



# The Bible

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Note: The Scripture references in this hand-out are taken from the New King James Version.

## What is the Bible?

The Bible is God's Word... I've heard that the term Bible is an acronym which stands for: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. The English word "bible" comes from the Greek word "biblios" with its plural form "biblia." This is the same work in Latin, "biblia" which means writings.

## How would you answer the question: How was it determined which writings made it into the Bible and which did not?

Writings that have proven to be the Word of God are what made it into the Bible. The tests that were applied to these writings are called the Canon of Scripture. Canon means a rule, measuring line, a standard, or a model.

## What does 2 Peter 1:21 have to say about how the Bible was given to us?

2 Peter 1:21 - for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is a prophetic statement from God. Scripture was written by men of God who declared and wrote the truths of God.

## What does the term "holy" mean as it applies to "holy men of God" who wrote the Bible?

Holy means, set apart. These were prophets and apostles that God designated to be His spokesmen.

## When the Bible talks about prophecy, is it only talking about future events?

Certainly the Bible does include prophecies that address future events but it applies to anything a prophet says for God. The definition of our English word "prophet" is: a person who speaks by divine inspiration or as the interpreter through whom God express His will.

## What does it mean that those who wrote the Bible were moved by the Holy Spirit?

The writers of Scripture did not originate the message, the message came from God.

## What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 have to say about how we came by the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God.

## What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 have to say about why God gave us the Bible?

God gave us the Bible to make us complete and to equip us for every good work.

## What does it mean to be complete?

To be complete means that we are living out the purpose for which our Creator intended for us.

## How would you summarize our purpose?

Our purpose is to prepare for eternity.

## How does the Bible equip us for every good work?

**Doctrine:** The Bible teaches us what we need to know to be useful for God.

**Reproof:** it helps us see the error of our ways.

**Correction:** it helps us see what we need to do to correct the things that are limiting our effectiveness in doing God's work.

**Instruction in righteousness:** it helps us to see what are the right things to do.

## The key element of the Canon of Scripture is that it has to be inspired by God. How can we know if certain writings were inspired by God?

- It must be found to be true.
- It must be consistent with other writings known to be inspired by God.
- All the books of the Bible had been treasured by the churches.

We'll take a closer look at these criteria as we go along...

**Jewish tradition ascribes the Old Testament canon to Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue. Jewish tradition may be more than tradition, there is a lot of evidence that Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue played the most vital role in establishing the canon of the Old Testament. What does Ezra 7:10-11 have to say about why Ezra worked on determining what books should make up the Old Testament?**

Ezra 7:10-11 - For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:

Ezra sought to know the Word of God so that he could teach it to his countrymen. This made him an expert in God's Word.

**This also said Ezra was a priest. What does it mean to be a priest?**

Priests are those who helped the people to know God and also represented the people to God.

**Who are the priests today?**

All believers are priests...

1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

**How did Ezra serving as a scribe help him to determine what books should be in the Old Testament?**

Scribes spent a great deal of time copying Scripture so consequently, they would get to know the Word of God very well. This would help Ezra to be better at recognizing what was inspired of God and what was not.

History confirms the Old Testament canon of Scripture. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian confirms that there were 22 books in the Old Testament. These 22 became 39 when Judges/Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra/Nehemiah were split into two books each and the minor prophets were split into 12 separate books. Josephus also said that the end of the prophets came to a close with Ezra and Nehemiah.

**What did Jesus have to say in Luke 24:44 that reinforces that the Old Testament is the Word of God?**

Luke 24:44 - Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

Jesus and the New Testament affirm the Old Testament canon of Scripture.

**How does the Old Testament testify of Jesus?**

The Old Testament continually refers to God's Anointed, or the Messiah that will come to save God's people...

John 5:39 - You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

Jesus also said that if you believe the Old Testament, you'd have to conclude that Jesus was the Messiah...

John 5:46 - For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

**What did Jesus have to do per Luke 24:27 that reinforced that the Old Testament is the Word of God?**

Luke 24:27 - And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Jesus often made reference to the Old Testament to show that He was the one about whom the Scriptures foretold would come.

**Can you think of any examples from the Old Testament that indicate that Jesus was the Messiah?**

The fact that He was born in Bethlehem, of the line of David, raised in Nazareth, and would be crucified just to name a few.

**How does the New Testament relate to the Old Testament?**

- The New Testament fulfills all that was promised in the Old Testament.
- The entire Old Testament is Christ centered and the New Testament is a commentary on it.
- The Old Testament theme is: Someone is coming, the New Testament declares that: Someone has come, and prophecies that: Someone is coming again.

**What does Hebrews 1:1-2 have to say about how the writers of the New Testament are distinguished from the Old Testament?**

Hebrews 1:1-2 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

God spoke through prophets in the Old Testament and spoke through Jesus Christ in the New Testament. So the valid test of a writer's inspiration in the New Testament was his relationship to the Lord Jesus... they had to be an Apostle or a companion to an Apostle.

**What examples can you think of where New Testament writers were a companion to an Apostle?**

A couple examples are Mark who was a companion to Peter and Luke who was a companion to Paul.

**What does 1 Corinthians 9:1 have to say about the key criteria for an Apostle?**

1 Corinthians 9:1 - Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

An Apostle had to have seen the risen Lord Jesus. Also, Apostles did the work of an Apostle, leading people to Jesus and planting churches.

**What does Galatians 1:11-12 have to say about how Paul came to know what he wrote in his epistles?**

Galatians 1:11-12 - But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He came to know the truths written in his epistles through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**What is meant by the revelation of Jesus Christ? Is there a distinction between revelation and inspiration?**

Revelation refers to something God has made known, something God has unveiled or uncovered. Inspiration refers to the transmission or the writing. It refers more to the method that keeps the writing from error or mistake.

**Do we have apostles today?**

Yes, in that we have gifted believers called to plant churches. But we do not have apostles writing Scripture today because the church does not need more than one foundation...

Ephesians 2:19-20 - Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,

I believe 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 tells us that there would be a time when the Word of God to the church would come to an end...

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 - Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

This passages says that the prophecies that make up the New Testament would be completed since it is that which is perfect. When that happens, there would be no need for prophets giving more of God's Word because we have the full revelation of God for our age.

**What does John 14:25-26 have to say about how Jesus inspired the writing of the New Testament?**

John 14:25-26 - These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

The 27 books of the New Testament were inspired by God, the Holy Spirit who helped the disciples remember what Jesus taught them. This is reinforced in other passages of Scripture...

John 16:12-15 - I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

**What does Deuteronomy 18:21-22 have to say about how can we know the true Word of God?**

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 - And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'-- when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Most prophets foretold the future as part of their inspired writing. They were authenticated as truly speaking for God when a near-term prophecy comes to pass. If a near term prophecy came to pass, you could trust the rest of what they has to say in God's name as truly being from God.

**What does Deuteronomy Psalm 119:160 have to say about how can we know the true Word of God?**

Psalm 119:160 - The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. The true Word of God is going to be found to be true and accurate. It is not going to contradict some other portion of Scripture that is known to be from God...

1 Corinthians 2:13 - These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**What does Deuteronomy Isaiah 55:10-11 have to say about how can we know the true Word of God?**

Isaiah 55:10-11 - For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The Word of God accomplishes its purpose. People are saved and lives are changed as a result of understanding God's Word.

**What about the Apocrypha in the Catholic version of the Bible? Why isn't this included in the Bible Protestants use?**

Apocrypha means "hidden or concealed" and is a group of 14 books written after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Apocrypha does not meet the qualifications to be part of the Canon of Scripture and did not make it into the Catholic Bible until the Council of Trent in 1546 AD. They were useful for historical purposes but not inspired of God.

There are other writings that some have held up as being part of Scripture: The Gospel of Mary, Thomas, or Peter for example. No canon or council recognized these writings until recent times. They are clearly contradictory to the canon of Scripture in a lot of cases. Eusebius said these writings were "totally absurd and impious."

**How would you summarize how the Bible came to be what we have today?**

The Bible was inspired by God, written by men of God, reveals the truth of God, is kept and preserved by the Holy Spirit of God, and is accepted and loved by the people of God.