

Welcome to the
Connecting Class

Connecting with God

Connecting with His Church

Connecting with His World

Through

Exposition of light in Scripture

Experience of life in community

Expression of love in ministry

apttoteach.org

The John Rylands Fragment

117-138 C.E.

John 18:31-33

**The earliest
known copy of
any portion of
the New
Testament**



Some historical critics believe the earliest Christians were not “orthodox.”

- 1. The first Christians followed Jesus as a human prophet (not God)**
- 2. giving attention to his ethical teaching and radical social ideas (not his death and resurrection).**

Hypothetical “Q”

**Material common to Matt.
& Lk. but not in Mk.**

The Gospel of Thomas

**A 2nd Cent. Gnostic
document**

- 3. Much later, following Paul’s lead, the church made Jesus divine with an emphasis on his death and resurrection.**

“The Jesus Seminar”

What do historical critics know about Jesus?

- ✓ **If a statement has a parallel outside the Gospels it could not be of Jesus.** It was imported as past Jewish culture.
- ✓ **If a statement seems to support a unique Christian doctrine it could not be of Jesus.** It was propaganda created by the early church.
- ✓ **If a statement is supernatural it could not be true.** Miracles were the imagination of the early church in its desire to create a Divine Christ figure.
- ✓ **If a statement is found in only one source or is inconsistent with the culture it could not be of Jesus.**

Jesus' Seminar

"The authentic words of Jesus"

"turn the other **cheek**" (Matt.5:39; Lk.6:29)

"**congratulations, you poor**" (Lk.6:20)

"**love your enemies**" (Lk.6:27; Matt.5:44)

Good Samaritan (Lk.10:30-35)

Shrewd Manager (Lk.16:1-8)

Vineyard Laborers (Matt.20:1-15)

"**Pay to the emperor what belongs to the emperor and God what belongs to God**" (Matt.22:21; Mk.12:17; Lk.20:25)

The Da Vinci Code

- ✓ The head of the **Priory of Sion** (a group protecting the **Holy Grail**) is killed but leaves symbolic clues behind. A Harvard Prof. Leads an investigation.
- ✓ **Opus Dei** of the Catholic church is repressing the secret (Grail = **Mary**, mother of Jesus' daughter) revealed in forbidden gospels and the feminine principle of the early church.
- ✓ **Constantine** is used by the church to “seal” the secret by selecting the 4 gospels from some 80 others and making Jesus divine.
- ✓ **Leonardo Da Vinci** (former head of Priory of Sion) gave hints of the truth in his paintings.

The Da Vinci Code

Where is it inaccurate?

- ✓ **The role of Constantine in shaping Christianity is largely fictitious.**
- ✓ **The orthodox Church dates back to the 1st. Century not the 4th.**
- ✓ **Gnostic gospels were late and had little impact on Christianity.**
- ✓ **Mary as the bride of Jesus is without any historical merit.**

What are some of the most common questions raised with respect to the origin of the Bible?

- ✓ *Why is the Catholic Bible different from the Protestant Bible?*
- ✓ *Why is the King James Version different from other versions?*
- ✓ *Why were some books excluded from the Bible?*

Hebrew Bible

Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Prophets

Joshua to Malachi

Writings

Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ruth
Song of Solomon
Ecclesiastes
Lamentations
Esther
Daniel
Ezra
Nehemiah
I Chronicles
II Chronicles

Protestant O.T.

Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua to Esther

Wisdom

Job to Song of Solomon

Major Prophets

Isaiah to Daniel

Minor Prophets

Hosea to Malachi

Catholic O.T.

Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua to Esther

Tobias
Judith

Wisdom

Job to Song of Solomon
Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus

Major Prophets

Isaiah to Daniel

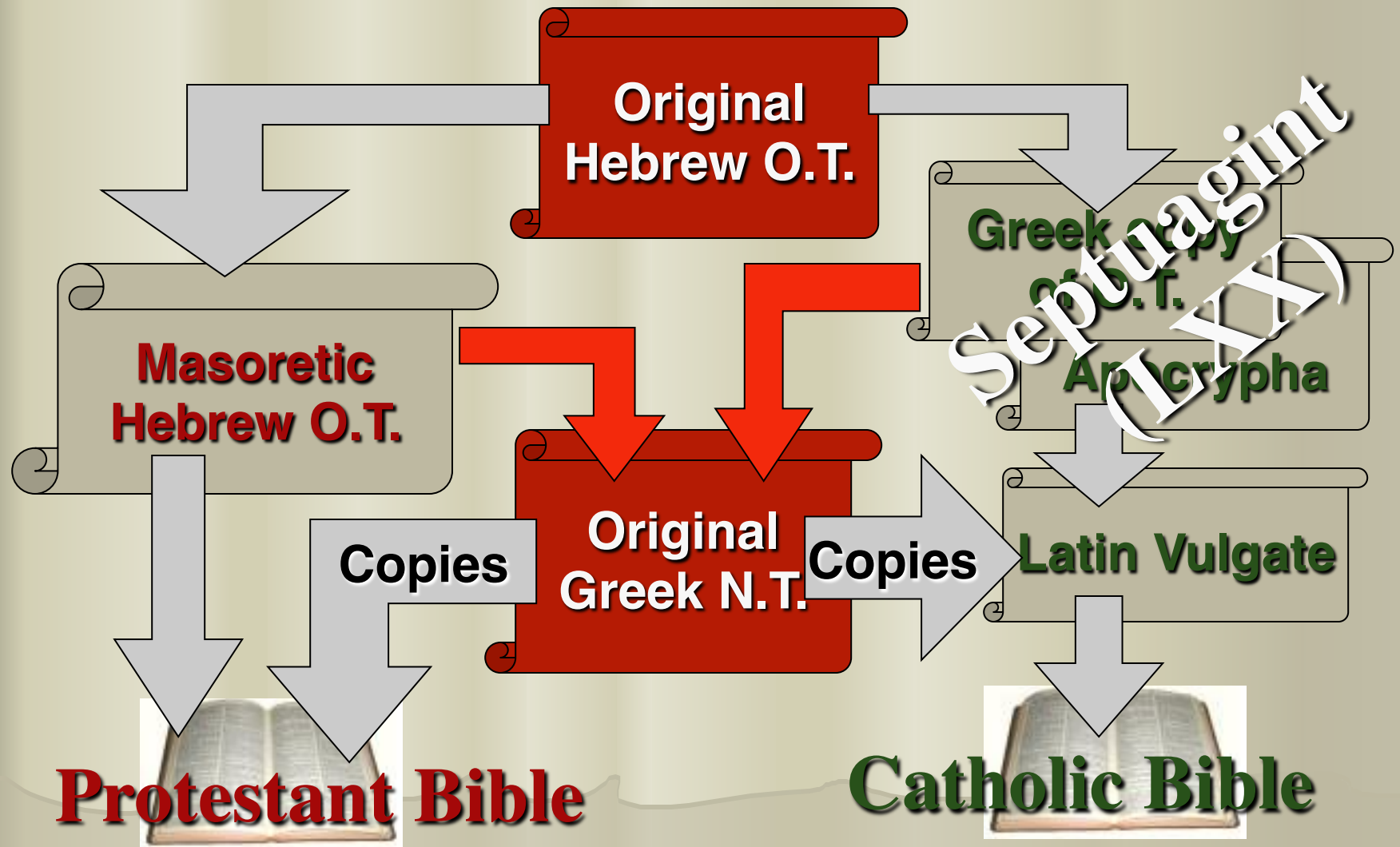
Baruch

Minor Prophets

Hosea to Malachi

I & II Machabees

Why is the Protestant Bible different than the Catholic Bible?



The Catholic bias in the Latin Vulgate

Matthew 4:17 “**do penance** (repent) for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Luke 1:28 “Hail, **full of grace** (favored one)! The Lord is with you.”

Ephesians 5:31-32 “this **sacrament** (mystery) is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

Why does the King James differ from other Versions of the Bible?

Three Greek manuscript traditions

Southern
Egypt

Western
Italy

Eastern
Asia



**Most modern
Translations**

The oldest MSS

King James

**The largest number of
MSS but from the
10th - 12th cent. only**

The King James Version

Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the best 4th cent. MSS but only in 5th cent. documents.

John 7:53-8:11 does not appear in the best MSS of John but probably does represent an accurate oral tradition.

I John 5:7 in the King James Version includes material that has no MSS authority earlier than the 16th Cent. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

(Note also Jn.1:18, I Tim.2:7, Acts 8:37, Mk.9:44,46, 11:26)

Transmission of the New Testament

Oral tradition

Original manuscripts

**Quotations by early
Church Fathers**

**Ancient Versions
in other languages**

**Copies of original
manuscripts**

**Reconstruction of
the original Greek text**



The Canon - Key facts



- ✓ Most books were **accepted when written**.
- ✓ The first list of books was a response to the Gnostic heretic **Marcion**. (140 CE)
- ✓ The **Council of Nicea** in 325 CE and the work of **Eusebius**.
- ✓ The present list by **Athanasius** (367 CE)
- ✓ The final official canon at **Council of Carthage** (397 CE)

What was the criteria by which a N.T. book was recognized as inspired and therefore authoritative?

- ✓ **Ancient** - Did the text convey the teaching of Jesus?
- ✓ **Apostolic** - Did the text come from a man of God?
- ✓ **Orthodox** - Was the teaching in the text orthodox?
- ✓ **Effect** - Did the text have power?
- ✓ **Catholic** - Did the text receive broad acceptance in the early church?

Centers of early Christianity.



Which books were in dispute and why?

HEBREWS - uncertainty of authorship

JAMES - conflict with Galatians & Romans

II PETER - different in style from I Peter.

II & III JOHN - private nature and limited circulation.

JUDE - it quotes from Enoch 1:9 (vs.14-15).

REVELATION - its teaching of the millennium.

Why were some books excluded?

- ✓ **By the 9th century there were about 280 such books identified.**
- ✓ **They lacked apostolic or prophetic authorship.**
- ✓ **They did not claim to be the Word of God.**
- ✓ **They contain unbiblical concepts such as prayer for the dead in II Macc.12:45-46.**
- ✓ **They had some serious historical inaccuracies.**

Some popular excluded books?

The Gospel of Thomas (140C.E.?) -
(collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus)
It has a strong Gnostic flavor and was written
to justify a sect. Didymus Judas Thomas (the
twin) may have been Jesus' half brother (Mk.
6:3).

Second epistle of Clement - (placed
after Revelation)

Didache (2nd century Christian theology)

Some conclusions

- 1. The historical critical conclusions are based on many assumptions that can and should be challenged.**
- 2. The N.T. canon was not a simple process but the bulk of the material was accepted early.**
- 3. Identifying the original text of the N.T. is a complex process but we can be confident that we have a good text.**





Luke 4.18-19 (LXX)

“to proclaim release to the
captives and recovering of sight to
the blind”

Isaiah 61:1-2 (MT)

“to proclaim liberty to the
captives, and the opening of the
prison to those who are bound”

A classic example of conflicting accounts in the Gospels.

Matt. 28:1-4

Before entering the tomb

“for **the angel** of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow...”

Mark 16:2-5

After entering the tomb

“On entering the tomb they saw **a young man in a white robe** seated at the right-hand side.”

Luke 24:1-4

“As they stood there not knowing what to think, **two men in brilliant clothes** suddenly appeared at their side...”

1. The earthquake & removal of stone occurs before dawn.
2. A group of four women come early to the tomb and are amazed to see that the stone has been rolled away. They are told to go tell the 12 (Matt.28:1-7).
3. Mary rushes off to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus has been stolen (Jn.20:2).
4. The other women stay in the garden & enter the tomb, are met by two angels, & are told again to carry word of the resurrection to the disciples.

The problem of “a young man” of Mark 16:5, “two men” of Lk.24:4, is one of the “ordinary” synoptic divergences of detail.

The King James Version

Luke 2:14 (KJV) “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, **good will toward men.**”

Luke 2:14 (NRSV) “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace **among those whom he favors.**”

The difference is one letter in the Greek text.

What was the criteria by which an O.T. book was recognized as inspired and therefore authoritative?

- 1. The text claimed to be the work of a Prophet of God and therefore inspired.**
- 2. The Jewish community recognized select texts as authoritative.**
- 3. Jesus respected the Jewish Canon.**

Forces that led to the formation of the Canon.

- ✓ **The existence of the O.T. canon.**
- ✓ **The intrinsic value of the message that the documents carried.**
- ✓ **Needs for public worship and reading.**
- ✓ **Controversial documents and teachings.**
- ✓ **Persecution.**

Hindrances to the speedy formation of the Canon.

- ✓ **Poor communication.**
- ✓ **A preference for oral testimony.**
- ✓ **The presence of the Apostles.**
- ✓ **Expectation of Christ's early return.**
- ✓ **A lack of agreement on some documents.**

The universally accepted books of the N.T.

- ✓ In the **2nd cent.** church leaders cited the Gospels and epistles alongside Hebrew Scriptures when trying to settle internal disputes.
- ✓ **20 of the present 27** were so accepted quite early (within a 100 years after they were written).
- ✓ Our present New Testament canon was fixed in principle **by 150AD.**

Author / Book	Date written	Earliest copies	Time gap	No. of copies	Percent accuracy
Hindu, <i>Mahabharata</i>	13 th cent.B.C.				90
Homer, <i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.			643	95
Herodotus, <i>History</i>	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,350 yrs.	8	?
Thucydides, <i>History</i>	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs.	8	?
Plato	400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs.	7	?
Demosthenes	300 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400 yrs.	200	?
Caesar, <i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,000 yrs.	10	?
Livy, <i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C. – A.D. 17	4 th cent. (mostly 10 th cent.)	400 yrs. 1,000 yrs.	19 copies	?
Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1,000 yrs.	20	?
Pliny Secundus, <i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750 yrs.	7	?
<i>New Testament</i>	A.D. 50-100	A.D. 114 (fragments)	50 yrs.		
		A.D. 200 (books)	100 yrs.		
		A.D. 250 (most of N.T.)	150 yrs.		
		A.D. 325 (complete N.T.)	225 yrs.	5,366	99







