



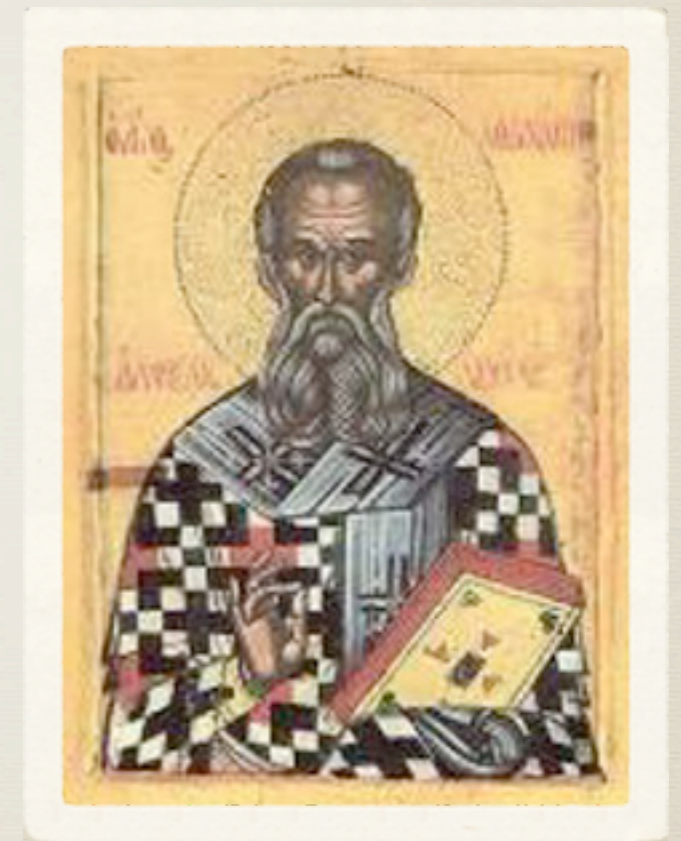
Christ Event: Climax of Creation

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself

2 Cor 5:19

Christ Event

- * ...the more ancient and venerable things (Genesis) were **sketches of the mysteries** recently revealed to us and that **they foreshadowed** the Truth.
- * Then the **Truth** itself **arrived** (Christ), and the whole corpus of the Holy Scripture was **perfected** without a shadow.



St Anastasius of Sinai,
7th century





God Prepares the Way



- * Old Testament - Prophets
- * Hellenic culture - Alexander the Great - language
- * Roman empire - roads and civil order

Christ Event

- * Whole process of Creation leads up to climax, the perfection of mankind in the **Christ event**.
- * First the development of the cosmos and all forms of matter and organic life.
- * Then man is created and finally the event which provides for His perfection.
- * Central event of Christian faith & **climax of Creation**.



Christ Event

- * *In the beginning was the **Logos**, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* (John 1:1-5)
- * Nativity Hymn Proclaims:
*"**Today Christ is born.** God has come down to earth, and man has gone up to heaven."*



Incarnation of God



- * World was prepared for this event as part of **grand plan** of creation.

*But when the **fullness of the time** came, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law...* (Galatians 4:4)

- * Why is this event so significant?
 - * Indescribable event: infinite creator of all, united with Man, takes on flesh from a virgin woman.
 - * God **manifests the divine image** given man, showing **unity of Creation and God** through mankind.

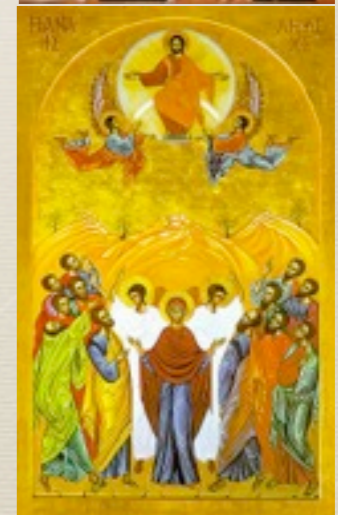
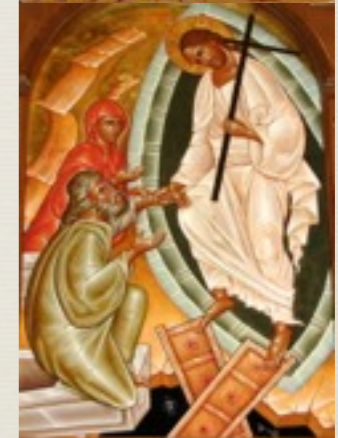
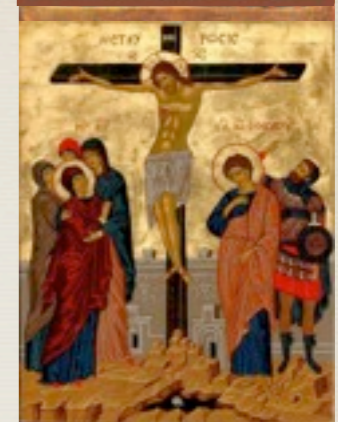
Incarnation of God



- * Can science explain this event?
 - * Science can only deal with matters of space and time.
 - * not subject to natural laws.
 - * beyond all scientific inquiry.
- * Is **historical event** - 2000 years ago and in a specific place - Palestine

Christ Event

- * Following Incarnation what did He do?
 - * Taught, prepared His disciples, unjustly killed, resurrected, ascended to heaven to sit at right hand of Father.
- * Why?
 - * To **lead us**, show us the way for healing, and same victory over death.
 - * Become **one** with Him, to be glorified - **Theosis**. For our **salvation - eternal life**.



Christ Event

- * How is this event perpetuated?
 - * Through **Holy Spirit** Christ sent on Pentecost ten days after His Ascension.
- * His presence maintained through the work of His **Church**
 - * In Liturgies, Holy Eucharist, its Members led through purification and illumination to glorification or union with Christ.
- * **No natural cause** can be attributed to its perpetuation other than communion of creature man with his Creator.
- * Independent of natural laws.



Christ Event

- * Where do we find **ultimate truth**?
In forms of ancient Philosophers, in mathematical formulas of scientists on in the Christ Event recorded in Scripture?
- * Participation in Christ is participation in **Reality** greater than limited reality of physical world.
- * Through constant participation in this event we form **communion** with God that sustains our existence into **eternity**.



St Irenaeus (2nd Century)



- * *Through the creation itself the Word reveals the Creator... Similarly through the law and the prophets the Word proclaimed both Himself and the Father....*
- * *Finally through the **Word made visible and palpable**, the **Father was revealed**.*
- * *The creation was granted to mankind
1st to provide the **knowledge** that there was a creator and
2nd **after the incarnation to provide the meaning of creation as a precondition for the salvation history.***

Christ Event

- * How did **Incarnation** of Christ and His **Resurrection** change human situation?
- * We were imprisoned by death and suffering.
- * Through His Love and Sacrifice, Lifted mankind out of a law of decay and corruption and death.
- * Gave a path for **renewal** and entering His kingdom
- beyond all visible elements of the creation



Historical Evidence?

- * Is it possible that this Christ Event only a myth?
 - * No! **Historical** fact.
Scientifically documented in ancient documents including hundreds of eyewitnesses.
- * Segments of John from **29 years** after original.
Thousands of complete manuscripts.
- * Also Early Roman and Jewish sources.
- * Historically its a proven fact.

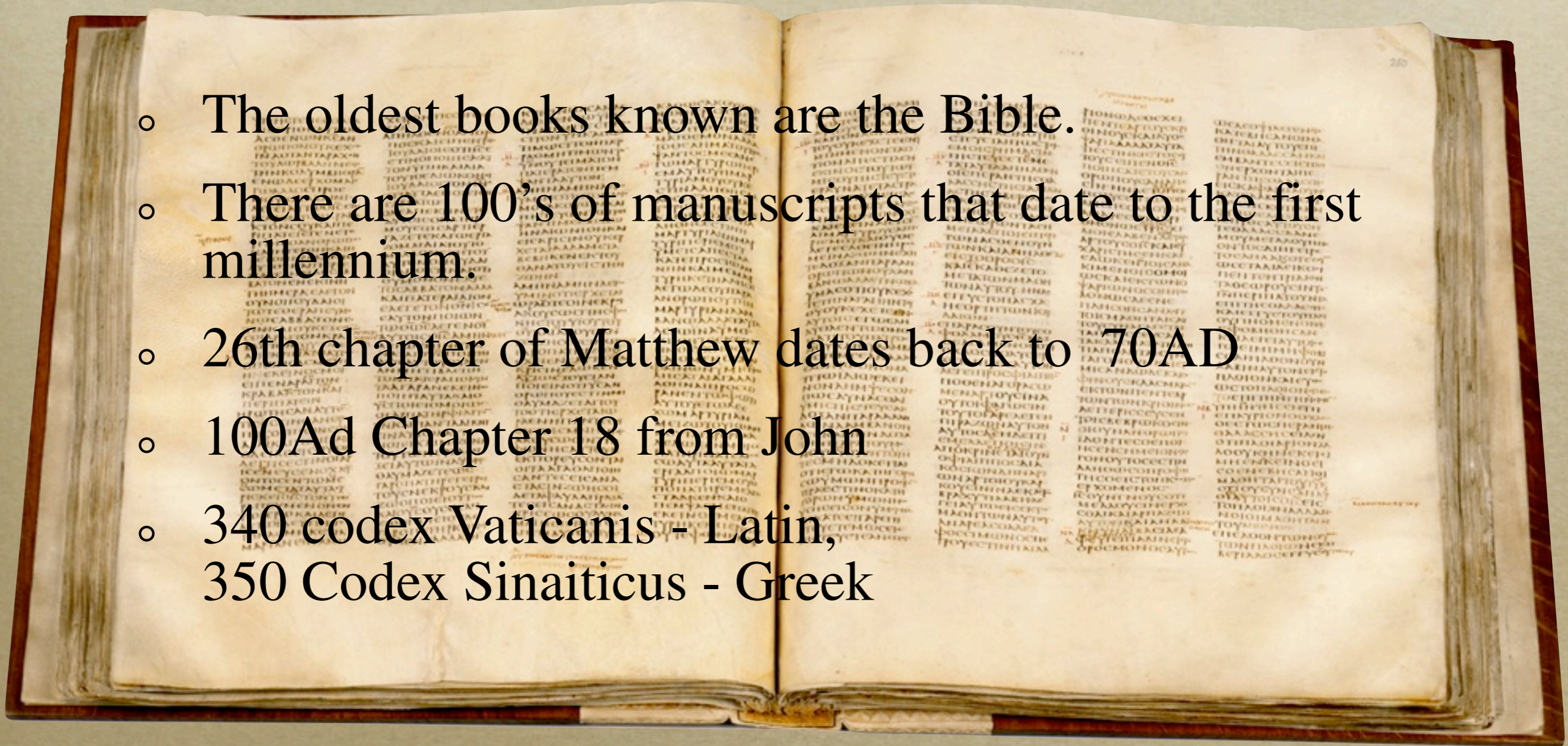


Biblical Manuscripts

- Bible is the most copied book in antiquity
- 5,700 complete or fragmented Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin manuscripts and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages
- 60000 Greek manuscripts of which written by 2100 authors. 1500 of these were Christian authors.
- Copies of the Bible exist in 380 libraries.
- For most ancient works there are only 1 - 10 copies. For Homers Iliad there are only 190 copies.
- 86,000 quotations from the early church fathers and several thousand Lectionaries.

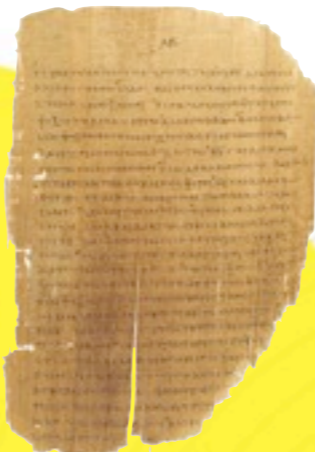
Biblical Manuscripts

- The oldest books known are the Bible.
- There are 100's of manuscripts that date to the first millennium.
- 26th chapter of Matthew dates back to 70AD
- 100Ad Chapter 18 from John
- 340 codex Vaticanis - Latin,
350 Codex Sinaiticus - Greek

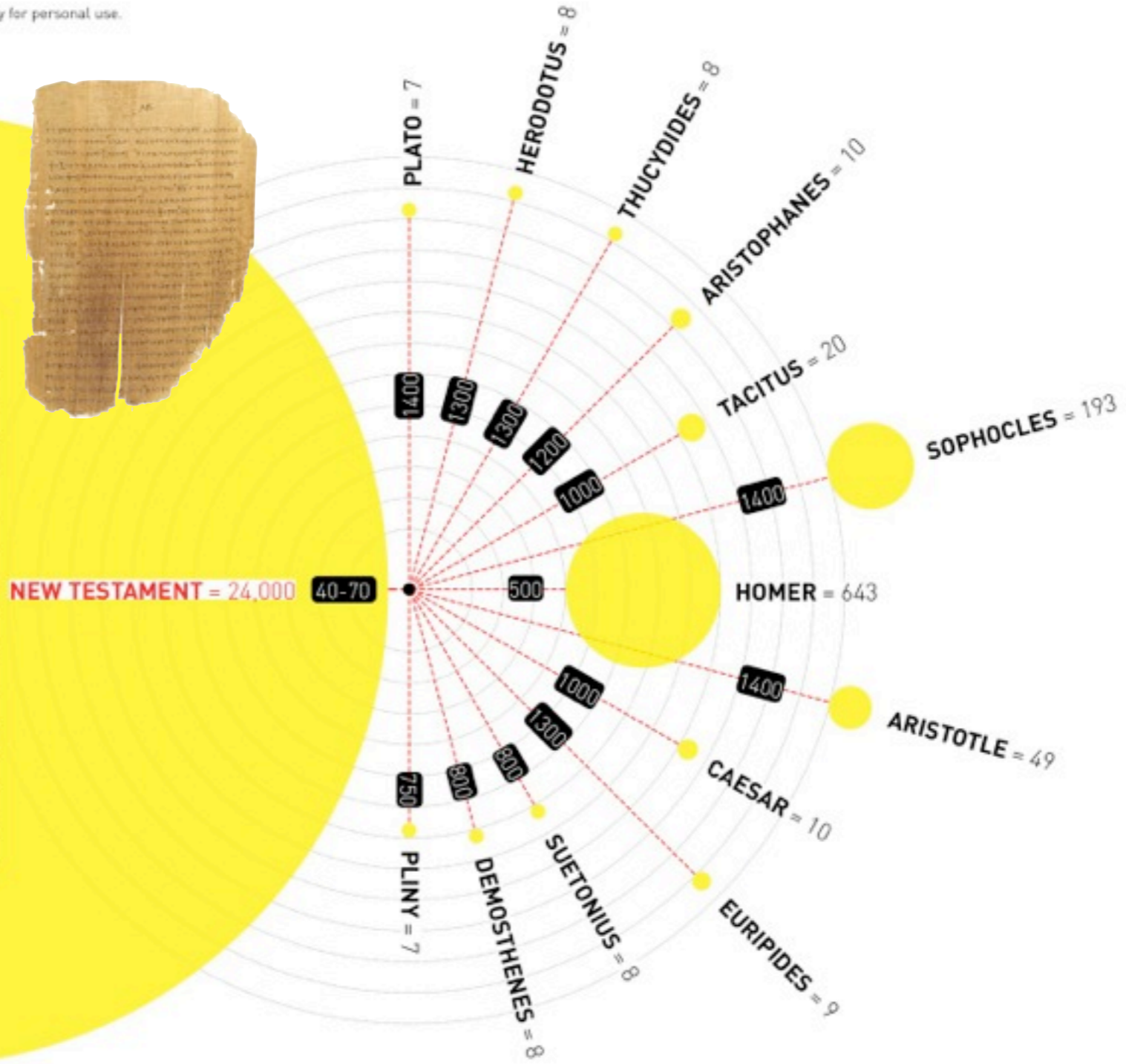


THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT TEXTS

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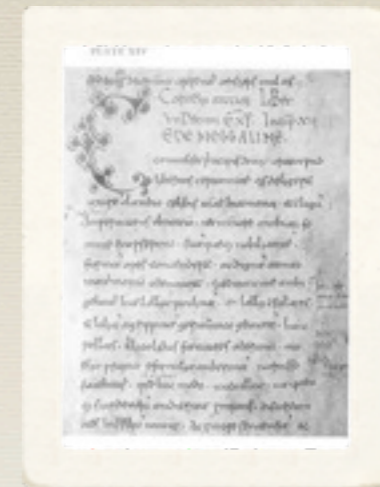


AUTHOR / TEXT	EXISTING COPIES	YEARS BETWEEN ORIGINAL & EARLIEST SURVIVING COPIES
NEW TESTAMENT	24,000	40-70
HOMER / ILIAD	643	500
SOPHOCLES	193	1400
ARISTOTLE	49	1400
TACITUS	20	1000
CAESAR	10	1000
ARISTOPHANES	10	1200
EURIPIDES	9	1300
SUETONIUS	8	800
DEMOSTHENES	8	800
THUCYDIDES	8	1300
HERODOTUS	8	1300
PLINY	7	750
PLATO	7	1200





Tacitus (c. 56–c. 117)



- * A senator and a historian of the **Roman Empire**
- * In his Annals mentions Christianity and "Christus", while describing Nero's persecution of this group following the Great Fire of Rome c. **64**, he wrote:
- * *Nero fastened the **guilt** of starting the blaze and inflicted the most exquisite **tortures** on a class **bated** for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. **Christus**, from whom the name had its origin, **suffered the extreme penalty** during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus...*



Josephus (c. 37–c. 100)



- * **Jew and Roman** citizen wrote *Antiquities of the Jews* in **93 AD**.
- * *About this time came **Jesus**, a wise man, if indeed it is appropriate to call him a man. For he was a performer of **paradoxical feats**, a teacher of people who accept the unusual with pleasure, and he won over many of the Jews and also many Greeks. He was the **Christ**.*
- * *When Pilate, upon the accusation of the first men amongst us, condemned him to be **crucified**, those who had formerly loved him did not cease to follow him, for he **appeared to them on the third day, living again**, as the divine prophets foretold, along with a **myriad of other marvelous things** concerning him.*
- * *And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.*

History

How this truth has been preserved?

History

- * The truth of the Christ event has been preserved **by the Church.**
- * Initially it was the **eyewitnesses** that spread the word. Then their followers through a strict process of ordination.
- * The truths were **written down** & became the NT.
- * Book of Acts gives us an historical account of the development of the Early Church before there was a NT.
- * Orthodox Church has been in existence **continuously** since the time of Pentecost.

History of Early Church

- * Early on many tried to deny or distort this Event. Why?
- * Church Fathers fought to maintain the truth of His incarnation. What did believers do?
 - * Canon of **New Testament** to establish authoritative writings
 - * **Ecumenical Councils** to defend true nature of Christ,
 - * Divinely inspired writings of **Church Fathers**.
 - * **Apostolic succession** of clergy to carry forward the Tradition taught by Apostles.

History of Church

- * In addition to the Marcion & Gnostics, what was one of early heretical ideas about the nature of God that had to be defended against by the Fathers?

Heresy of Arius - 4th C.

- * Presbyter from Alexandria
- * The Son of God **did not** always exist, but was **created** by God and is therefore **distinct from God** the Father. **Christ was a creature.**
- * Belief is grounded in Gospel of John
“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

- * Jesus said the Father was greater because He was a creature, but because He was also a man, He was both human and divine, but one person.
- * He said this to Apostles before Resurrection when they only saw him as a man.
- * Paul says, He was "*... made for a little while lower than the angels . . .*" (Heb. 2:9). Also that Jesus "*emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men . . .*" (Phil. 2:5-8)

Heresy of Arius - 4th C.

- * Arius taught based on erroneous interpretation of Scripture:
 - * Christ united himself with an existing human body taking place of the rational soul.
 - * Christ has no communication with nor direct knowledge of God beyond that of all creatures.
 - * Liable to sin but God gave him grace in advance.
 - * He is God in name only.
- * What is wrong with this teaching?

Heresy of Arius - 4th C.

- * Attacking **doctrine of Holy Trinity** with innovation
- * **Philosophical view** of one who did not know the uncreated nature of God by experience.
- * Like many of us, Arius could not accept anything that could not be explained with **rational thought**.
- * How was this resolved?
 - * Emperor Constantine called a council of the Bishops.
1st Ecumenical Council

1st Ecumenical Council



- * Where: Nicene in **325**
- * Key participants: Athanasius the Great, Nicholas of Myra, Spyridon of Trimythous, Alexander of Alexandria, and Paphnutius of Egypt. Over 300 Bishops were present.
- * Many had marks of Persecutions: Potaman of Herkleia had his right eye plucked out, Paul who had been tortured with red hot irons and crippled in both hands...
- * Many illustrious for ascetic life: Iakovos of Nisibis, Spyidon of Cyprus
- * They were illumined and glorified, now recognized as saints.

- * St. Alexander supported Church Tradition on the equality in the Trinity also with Scripture:
- * *"I and the Father **are one**" (John 10:30) and "That they all may be one; as thou, **Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me"*** (John 17:21)

Saint Spyridon

- * Another defender of Trinity in the Council.
- * Shepherd in youth.
- * Had practice of offering help to anyone in need.
- * Became bishop - Known for his prayers that led to end of long drought + many other miracles
- * Suffered tortures: one eye was cut out and the calf of his left leg severed.



Saint Spyridon



- * Relatively unlearned,
Arians feared his miracles and deeds would influence decisions of more educated fathers.
- * Debated a philosopher defending Arius:
He said to him, knowing he was trapped by the limits of his rational mind,
“In the name of Jesus Christ, listen to me and hear what I have to say to you.”

Saint Spyridon



- * Silent for a moment, he continued,
 - * *"Can't you now realize how true all of this is, O philosopher? Consider this simple and humble example:*
 - * *Created and mortal beings and are not worthy to resemble the One who is divine in being and ineffable. Since we believe more readily through our eyes than through what we merely hear with our ears, I want to prove something to you using this brick.*
 - * *It is composed of three elements which combine to make it one single being and nature.*

Saint Spyridon



- * Made the sign of the holy Cross with his right hand while holding a brick in his left hand, and he said, *"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"* while squeezing the brick. What happened?
- * Flames rose into air, water poured down upon ground and clay alone remained in his hand!
- * In awe, Philosopher accepted Traditional faith, rejoicing that the saint had overcome his own logic. Arian heretics were at a loss.
- * Grace working in him proved more powerful in clarifying matters about divine nature of Christ than rhetorical knowledge of others.



Emperor Constantine



- * Did Constantine interfere?
- * Modeled council after Roman senate where emperor had **no right to vote**.
- * Did **not** dictate to the council.
- * He **affirmed** its conclusions after all the deliberations had concluded.
- * He wrote to the Bishops, "*Whatever is decided in the holy councils of bishops must be attributed to the **divine will**.*"

1st Ecumenical Council

- * Heresy introduced by Arius was condemned.
- * Creed agreed upon at the council affirms what had been taught from the time of the Apostles.

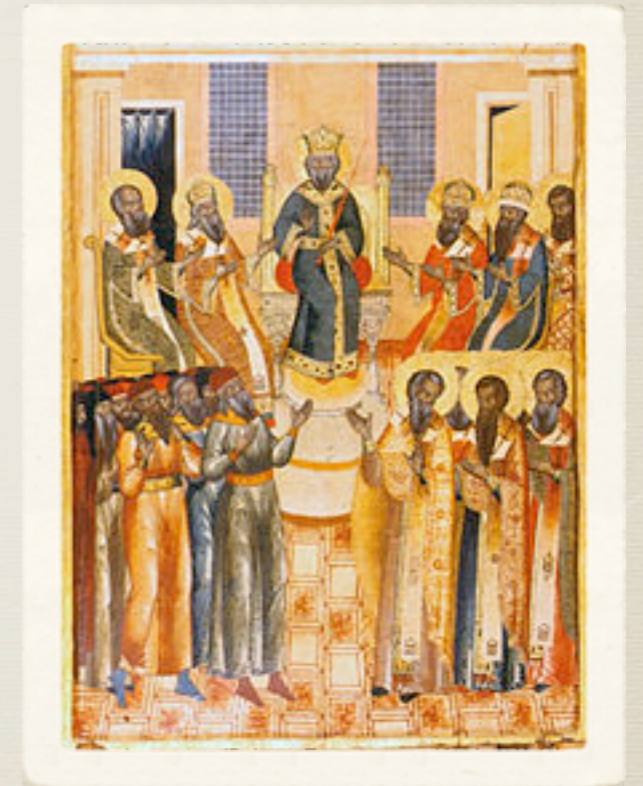


Creed

- * *I believe in **one God**, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*
- * *And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the **only-begotten Son of God**, begotten of the Father **before all ages**;*
- * *Light of Light, **true God of true God**, begotten, not created, of **one essence with the Father** through Whom all things were made.*
- * Reaffirmed fundamental **Apostolic Truth**:
Jesus Christ both **fully Human** and **fully God**.

2nd Ecumenical Council

- * When: **381** in Constantinople
- * Key participants: Gregory of Nanzianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Meletius of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem and about 150 other Bishops
- * Clarified role of **Holy Spirit** according to Apostolic Tradition.



Creed

- * *And in the **Holy Spirit**, the Lord, the Creator of life, Who **proceeds from the Father**, Who **together** with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.*
- * Known as Nicene/Constantinopolitan Creed

3rd Ecumenical Council

- * When: **431** in Ephesus
- * Rome had fallen and West was dominated by barbarian thought.
- * Empire now centered in Constantinople.
- * Key Participants: 160 Bishops including Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius - Archbishop of Constantinople



Nestorian innovation

- * Nestorius objected to title of Mary as "**birth-giver of God**", Theotokos.
- * *"let no man call Mary Theotokos, for Mary was only a human being and it is **impossible** that **God** should be **born of a human being**."*
- * Title was **not new** - part of Tradition of Church. Included in oldest Greek prayer used by Origen, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nanzianzus and others.



Nestorian innovation

- * Why was this significant?
- * Nestorius wanted her called Christokos because he said Jesus was not fully divine but a **man adopted** by the divine Logos.
- * After Mary bore Jesus He then became a vehicle for divinity.
- * Main defender in this case was Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria.



3rd Ecumenical Council

- * Council upheld **Tradition** condemning Nestorius
- * Affirmed Jesus was took on human flesh from Mary and both fully man and fully God.
- * It was a birth of immaculate conception. Mary remained a virgin.
- * The Creed of the last council was **affirmed** and to be used by all Churches.
- * Again Tradition upheld against innovations.



Mary - Theotokos



- * Mary plays a key role in God's plan for creation.
- * How?
 - * Through her comes the Christ - Event
God was united with Mankind. She is the willing vehicle for the crowning event in Creation.
- * We **honor** and **venerate** the Virgin Mary as *"more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious without compare than the Seraphim ..."*
- * Honored in every service, and we ask for her **intercession** before the throne of God.

Mary - Theotokos

- * How did her story begin?
- * Born of **aged parents** who promised to dedicate her to life in the Temple (Nativity: September 21)
- * **At 3** taken to Temple and lived there until about **13 years** of age. (Entry to Temple: Nov 21)
- * Joseph, an widower, chosen to **protect her** so she could remain a virgin.



Annunciation

- * March 25
- * Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would conceive and bear a son, even though she "*knew no man.*"

Luke 1:26-38

- * Gabriel: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. **Blessed art thou among women.***"
- * "*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son of the Most High:** ... and of his kingdom there **shall be no end.***"
- * How did she respond?



Annunciation



- * *"'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?'"*
- * *"And the angel answered... 'The **Holy Spirit** shall come upon thee, and the **power of the Most High** shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the **Son of God**... For with God nothing shall be impossible.'"*
- * *And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; **be it unto me according to thy word.**' And the angel departed from her."*
- * She of free choice became obedient to God, Uniting her will to the will of God.

Mary - Theotokos



- * What is significant about how she used her free will?
 - * Used it the way Lord intended.
In Lord's words she, "*heard the word of God and **kept it.***" (Luke 11:28)
- * Figured greatly in the OT prophecies, the most important of which is that of Isaiah:
"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)
- * Through her personal sinlessness she fulfilled all the hopes and prophecies of Israel.

Theotokos



- * Orthodox know Blessed Virgin lived a sinless life but was born in ancestral sin just like any other person.
- * Orthodox do not accept Roman Catholic doctrine of Immaculate Conception of Mary.
- * If Mary had not been born in ancestral sin, God could not have assumed sinful human nature from her.
- * St. Gregory Nazianzen wrote, *“For that which He has not assumed He has not healed.”*

Theotokos



* Prayer from service of Compline has beautiful words:

*“thy glorious birth-giving has
united God the Logos to man and
joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things.”*

A Model



- * She is model for us.
- * St. Maximos the Confessor says in reference to Christian goal of becoming Christ-like:
 - * *Just as the Theotokos gave birth to Christ in a bodily way, so we must give birth to Christ in an unbodily or spiritual way.*
 - * *In so doing, we **imitate her practical spiritual life**, including the **purity and humility** by which she formed her **free will** into **perfect obedience to the Will of God**.*

Synergia

- * Mary's obedience is an example of **synergy**, or cooperation, with God. For that reason we sing, *"For through her has salvation come to the whole human race."*
- * Concept of synergy essential to Orthodox understanding of salvation. Why?
- * Synergy is **exercise of free will** to **accept** God's gift of grace. **Not** idea that **human merit** required or applicable for salvation.
- * For Salvation we must use our free will to **cooperate with divine will.**



4th Ecumenical Council

- * when: **451** in Chalcedon at shrine of St. Ephemia.
- * Key Players: 500 Bishops , Cyril of Alexandria
- * Euctyches taught that **before the Incarnation Christ was of two natures but after there was one nature** (monophysites).
the spiritual principle.
- * Pope Leo's tome defending Tradition of two natures of Christ was accepted.
- * Creed was **affirmed again**.
- * Agreed that **Creed** could **never** be **altered**.



5th Ecumenical Council

- * When: **553** in Constantinople
- * Key players: 150 - 170 Bishops
- * Controversy over question: *“How could God die?”*
- * Just as it is legitimate to say God was born, we can also say God died. It is God-made-man of whom this is said. God in His transcendence is subject neither to birth or death. - Kallistos Ware
- * Again affirmed **two natures** of Christ.

6th Ecumenical Council

- * When: Constantinople, **680-1**
- * Monothelites. Argued, Only one divine will in Christ
- * Council upheld Tradition. *Just as there are in Christ two natures, divine and human, so there is in Christ not only **divine will but also a human will**;*
- * *if Christ did not have a human will like ours, he would not be truly a man as we are.*
- * *These two wills are not contrary to one other, for the human will is at all times freely obedient to the divine will.* - Kallistos Ware
- * **Our task is to unite our will to His divine will.**

7th Ecumenical Council

- * When: Nicaea 787
- * Iconoclasts - objected to use of **images** of Christ.
- * *Proclaimed that since Christ became true man, it is **legitimate** to depict his face upon the holy icons; and, since Christ is one person and not two, these icons do not just show us his humanity in separation from his divinity, but they show us the **one person** of the eternal Logos incarnate.* – Kallistos Ware



Nature of Christ

- * **One Hypostasis** - one person, one personality
- * **Two natures**, Divine and Human, immutably & unconfusedly, do not mingle and are not converted one into the other.. forever united.
- * **Two wills**, divine and human where the human will was subjected to the divine will.
- * Flesh deified was not destroyed. **Human will** not destroyed but willingly **subjected to divine will**.



Christ Event

- * Ecumenical Councils continually **defended** the Christ Event.
- * Orthodox Church known as **Church of the Seven Councils**.
- * Doctrine remains unaltered from time of Apostles protecting the true nature of the Christ Event.
- * Christ Event (Incarnation), is most significant event in all the acts of Creation.



Christ Event



- * Christ came as second Adam showing us true nature of our personhood as human beings.
- * He is the perfect man he calls us to become.
- * Aim of all creation -- to **be deified through our union with Him.**



"The glory which thou hast given to me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one: I in them and thou in me, may they be perfectly united in one." (John 17:22-23)

Christ Event

* Questions?

Sola Scriptura

The Bible



- ✦ True or False?

“The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.”

- ✦ (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminaries Abstract of Principles)

- ✦ Sola Scriptura - Foundation of Protestantism
16th Century Invention

- ✦ Orthodox **do** believe Scripture is “Truth” inspired by God.
But **not** *“only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule.”*

Sola Scriptura


- ✦ Problems with this idea
 - ✦ 1. Presupposes Scripture is **self-authenticating**
 - ✦ Forgets that Church determined the canon of the Bible which took centuries.
Bible supports Church Tradition.
 - ✦ Forgets Church is Body and life of Christ.
Rejects authority of Church which is rejecting Christ.
 - ✦ Forgets Apostolic beginning of the Church
Permits a break from fullness of Apostolic Tradition.

Sola Scriptura

- ✦ 2. Presupposes Scripture is **self-interpreting**.
- ✦ Not even true in science - theory of relativity & uncertainty principle.
- ✦ Texts do not exist in abstract.
Proper interpretation comes from Tradition.
Question is whose tradition.

Sola Scriptura

- ✦ Now over 30,000 denominations due to different interpretations of Scripture with new traditions.



Without context, Scripture is just another set of ancient texts.

- ✦ Bible must be interpreted in context of Church and its Holy Tradition.

Tradition of Apostles is only tradition that gives authority to Scripture.

Bible is a product of Christ's Church to help us.

Sola Scriptura

- 3. Presupposes Scripture **intended to be all sufficient guide**
- OT gives detailed instructions about worship.
NT provides no details about the eucharist
Do this in remembrance of Me. (Luke 22:19)
- Early Church came together on the first day of the week to break Bread, but most evangelicals only celebrate once a month or less. (Acts 20:7)
- If Paul's letters were intended to be self-sufficient wouldn't he have provided more details?



Sola Scriptura



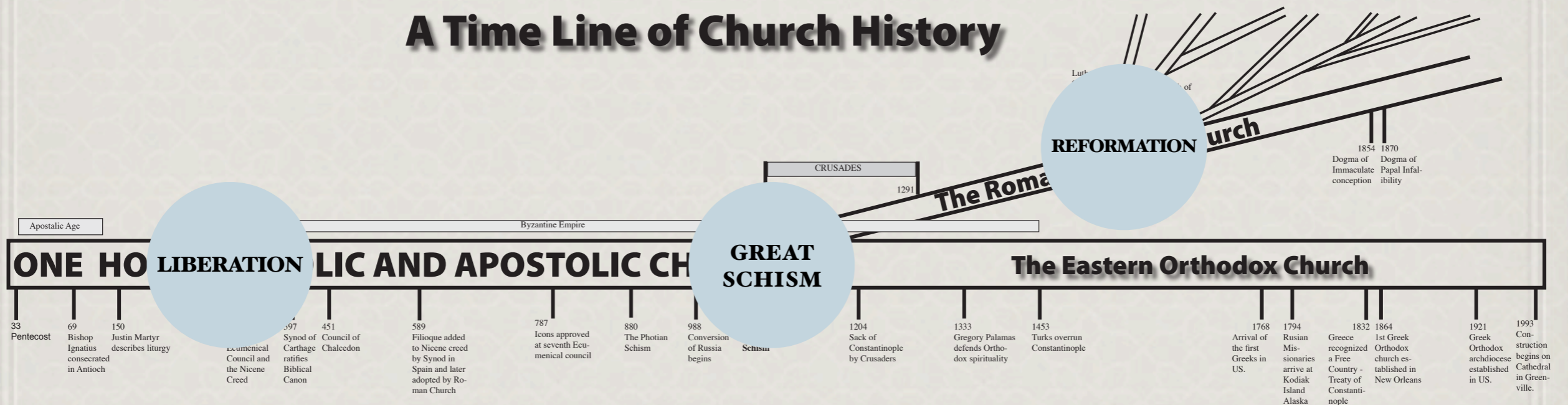
The Gospel of John is concluded with:

But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

John 21:25

Where did this false idea come from?

A Time Line of Church History



Began with Martin Luther's Break with the Roman Church over doctrines that were not apostolic. Part of effort to discredit Roman Church. Orthodox Church was not a party to this unfortunate split.

Sola Scriptura

- ✦ If you strip away Tradition from Church what do you have?
- ✦ An ideology with a written set of words.
- ✦ Faith is not based on a Book, but on relationship with God.
- ✦ Says anyone can pick up a book and with self-interpretation get everything one needs to be a Christian.
- ✦ For Orthodoxy, Christianity is a way life to be lived in relationship with Christ.
- ✦ We seek union with Christ through Holy Spirit in His Body, the Church.
- ✦ We get help through the sacramental life within the Church
- ✦ For Orthodox, Christianity is not simply a set of doctrines or moral precepts contained in a book.



Christ Event



- * Through Councils of the Church, through those participants who are illumined, through the writings that have been identified as Scripture, through the practices, hymns, prayers and icons, the Church has maintained and clarified the essential essence of the Christ Event.