

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

Old Testament
(39 books)

Moses
~1400 BC

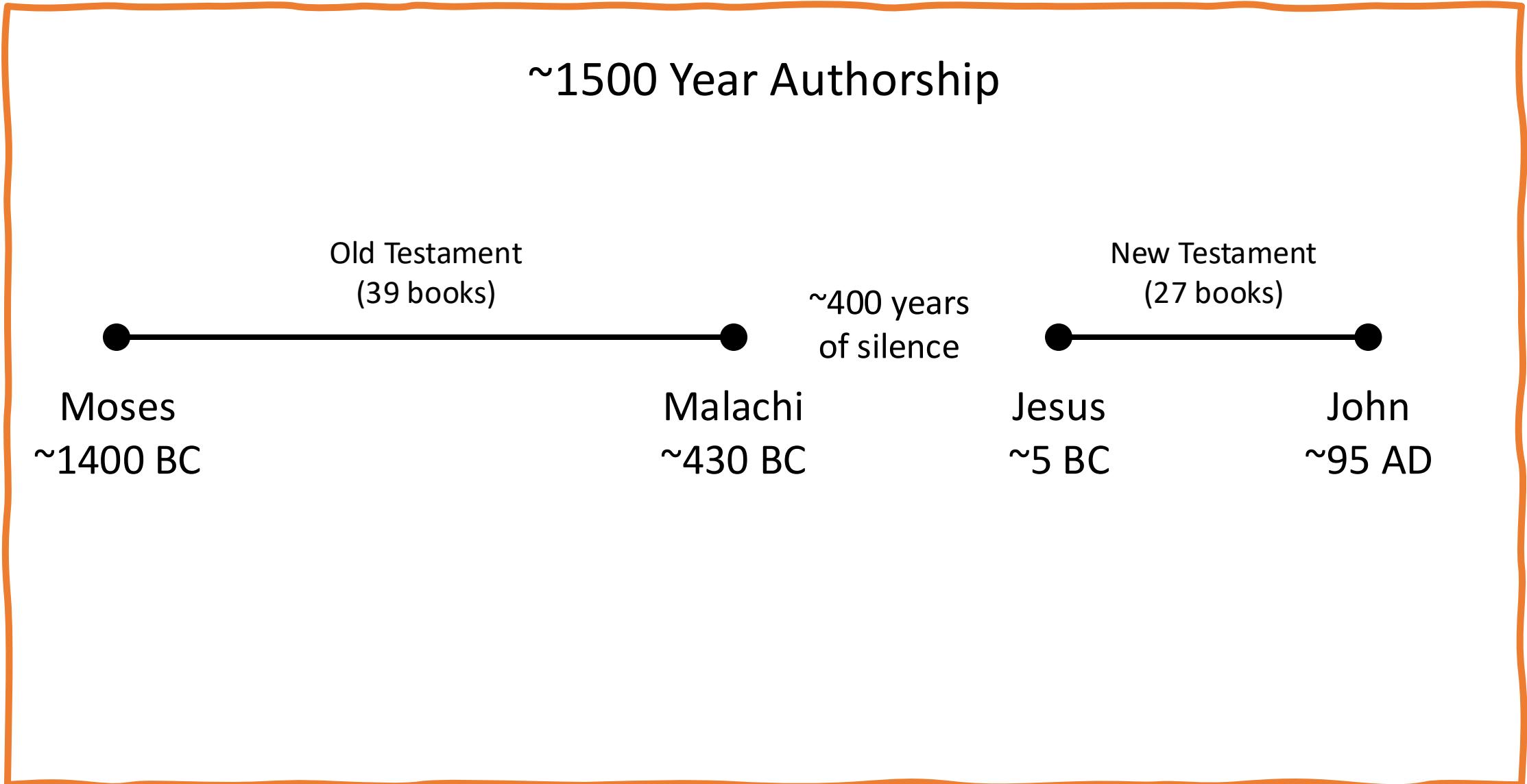
Malachi
~430 BC

~400 years
of silence

New Testament
(27 books)

Jesus
~5 BC

John
~95 AD



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

PEOPLE

6.2 billion

887 million

508 million

**= 4,007 languages with at
least some Scripture**

7.7 billion (up to 99% of all people)



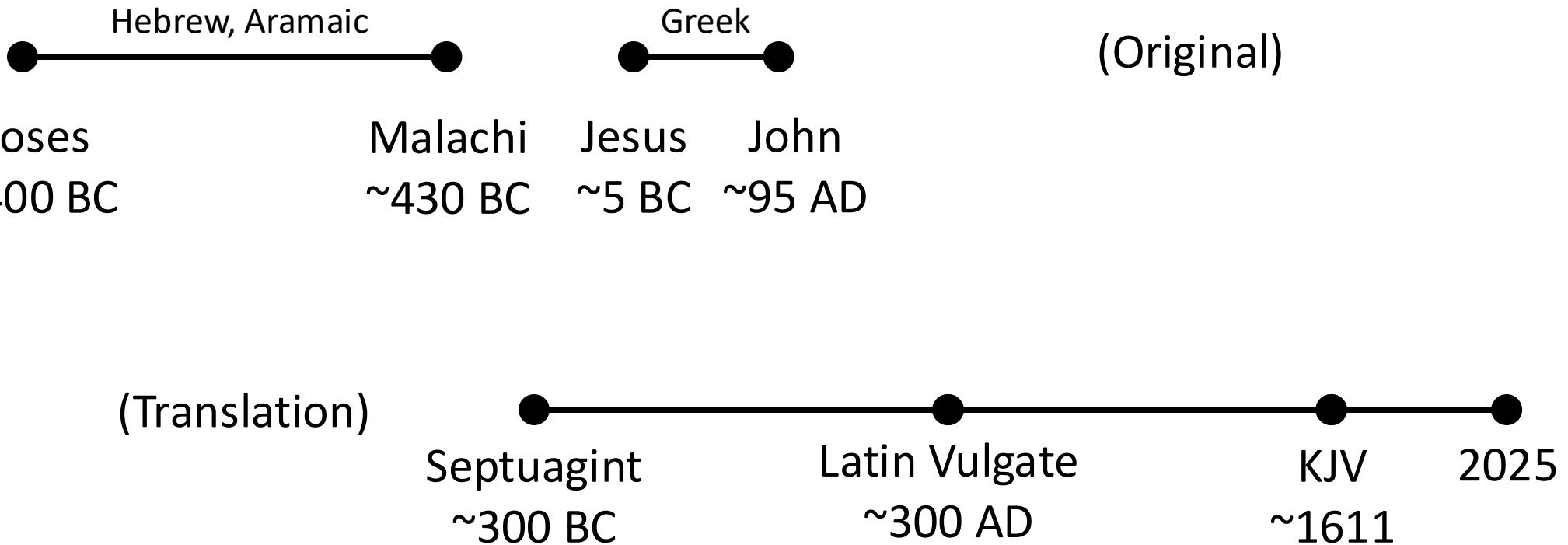
August 2025

wycliffe.net/resources/statistics

A Project spanning Millenium

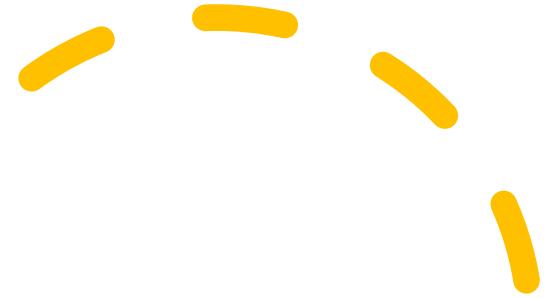
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- Over 2,000 years of translation work
 - Early translations like the Greek Septuagint (3rd century BCE) and Latin Vulgate (4th century CE)
 - Accelerated dramatically in the modern missionary era (19th-21st centuries)
 - Continues today (Wycliffe Bible Translators, Canadian Bible Society, and others)

A Project of Millenium



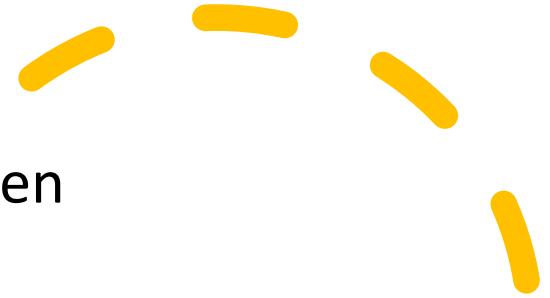
Translation Challenges

- 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

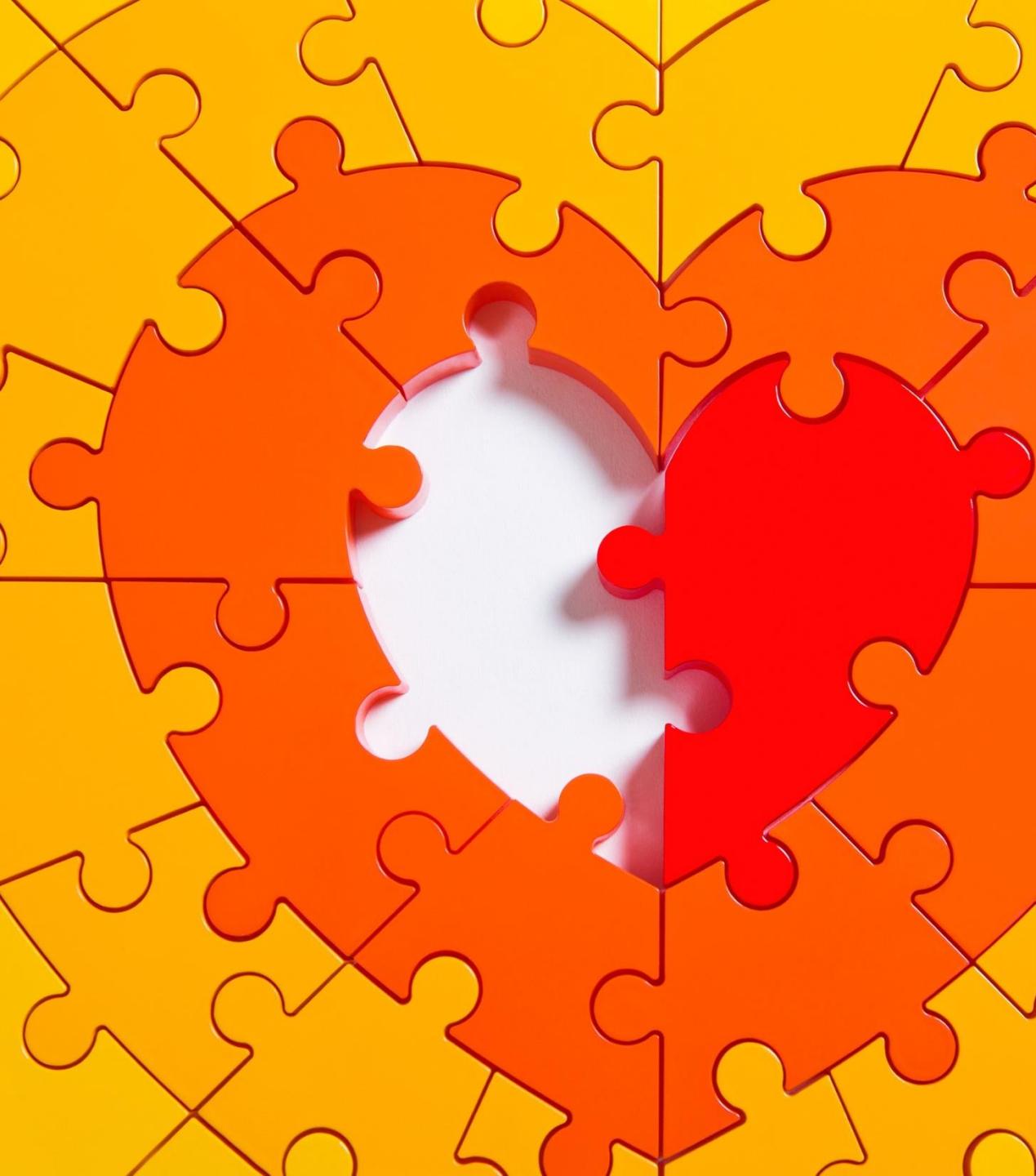
TLB – The Living Bible

NLV – New Live Version



Message

One coherent story; many puzzle pieces



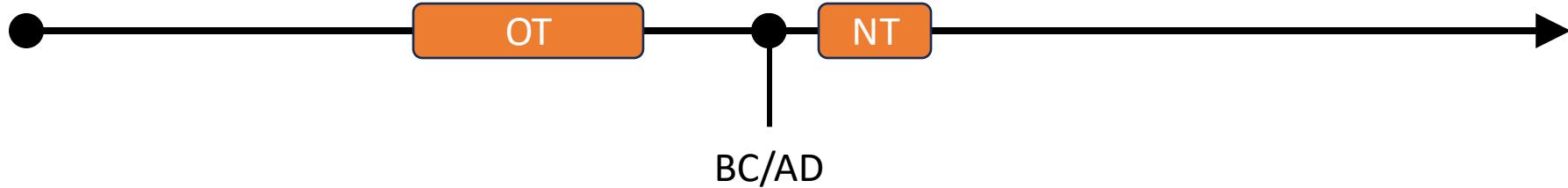
A puzzle with
many pieces

The Universe: It's Origin and Purpose

“In The
Beginning”
(John 1:1)

“The Word
became flesh”
(John 1:14)

“The Fullness
of Time”
(Eph 1:9)



“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.

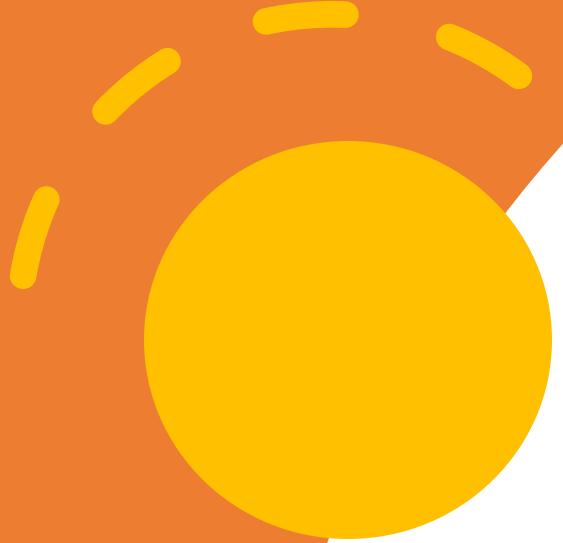
[Eph 1:9-10 ESV]



One Coherent Story



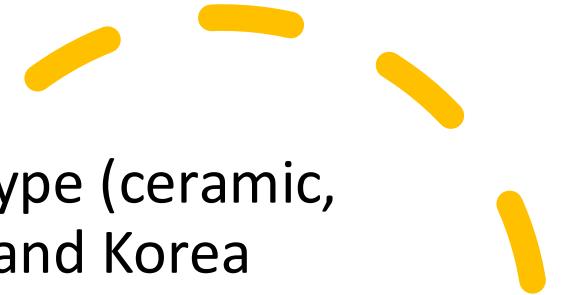
- Establishes origin from “the beginning” and purpose in “the fullness of time” for creation
- Reveals Jesus Christ ⇔ The Word of God
- A message of redemption and unity found in the Word

A yellow circular icon resembling a bomb or a sun, positioned on the left side of the slide. It has a yellow outline and several short yellow lines radiating from its top edge, suggesting an explosion or energy release.

Influence

Information Technology,
Literacy, Human Rights

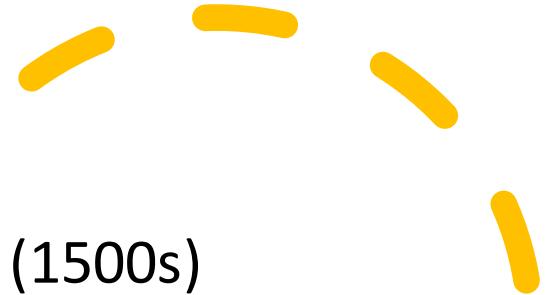
Printing Press



- ~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

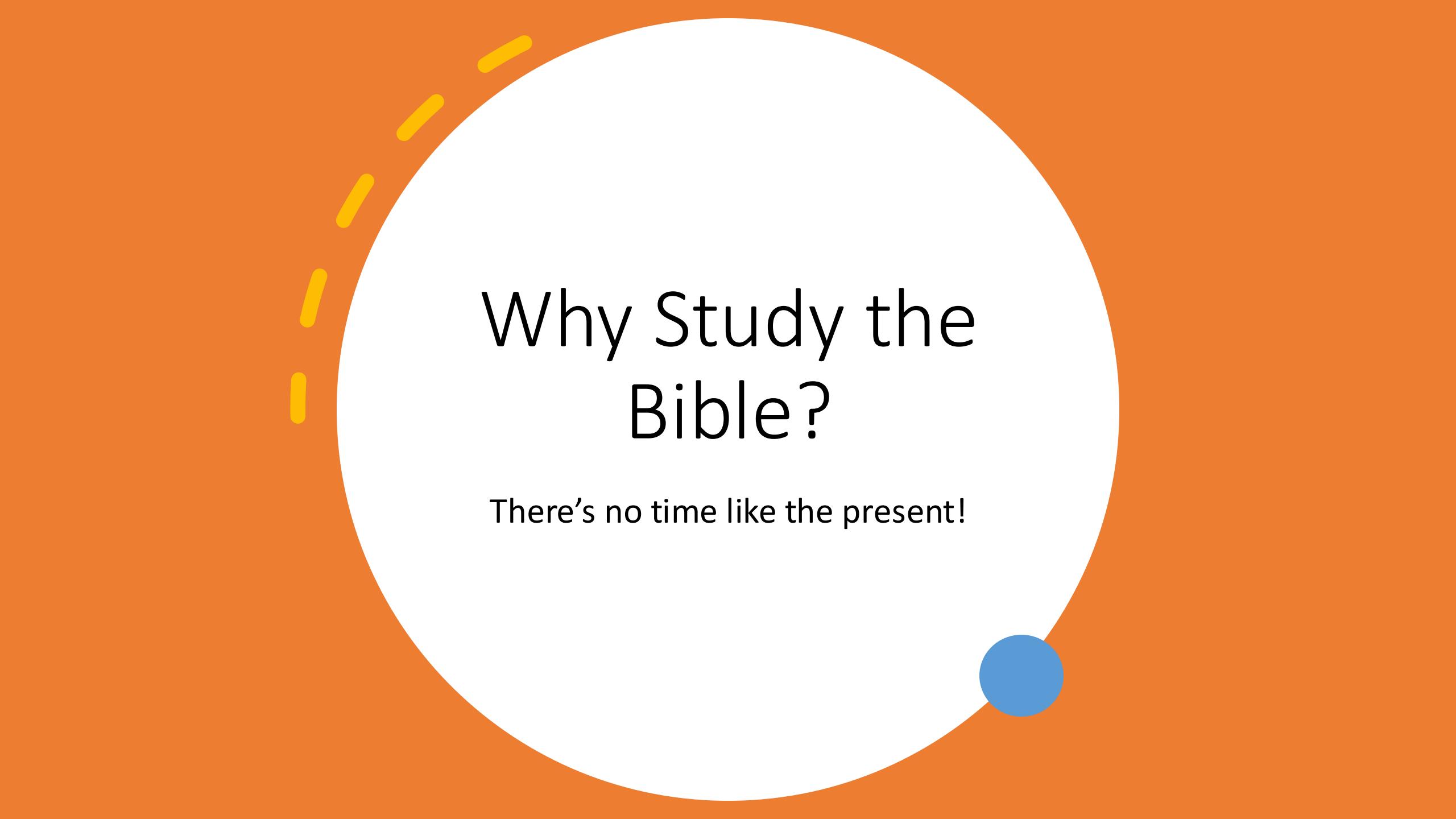


Belief that humans are created in the “Image of God” has influenced major human rights developments:

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

A Unique Book with Unique Challenges

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

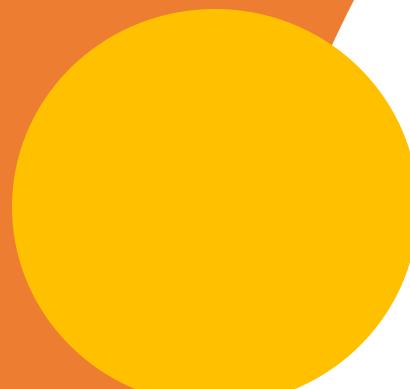


Why Study the Bible?

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