

Neighborly Apologetics

The Royal Law
Love your neighbor

God has entrusted the primary work
of the Kingdom to the common
Christian family

with a priestly role in our neighborhoods

Neighborly Apologetics

The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection
The Importance of the Early Polemic and Creed



**Neighborly Apologetic
Categories:**

- 1. Evil and Suffering*
 - 2. Absolute Truth and Relativism*
 - 3. “Only One Way” and Religious Pluralism*
 - 4. Faith and Reason*
 - 5. Free Will and Sovereignty*
 - 6. God’s Existence and Nature*
 - 7. Goodness of Man, Judgment and Hell*
 - 8. Hypocrisy and Christian Crimes of the Past*
 - 9. The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection*
 - 10. Miracles*
 - 11. Science and Evolution*
 - 12. The Veracity of the Bible and “Contradictions”*
- Plus: Burning Issues of our Day*

Who is Jesus?

The Question Pursued...

- + the promise and the prophecy
- + His life and words
- + His death and resurrection
- + the claim of deity
- + is Jesus the only way?
- + how to handle the questions



Who is Jesus?

Christ's death and resurrection



Christ's resurrection



the heart and key of the Christian apologetic

BC or BCE

AD or CE

And *if Christ has not been raised*, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:14

Christ's resurrection

BC or BCE

AD or CE

*...if Christ has not
been raised*, your
faith is futile and you
are still in your sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

Christ's resurrection

Who is Jesus?

Christ's death and resurrection

appearances of the physically risen Jesus

appearances of the physically risen Jesus

- to Magdalene at the tomb
- to the other women
- to Cleopas and the companion in the road to Emmaus
- to the Ten in a locked room that first night
- to Peter
- to the Eleven in a locked room eight days later
- to seven of the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias
- to the Eleven on a mountain in Galilee
- to over 500 at the same time
- to James
- to the Eleven in Jerusalem/Bethany
- to the Eleven on Olivet
- (many more over a 40-day period)

→ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep 1 Corinthians 15:6

Who is Jesus?

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the early polemic and the creed

Who is Jesus?

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the early polemic and the creed

the polemic

the creed

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the polemic - point/counterpoint

the creed - a statement of belief that counters some challenge

Christ's death and resurrection
appearances of the risen Jesus

the accusations:

- the appearances were merely hallucinations
- the appearances were mistaken identity
- the resurrection was spiritual and therefore the appearances were merely spiritual
- the appearances were all part of the resurrection myth/legend

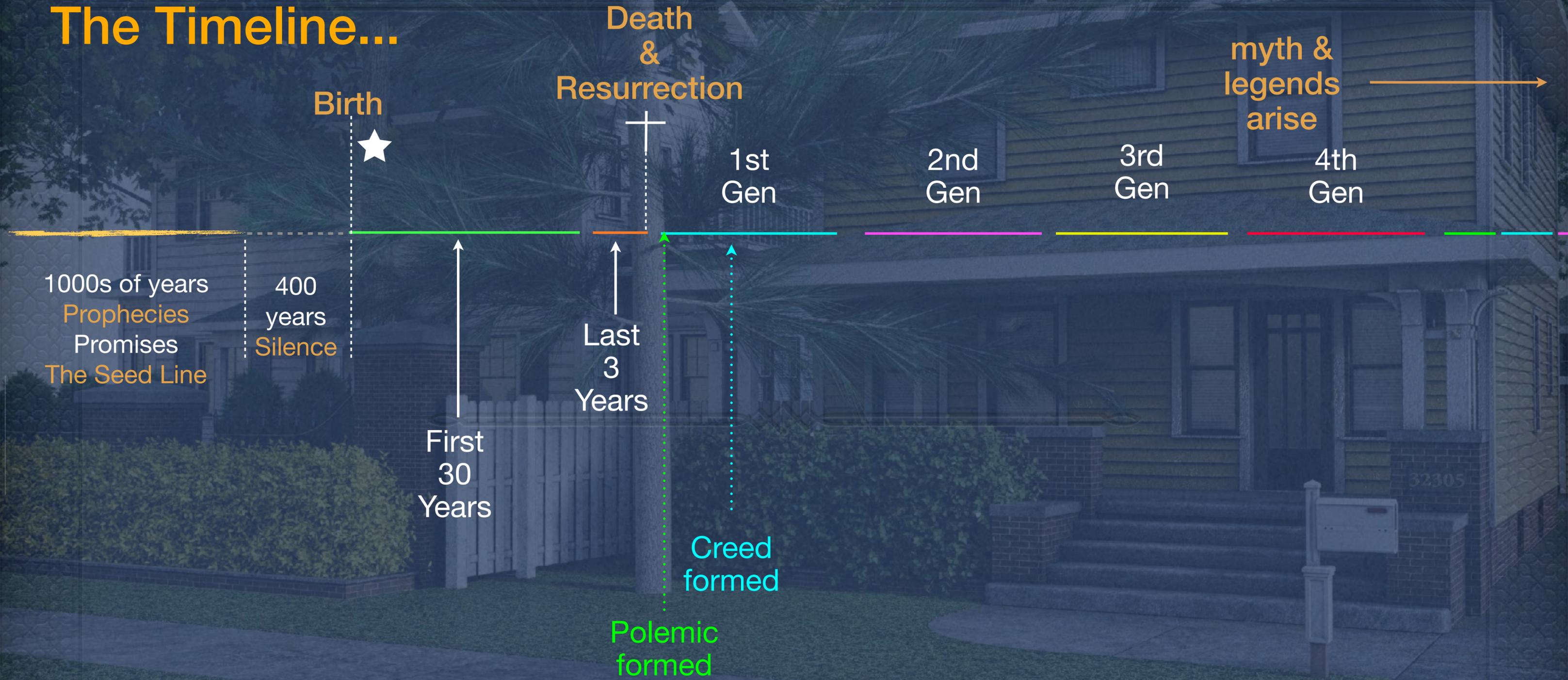
A recent survey in Britain showed that 22% of Brits don't believe that there ever was a real Jesus... that it is all fake, some kind of a *myth* or made-up deception.

Christ's death and resurrection
appearances of the risen Jesus

evidence:

- The real death of Jesus and the real wrapping and burial in a tomb
- The sealing of the stone and the contingent of soldiers posted at the tomb
- The earthquake, the angel, the rolling away of the stone
- The terror of the guards and subsequently fleeing their post
- The women seeing the empty tomb and angels declaring the resurrection
- Peter and John examining the empty tomb and the empty grave wrappings
- The soldiers reporting that the tomb was empty and **the rise of the polemic**

The Timeline...



1000s of years
Prophecies
Promises
The Seed Line

400
years
Silence

Birth



First
30
Years

Last
3
Years

Death
&
Resurrection



1st
Gen

2nd
Gen

3rd
Gen

4th
Gen

myth &
legends
arise

Creed
formed

Polemic
formed

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

Polemic
formed
early

the polemic

Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said,
“Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I am to rise again.’ Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Pilate said to them,

“You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.”

And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. Matthew 27:62-66

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the polemic



Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said,

“You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.”

And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, **and is to this day**. Matthew 28:11-15

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the polemic (at its beginning)

Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him,
“Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

And Jesus said,

“I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of
Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Tearing his clothes, the high priest said,

“What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard
the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?”

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Mark 14:61-64

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the polemic

Point: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God!

Counterpoint: He is not. He was crucified and is now dead. End of story.

Point: Jesus rose from the dead!

Counterpoint: His body is in the tomb.

Point: The tomb is empty.

Counterpoint: The disciples stole the body.

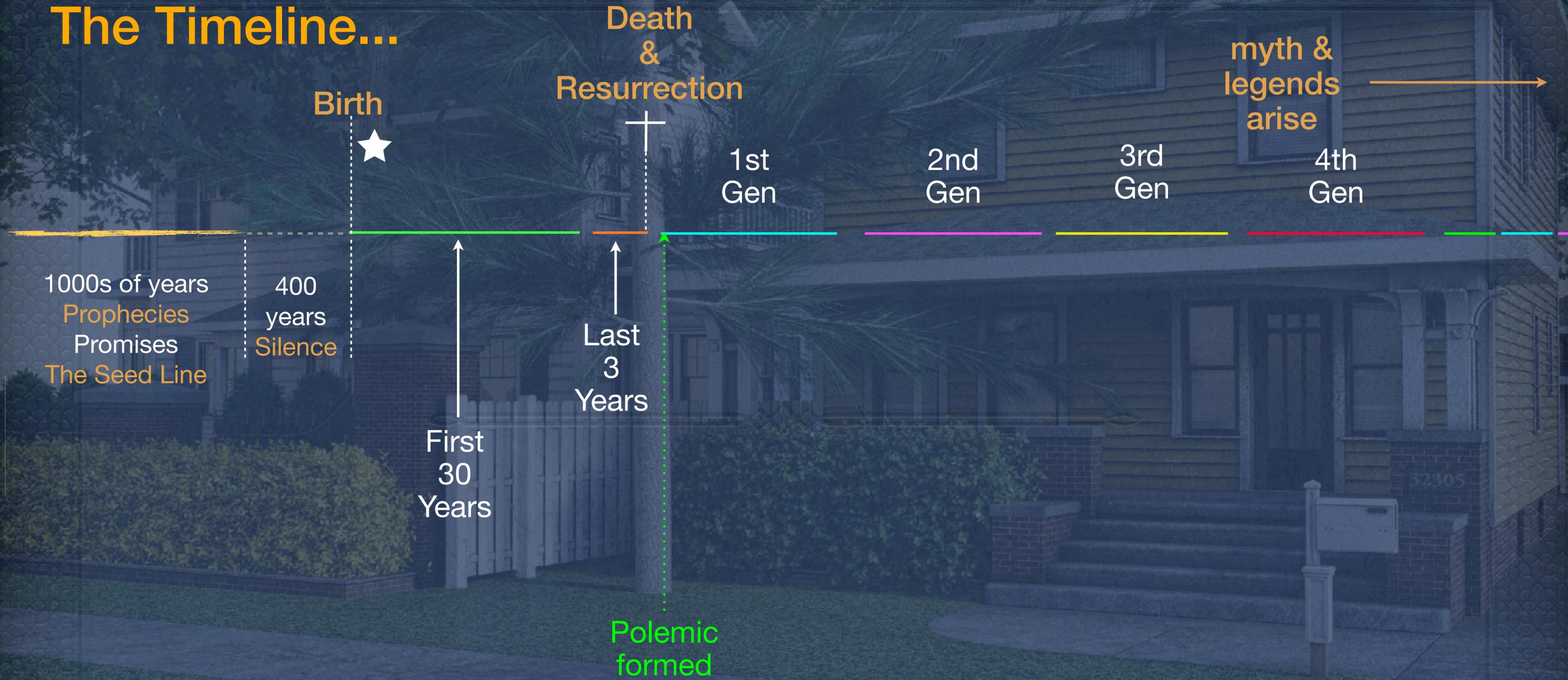
Point: Soldiers were guarding the tomb.

Counterpoint: They fell asleep.

Point: They were bribed to say that.

Counterpoint: <silence>

The Timeline...



Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the polemic - point/counterpoint

the creed - a statement of belief that counters some challenge

Christ's death and resurrection

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the creed - a statement of belief that counters some challenge

Webster's 1828 dictionary:

“Creed: A brief summary of the articles of Christian faith... as the Apostle's Creed... that which is believed...”

- The Apostle's Creed most likely arose to counter the heresy of Marcion
- the Creed of Nicaea—Arian;
- the Nicene Creed—Apollinarianism;
- Chalcedonian Creed—Nestorian;
- etc.

the importance of the polemic and the creed

the creed

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

1 Corinthians 15: 1-8

the importance of the polemic and the creed

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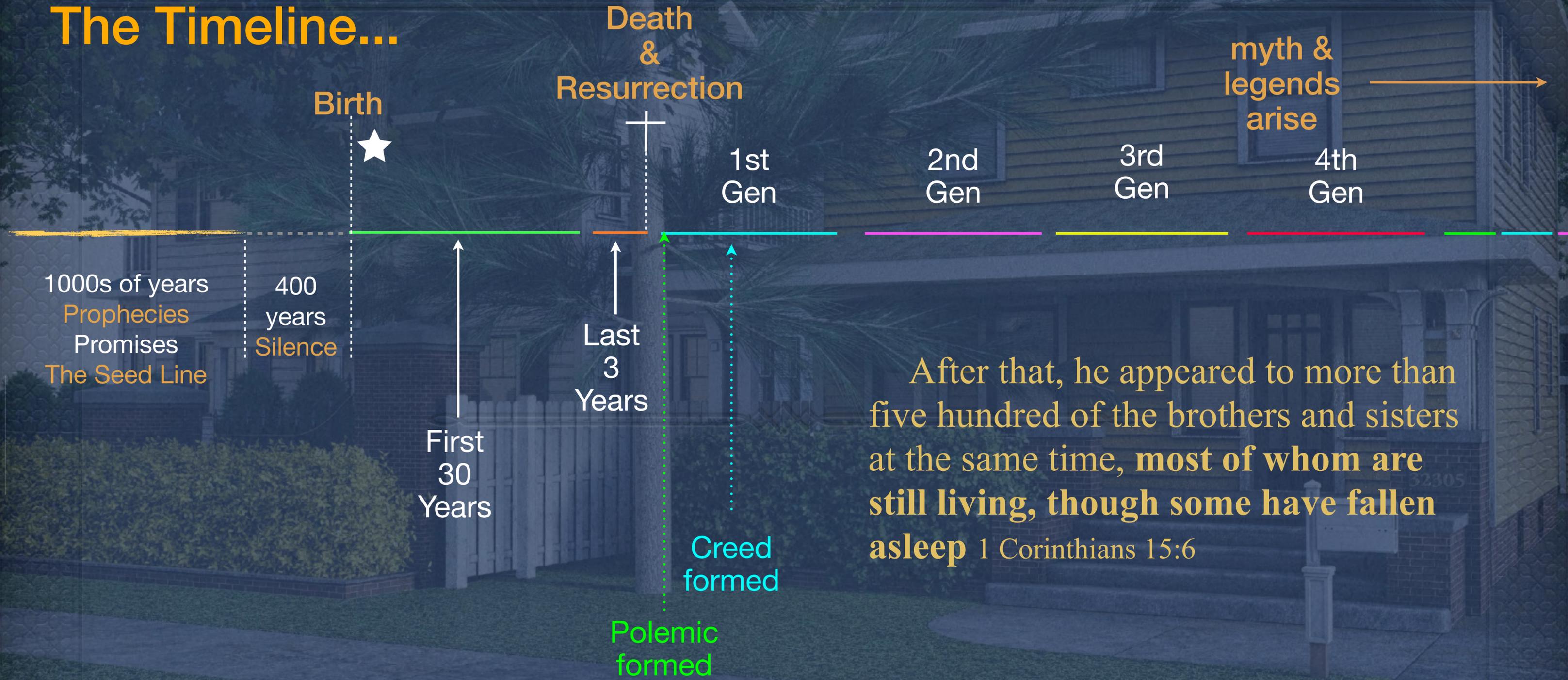
the importance of the polemic and the creed

the creed

Paul's words: "**delivered to you... what I received**" are well-known rabbinical terms that introduce a creed or tradition, which he then follows immediately with a list, also typical of a creed:

- Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture
- He was buried
- He was raised on the third day according to the Scripture
- He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve
- He appeared to more than 500 brethren...
- He appeared to James, then to all the apostles

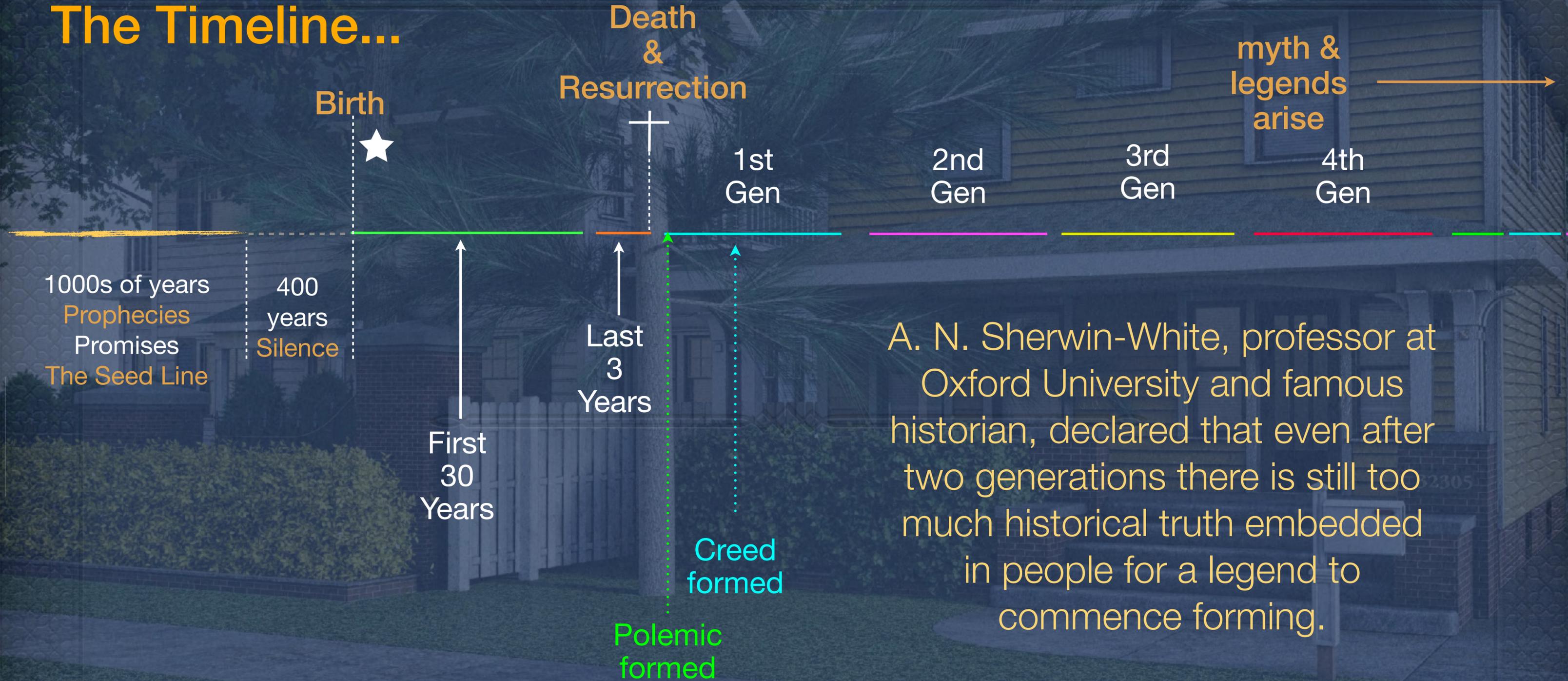
The Timeline...



After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, **most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep** 1 Corinthians 15:6

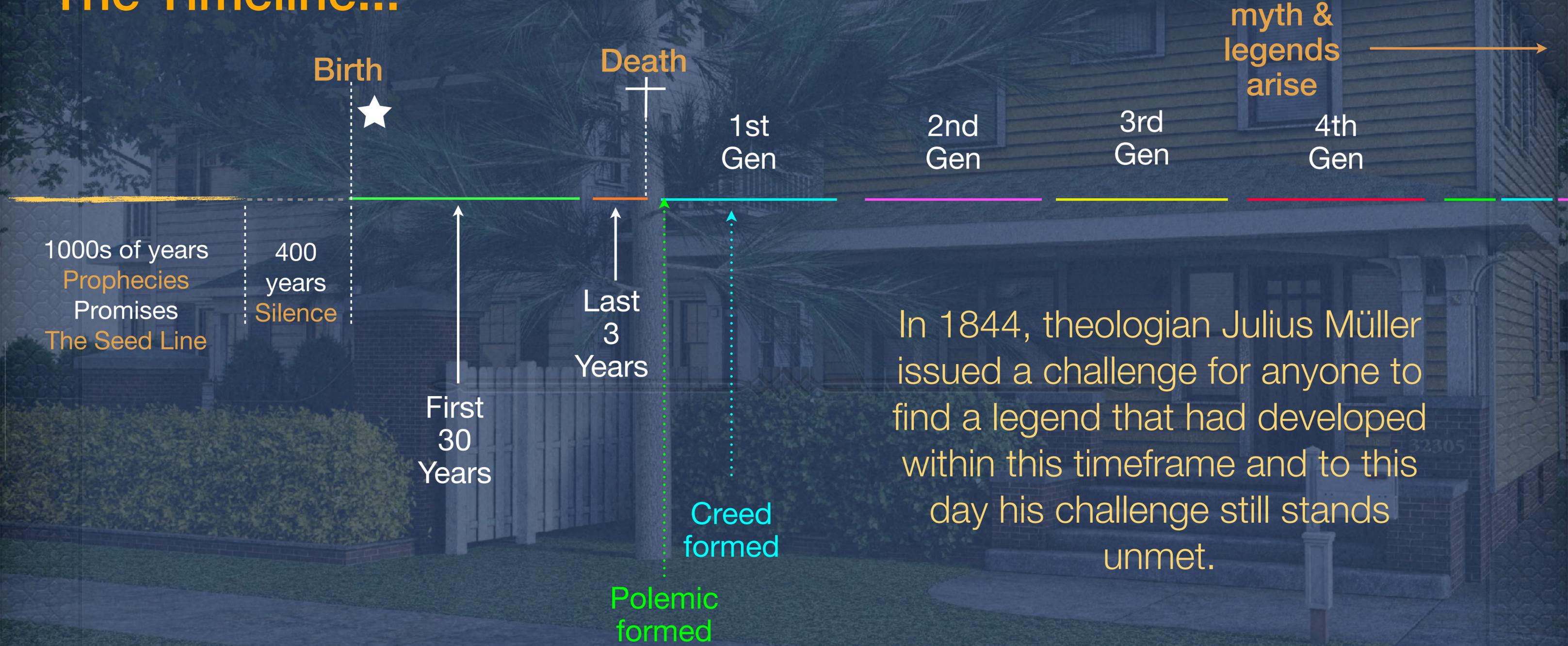
“...most of whom are still living...” In other words, go check it out.
Again, myths and legends don't arise when living witnesses are still around.

The Timeline...



A. N. Sherwin-White, professor at Oxford University and famous historian, declared that even after two generations there is still too much historical truth embedded in people for a legend to commence forming.

The Timeline...



In 1844, theologian Julius Müller issued a challenge for anyone to find a legend that had developed within this timeframe and to this day his challenge still stands unmet.

Christ's death and resurrection

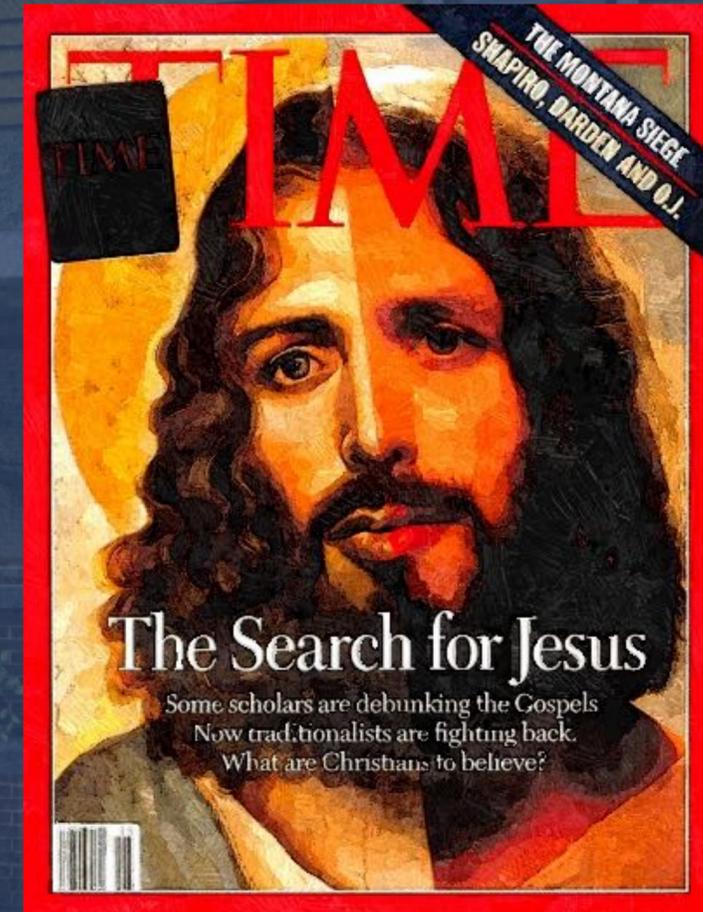
the importance of the polemic and the creed

It might be of value to ask the question, why do people spend time trying to prove Him non-existent?

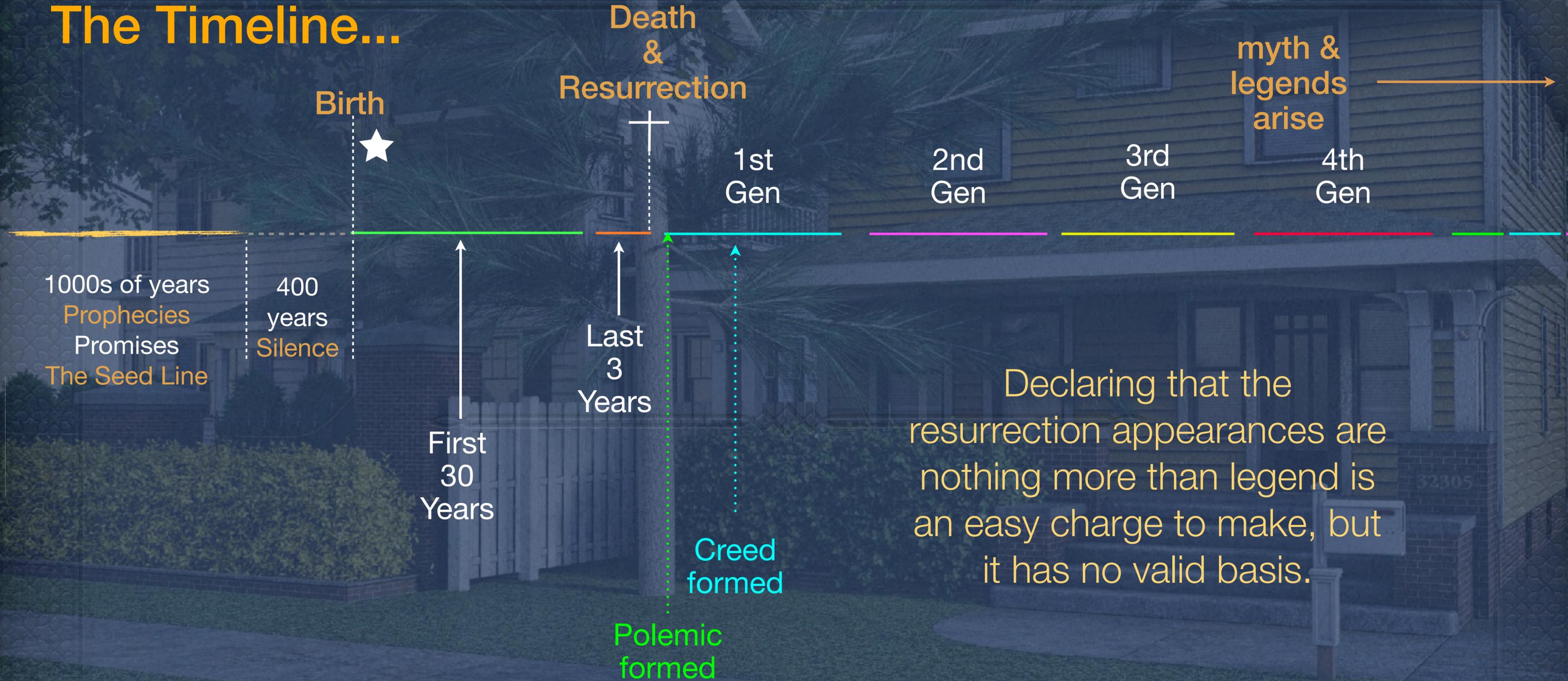
- There are societies of “mythicists” whose sole purpose is to prove Jesus is merely a myth and legend.
- The Jesus Project was founded not long ago for the purpose of debunking the historical Jesus.
- There have been numerous books written whose object is to deny the historicity of Jesus.
- For years, it seemed that every Easter, Time and Newsweek were obsessed with debunking Him.

This should be eye opening.

Why dedicate so much press to this? Why build a campus club for this purpose? Why are there not societies formed to debunk the existence of Plato or Aristotle or King Arthur?

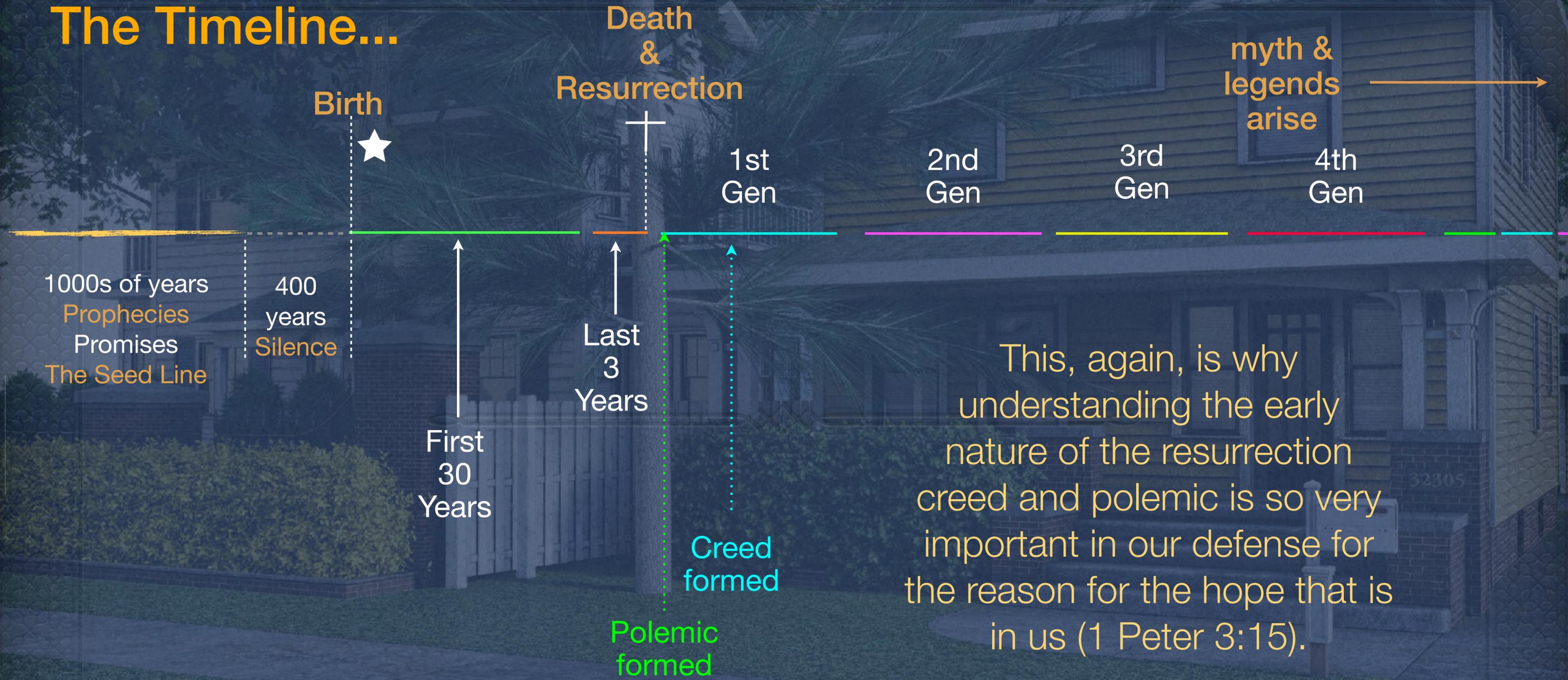


The Timeline...



Declaring that the resurrection appearances are nothing more than legend is an easy charge to make, but it has no valid basis.

The Timeline...



This, again, is why understanding the early nature of the resurrection creed and polemic is so very important in our defense for the reason for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15).

Neighborly Apologetics

The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection
the Importance of the Early Polemic and Creed

Next: the charge of contradictions in the timing and events and places of the resurrection account

