δοκεῖν/δόκησις* (“to seem”).
 - ✿ Really divine...only seemed human
 - ✿ Didn't really suffer.



DOCETISM

* Mark 1:10, "And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him." [*Adoptionism*]

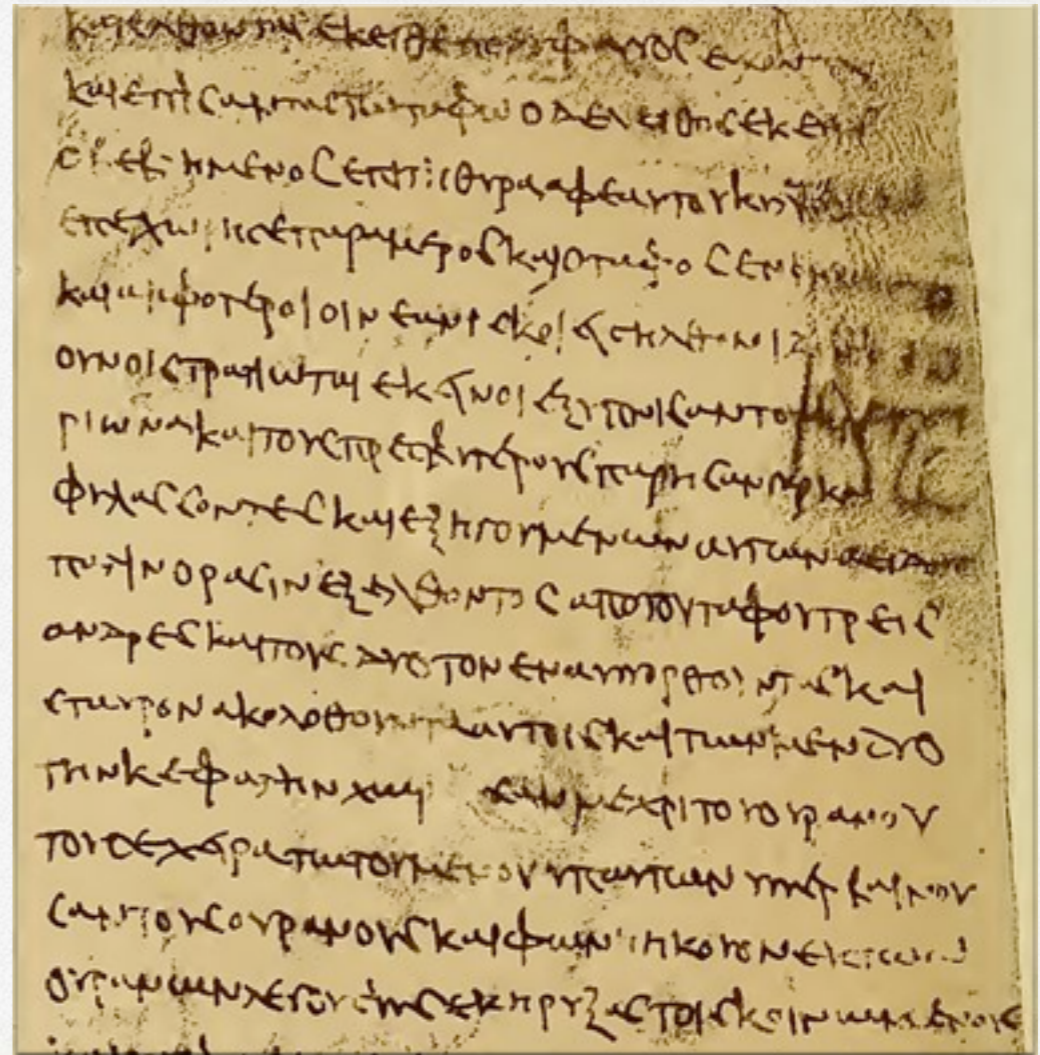
* Mark 15:34, At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [*divine left*]

[*LS 33 v. 18, "My power..."*]



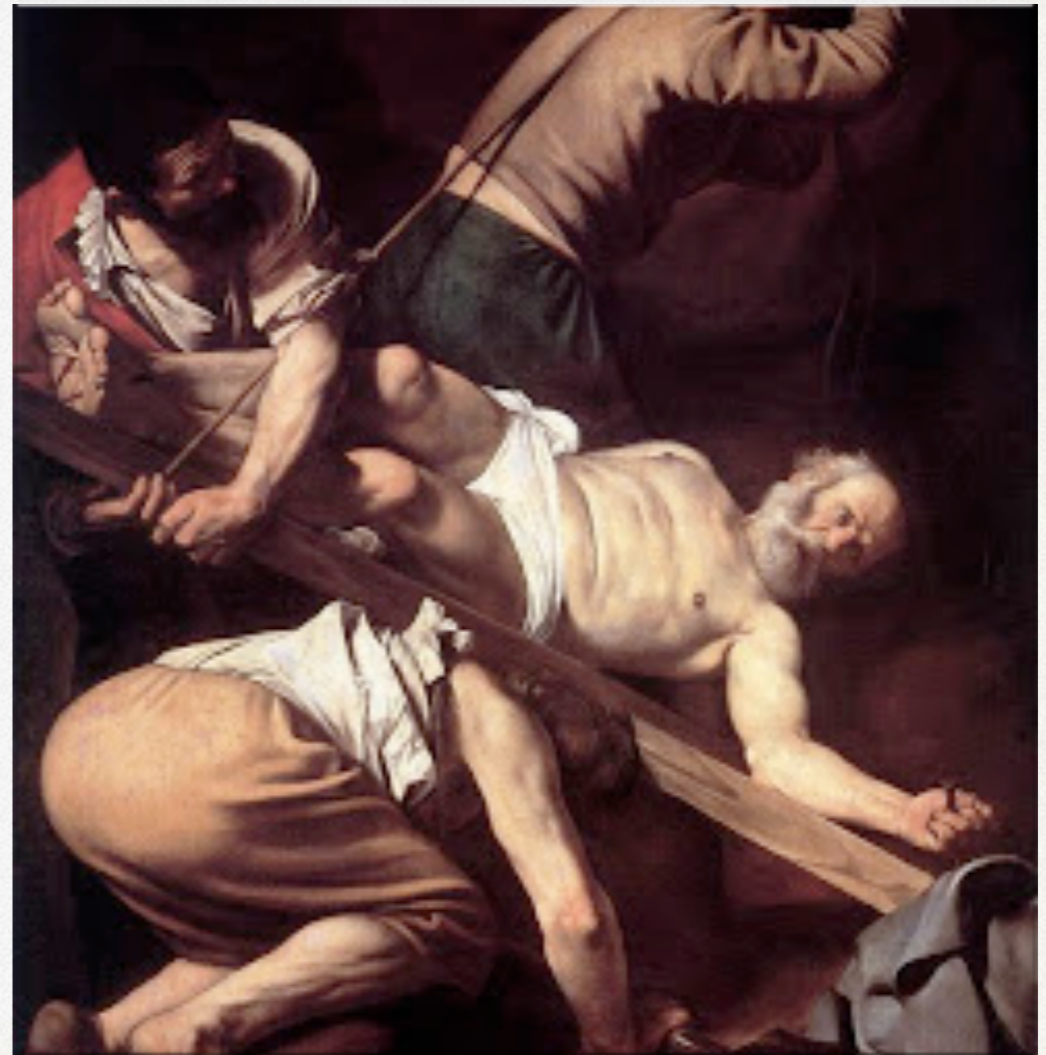
THE GOSPEL OF PETER

- * Arguably at least as popular as the canonical Mark (3 times as many surviving mss) ***
- * Continuing Popularity ***
- * Scenes [LS 33 v. 39-44]
 - Resurrection
 - Angels help
 - Giant Jesus
 - Cross talk
- * (Although these scenes may strike us as unbelievably odd, that may be do principally to their unfamiliarity. Are they really that different in kind from the most familiar — *but still fantastical* — claims found in the canonical scriptures?)



THE GOSPEL OF PETER

- ❖ Ancient Discovery (*by Serapion*)
of a Forgery (*not by the*
“historical” Peter) [LS 34 v. 60]
- ❖ (Historical) Peter executed
under Nero’s persecutions c. 64
- ❖ Gospel of Peter (early 2nd
c.)...Modern Rediscovery***



THE GOSPEL OF PETER

✿ Trend:

✿ Exculpating Pilate/Rome
(*not "Pilot"*)

✿ Blaming Jews***
[LS: 34 v. 46]



✿ Slides:

[frederickuu.org/about/Banned Books of the Bible](http://frederickuu.org/about/Banned_Books_of_the_Bible)

✿ Q&R

✿ Introductions

NEXT CLASS

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