

Why Study The Bible?

BFM Fall Retreat 2025
Session 1



Why Study the Bible?

One-of-a-Kind
Book!

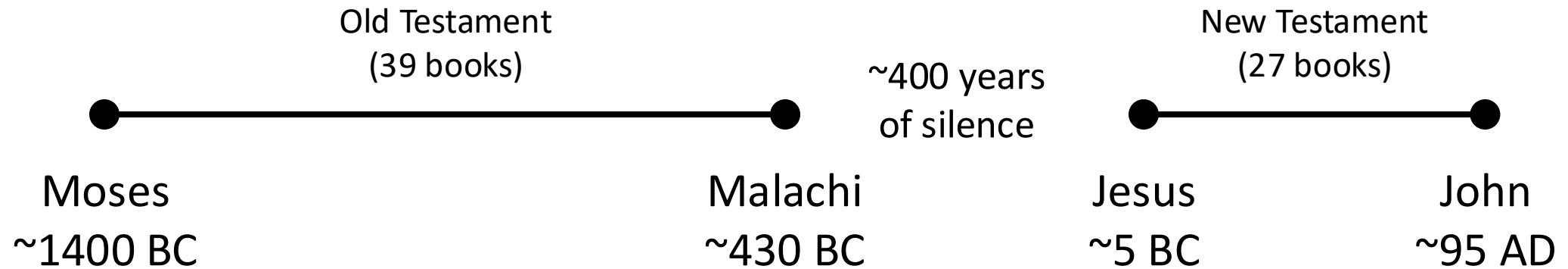
- **Authorship**
- **Language**
- **Message**
- **Influence**



Authorship

~40 Writers, ~1500 Years

~1500 Year Authorship



Diverse Authors

- Moses – a Hebrew born enslaved, led the Exodus
- David – a shepherd, poet, and king
- Ezekiel – a prophet in Babylonian exile
- Matthew – tax collector
- Peter – a fisherman
- Luke - a physician
- Paul – a Pharisee turned missionary for Christ

Unique Credibility

- Eyewitness accounts of events and experiences
- Many suffered or died for their testimony
- Supported by Biblical and historical writings



Diverse Genres

- Historical narrative (Kings, Acts)
- Legal codes (Leviticus, Deuteronomy)
- Poetry and songs (Psalms, Song of Songs)
- Wisdom literature (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
- Prophetic writings (Isaiah, Ezekiel)
- Epistles (Paul's letters)
- Apocalyptic (Daniel, Revelation)
- Biographical narrative (The Gospels)



Language

The Most Translated Book in History

Global Scripture Access



LANGUAGES

Full Bible: 776

+ New Testament: 1,798

+ Portions: 1,433

= 4,007 languages with at least some Scripture

PEOPLE

6.2 billion

887 million

508 million

7.7 billion (up to 99% of all people)



August 2025

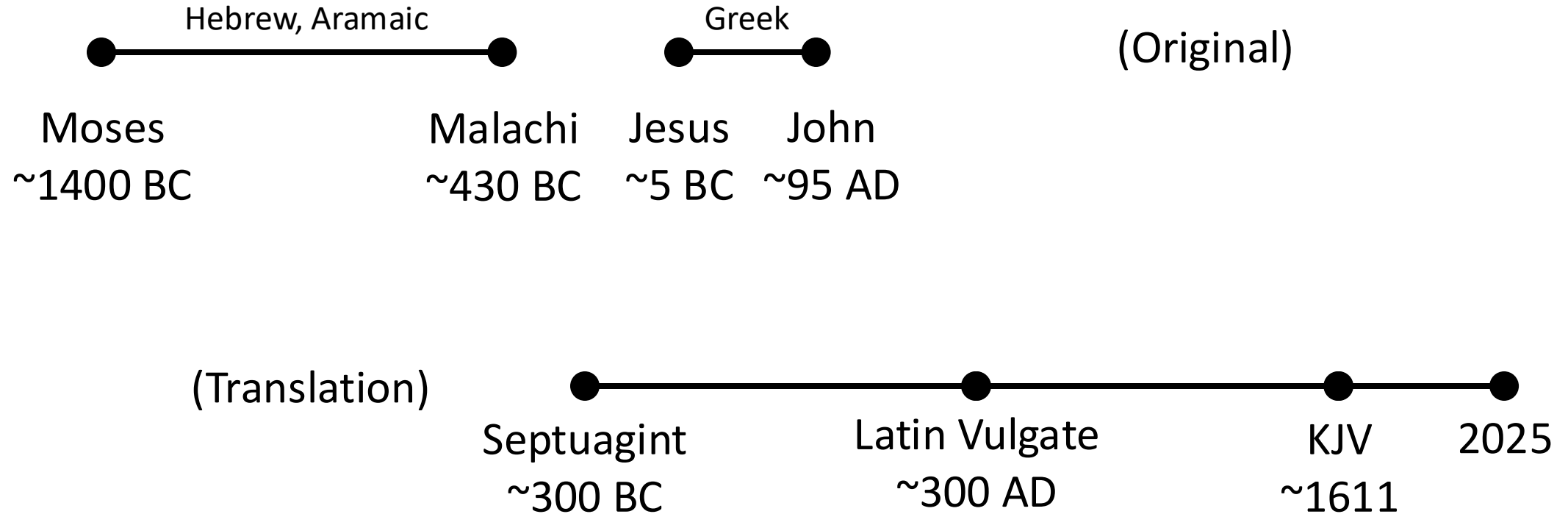
[wycliffe.net/resources/statistics](https://www.wycliffe.net/resources/statistics)

A Project spanning Millenium

Over 2,000 years of translation work

- Early translations like the Greek Septuagint (3rd century BCE) and Latin Vulgate (4th century CE)
- Accelerated dramatically in the modern missionary era (19th-21st centuries)
- Continues today (Wycliffe Bible Translators, Canadian Bible Society, and others)

A Project of Millenium





Translation Challenges

- Idioms don't travel neatly
 - Hebrew "long of nose"
- Words carry different weight
 - Greek "bowels"
- Moving metaphors, idioms, humor, and emotion



Translation Types

- More “word-for-word” (often called formal equivalence)
- More “thought-for-thought” (dynamic/functional equivalence)
- Paraphrase: rephrases for readability and punch

Word for Word

KJV – King James Version
ESV – English Standard Version
NASB – New American Standard Bible

Thought for Thought

NIV – New International Version
NLT – New Living Translation
GNT – Good News Translation

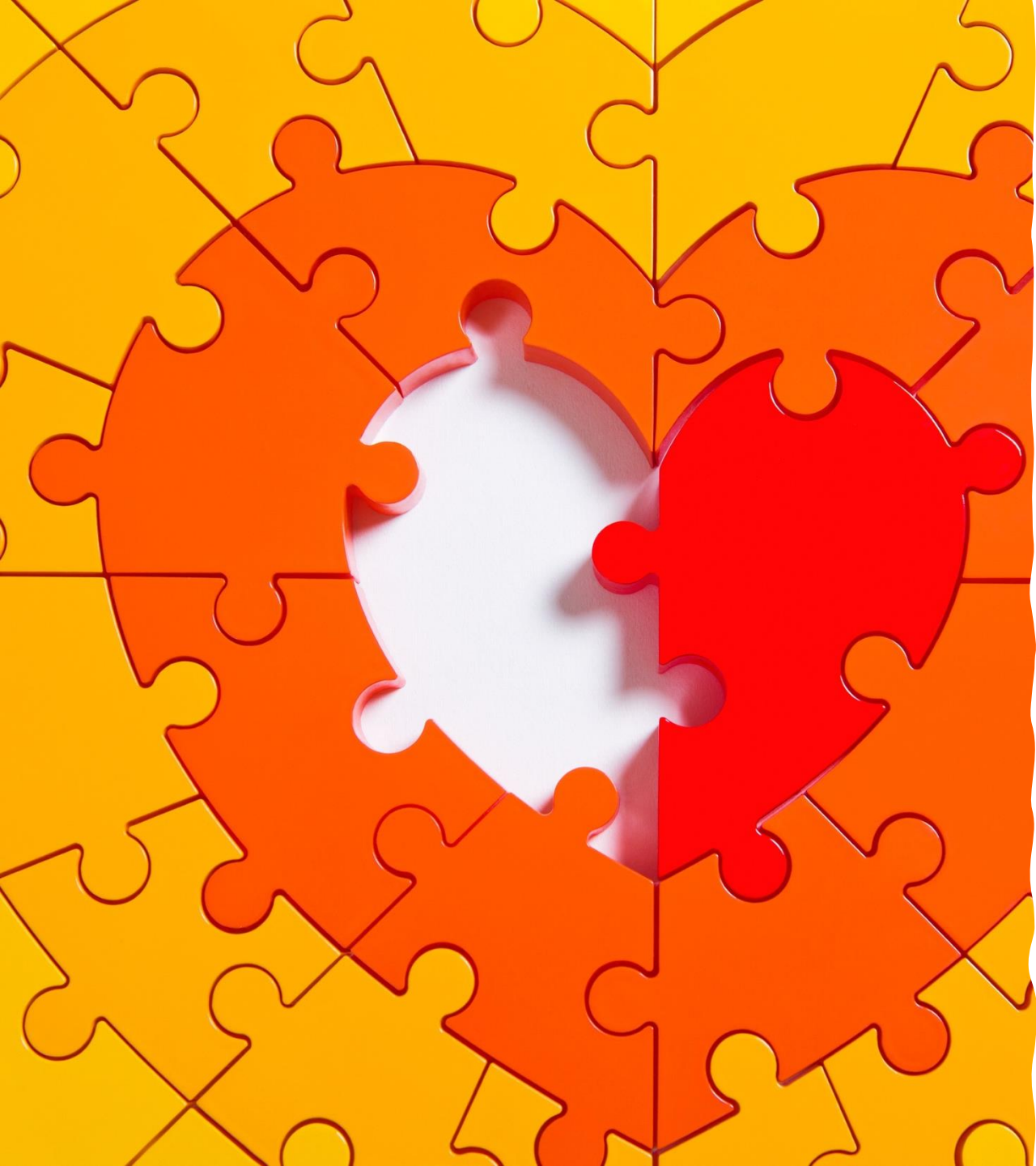
Paraphrase

MSG – The Message
TLB – The Living Bible
NLV – New Live Version



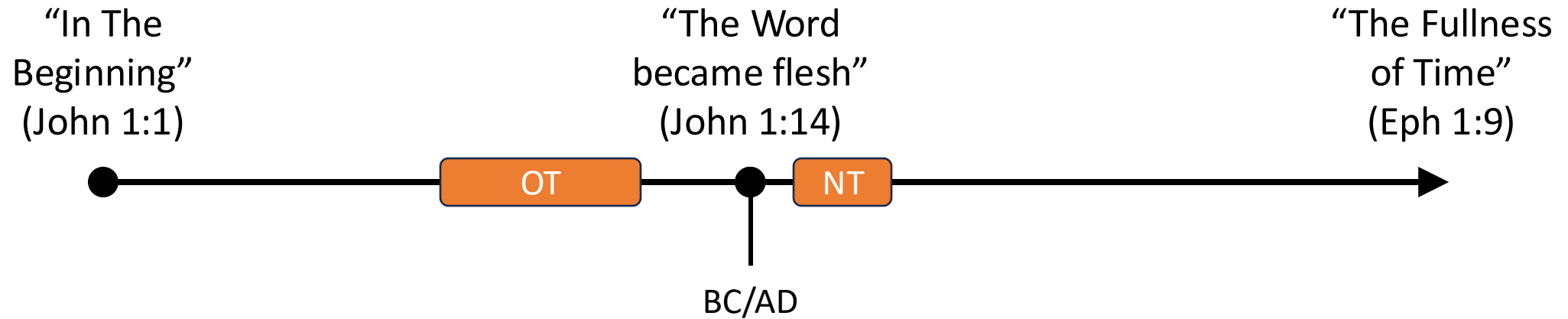
Message

One coherent story; many puzzle pieces



A puzzle with
many pieces

The Universe: It's Origin and Purpose






“In the beginning”

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

[John 1:1-3 ESV]





“The Word became flesh”

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[John 1:14 ESV]





“The fullness of time”

Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

[Eph 1:9-10 ESV]





One Coherent Story

- Establishes origin from “the beginning” and purpose in “the fullness of time” for creation
- Reveals Jesus Christ ⇔ The Word of God
- A message of redemption and unity found in the Word



Influence

Information Technology,
Literacy, Human Rights



Printing Press

- . ~1040 ~ 1200 – Moveable type (ceramic, metal) technology in China and Korea
- . ~1450 –Gutenberg printing press using moveable metal type with hand mould (**technology enabled to scale**)
- . ~1455 - Gutenberg Bible becomes a high-quality commercially viable product (**product demand driver for scale**)



Literacy

- The Protestant Reformation (1500s) encouraged a “read it yourself” ethos
- Bible as both a motivation and teaching tool for education and literacy
- Literature by numerous Western authors was shaped by Biblical narrative and imagery



Imago Dei

Belief that humans are created in the “Image of God” has influenced major human rights developments:

- Abolition of Slavery
- Rights of Indigenous peoples
- Women’s equality

A Unique Book with Unique Challenges

- **Authorship - context**
- **Language – translation**
- **Message – jigsaw puzzle**
- **Influence – abuse**

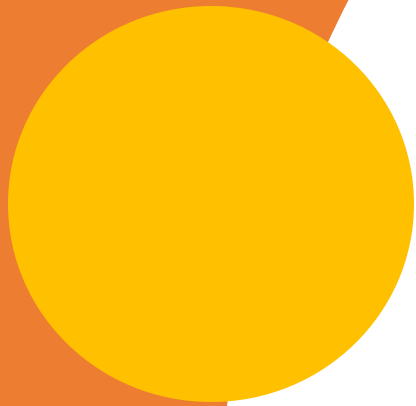


Why Study the Bible?

There's no time like the present!



“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
(Proverbs 14:12, 16:25)



Thank you!
Q&A