Early Objects of Christianity

#2 First known piece of the New Testament.

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Available at www.GospelHall.org
The first of many…

1. First known church building.
5. First known picture of Jesus.
6. First known hymn.
7. First known archaeological evidence of crucifixion.
The oldest known fragments of New Testament copies.

P52, P66 and P75
Ancient Technology for Writing...

Clay tablets used in Mesopotamia since 3100 B.C.

Papyrus was made from reeds since 3000 B.C. The oldest NT fragments are all on papyrus.

Parchment made from animal skins becomes standard for scribes between the 300s and 1400s.
The earliest New Testament copies were all written on parchment that was bound in a book called a codex.

Christian usage of a bound book (instead of a scroll) was later adopted by the rest of the world.
Naming the papyrus

- Papyrus fragments of the New Testament are named with a P followed by a number. “P52”, for example, is the name of the specific fragment of papyrus.
- There are 127 known papyrus fragments, each named P1, P2, P3 all the way to P127.
- Throughout the 20th century there were steady discoveries of New Testament papyri.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of known papyri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1900</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
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P52 – the oldest NT fragment.

- A small piece of the Gospel of John discovered in 1933 at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England
- The fragment has been dated by scholars to have been written about 125 A.D., the earliest known fragment of the New Testament.
- It is believed John wrote the fourth gospel about 90 A.D. in or near Ephesus in modern day Turkey.
- The fragment was discovered in Egypt, about 1000 km from Ephesus.
- This indicates that John’s gospel was circulated among Christians very early after he wrote it.
The 1800s was a period of fierce attack on authenticity of the Bible led by German “higher critics”.

In 1844, F. C. Baur claimed that John’s Gospel was written by someone around 170 A.D., and is not from the Apostle John.

The theory behind this late dating was that John doesn’t contain references to sharp disagreement between Jewish and gentile believers which is mentioned in other books such as Hebrews.

F.C. Baur concluded by this observation that John must have been written by someone else in the 170’s after a time of synthesis of the two extremes.

This theory was accepted by critics who seem eager to dismiss the divine claims of the Bible. When P52 was discovered in 1933, Baur’s fanciful conclusions went up in smoke.
it is not permitted to kill anyone," so that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spokе signifying what kind of death he was going to die. Entered therefore again into the Praetorium Pilate and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Thou art king of the Jews?"
a King I am. For I have been born into the world so that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is hears of me my voice." Said to him Pilate, "What is truth?" having said, again he went out unto the Jews and said to them, "I find not one fault in him."
P66 the oldest NT manuscript that contains multiple chapters.

- Made between 100 and 200 A.D.
- Discovered in Egypt in 1952.
- It is not as old as P52, but it is more extensive.
- Very well preserved. Even the binding of the book remains mostly intact.
- It contains most of the Gospel of John.
- Like many of the oldest manuscripts, the story of the woman taken in adultery in chapter 8 is noticeably absent.
A manuscript dated between 175 and 225 A.D.

Discovered in Egypt. Now at Vatican Library, Rome

Originally contained about 144 pages of which 102 have survived.

Unique features of P75

- Along with P66, this is the oldest fragment from the New Testament with multiple chapters.
- Contains large parts of both Luke and John.
- Like other early manuscripts, John 7:53-8:11 (the woman taken in adultery) is absent from this copy.