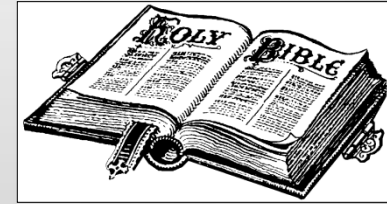


Bible Canon: How we got our Bible



Hanley Mathews

How we got the Bible – 6 Steps



- 1 REVELATION
- 2 INSPIRATION
- 3 CANONIZATION
- 4 TRANSMISSION
- 5 TRANSLATION
- 6 PRESERVATION

1. Revelation

- Revelation – God revealing who He is
- General Revelation
 - Through Nature – Ps 19:1, Rom 1:18-21
 - Nature tells us about God’s creative power
 - Through Providence – sun, rain, air, water – Matt5:45
 - God’s providence tells us about His mercy for all life
 - Through our Conscience – Rom 2:14, 15
 - Our conscience tells us about God’s righteous laws

Special Revelation

Special revelation – God revealing His character, His mind, His will, His plans, etc

- Dreams and Visions
- Signs, Wonders, Miracles
- Audible voice of God
- Theophanies
- Voice of Angels
- The prophets speaking
- Supernatural events
- His Son – Jesus Christ
- Holy Spirit guided writing



Special revelation is the source of the Bible

What the Bible Reveals

Most important things that the Bible reveals:

- The character of God
- Divine judgment for sin and disobedience
- Divine blessing for faith and obedience
- Revelation of Christ as Savior from sin
- Revelation of Christ future glory as King of Kings

No other religious or secular book reveal these truths.

2. Inspiration

- Inspiration is the process of writing what is revealed by God
 - by a human
 - writer's unique writing style and memory
 - under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - ideas, words given by the Holy Spirit – Jer 1:9, 2 Pet 1:20-21
 - with the breath of God into the text
 - God has breathed into the text – 2 Tim 3:16
 - There is spiritual life of God in the text of the Bible
 - Indicates text authorized by God as His Word

Results of Inspiration

- The original Bible texts are accurate and inerrant – Ps 12:6
- Both ideas and words are given by God
- All parts of the Bible are equally inspired
- The Bible is unbreakable or infallible – it is 100% trustworthy. Does not contradict itself.
- The Bible has the final authority in all matters of life and spirituality

What Inspiration Includes

Everything in the Bible is inspired:

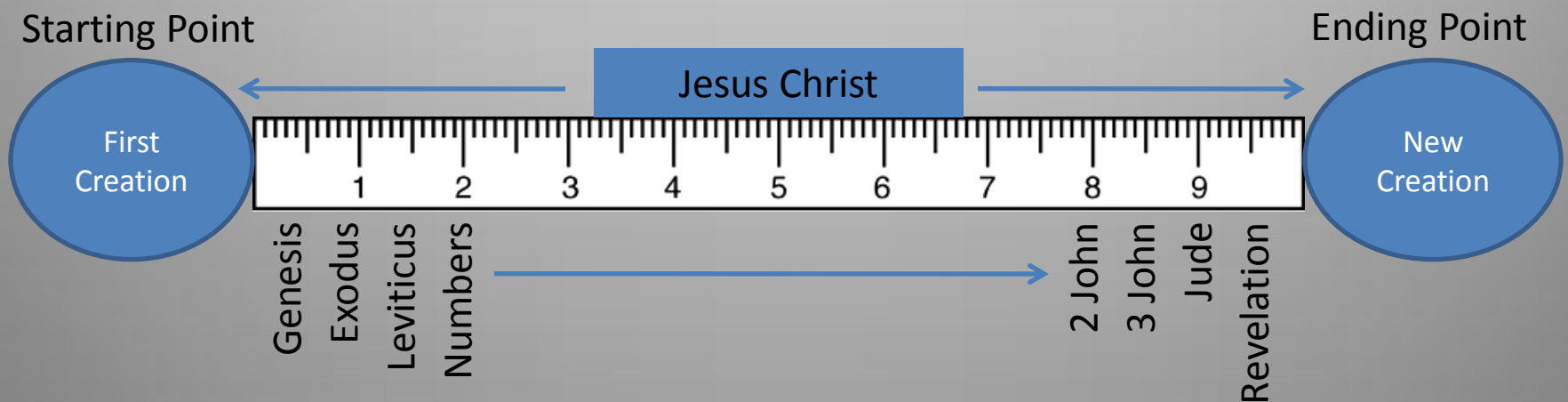
- Everything that God has spoken
- Things in the mind of God revealed to us
- All prophecy – fulfilled and yet to come
- Historical events revealed in the Bible
- The quotes of what people spoke and thought
- The quotes of what Satan or demons spoke and thought
- Facts, dates, ages, numbers, measurements, etc

Inspiration – False Views

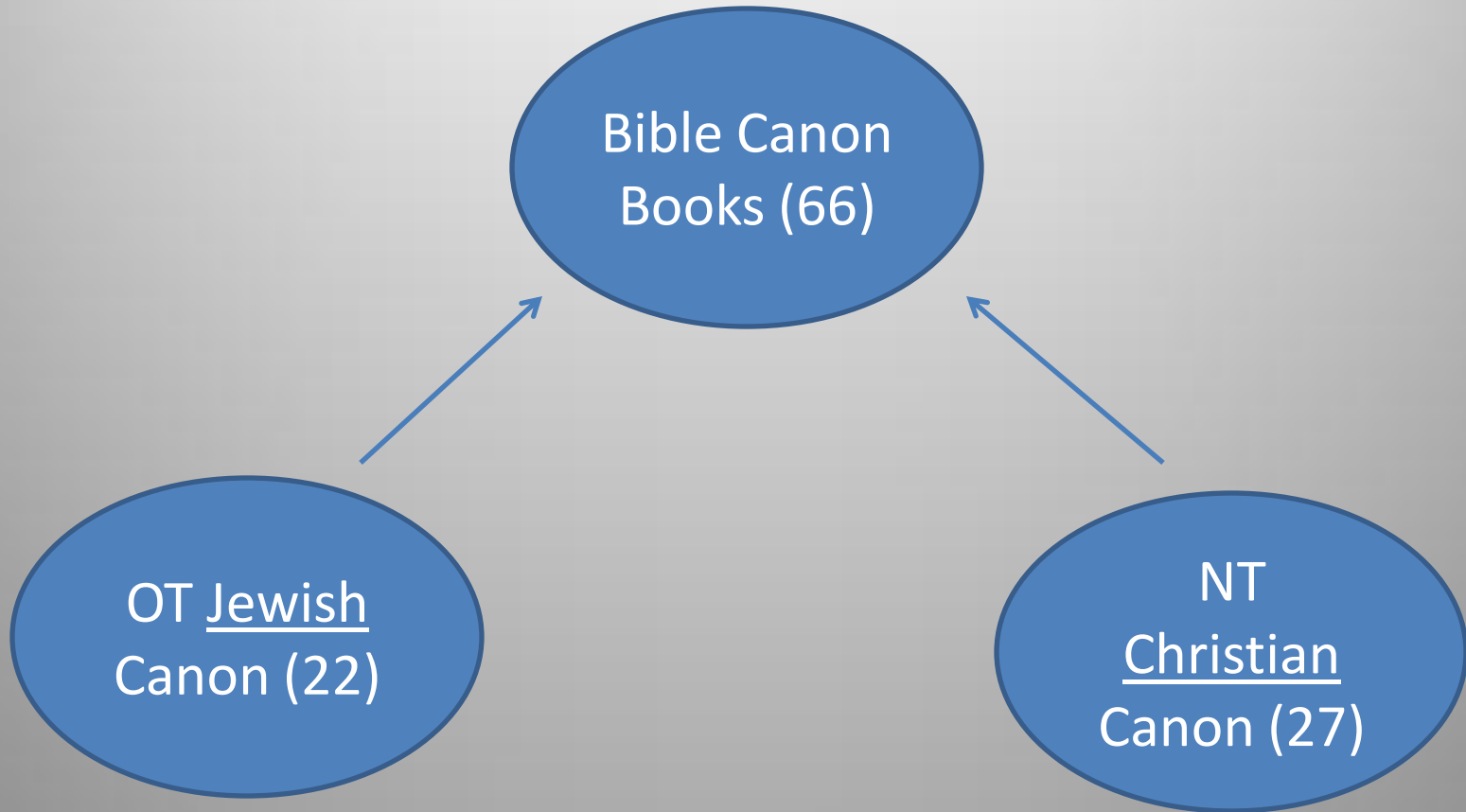
- God did not inspire – men wrote the Bible
- The writer is inspired, not the text – any person can be inspired, even today
- Partial inspiration - in faith/spiritual things, not in history and science
- Conceptual inspiration – only concepts or ideas are inspired, not the actual words
- Divine dictation – Denies human element, God dictated the entire text

3. Canonization

- Canon – A set of books ACCEPTED as scripture
- God determines it (Ps 118: 89) and man discovers it (Ps 118:94)
- Word Canon means “a straight rule, a standard”
- A straight line needs 2 points – starting point and ending point



Canonization



Books in Jewish Canon (22)

Books of Moses (5)	Prophetical Books (13)	Hymns (4)
1. Genesis	1. Joshua	1. Psalms
2. Exodus	2. Judges & Ruth	2. Proverbs
3. Leviticus	3. Two Books of Samuel	3. Ecclesiastics
4. Numbers	4. Two Books of Kings	4. Song of Solomon
5. Deuteronomy	5. Two Books of Chronicles	
	6. Ezra & Nehemiah	
	7. Esther	
	8. Isaiah	
	9. Jeremiah & Lamentations	
	10. Ezekiel	
	11. Daniel	
	12. Twelve Minor Prophets	
	13. Job	

Jewish Canon

- Genesis to Malachi – BC 1445 – BC 430
- Ezra 7:6 and 10 – Ezra, the skilful scribe, was the key person who gathered all the OT books
- Later books quote older books
 - Books of Moses are quoted in all of OT
 - Events in Joshua are quoted in Judges
 - Chronicles quotes from Genesis to Ruth
 - Nehemiah refers to Israel history from Genesis to Ezra
 - 1 Kings refers to Solomon's proverbs and songs
 - Daniel cites Jeremiah
 - Jonah recites from Psalms
 - Ezekiel refers to both Job and Daniel.

Apocryphal Books (BC 400 – AD 1)

1. 1 Esdras
2. 2 Esdras
3. Additions to Esther
4. 1 Macabees
5. 2 Macabees
6. Tobias
7. Judith
8. Wisdom
9. Sirach
10. Baruch
11. Epistle of Jeremiah
12. Susanna
13. Prayer of Azariah
14. Prayer of Manasseh
15. Bel and the Dragon
16. Laodiceans

- These books were written after Malachi and none of them are inspired by God.
- Even though they are not inspired to be scripture, they have some value as history of the Israel after Malachi
- Josephus, Jewish historian in AD 90 refers to the apocryphal books as not having been esteemed to have same authority as the 39 books of the OT
- Since the Jewish people themselves rejected the scriptural authority of the apocrypha, we do not see these books in our Bible today.

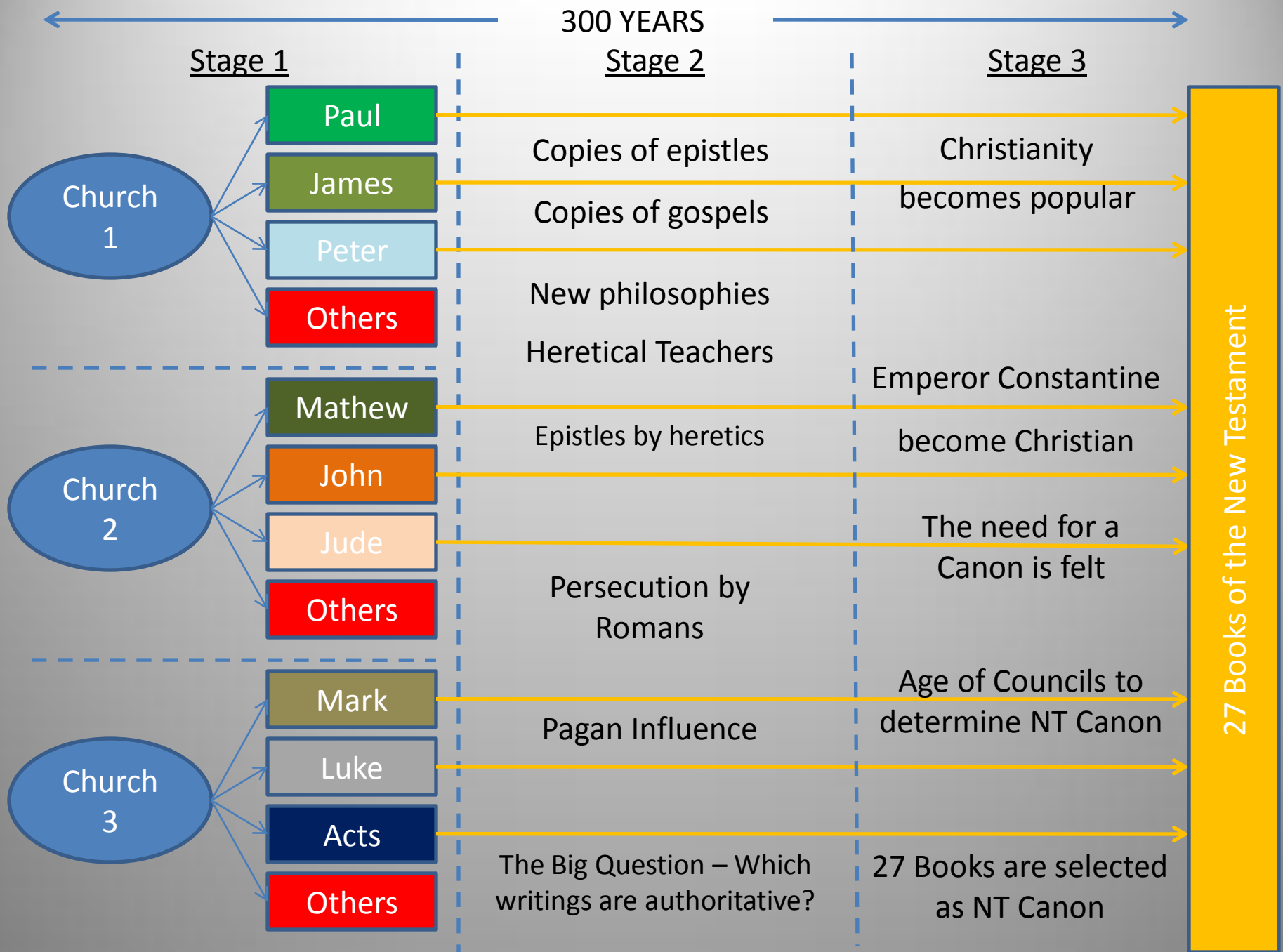
Testimony of Lord Jesus Christ

Luke 24: 44, 45:

- He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.
- Our Lord Himself confirmed what He regarded as scripture - Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms – NOT THE APOCRYPHA

NT Canon – Stage 1

- Numerous writings and epistles were produced – Luke 1:1
- The apostles and their disciples were alive as the authority for what constituted the Word of God
- All books in the present NT Canon were completed before the death of Apostle John (AD ??)
- But different churches had single books, or a small collection of books – each location had its own library
- Due to vast distances and slow process of making copies, not all churches had ALL the NT books.
- A dire need to have one canon did not exist. Christianity vs. Paganism, cults and heretical teachers were absent.
- In addition, the primary scripture used by the early church was the OT.
- There was a recognition that some scrolls were scripture, and some were just inspirational writings



Apostle Peter (AD 1 – AD 64)

- 2 Pet 3:14, 15 refers to “all Paul’s epistles”:

1. Romans
2. I Corinthians
3. II Corinthians
4. Galatians
5. Ephesians
6. Philippians
7. Colossians
10. I Thessalonians
11. II Thessalonians
12. I Timothy
13. II Timothy
14. Titus
15. Philemon

Polycarp (AD 70 – AD 150)

1. Gospel according to Matthew
2. Gospel according to Mark
3. Gospel according to Luke
4. Acts
5. I Corinthians
6. II Corinthians
7. Galatians
8. Ephesians
9. Philippians
10. Thessalonians
11. II Thessalonians
12. I Timothy
13. II Timothy
14. Hebrews
15. I Peter
16. I John
17. III John
18. Revelation

All these NT books were quoted as scripture by Polycarp in his writings.

Tertullian of Carthage (AD 155 – AD 220)

1. Gospel according to Matthew
2. Gospel according to Mark
3. Gospel according to Luke
4. Gospel of John
5. Acts
6. Romans
7. I Corinthians
8. II Corinthians
9. Galatians
10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. I Thessalonians
14. II Thessalonians
15. I Timothy
16. II Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. I Peter
21. I John
22. III John
23. Jude
24. Revelation

All these NT books were quoted as scripture by Tertullian in his writings.

Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 293 – AD 373)

1. Gospel according to Matthew
2. Gospel according to Mark
3. Gospel according to Luke
4. Gospel of John
5. Acts
6. Romans
7. I Corinthians
8. II Corinthians
9. Galatians
10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. I Thessalonians
14. II Thessalonians
15. I Timothy
16. II Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. James
21. I Peter
22. II Peter
23. I John
24. II John
25. III John
26. Jude
27. Revelation

Council of Carthage AD 397

- Officially recognized all 27 books as scripture
- Their rules for the NT Canon
 - Books written by the apostles of Christ
 - John, Peter, Paul, Mathew
 - Books written by close associates of the apostles
 - Mark, Luke, James, Jude
 - Books recognized by majority of believers as inspired, author unknown
 - Book of Hebrews

Some Rejected Books (NT Apocrypha)

- Letter of Clement – AD 96
- Letter of Barnabas - AD 120
- Letter of the Apostles – AD 160
- 3rd Corinthians – AD 160
- Acts of John – AD 150
- Acts of Paul – AD 160
- Letter to the Laodiceans – AD 200
- Revelation of Peter – AD 200
- Revelation of Thomas – AD 200
- Revelation of Stephen – AD 400
- Revelation of Paul – AD 475

There are 100s of such writings that were created by non-apostles and were rejected by the church from being a part of the NT Canon.

Why were they rejected?

- Almost all of them were written 100 years or more AFTER the NT books
- Many of them are proved to be forgeries written in the name of some apostles
- Many of them teach heresies – Gnosticism and Paganism – not inspired Word of God
- Many of them contradict the scriptural truths found in the canonical books
- Some are just inspirational tales and commentaries based on the 27 canonical books
- Many of these books can be read online – you can see the difference between scripture and non-scripture.

Summary - Bible Canon

- OT Canon – 1000 years and many authors
- NT Canon – 300 years and 9 authors
- A slow process of recognizing the authority of each book that belongs in the Bible
- Not decided by one person or one church, but by the faithful believers in over 1000 years
- Books were added to the canon and never removed later
- The Holy Spirit of God guided the church to recognize which books are inspired

4. Transmission

- The process by which the original books of the Bible were copied by hand
- Copies made by scribes, who sometimes made copy errors.
- Sometimes scribes added some lines to clarify the original text
- We do not have the originals any more, but we have copies of the original from AD 200
- Using a scientific process called Textual Criticism of numerous copies, researchers have concluded that 99.5% of present day text exactly matches the original text.

Jewish Scribes

- Use only clean animal skins
- The ink must be black, and of a special recipe
- They must verbalize each word aloud while they were writing.
- The letters, words, and paragraphs had to be counted, and the document became invalid if the total did not match the original.
- There must be a review within thirty days, and if as many as three pages required corrections, the entire manuscript had to be redone.

Transmission Problems

- Despite best efforts, still minor copy errors did creep into the copies – mainly dates, numbers, ages, etc
- This is mainly because of the huge volume of copies that scribes have created over 1000s of years.
- Some scribes added some information where they felt it was needed (Eph 1:1 “in Ephesus”)

5. Translation

- Translation is the process of beginning with something (written or oral) in one language (the source of language) and expressing it in another language (the receptor language)
- The books of the Bible were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek
- Entire Bible translated into 314 languages
- NT translated into 715 languages
- Gospel of Mark and John translated into 890 languages

Problems with Translation

- Subjective – depends on the person who is doing the translation
- Not all words may have an exact match from an old language to a new language
- Word for word translation – KJV, NASB
- Thought for thought translation – NIV
- Paraphrase translation – NLT, CEV, etc
- Original texts are inspired, translations are not inspired

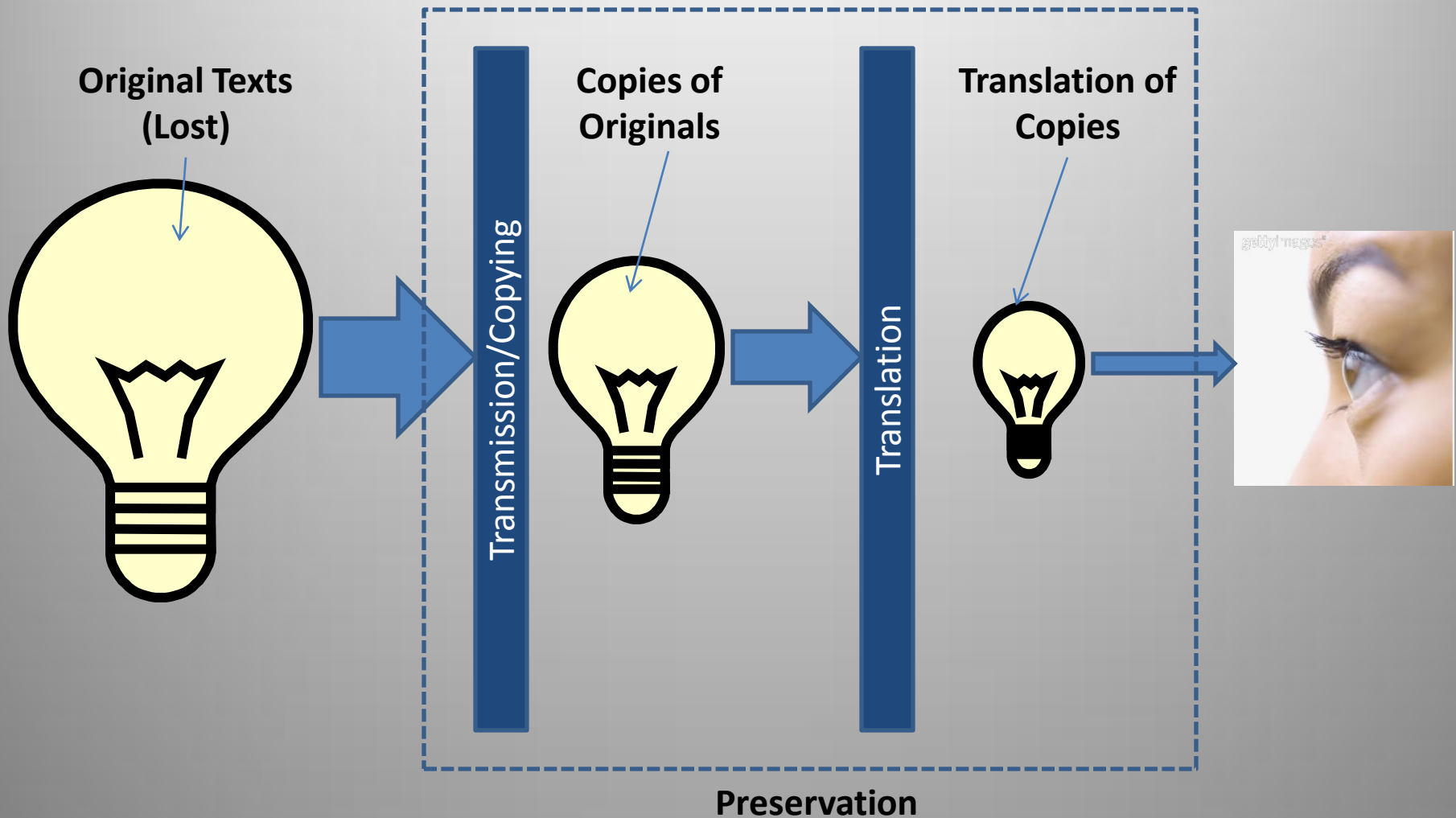
Bible Translations in English

- William Tindale (1492-1536)
- Miles Coverdale (1488-1569)
- Richard Taverner (1505-1575)
- The Great Bible (1539)
- The Geneva Bible (1560)
- The Bishop's Bible (1568)
- The Rheims-Douai Version (1609-10)
- King James ("Authorized") Version (1611)

6. Preservation

- Transmission – copy errors, editing errors
- Translation – word for word errors
- Preservation – Despite the errors that can come in during transmission and translation, God has preserved the original words and the message for 1000s of years till today.
- Other than the Bible, no other book has endured the similar attacks while still remaining the same – testify of God's power.

Transmission, Translation and Preservation



Textual Criticism

Original - _____

- Copy 1 - Jesus Christ is the Savior of the orld
- Copy 2 - Jesus Christ the Savior of the world
- Copy 3 – Christ Jesus is the Savior of the world
- Copy 4 - Jesus Christ is Savior of the world
- Copy 5 - Jesus Christ is the avior of the world
- Copy 6 - Jesus Christ is the Savior of world
- Copy 7 - Jesus hrist is the Savior of the world

There are 24,000 manuscript copies of the NT texts and 100s of OT texts available today.

Preservation

- A. Z. Conrad said about the Bible - "Century follows century, there it stands. Empires rise and fall and are forgotten, there it stands. Dynasty succeeds dynasty, there it stands. Kings are crowned and uncrowned, there it stands. Emperors decree its extermination, there it stands. Despised and torn to pieces, there it stands. Storms of hate swirl about it, atheists rail against it, agnostics smile cynically, profane perilous punsters caricature it, unbelief abandons it, higher critics deny its claim to inspiration, there it stands. The anvil that broke a million hammers, there it stands. The flames are kindled about it, the arrows of hate are discharged against it, radicalism rants and raves about it, fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily, the tooth of time gnaws against it but dents it not. Infidels predict its abandonment, there it stands. Modernists try to explain it away, there it stands. Devotees of folly denounce it, there it stands."

How to Read and Study the Bible

- To get the basic information you can just read a translation like the NIV or NLT
- To study the Bible using word study you need to read the KJV or NASB
- To fully understand the meaning of a word or passage you must read the Bible in original Hebrew or Greek
- A lot of tools to study original words are available online.

Conclusion

- The Bible is a miracle of God in our hands
- In it we can partake of the spiritual life of God
- A lot of sacrifice, study, prayer and faith has gone into the selection of the books
- Therefore read this book daily
- Don't just read – we need to study each word. Use Greek and Hebrew word to learn the meaning.
- Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of mouth of God

QUIZ!!

True or False

Except for dates and ages, everything else in the original Bible text is accurate and inspired by God.

- FALSE!! –
 - Everything in the original texts of the Bible is accurate and inspired by God, including dates and ages
 - Due copying/translation very minor errors are found occasionally in copies we have today

True or False

The Gospel of John is inspired because this gospel is found in the NT canon

- FALSE!! – Gospel of John is not inspired because it is in the canon. It is in the canon, because God inspired it
- Example
 - False – Diamonds are precious because it is used to make wedding rings.
 - True – Diamonds are used to make wedding rings because it is precious.

True or False

A lost letter written by Paul to the church in Antioch is unearthed by archeologists. Now we should add this letter as a new epistle to the Bible canon.

- False!! – There are no more books that can be added to the Bible. The Bible canon is closed.
 - Jude 3 – “once for all” delivered faith
 - 2 Pet 1:3 – He has given “all things” ...
 - Rev 22:18,19 – no more books after Revelation
 - “If it is new, then its not true, if its true then its not new.”

True or False

The emergence of false teachers and heresies in AD 150 helped promote the need for a Canon .

- True!!
 - False teachers began flooding the church with their writings and forgeries
 - This led the public to demand an authoritative canon of inspired books
 - This led to Councils to establish the Canon

True or False

Due to copy/translation errors we cannot trust the Bible we have with us today.

- False!!
 - God has miraculously preserved very accurate copies of the original texts
 - Textual criticism shows that 99.5% of the words are exact match with original

True or False

To study the usage and meaning of the Greek word 'agape', the NLT (New Living Translation) will suffice.

- False!!
 - To do word study you need a word-for-word translation
 - For example – the KJV or NASB

The End