





# Misquoting Jesus



# I. The Position

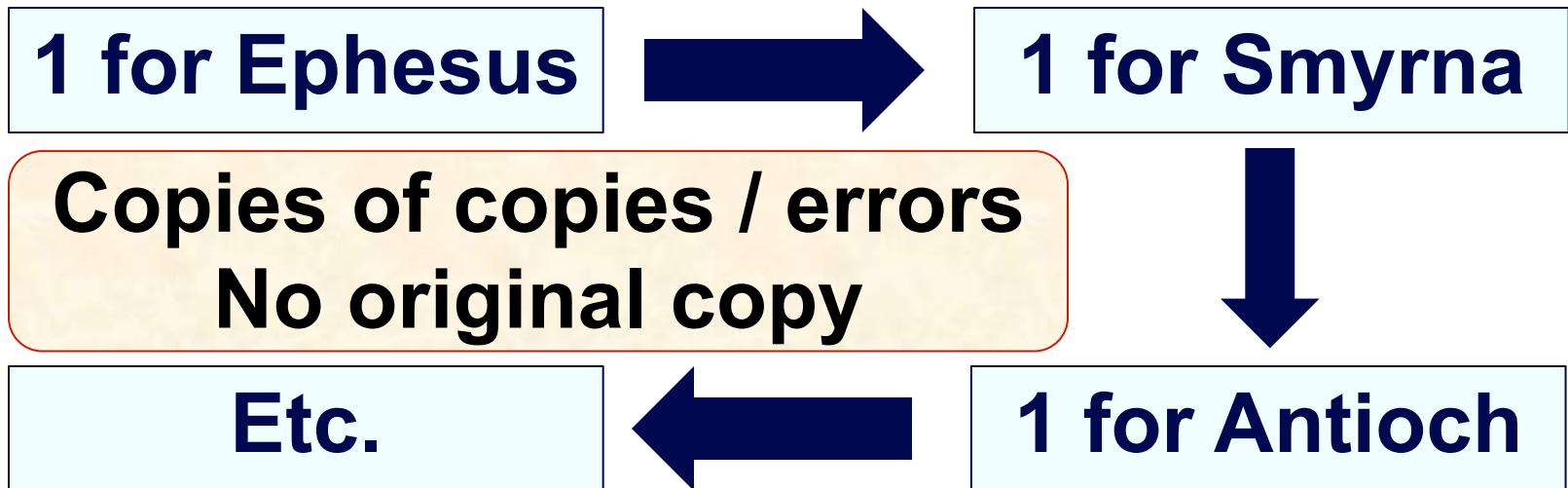
# **Bart Ehrman's slant**

- 1. Not actually reading words of Matthew, Mark, Luke, etc.**
- 2. Not reading translation of the originals**
- 3. Copies differ; may not know what author wrote**
- 4. Why think God performed miracle of inspiring the words in the first place if He didn't perform miracle of preserving the words?**

# *The Da Vinci Code*

- Buy one in Louisiana, another in California: same book
- Ancient world: copied by hand. Try it.

Mark (Rome)



# **NT *is* best-attested book from ancient world**

- **Greek MSS: 5700**

**But there are more differences in  
our MSS than there are words in  
NT: between 300,000 – 400,000?**

- **Most don't matter**
  - **Misspelled words**
  - **Omitted words**

# Intentional errors

- **Jn.7:53-8:11, not in oldest MSS**
- **Mk.16 ending**
- **Mk.1:41, scribal change?**
- **Mt.24:36, ignorant Lord?**
- **Hb.2:9, *without God?***
- **Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not think Jesus was God**
- **Text transmission = ‘telephone game’**



**I. The Position**

**II. Things We Agree On**





# **We agree...**

- 1. There are differences in MSS**
- 2. Most affect nothing at all**
- 3. We have the wording of the original text almost all the time**
- 4. Some readings are difficult to decide**
- 5. Some scribes changed MSS readings**



**I. The Position**

**II. Things We Agree On**

**III. Things We Disagree On**

# Overstating the case

- **Printed books: mistakes do occur**
  - **Britannica**
  - **Merriam Webster**
  - **Bart Ehrman (*Misquoting Jesus*, 33)**

**If 100,000 printed:  
100,000 errors!  
What if 400,000 printed?**

# **Real issue: significance of variants**

- 1. We have many variants because we have many MSS. Greek: 5700**
- 2. Average MS: 400+ pages long**
  - ◆2.5+ million pages of texts**
  - ◆hundreds of witnesses for every book**
- 3. Latin (10,000+!), Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, Gothic, Ethiopic, Armenian (probably 15,000 in all)!**
- 4. Ancient disciples: 1,000,000+ NT quotes**

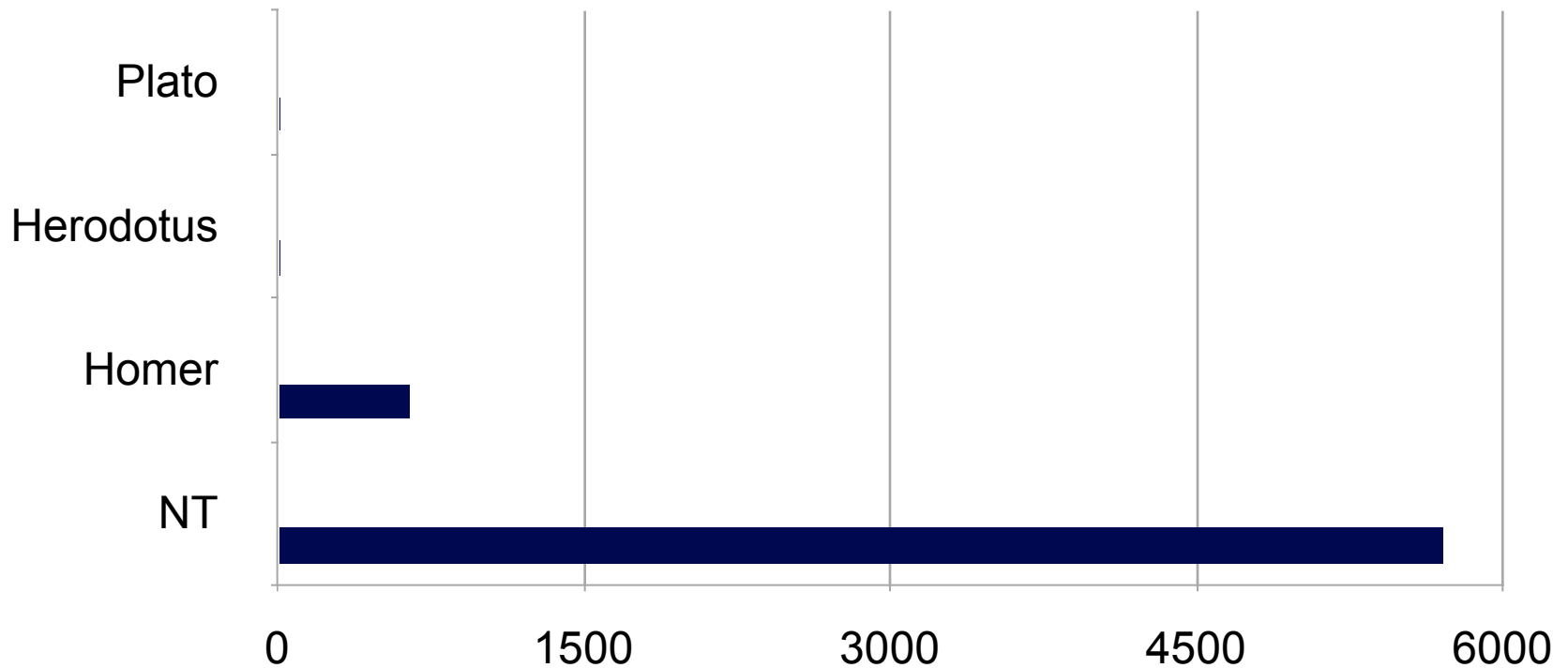
# Quality of NT MSS

- One MS probably from 1<sup>st</sup> Century
- Eighteen MSS from 2<sup>nd</sup> Century
- Sixty-four MSS from 3<sup>rd</sup> Century
- Forty-eight MSS from 4<sup>th</sup> Century
- 131 MSS w/in 300 yrs. of composition

**Average Greek/Latin author has  
NOTHING w/in 300 years**

**Total for most usually averages  
less than 20, probably below 12**

# NT Compared to Other Ancient Documents



# Not like 'Telephone Game'

## Transmission of NT MSS

- Handed down in writing, not by mouth
- Multiple lines of text, not one
- Text critics don't rely only on last person in each line
- Early writers comment on text as it is transmitted
- Not told only once by a person

# Illustration: Codex B and P<sup>75</sup>

- P<sup>75</sup> is 150 years older than B
- Yet P<sup>75</sup> is not an ancestor of B
- B copied from earlier common ancestor related to both
- Combination of these MSS goes back to early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century!



# Codex Vaticanus (B)



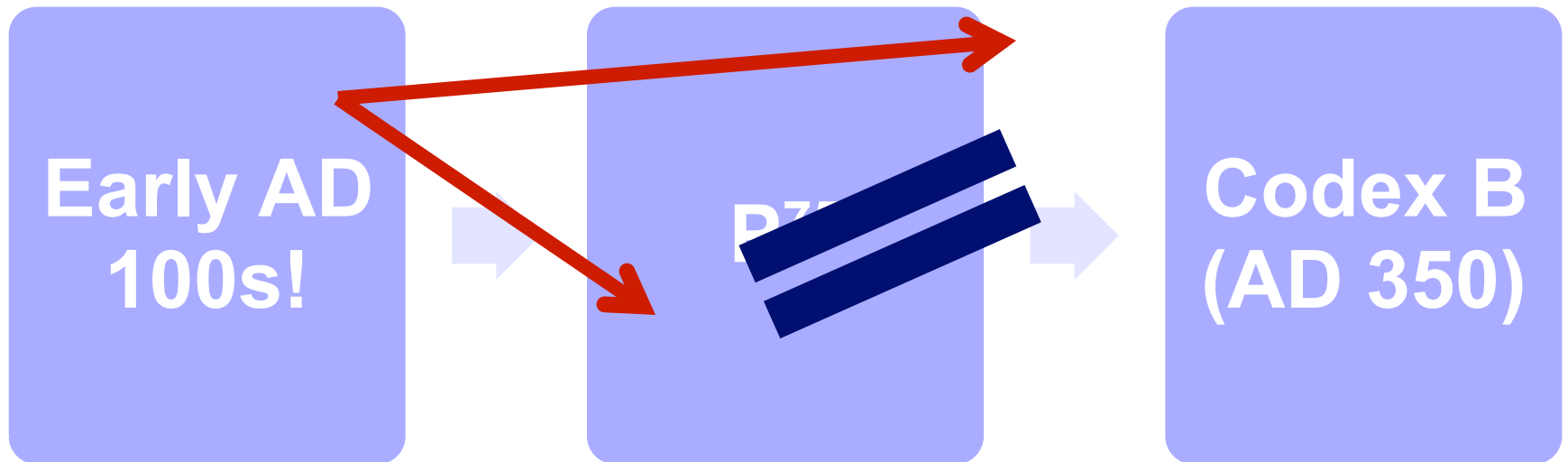
c. AD 350

# Bodmer, P<sup>75</sup>



c. AD 175-225

# Early Textual Evidence (B) and P<sup>75</sup>



# What about Mk.1:41?

- A few MSS mention Jesus' *anger*; others, *compassion*
- Mk.3:5 undeniably speaks of His anger
- So what?
  - It is not radical to see Jesus angry
  - Ro.1:18, God

## What about Mt.24:36?

- Some MSS lack “*nor the Son*”
- Mk.13:32 definitely includes them
- Cannot assume Mt.24 changes NT view of Jesus if Mark contains same idea
- BE does not consider Lord’s humiliation, Ph.2:5-11

Jesus accepted man’s limitations of time, space, and knowledge to be fully human



## What about Hb.2:9?

- **Bart answers himself (*Misquoting Jesus*, 147-148)**

# What about 1 Jn.5:7-8?

- Appeared first in 1522
- Just because one passage does not teach a doctrine does not mean the NT does not teach it (e.g.: Mt.3; 28)

**Not a single truth is at stake  
with Bart Ehrman's "proof"**

# What about Mark's ending?

- It is almost impossible that Mk.16:8 is original ending of Mark: *“for they were afraid...”*
- Suppose Bart is right? Are we left w/o evidence of His resurrection?

Mt.28

Lk.24

Jn.20-21

1 Co.15, *witnesses still alive...*

# Did Matthew, Mark, Luke believe Jesus is God?

Test case: Matthew

**Worshipped, 2:11**

**Words, 7:24**

**Forgiveness, 9:2-6**

**Lord of Sab., 12:8**

**Son of David, 12:23;**

**21:9; 14:33**

**Son of God, 16:16;**

**27:43, 54**

**Son of Man, Dn.7**

**(Mt.26:64-66)**

**(Mt.25:31-32, Son of  
Man is Judge of all)**

**David's Lord**

**(22:41-46)**

**All authority,  
heaven/earth 28:18**



**Coconut pie recipe**

**Perfect / lost**

**Copy 1: Daughter**

**1 misspelling**

**Copy 2: G-Daughter**

**+ Transposition**

**3: friend      4: friend**

**+ Two “ands”**

**5: friend      6: friend**

**+ “pie” omitted**

**More copies = more mistakes**

**Closer to original = fewer mistakes**

**More copies = easier to correct errors**

**‘Different’ mistakes allow for certainty**

# Mere differences do not constitute a contradiction

- **Holocaust**

**Poisonous gas**

**Shot w. guns**

- **Plane crash:**

**Engine on fire**

**Engine quit**

**But both events did occur**

