



GOOD NEWS

The Story of God's Purpose In Jesus and His People

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

What is the Bible?

What is it about?

How do I understand God's will from it?

HOW WE OFTEN SEE THE BIBLE



HOW WE OFTEN SEE THE BIBLE

Law

History

Poetry

Major Prophets

Minor Prophets

Gospels

History

Letters

Prophecy

Books of the Bible

Old Testament

New Testament

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Law

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

History

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Songs
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Poetry

Major Prophets

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

Minor Prophets

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts

Gospels

Church History

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians

Letters

1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

Letters

Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation

Letters

Prophecy

HOW WE OFTEN SEE THE BIBLE

Law

History

Poetry

Major Prophets

Minor Prophets

Gospels

History

Letters

Prophecy

SEE LAYERS AND MESSAGES THROUGH THE SECTIONS

LOVE

CHILDREN

REDEMPTION

COVENANT

MANY OTHERS

**WE SPEND A LOT OF TIME
LOOKING AT THE TREES**

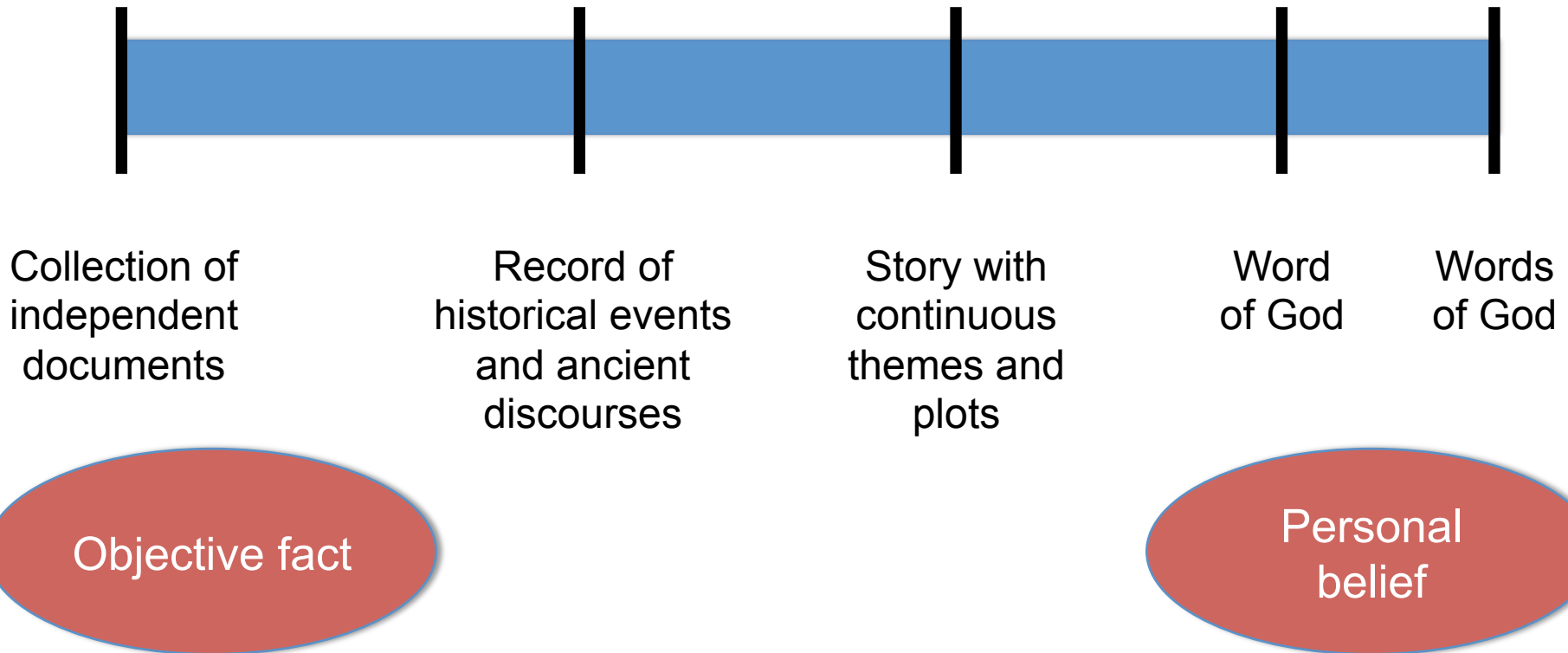


THIS STUDY IS ABOUT SEEING THE FOREST



WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Spectrum of answers



WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Purpose

History

Organization

COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Number Of Documents

- “Books” in the OT: Hebrew – 24, Christian – 39
 - Differences: Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Minor Prophets
 - In reality, many more individual documents
 - Consider Psalms & Proverbs
- “Books” in the NT: 27

COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Authors

- At least 35
 - Many authors unknown
 - Actual number probably at least 45
- Many more sources

COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Writing (Literary) Types/Styles

- History/Narrative
- Poetry
- Wisdom
- Law
- Prophecy
- Discourse
- Personal correspondence

Does my level of comfort with different styles impact how much time I spend in them?

COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

When

- When written?
- What period do they cover?

~4000 BC

~4 BC

2018

Creation

Jesus' birth

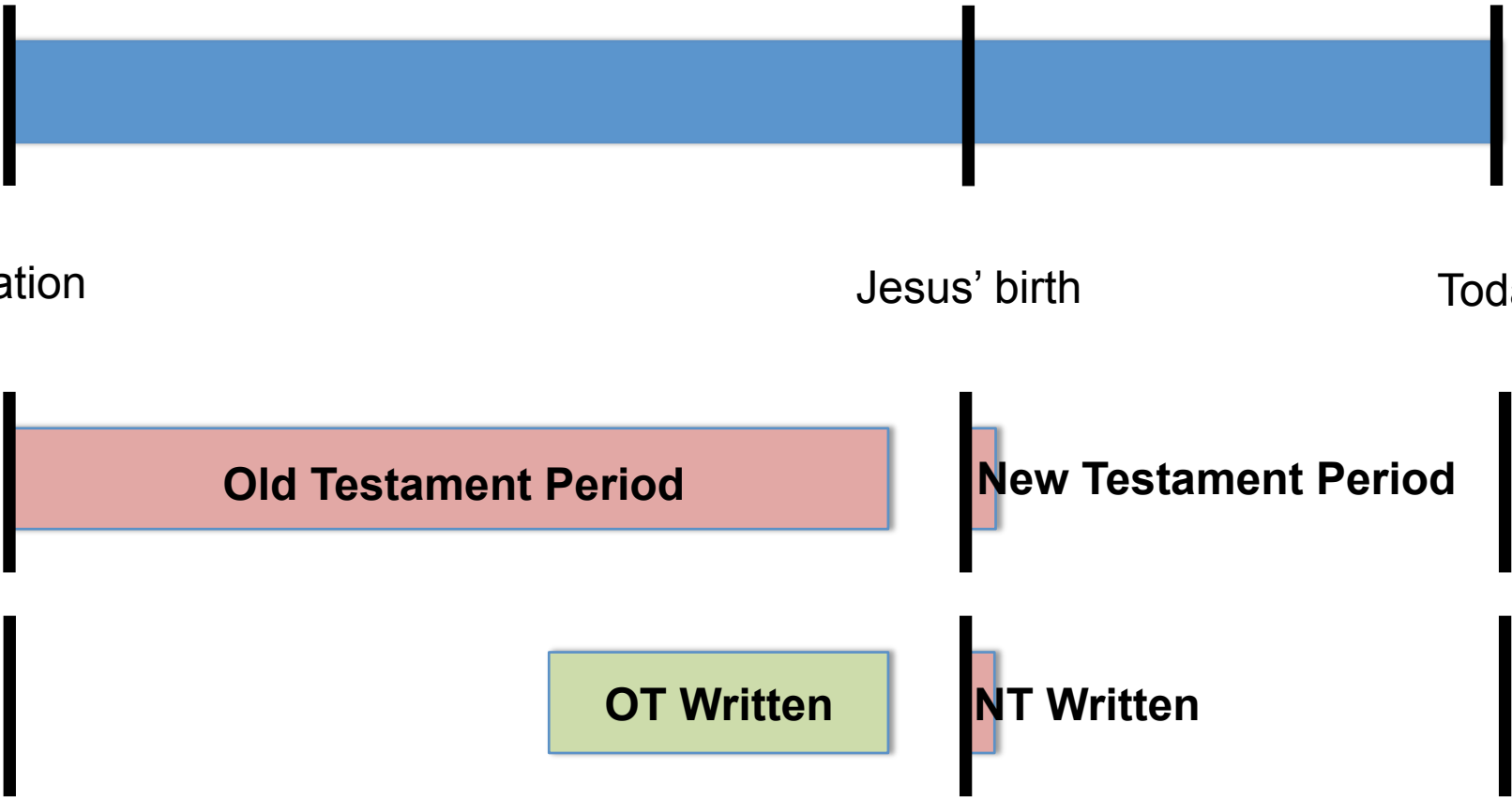
Today

Old Testament Period

New Testament Period

OT Written

NT Written

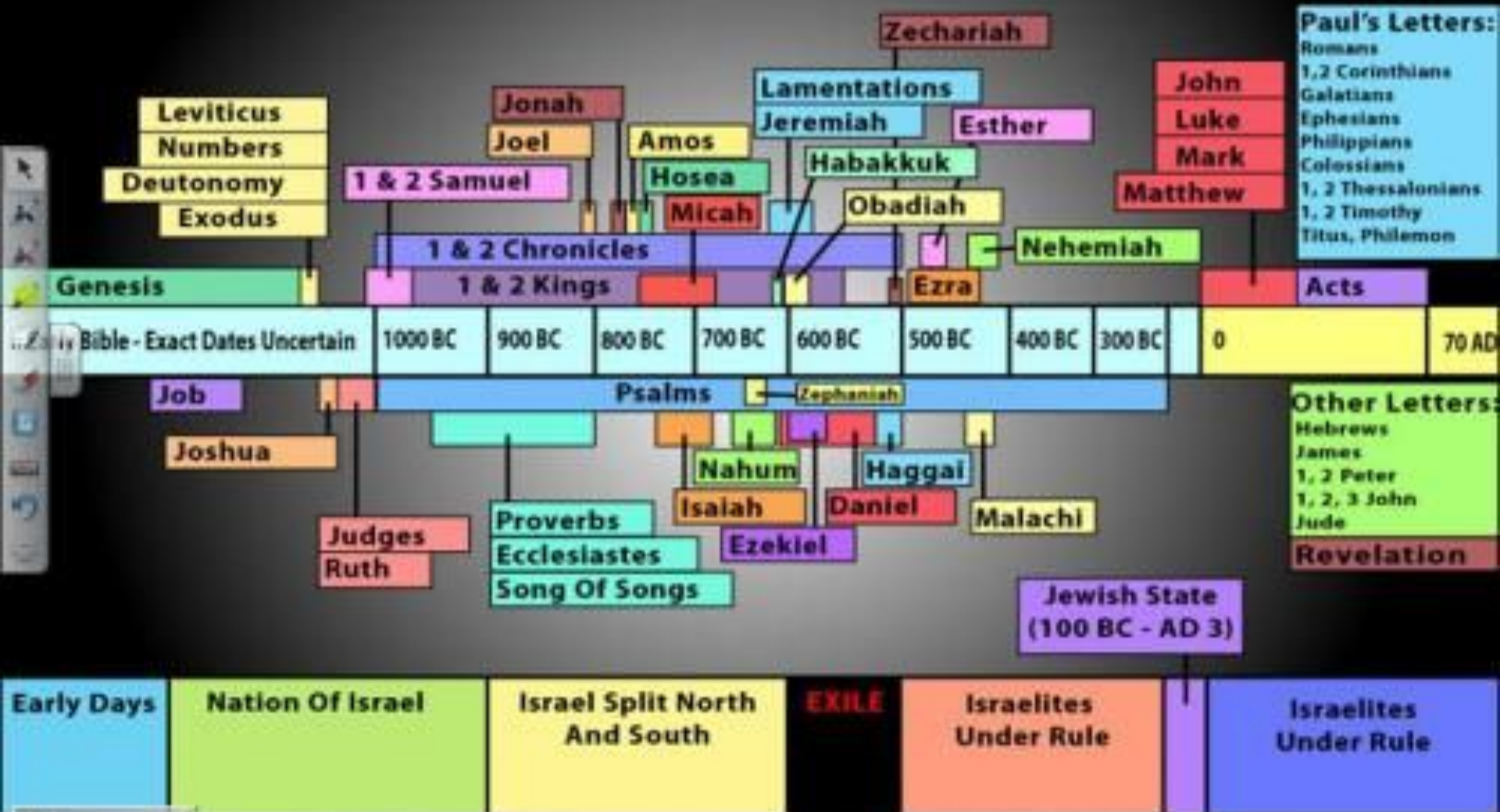


COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Chronology

- Does it matter?

BIBLE TIMELINE



COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Chronology

- Does it matter?
- More appropriate to ask
 - How and when does it matter?
 - How and when is chronology less critical?
 - E.g. Samuel/Kings & Chronicles, Matthew, intermixing John with other gospels

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

100's of documents

With dozens of different authors

- And many more sources
- Though four authored almost 40% of the text
 - Moses, Jeremiah, Luke, Paul

Written in several literary styles

- History, narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, discourse, personal correspondence (possibly others)

Composed across ~1500 years

But covering a span of ~4100 years

Not organized chronologically

- And sometimes even individual documents aren't written chronologically

SO WHAT?

The Bible is an almost unparalleled collection of ancient documents.

As a whole, it's breadth, variety and complexity is astounding.

And challenging.

If in all this complexity we see a single, cohesive, personal story, there can be no doubt about God's existence and wisdom.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

A collection of diverse writings

Each with their own specific messages

But which together tell a singular story of God's purpose and desire

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

We typically think of “the bible” as a single document

It’s more accurately described as many documents that tell a single story

Who decided what’s in the collection? Couldn’t they have controlled the story by determining which documents to include or exclude?

WHICH DOCUMENTS?

“Bible”

- Derived from a phrase that meant “the books”
- Originally used by Greek Jews to refer to what we know as the Old Testament
- The singular version was applied by Jesus and his apostles individually to several documents

WHICH DOCUMENTS?

The books

- Psalms (Luke 20:42, Acts 1:20)
- Isaiah (Luke 3:4, 4:17, 20)
- “Book of Moses” (Mark 12:26)
 - Reference from Exodus
- “Book of the prophets” (Acts 7:42-43)
 - Quote from Amos 5
 - Reference to the book containing most of the prophets and Joshua, Judges, Samuel & Kings
- John (John 20:30)
- “...the books” (2 Tim 4:13)

WHICH DOCUMENTS?

More commonly in the NT, we see references to the documents in the bible as “scripture” or “the scriptures”

- Literally, “the writings”
- Term was first applied to the OT in the period between the testaments
- Over 50 uses in the NT
- Though a common term, it clearly had a specific connotation by the time of Christ
- “*The scriptures*” is the most widely used title in “the bible”

WHICH WRITINGS?

Key references to Scripture(s)

- John 5:39
 - “The Scriptures” are the source of eternal life
 - They testify about Jesus
- Luke 24:44-45
 - Law, Prophets, Psalms → Scriptures
- 1 Tim 5:18
 - Luke already regarded as Scripture
- 2 Pet 3:15-16
 - Paul’s letters already regarded as Scripture

WHICH WRITINGS?

Who decided what's in the collection? Couldn't they have controlled the story by determining which documents to include or exclude?

WHICH WRITINGS?

The collection of writings included in the OT was settled before Jesus' birth

- Jesus himself confirmed its legitimacy
- Many other Jewish writings had a spiritual or theological focus
 - But they were not regarded as having the authority or significance of those in the “Hebrew bible”

WHICH WRITINGS?

Both the NT and outside sources show that many NT writings were accepted as additions to Scripture within the lifetime of Jesus' initial followers

- The gospels
- Paul's letters

WHICH WRITINGS?

Even in the first few years after Jesus' resurrection, people were looking to exploit Jesus' followers for their own purposes

And, like in the times before Jesus, many documents were being circulated that had a spiritual focus and purpose

WHICH WRITINGS?

For these reasons, debate about some writings continued for many years

Eventually, a near-consensus was reached about which additional documents should be considered additions of Scripture

WHICH WRITINGS?

The councils that allegedly “declared” the list of NT documents only affirmed the agreement that had already emerged

The “debated” writings in Scripture compliment rather than change the direction of the story or its declaration of God’s purpose and desire

The excluded writings lacked evidence of authority or contradicted things already widely established as true

WHICH WRITINGS?

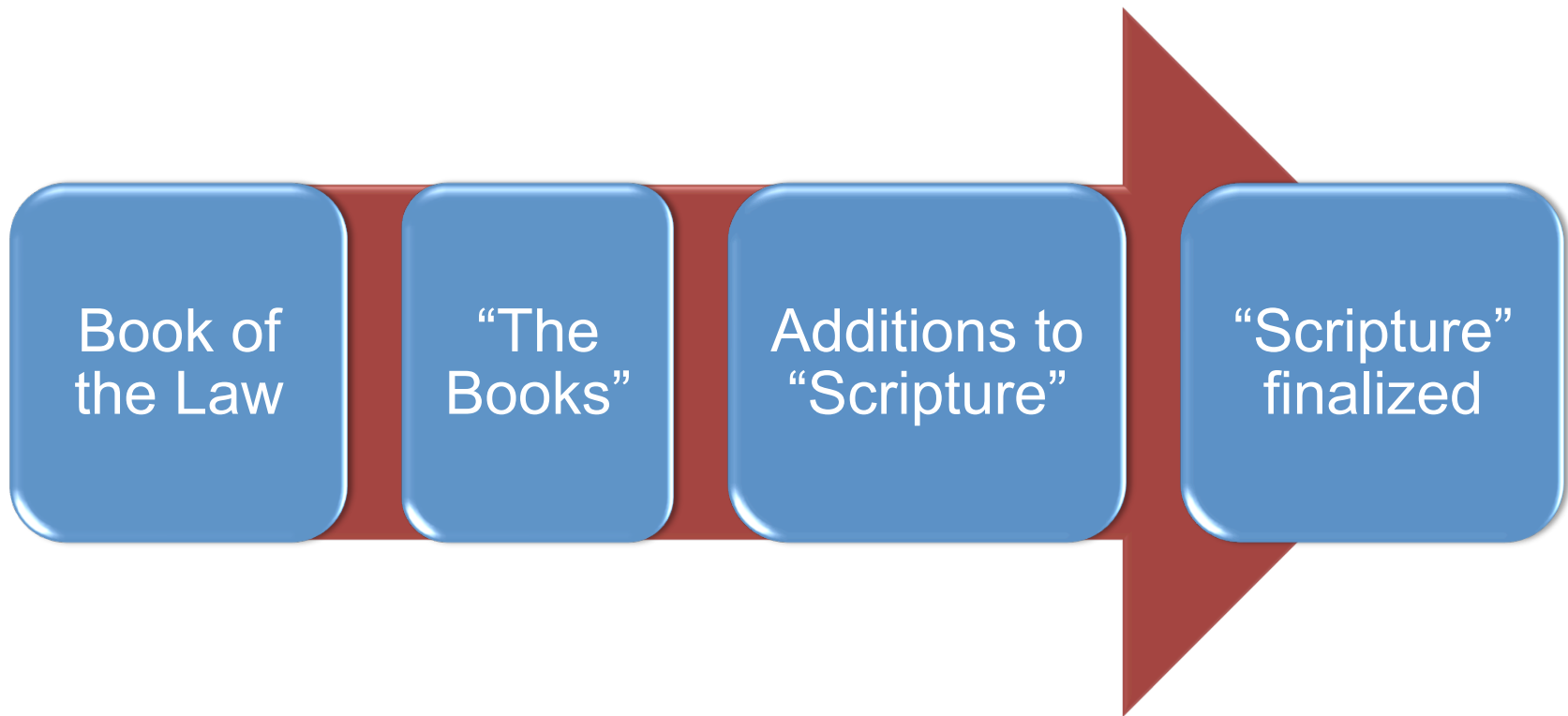
OTHER LETTERS
ACTS
PAUL'S LETTERS
GOSPELS
OTHER WRITINGS
PSALMS
PROPHETS
LAW

Debated before consensus emerged

Authority recognized by Paul/Peter, near consensus by early Christians (reflected in the organization of the NT)

Authority recognized before Jesus of Nazareth, authority affirmed by Jesus and his apostles

INDIVIDUAL WRITINGS TO “THE BIBLE”



PRESERVATION OF THE WRITINGS



NT VS. SIGNIFICANT ANCIENT WRITINGS

Author	Date Written	Earliest Fragment	Span	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	----
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	----
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400 yrs	8	----
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1500 yrs	9	----
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300	10	----
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	----
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49	----
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	----
Homer (Iliad)	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	50-100 AD	2nd Cent. A.D.	less than 100 years	5600	99.50%

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Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1500 yrs	193	----
Homer (Iliad)	8th-7th C. B.C.	1000 A.D.	1800 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	50-100 A.D.	1st Cent. A.D.	less than 100 years	5600	99.50%

Earliest complete copy: 1700 years after original

Earliest complete copy: 300-400 years after original

SO WHAT?

It's good to question and investigate whether we are justified in putting confidence in the Scriptures as we have them today.

However, after seeing the evidence, what does it say about us if we are apathetic towards Scripture, its purpose, and its message?

THE WRITINGS

How are they organized?

THE WRITINGS

Hebrew Bible		Christian Old Testament	
Law	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Law	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
Prophets (former)	Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings	History	Joshua through Esther
Prophets (latter)	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve	Poetry & Wisdom	Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
Writings	Esther, Daniel, Ezra Nehemiah, Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon	Prophets	Isaiah through Malachi

THE WRITINGS

Would I approach a writing differently if I viewed it as prophecy rather than history?

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