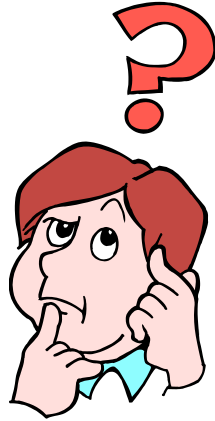


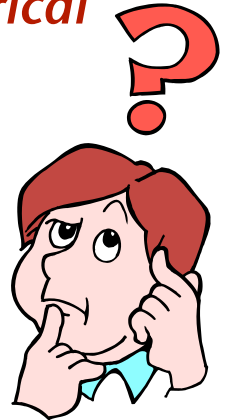
The greatest philosophical challenges to the Christian faith.

- ✓ Is God there? (materialism)
- ✓ Does God care? (suffering)
- ✓ Is God fair? (pluralism)

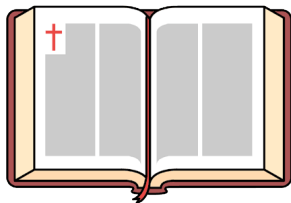


The greatest historical challenges to the Christian faith.

- ✓ The integrity of the N.T. teaching.
- ✓ The formation of the Biblical canon.
- ✓ The testimony of the Christian church.



The Canon



Why were some books excluded from the Bible?

2 Peter 3

“15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother **Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you**, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which **the untaught and unstable distort**, as they do **also the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction.”

- ✓ *The early church respected a canon of authoritative texts.*
- ✓ *The canon included Apostolic letters.*
- ✓ *There were unorthodox groups that claimed to be Christian.*

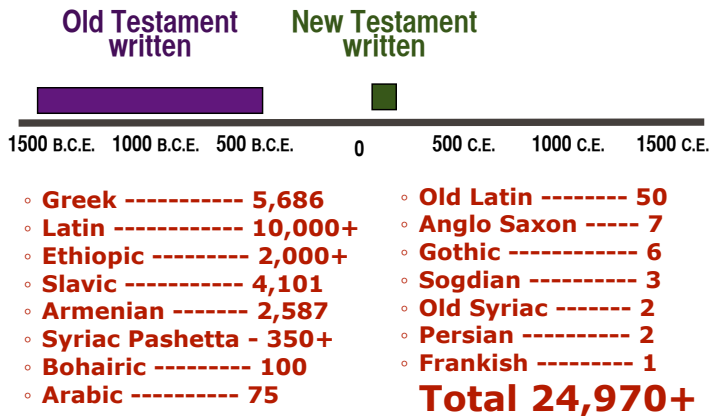
How did the early church respond to heresy?



The canon of the New Testament

1. *The stories of the formation of the canon are influenced by differing presuppositions.*
2. *The manuscripts behind our N.T. are true to the originals.*

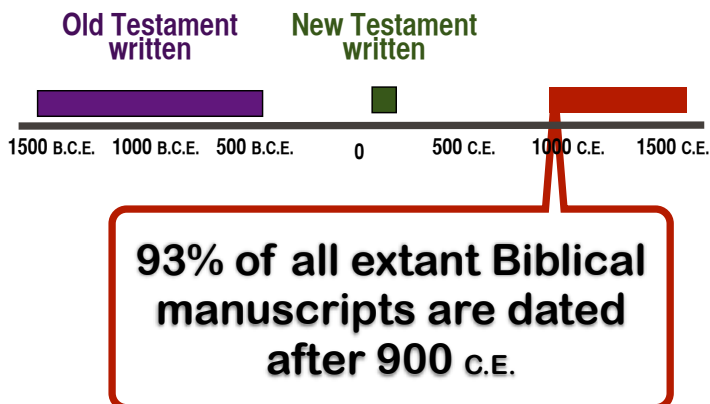
There are a large number of extant Biblical manuscripts.



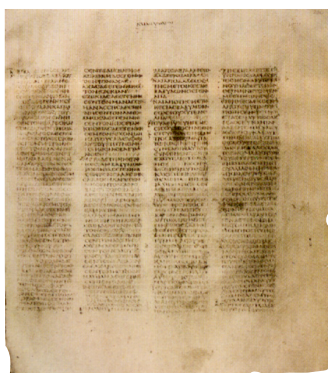
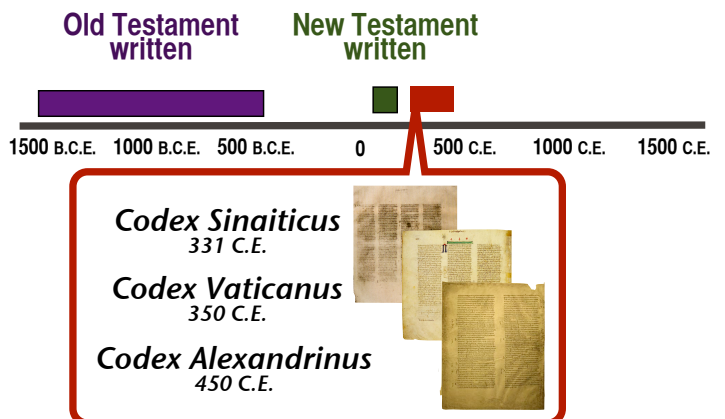
The most famous classical documents

| Ancient Documents | Date | Earliest copy | Time gap | No. of copies |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Herodtus (history) | 480–425 B.C.E. | 900 C.E. | 1,300 years | 8 |
| Thucydides (history) | 460–400 B.C.E. | 900 C.E. | 1,300 years | |
| Aristotle (philosopher) | 384–322 B.C.E. | 1,100 C.E. | 1,000 years | 5 |
| Caesar (history) | 100–44 B.C.E. | 900 C.E. | 1,300 years | 10 |
| Pliny (history) | 61–113 C.E. | 850 C.E. | 750 years | 7 |
| Suetonius (history) | 70–140 C.E. | 950 C.E. | 800 years | |
| Tacitus (history) | 100 C.E. | 1,100 C.E. | 1,000 years | 20 |
| Confucius | 550 C.E. | 650 C.E. | 1,200 years | 30 |
| I Ching | 660 C.E. | 900 C.E. | 1,550 years | 20 |

There are a large number of extant Biblical manuscripts.



Three Greek manuscripts are at the core of our modern translations of the Bible.



Codex Sinaiticus (X)



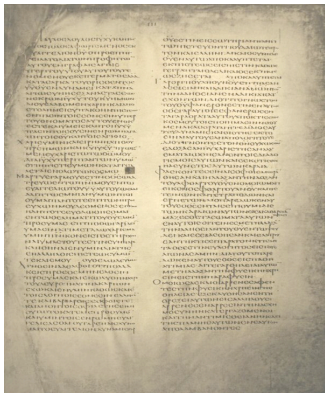
The basis of most modern translations of the N.T.



Codex Vaticanus (B)



The oldest and best manuscript of the Septuagint (the Greek translation)



Codex Alexandrinus (A)



The basis for the first printed Greek N.T.

O'Callahan Fragment 50-60 C.E. A portion of Mark



A part of the Dead Sea Scrolls that may date back to the original copy of Mark

Magdalene Fragment (P64) 30-60 C.E. A portion of Matthew



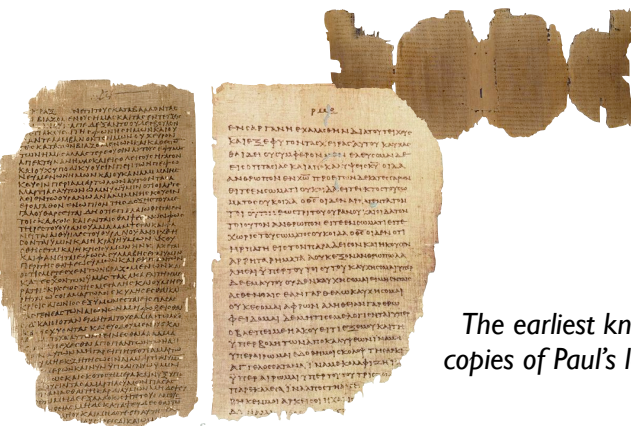
One of the earliest known copies of any portion of the New Testament

The John Rylands Fragment (P52) 117-138 C.E. John 18:31-33



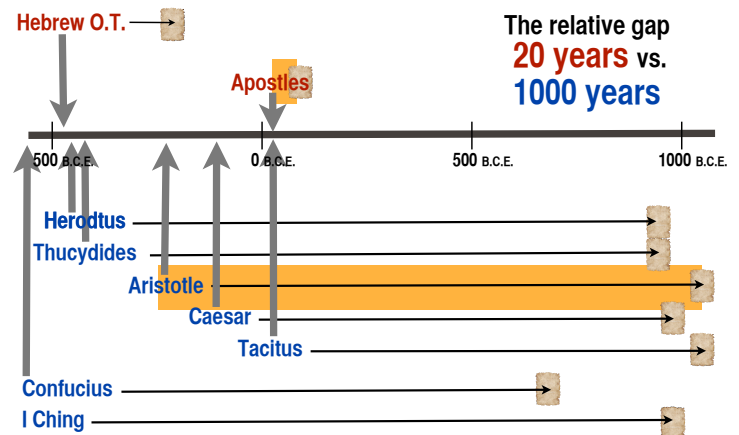
One of the earliest known copies of a portion of John

Chester Beatty I (P45) 3rd cent. Luke



The earliest known copies of Paul's letters

Ancient authors and extant manuscripts



“If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.”

*F. F. Bruce
Manchester University*

“Most of these [textual] differences are completely immaterial and insignificant....In fact, most of the changes found in our early Christian manuscripts have nothing to do with theology or ideology. Far and away the most changes are the result of mistakes, pure and simple - slips of the pen, accidental omissions, inadvertent additions, misspelled words, blunders of one sort or another.”

*Bart Ehrman in Misquoting Jesus
pp. 10, 55-56, 62, 94, 177*

The canon of the New Testament

1. The stories of the formation of the canon are influenced by differing presuppositions.
2. The manuscripts behind our N.T. are true to the originals.
3. Most N.T. documents were received as authoritative based on specific criteria.

Christians did not invent but identified the inspired writings as Scripture.



Which manuscripts are more authentic?



#1 The number of manuscripts



More reliable

Less reliable

#2 The age of manuscripts



Original



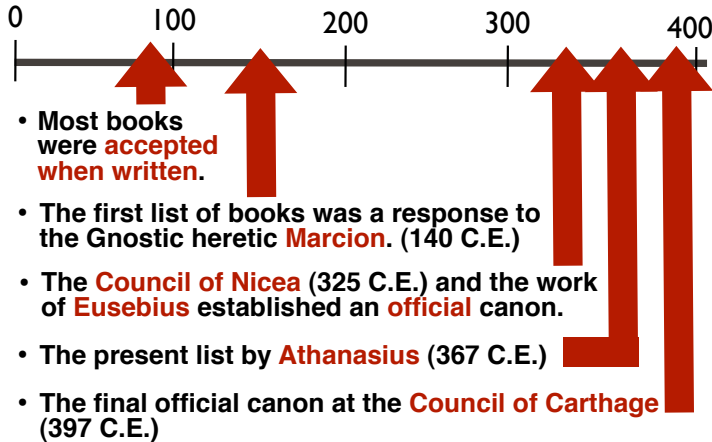
More reliable



Less reliable



The Canon of the New Testament - Key facts



Which books were in dispute and why?

- **Hebrews** - uncertainty of authorship
- **James** - conflict with Paul's letters
- **2 Peter** - different in style from 1 Peter
- **2 & 3 John** - private nature and limited circulation
- **Jude** - it quotes from Enoch (vs.14-15)
- **Revelation** - its teaching of the millennium

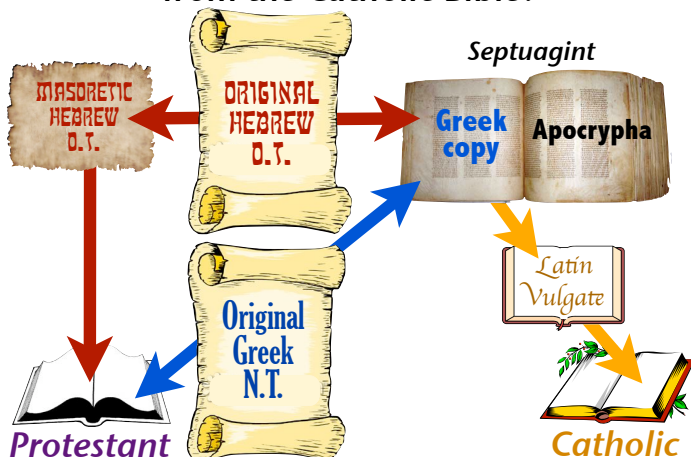
The canon of the New Testament

1. The stories of the formation of the canon are influenced by differing presuppositions.
2. The manuscripts behind our N.T. are true to the originals.
3. Most N.T. documents were received as authoritative based on specific criteria.
4. Some books were disputed and accepted later than others.

Hebrew Bible Protestant Bible Catholic Bible

| Law | Law | Law |
|--|--|---|
| Genesis - Deuteronomy | Genesis - Deuteronomy | Genesis - Deuteronomy |
| Prophets | History | History |
| Joshua - Malachi | Joshua - Esther | Joshua - Esther Tobias, Judith |
| Writings | Wisdom | Wisdom |
| Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1,2 Chronicles | Job - Song of Solomon | Job - Song of Solomon Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus |
| | Prophets | Prophets |
| | Major (Isaiah - Daniel) Minor (Hosea - Malachi) | Major (Isaiah - Daniel, Baruch) Minor (Hosea - Malachi, 1&2 Machabees) |

Why does the Protestant Bible differ from the Catholic Bible?



Conclusions

1. You can trust the Biblical record.
2. There are reasonable answers to the challenge of historical critics.
3. Historical criticism's limits and assumptions must be recognized.
4. Christian faith is not based on reason alone but is not contrary to reason.