

One of the first challenges an atheist may hurl is that you do not know or have any evidence of when the New Testament was written since the very first approved list of the books of the New Testament was produced by the Synod of Hippo in 393 AD. These doubters will then presume that the books of the New Testament were written by men other than those listed as their authors at a much later date than the first century.

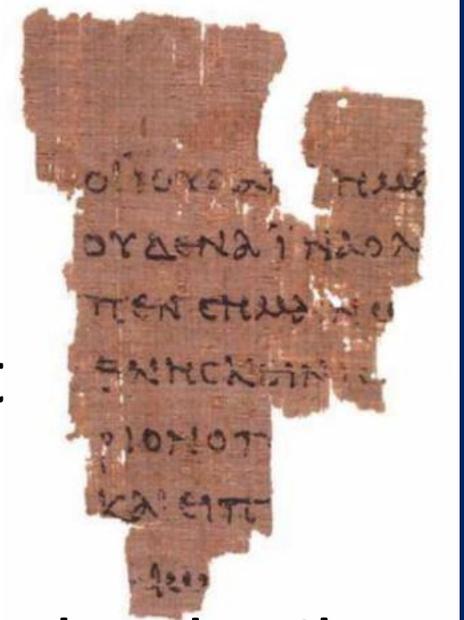
The Catholic church will say the Bible is a Catholic book – but it is not!

A group of liberal theologians in the early 1800's in Tübingen, Germany believed that none of the books of the New Testament were written before 200 AD, however, many of the archeological finds of ancient writings in the last half of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century clearly show that the New Testament books were written before that time.

Four of the papyrus date 100-150 AD.

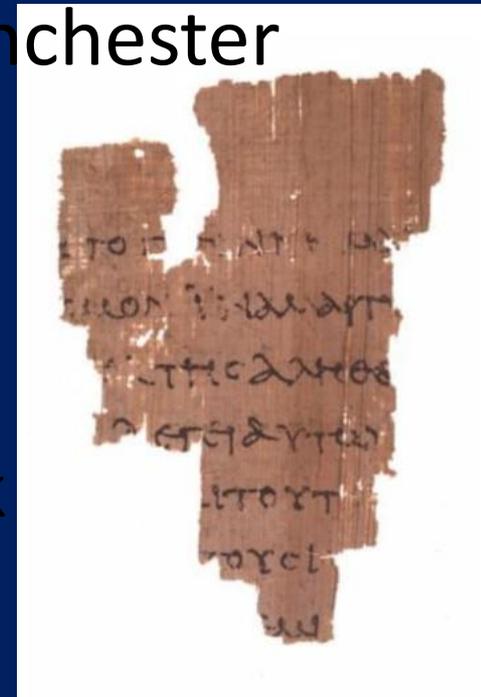
P52 contains the text of Jn 18:31-33 on one side and has Jn 18:37-38 on the back.
(found in 1920)

Front



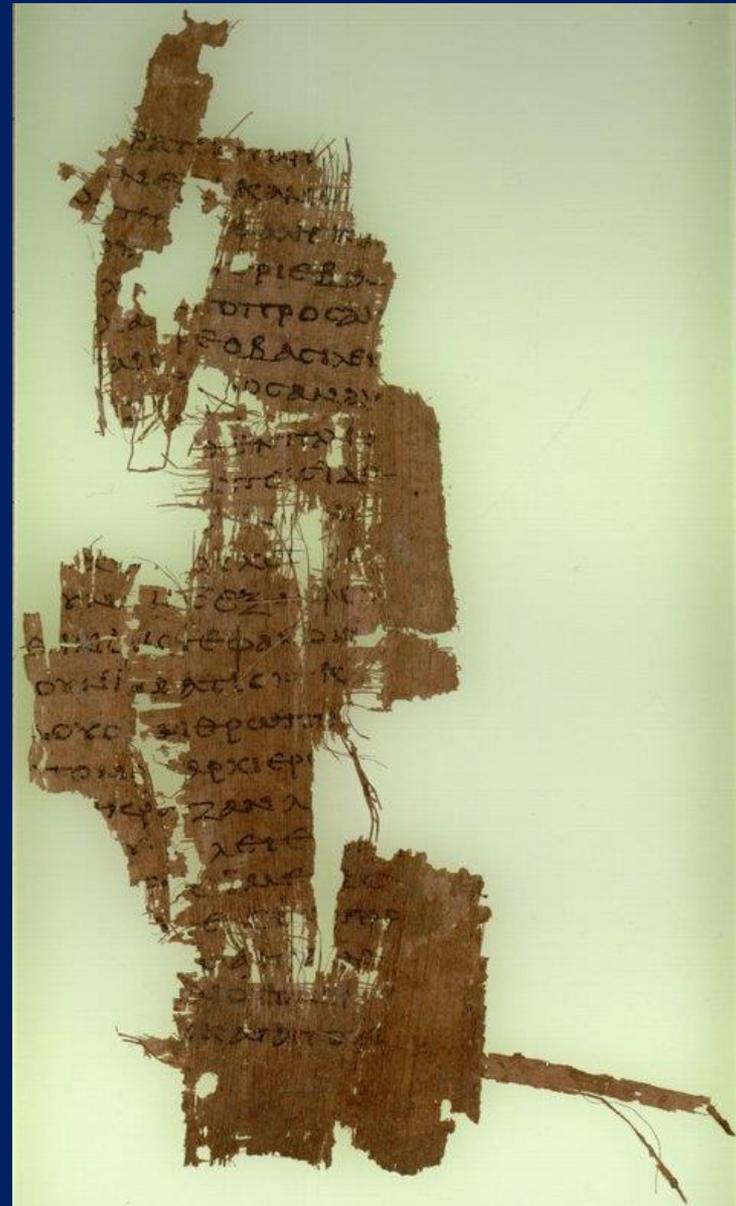
John Rylands Library
in Manchester

Back



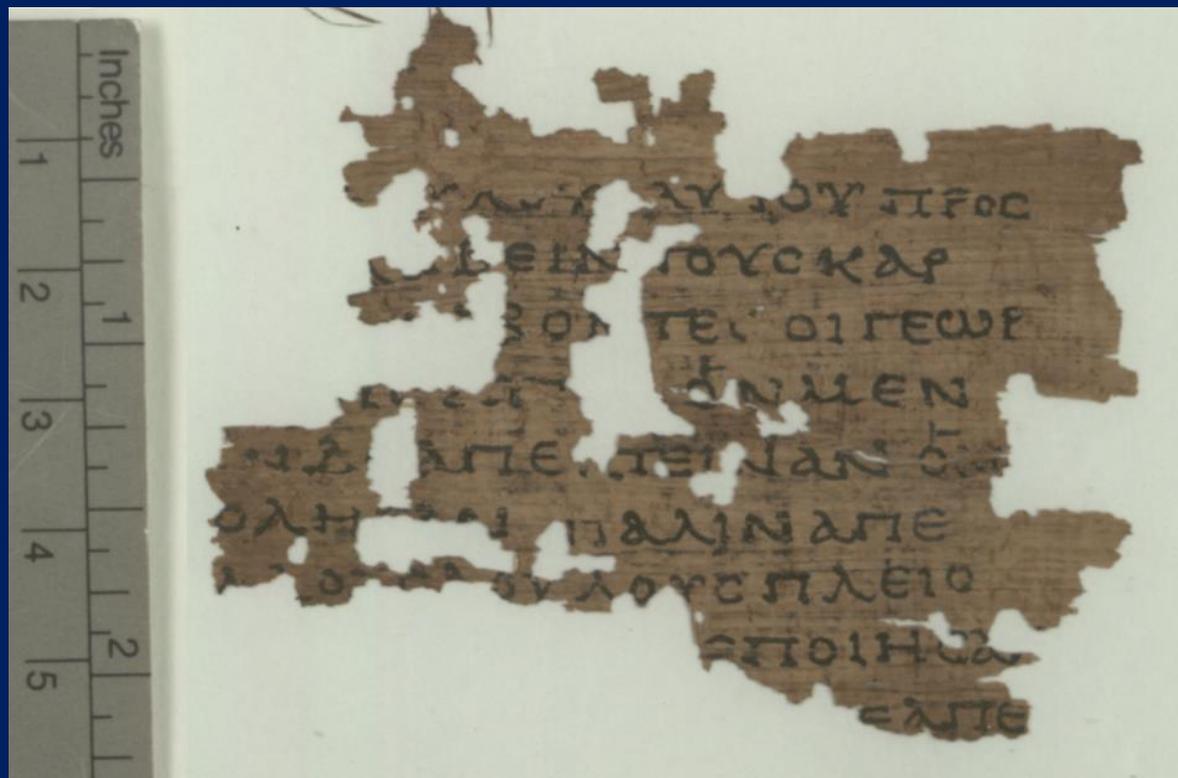
P90 contains the text of Jn
18:36-19:1; 19:1-7. Currently
housed at the Sackler Library
(Papyrology Rooms, P. Oxy.
3523) in Oxford

Written about 150 AD



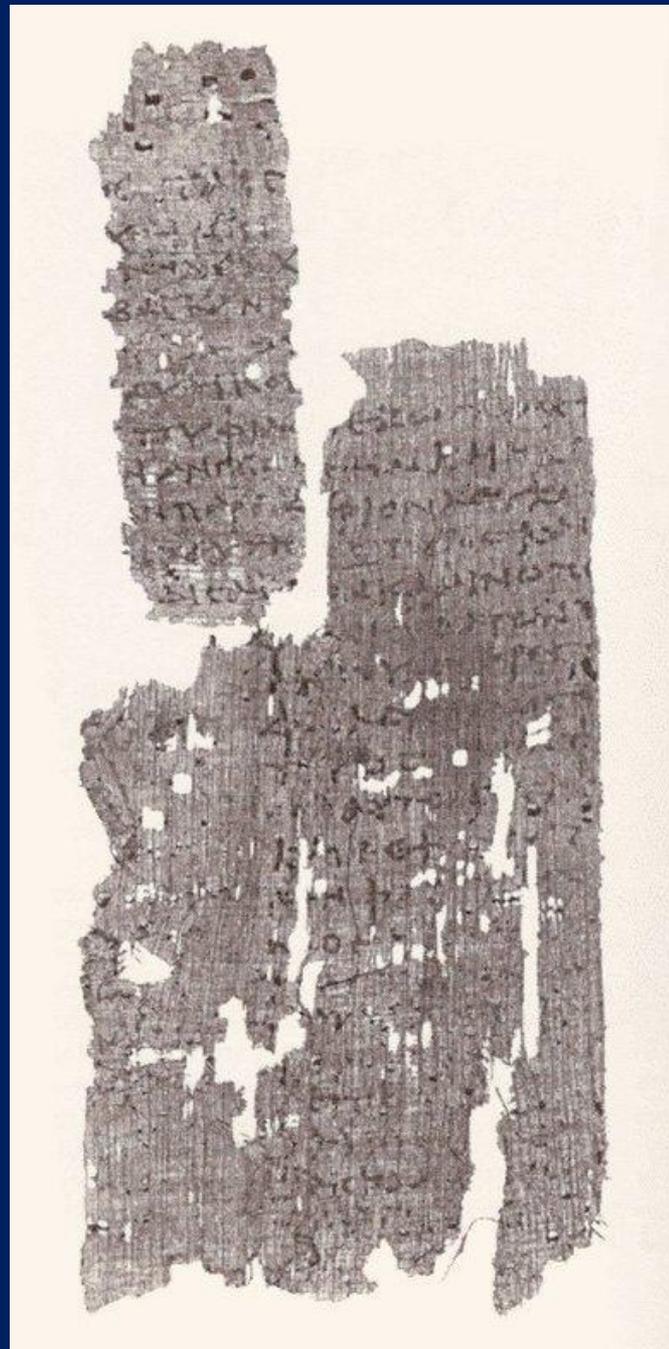
P104 contains Matthew 21:34-37; 21:43,45 dated between 100-200 AD P104 belongs to a collection of papyrus fragments discovered in the late 19th century in a garbage dump outside Oxyrhynchus, Egypt.”

Found in 1895-98, conserved in the Papyrology Rooms at Sackler Library, Oxford, UK.



P98 is a fragment of the Revelation containing chapter 1:13-2:1, dating 100-200 AD currently housed at the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.

First translated in 1971 by Wagner who didn't know what it was.



Among the doubters of the New Testament, are primarily the Roman Catholic Church, the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, but includes all denominations as they disavow the importance of some parts of the NT.

Jude 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

There are those who don't recognize the importance of Jude 3, concerning when the NT was completed.

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

The question of the time of writing of the books of the New Testament has to do with the need to know.

Jesus told the eleven in John 14:26 *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

But this was addressed to the eleven and not to Christians in general.

John goes on to say that he wrote his gospel *that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*(John 20:31).

When did people start writing these accounts?
Undoubtedly as soon as they heard.

Luke begins his account with *1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us.*

We date Luke's account by the ending of the book of Acts, 2 years into Paul's imprisonment in Rome – about 62AD.

If we ask why the Christians would have wanted these accounts, we should recognize that they wanted to do what God asked and they did not all have the miraculous gifts that would allow them to teach these accounts and had to rely on all too fallible human memory.

They needed these things written down for their certainty about the gospel plan of salvation.

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.(2 Tim 3:14-15)

The Old Testament was insufficient to give the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

Without Jesus there was no forgiveness of sins -

Heb 9:22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Without baptism, there is no salvation for sins under the New Covenant – 1 Peter 3:21 *and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also.*

Timothy is first mentioned in Acts 16.1, occurring at the start of the second missionary journey – about 52 AD.

If Timothy had known these things as a child, he would have been 13 or less (the age of manhood for a Jewish boy) when he learned them, implying that documents which would give him the account of Jesus, His life and His death and the need for baptism, would have been available by 39 AD – 6 years after the death of Jesus

The only Scriptures that tell us these important facts, prior to Paul's letters and Luke's account, would be the gospels – Matthew, Mark, and John.

Mark is a young man and untried at the close of Acts 15 – v. 38. That leaves Matthew and John, however John makes no mention of the necessity of baptism for salvation, meaning that Matthew must have been written by this time and that John might have been written.

Thus, Matthew must have been the first account written and its date is prior to AD 39.

Lois and Eunice would have used this to teach the child Timothy what he needed to know to be saved.

Recognizing that Luke begins his account
*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an
account of the things accomplished among us, just
as those who from the beginning were
eyewitnesses and servants of the word have
handed them down to us, (Luk 1:1-2)*

I can only conclude John's gospel was written prior
to AD 57, the date of Luke's account.

Joh 20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

Amazingly close to Luke's statement

I find it incomprehensible that John would have waited longer than the six years I have assumed for its dating to provide the *“Scriptures that are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Timothy was not the only young man that needed to have these things written down.

Turning our attention to Mark, we find that although he was unreliable in Acts 15.38, he was useful at 2Tim 4.11. What would have made him increase so much in value during the years between 52 AD and 68 AD (the probable year of Paul's death)? Only a significant work on Mark's part would have restored Paul's confidence in him. Remember Paul stopped his long association with Barnabas at Acts 15.39 because of the severe doubt Paul had over his dropping out of the first missionary journey.

Paul does not ask for Mark until near the end of his life, thus implying that Mark wrote his gospel at Peter's direction sometime after Paul's imprisonment and before the writing of 2 Timothy. Most probably, the writing of this gospel convinced Paul that Mark was useful. These events would place Mark's gospel in the years 62-66 AD.

Do you find it as amazing as I do that God would preserve these manuscripts in a rubbish heap in Egypt until some men starting looking through it in 1895?

I am amazed at the providence of God!

Just so you could know and believe that Jesus was the Christ – not based on fallible men as in the Roman Catholic Church – but on rock solid evidence that these things were written that you might believe!

Do you believe? Or will you once more reject the evidence?

Has your faith wavered?

Jas 1:5-6 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

Act 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

