

Chapter Fifty-two

Bibliology - The Study of Scripture

INFORMATION ABOUT GOD'S character, God's plans, God's activities, God's interaction in history, God's knowledge, God's ways and God's wisdom not known by man through his natural life must come to man through some supernatural means of revelation. Revelation literally means to take a covering off so that what was covered and unknown may be seen and known. In order to communicate this information, God would need to communicate to man through a means that man would understand. There are several methods that God has used to communicate special revelation to man. In the past he used dreams, visions, theophanies, angels, even the urim and thummim which were kept in the breastplate of Israel's high priest. God also spoke directly to and through men called prophets and apostles. God's activity in history itself has provided revelation of himself and of his plans. These are all forms of communication used by God to bring about his revelation.

The greatest and most direct method of revelation God used was the incarnation of Jesus Christ. While Jesus lived on the earth his words and deeds revealed the Father (John 1:14), the nature of God (14:9; 17:26), the power of God (3:2), the wisdom of God (7:46), the glory of God (1:14), the life of God (1 John 1:1-3), the love of God (Romans 5:8) and the word of God (John 17:17).

The information that God revealed through all these means of special revelation were recorded in writing, one of the most basic forms of communication given to men. In the Old Testament God inspired men to record in written form historical events which included not just human events but God's activity also, as well as the words he spoke. The prophets who received words from God to speak to men often wrote them down.

"Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
2 Peter 1:20-21

"Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false." Habakkuk 2:2

God's revelation in Scripture is progressive. This means that information or revelation that comes later often builds on information or revelation that he gave earlier. The Old Testament revelation gave clear, accurate information concerning the big picture, but the New Testament revelation gives clear, accurate information concerning the details of the picture. Throughout the process of progressive revelation the information is trustworthy and useful, but is moving toward a more complete form.

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves."

“For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.” Matthew 11:13

Some false contemporary views of revelation include:

1. Reducing the meaning of the historical events of Scripture to the imagination or opinion of the man (Moses, Joshua, David, etc) recording the event. This view would say, for example, that it was only in Joshua's understanding that the walls of Jericho fell for Israel because they were the chosen people of God, when in reality the walls may have fallen for some other unknown reason of God's – or it may have simply been a random earthquake. The correct understanding of revelation is to understand both the what and the why of what happened in light of the scriptural account.
2. The moment of the revelation is considered to take place when the modern man reads or considers Scriptures. The result is personal revelation from “God”. This would allow modern readers to make application of the events in Jericho to their own current situations, disconnected from the actual historical events and purposes revealed in Scripture. In this situation, the reader is trying to gain revelation from God apart from the truth of Scripture – instead, creating their own personal encounter with God through reading their own meaning into the story. Within a very short time the modern reader is not even using their Bible to receive revelation about God. They move quickly to understanding “God” by interpreting their own thoughts and experiences. Personal revelation from God should not be confused with personal illumination from the Holy Spirit.

The revelation of Scripture from God includes the necessity that the writers and the words that they wrote were inspired. This leads us to one of the most crucial teachings of Christianity: the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Inspiration

The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture means there was a divine influence by the Holy Spirit on the process of writing the Scriptures in the past. The fact that Holy Spirit inspired the recording of the revelation of the infinite God in written words means those words remain inspired and continue to communicate the revelation that God intended for all time. As Jesus said:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”
Mark 13:31

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.” Matthew 5:18

The Bible claims that the writers of the Scriptures were even moved by God in their understanding of the words and events of revelation. Two key verses capture the biblical claim for the written revelation: 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 3:16.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture” refers to the entire Bible which is the revelation from God. The word “Scripture”, or γραφή in the Greek, is used to refer to:

1. The whole Old Testament as the writings of the prophets or the prophetic writings (Mt. 21:42; 22:29; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Romans 1:2)
2. Individual passages of the Old Testament (Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 2:22; Acts 1:16; Romans 4:3; 9:17; Galatians 3:8)
3. New Testament letters (2 Peter 3:16; 1 Timothy 5:18)

The Scriptures speak with divine authority:

“These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” John 19:36

The Scriptures speak with divine foresight:

“The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.” Galatians 3:8

“God-breathed” is the Greek word θεοπνευστος which captured the thought of the rabbinical teaching that held to the understanding that the words of the prophets did not come from the prophets themselves but instead were the result of the Spirit of God resting on the prophets and speaking through them. Thus, the Rabbis and the apostles agreed that the words coming through the mouths of the prophets were breathed through them from the mouth of God himself.

Paul goes on to say not only that all Scripture is God-breathed, but he states the reason God revealed the truth through the Scripture. Scripture is “useful” or “profitable” for preparing men for effective lives before God. Scripture will itself teach, rebuke, correct and train a man to be righteous and equipped to fulfill God’s will on earth. In other words, God’s revelation to man through Scripture is necessary for man to become all that the creator has planned for him to be.

Peter describes the source and authority of Scripture when he writes:

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20-21

Peter, like Paul, drew attention to the Scriptures in his dying words, as he wrote his final letter. Peter says that Scripture did not come from the prophet’s understanding of events or his interpretation of what he felt God was saying. In fact, Peter emphatically denies the human origin of Scripture. Instead Peter says, the prophets were “carried along” by the Holy Spirit. “Carried along” is the word φερω which was used to describe a ship carried along by the wind. It is used this way in Acts 27:15, 17:

“The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along . . . Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.”

The word φερω, or driven along, means “to be carried, to be borne along.” The prophets will and insight were carried along by the Spirit of God in order to see, understand

and communicate what the Spirit of God intended. They went where the Spirit carried them, just like the ship went where the wind drove it. An example of a man's will being overcome and carried along by the Spirit of God may be seen in the opening lines of Jude's letter:

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." Jude 3

Jude was personally eager to write about salvation but something beyond him caused him to feel the urgency to communicate to the people about holding to the faith and resisting apostasy.

One more important point concerning the doctrine of inspiration: the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of Scripture did not end with giving them insight and thoughts; inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Scripture extends to the very words that were written. Paul writes:

"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words." 1 Corinthians 2:13

Peter tells us that Paul speaks to us in his letters:

"Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters." 2 Peter 3:15, 16

It is important to accept that the written words are inspired, or breathed from God, because if you simply accept that God's inspiration reached only to the thoughts of the writers you can then assume that it was possible for them to fail to properly communicate those thoughts in words they spoke or wrote. If this concept is accepted, which regrettably it is, then we really do not know if we have an accurate recording of the revelation of God. We could believe that he inspired Paul, Peter, Isaiah, David, etc. in the past but the revelation they received could then be rejected based on the fact that they failed to accurately record it. The Bible teaches that God inspired the very words the prophets spoke and the very words the apostles recorded. Inspiration of Scripture extends to the words of Scripture.

Points of Doctrine Concerning Inspiration

1. All Scripture is inspired. (2 Tim. 3:16)
2. Scripture comes from the mouth of God. (2 Tim. 3:16)
3. Scripture reveals God's plan and God's ways to man. (2 Tim. 3:16)
4. Scripture did not originate in the thoughts of man. (2 Peter 1:20)
5. Scripture came through men who were carried along by the Holy Ghost in their thinking, speaking and writing. (2 Peter 1:20)
6. The Words of Scripture were written through inspiration. (1 Cor. 2:13)
7. The Words of Scripture continue to be inspired throughout all time. (Mark 13:31)

Doctrinal Errors Concerning Inspiration

1. **Natural Inspiration** – erroneously sees the writers of the Bible as very great men who were geniuses. They came up with their own thoughts and wrote them down. Since there have been many men like this in time, inspired books are many and are surely still being written.
2. **Mystical Inspiration** - this incorrect perspective accepts the Bible to be the result of men who were assisted by the Holy Spirit to write good material that was “inspired” by God. This view would consider many of today’s sermons, songs, books, conversations and actions as equally “inspired” by God.
3. **Dynamic Inspiration** – an errant opinion that presents biblical authors as having had a revelatory experience with God. Then they wrote down in their own words and abilities what happened. In this case the message from God passes through the human heart and mind and comes out in written form, similar to fresh water passing through a garden hose. The water starts out fresh but by the time it comes out it tastes like the garden hose.
4. **Degree Inspiration** – this view accepts the Bible as inspired but considers some parts to be more inspired than others.
5. **Limited Inspiration** – in this position some parts of the Bible are inspired and others are not inspired. Inspiration is accepted in the case of doctrinal teaching, but some of the historical accounts (creation, flood, Abraham, Job, even miracles) are fables, stories, inaccurate recordings or simply men who wrote history without inspiration. Of course, the problem with this is if the history is not inspired – or even in error – how can the words or doctrine from that history can be accurate or useful.
6. **Concept Inspiration** – an illogical proposal that believes that the ideas of Scripture are inspired but that the words themselves are not. This is like saying I understood the novel but I couldn’t understand any of the words.
7. **Barthian Inspiration** – Karl Barth introduced a liberal view of inspiration in the 1900’s. He held that Jesus was the Word and that the Bible revealed and testified about Jesus. In this view Jesus is revealed in the Bible but the Bible is not inspired, and worse, it contains errors. The problem is clear: If Jesus is unknowable except by revelation from God, how can we truly know Jesus – especially if the revelation we have is in error or not a worthy revelation.
8. **Neo-orthodox Inspiration** – this false doctrine teaches the Bible is the *word* of God but not the *words* of God. The individual words are not inspired but when you read the Bible it becomes the Word of God, or inspired, for the reader. This developed from Barthian Inspiration.
9. **Mechanical or Dictation Theory** – this undeveloped position teaches that the writers of the Bible were used by God as human typewriters (or word processors). God dictated word for word, and the writer simply recorded it. For example, Moses would have been told, “Write ‘In the beginning . . . God created . . .’” In this case, the personality, experience, vocabulary, etc. of the author is set aside. The Bible does not teach this nor does it reflect this form of inspiration. The books of the Bible reflect the personalities, vocabulary, experience and even the writing style of the authors. (Rom. 16:22)

Scriptural Proof of Inspiration

1. Concerning Moses, God said:
“God spoke all these words.” Exodus 20:1
2. David said:
“The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.” 2 Samuel 23:2
3. Concerning the book of Isaiah:
“The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw . . . Hear, O heavens! Listen O earth! For the Lord has spoken . . .” Isaiah 1:1, 2
4. Zechariah testifies concerning the earlier prophets:

"They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets." Zechariah 7:12

5. "Thus says the Lord" or "God said" is used repeatedly in the Bible to verify the recording of words spoken by God:
 - a. "Thus says the Lord" – Isaiah 1:11, 18; Jeremiah 2:3, 5, and more
 - b. "God said" – Genesis 1:3, 6, and more.
 - c. "The Word of the Lord came to me" – Jeremiah 34:1; Ezekiel 30:1, and more.
 - d. "The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him" or "The Lord said to Moses" is found more than sixty times in Leviticus – 1:1; 4:1; 5:14, and more.
6. There is internal support within Scripture for other parts of Scripture. For example, Paul recognizes the gospel of Luke as being inspired:

"For the Scripture says . . . 'The worker deserves his wages (from Luke 10:7).'"

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Timothy 5:18

7. Internal evidence in Scripture of an apostle recognizing another apostle's writing as inspired. Peter recognizes Paul's letters to be Scripture:

"(Paul's) letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."

2 Peter

3:16

8. Paul claims to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and to have received revelation from God:

"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."
1 Corinthians 2:13

"God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." 1 Corinthians 2:10

"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11, 12
9. John claims to be inspired and to have received revelation and words directly from God:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants . . . He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw – that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:1-2

"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later."

Revelation 1:19

The Extent of the Authority of Inspiration

The words of Scripture have divine authority. Jesus said "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and that the words would never pass away (Matthew 5:17-18). The details of scriptural authority extend to:

1. All written Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)

2. All the words in Scripture (Matthew 22:43; 1 Corinthians 2:13)
3. Even the verb tenses or noun forms are maintained as part of inspired Scripture. (Matthew 22:32; Galatians 3:16)
4. Even the smallest parts of the letters that make up the words are God-breathed Scripture. (Matthew 5:17-18)

Who Did the Actual Writing of These New Testament Books?

Tertius was the scribe that wrote Paul's words in Romans for Paul (Romans 16:22)

Silas was the scribe who wrote Peter's words in First Peter (1 Peter 5:12)

Paul simply signed his name at the end of these letters after they had been written by a scribe:

1 Corinthians 16:21

Galatians 6:11

Colossians 4:18

2 Thessalonians 3:17

These men are listed as joining Paul in sending the letters:

- Sosthenes - 1 Corinthians 1:1
- Timothy - 2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1;
Colossians 1:1; 1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1
- "All the brothers with me" - Galatians 1:1
- Silas - 1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1

The Doctrine of Inerrancy

The definition of the doctrine of inerrancy says that the original writings of Scripture (or, the autographs) are entirely true and never false when properly interpreted concerning doctrine, ethics, social life, physical life, history, geography, science, etc. Simply put, the doctrine of inerrancy teaches that the Bible is without error. The Bible teaches its own inerrancy. Part of the test of divine origin of Scripture is its accuracy and its truthfulness (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20-22). Jesus himself taught that Scripture could not be in error (John 10:34-35). Scripture depends on its own inerrancy when it quotes other Scripture as proof texts for certain truths or concepts (John 10:34-35; Matthew 22:32; Galatians 3:16). Scripture teaches that God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; First Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) and then repeatedly quotes God. If Scripture is God's word then it also must be accurate.

Augustine (354-430) supports the Biblical view of inerrancy when he says, "For it seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books. That is to say that the men by whom the Scripture has been given to us and committed to writing put down in these books anything false. If you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement, there will not be left a single sentence of those books, which, if appearing to anyone difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not be the same fatal rule be explained away as a statement, in which intentionally, the author declared what was not true" (Epistle from Augustine to Jerome around 394; Letter 28, chapter 3).

When it is said the Bible is inerrant or that it is always true, this includes all normal means of communication including:

- Rounding off of numbers
- Approximations
- Slightly differing accounts of an event by different eyewitnesses

- General and accepted language of appearance, i.e., things described as they appear to be
- Free quotations

For example, some have criticized the Bible for not knowing the value of pi. In 2 Chronicles we read the dimensions of the circular bronze basin made by Solomon:

“He made the sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits to measure around it.” 2 Chronicles 4:2

The critics would say that this is an error because $C = \pi \times D$, or circumference equals π times the diameter. A high school math book tells us that the value of π is 3.14 but the writer of 2 Chronicles 4:2 apparently didn't know that and instead used the value of 3 for π instead of 3.14. So, our Old Testament verse figures the equation this way:

$$\begin{aligned} C &= \pi \times D \\ C &= 3 \times 10 \text{ cubits} \\ C &= 30 \text{ cubits} \end{aligned}$$

A high school student would figure the equation this way:

$$\begin{aligned} C &= \pi \times D \\ C &= 3.14 \times 10 \text{ cubits} \\ C &= 31.4 \text{ cubits} \end{aligned}$$

But, of course, outside a high school class room 3.14 might be as “erroneous” as 3 when being used for space travel or technical equipment. In this case π would equal 3.14159. Even this value is a rounded off number from the unending value of π which is 3.14159265358979323846... The Bible maintains its inerrancy even though it rounds off some numbers since it is a normal and acceptable means of communication.

If two people witness a sporting event, an accident, or a political speech they will later give a similar account but most likely they will also record different details of the event. Both testimonies are true and accurate, but they would be different. For example, I could return home from having watched my son's baseball game. When my wife asked about the game I replied that our son had scored two runs and we won the game. Later at the grocery store she may talk with another parent and find out the final score was 7-1. When I reported the results of the game to my wife I may have been focused on my son, but I was not in error but omitting the fact that 5 other runs were also scored. The fact that two different accounts of a single event recorded in Scripture does not constitute an error. This also is acceptable in normal communication.

If I read in the newspaper: “Sunrise 6:37 A.M.”, I do not write a letter to the editor criticizing the paper for its error of scientific inaccuracy. I understand that the newspaper is communicating a fact from the perspective of the appearance of that event, not trying to state a law concerning planetary rotation. Clearly, the newspaper is only communicating what time the sun will appear. At times, the Bible also communicates from the perspective of men.

Imagine I received my annual evaluation from my supervisor at work in the form of a document that included ratings on different competencies, recordings of observed

performances, and some personal comments that included the following: “The employee has demonstrated an understanding of the assigned tasks and consistently performs them at a high level of competency.” If someone asks me in the break room what my boss said on my evaluation I could reply, “I am doing a good job.” Even though my supervisor never literally said this or used the terms “good job”, it is an acceptable and truthful reply. My summary of the evaluation was not verbatim, but it was accurate. There are places in the Scripture where free quotations like this are used while maintaining accuracy.

Jesus' Views of Scripture

Jesus accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as historically accurate. This is particularly interesting when you understand that Jesus was the second member of the Trinity in the flesh, and so he would have been part of all of these stories. Jesus considered these people and events as historical, and he agreed with the biblical description of each of them. Jesus challenged and corrected many individuals – including scribes, priests, even traditions, and more – but he never criticized or corrected the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus repeatedly demonstrated that he believed the Jewish Old Testament was the true and accurate word of God:

- Adam and Eve (Mt. 19:3-5; Mark 10:6-8)
- Noah and the Flood (Mt. 24:38-39; Luke 17:26-27)
- Sodom and Lot (Mt. 10:15; Luke 17:28-29)
- Jonah (Mt. 12:40)
- Isaiah – Jesus quotes from both the first and second halves of Isaiah’s book, assigning the full book to Isaiah. (Mt. 12:17; 13:13-15)
- Elijah (Mt. 17:11-12)
- Daniel (Mt. 24:15)
- Abel (Mt. 23:35)
- Zechariah (Mt. 23:35)
- Abiathar (Mark 2:26)
- David (Mt. 22:45)
- Moses and the books of Moses (Mt. 8:4; John 5:46)
- Abraham (Mt. 8:11; John 8:39)
- Isaac (Mt. 8:11)
- Jacob (Mt. 8:11)

The Jot and Tittle

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter (jot, yod, '), not the least stroke of a pen (tittle, a small line on a letter that changes the letter like Q and O), will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.”

- Jesus, Mt.5:18

Jot



- Smallest of all Hebrew letters called a yod.
- It is a letter but is similar in size and appearance to an English apostrophe '.
- Adding or subtracting the yod (or any other letter) can change the whole word, which would change the entire meaning of the sentence.
- Removing a yod from a passage of Scripture could change the meaning of that Scripture. According to Jesus, this was impossible to do.
- It is similar to the rough breathing mark in Greek that adds the letter “h” to the beginning of a word.

Title  <i>beth</i>  <i>kaph</i>	• A title is not a letter but a little line on a letter. • To the left, at the top, is the Hebrew letter <i>beth</i> with a title (the little extension of the bottom bar on the right side at the base of the letter). • To the left, at the bottom, is the Hebrew letter <i>kaph</i> without the title at the base of the letter. It is missing in the lower right corner of the letter. • This can be compared the little line on the English letter Q which is missing on the letter O. • The absence of the title can change the letter from a <i>beth</i> to a <i>kaph</i> in Hebrew. • The addition of one little line to one letter in English can easily change the word. Consider the following differences from adding a line as small as a dash (-): FUN becomes PUN becomes RUN becomes BUN.
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Defending the True Inspiration of the Bible	
We would say:	Then they would say:
"We believe in the inspiration of the Bible."	"The thoughts are inspired but not the words."
"We believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible."	"The Bible contains some information and some parts that are inspired, but not all."
"We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible." (<i>"plenary" means "full, entire, complete"</i>)	"The Bible has errors."
"We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible inspiration of the Bible."	"The Bible does not err in matters of doctrine, but some of the historical details are mistaken."
"We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, inerrant inspiration of the Bible."	"The Bible communicates concepts truthfully concerning faith, but has certain errors that must be corrected."
"We believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, unlimited inerrancy of the inspiration of the Bible."	"It doesn't really matter, we still think the Bible means what we want it to mean!"

Scripture Supporting Inspiration, Inerrancy and Authority of Scripture

"The words of the Lord are flawless like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6

"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure, and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward." Psalm 19:7-11

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word." Psalm 119:9

"Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." Psalm 119:89

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and

achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:9-11

" 'Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?' declares the Lord. 'Is not my word like fire,' declares the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?'" Jeremiah 23:28

"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand in the courtyard of the Lord's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah . . . Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word.'"

Jeremiah 26:2

"I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth (literally: "Writing of Truth")." Daniel 10:21

"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." Matthew 22:29

"Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." John 17:17

"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." Acts 17:11

"I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints." Colossians 1:25-26

"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God . . . Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." 1 Peter 1:23-2:3

"I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Revelation 1:9

The Canon of Scripture: Canonicity

The word "canon" comes from the Greek word *κανον* *kanon* which referred to measuring

instruments such as rulers, tape measures, plumb lines and levels. The term was first applied to Scripture by Irenaeus when he referred to it as the “canon of truth” when he recognized the written Scripture as the objective standard by which claims of truth would be measured. When Irenaeus compared the teaching of the Gnostics to the standard of Scripture he could prove they were clearly lacking in truth.

We should understand that the early church did not make the canon of Scripture or select some books to be the canon for Christianity. Instead, the early church simply recognized what God had already given through the apostles and prophets as the canon. The early church discovered or identified what books already had canonicity and acknowledged what was already true.

The Old Testament books are considered to have canonicity by Jews, Catholics and Protestants. The Catholics and Protestants also accept the New Testament books as part of the canon of Scripture. At the Council of Trent in 1546 the Catholic leadership voted to additionally accept the Apocrypha.

The Accepted Canons	
Jews	Old Testament
Protestant Christians	Old Testament, New Testament
Catholic Christians	Old Testament, New Testament, Apocrypha
Cults and other groups	Maybe parts of the above mixed with a variety of other books and sources including writings of men and personal thoughts or emotions.

Old Testament canonicity is based on the following:

1. **Jesus' Recognition** – For Christians, the fact that Jesus recognized the authority of the Old Testament and quoted from it attests to its canonicity.
2. **Authority** – The book had to be written by a recognized prophet or leader who had proven to be anointed by God through a historical event or the prophetic worthiness of the writing.
3. **Prophetic Accuracy** – The book could not show errors in fulfilled prophecy.
4. **Internal Evidence** – The book bears witness to itself or to other books of the Old Testament.
5. **Cause and Effect** – People living at the same time as the book's author may have accepted or rejected the prophet or the writer (Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah), but the results of history proved the book to be inspired. Those who believed preserved the book. Later generations could evaluate the book on its merit of content and accuracy.

Around 85 AD Josephus lists the accepted books of the Jewish canon. His list, which names the accepted Jewish Scripture of his day, is the same as our Old Testament.

New Testament canonicity is based on these tests:

1. **Apostleship** – To be included in the canon the book had to have the authority of an apostle by having been written by an apostle or having the support of an apostle.
2. **Apostolic Teaching** – The book also had to agree with what other apostles had taught. Churches like Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Rome, etc. had been established and overseen by the apostles and had men placed in authority by the apostles. These churches collected the writings of the apostles and taught their doctrine. These churches recognized apostolic teaching as opposed to deviant teaching. They were able to come together and universally agree on the books. If these apostolic churches rejected the books, they would never had

been accepted at a Church council.

- 3. Internal Evidence** – Each book had to show its own internal evidence of canonicity with uniqueness and some claim of authority or inspiration. Books that were not unique or did not claim authority were never preserved by the church for canonical reasons.

For the first 350 years of the church (30-397 AD) the church recognized the books of the canon without a Church council. No official list was made. No committees voted for or against. It was simply a matter of which books met the above criteria on a practical basis. The Church of the second century still had the disciples of the apostles leading them. As the years passed through the second century into the third century the weight and authority of the God-breathed canon eliminated and exposed rival books. Church authorities did not actively stamp out the false writings, although church leadership did expose the imitators. The genuineness of the true New Testament Scripture prevailed.

This was especially true during the persecution of Diocletian beginning in 303 AD. The Roman emperor, Diocletian, knew enough about the Christians and their “canon” of Scripture to call for the destruction of all Christian Scripture. Apparently, even the pagans had some recognition of the authority held by some of the Christian books. This persecution forced Christianity to shift even further through their writings and decide which books were they willing to die for and which books, in good conscience, could hand over to be destroyed. When Constantine became emperor he financed the reproduction 50 copies of the Christian Scriptures for use in Constantinople. It is interesting that the persecutors knew which books to burn and Constantine knew which books to have copied.

In 397 the Council of Carthage agreed on the list we have now consisting of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament Canon.

A few lists and collections of the books of the canon gathered during the years before the Council of Carthage have been preserved:

1. The Muratorian Fragment - Written around 170 AD this torn fragment lists the books that its anonymous author believed to be authoritative. The list omits Hebrews, James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, but no additional books are recorded.
2. Syriac Version of Scriptures – A translation of the Scriptures for the churches in Syria is recorded as being used as early as 170 AD. This old version of the Bible includes four Gospels, Acts, all of Paul’s Epistles, Hebrews, 1 John, 1 Peter and James. It does not include 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude or Revelation. Again, no additional books were included.
3. Latin Version of Scripture – From around 200 AD Latin translations of the Scriptures included our New Testament without 2 Peter, James and Hebrews. No additional books were included.

The Apocrypha

The Apocrypha comes from the Greek word *apokryphos* which is built on the Greek word *krypto* which means “secret or hidden”. They were given this name by Jerome around 400 AD because they are books that are rarely seen. They were written between 300-30 BC after the inspired Old Testament canon was closed. Old Testament revelation can be traced through a series of prophets who form a prophetic chain through the Old Testament beginning with Moses (1440 BC) and ending with Nehemiah who compiled

the final books after Malachi closed Old Testament Revelation around 432 BC. Scripture identifies these prophets as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Iddo, Jehu, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Chain of Prophetic Continuity Through The Complete Old Testament Revelation "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Luke 24:27		
Moses	Genesis, Exodus, Revelation, Leviticus, Deuteronomy	Nehemiah 9:14 Luke 24:27
Joshua	End of Deuteronomy, book of Joshua	
Samuel	Samuel wrote an early history of Samuel and David.	1 Chron. 29:29
Nathan	Nathan and Gad recorded events in the reign of David.	1 Chron. 29:29
Gad		2 Chron. 12:15
Nathan Ahijah Iddo	Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo wrote of the events during the reign of Solomon.	2 Chron. 9:29-31
Shemaiah Iddo	Shemaiah and Iddo chronicled the events in the reign of Rehoboam.	2 Chron. 12:15
Iddo	Iddo wrote of the events of the reign of Abijah.	2 Chron. 13:22
Jehu	Jehu wrote of the events of the reign of Jehoshaphat.	2 Chron. 20:34
Isaiah	Isaiah wrote of the events of the reign of Hezekiah.	2 Chron. 32:32
(Hozai?)	An unknown prophet (possibly Hozai) wrote of Manasseh's reign.	2 Chron. 33:19
Jeremiah	Jeremiah prophesied and recorded the final days of Judah during the reigns beginning with Josiah through Jehoiakim through Zedekiah.	Jeremiah 1:1-3
Ezekiel	Ezekiel prophesied and recorded events from July 5, 593 until April 28, 573 BC during the Babylonian captivity.	Ezek. 1:2; 40:1
Daniel	Daniel prophesied and recorded events from 605-536 BC This included the time of Jehoiakim of Judah, and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon until Cyrus and Darius of the Medo-Persians.	Daniel 1:1; 10:1
Ezra	Ezra returns to Jerusalem with the exiles with the written revelation and teaches the people. Ezra taught the word of God and recorded events.	Ezra 6:18; 7:11; 9:4
Zechariah	Zechariah prophesied to the Jews who returned from Babylon and recorded events in 520 BC.	Zechariah 1:1
Malachi	Malachi closed the time of revelation around 432 BC – until the coming of "the prophet Elijah" (John the Baptist).	Malachi 4:5
Nehemiah	Nehemiah was governor in Jerusalem for two terms (445-432 and a second term somewhere between the years 430-407). Nehemiah compiled the final prophetic books with all the previous revelation into an organized collection of written revelation known to Christians today as the Old Testament.	Nehemiah 1:1; 5:14;13:6

A list of the Apocryphal books:

1. First Esdras
2. Second Esdras
1. Tobit
2. Judith
3. Additions to the Book of Esther
4. The Wisdom of Solomon
5. Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach)
6. Baruch
7. Letter of Jeremiah
8. The Song of the Three

9. Daniel and Susanna
10. Daniel, Bel, and the Dragon
11. Prayer of Manasseh
12. First Maccabees
13. Second Maccabees

The Apocrypha was accepted into the Catholic canon in 1546 at the Council of Trent. This decision was an error on the part of this Church council for these reasons:

1. Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament never quote from the Apocrypha.
2. The Apocrypha itself never claims to be authoritative, inspired, or the word of God.
3. The internal evidence within the books themselves even disclaims inspiration, stating that there were no prophets that could speak or write under the inspiration of the spirit during the years these books were written (1 Maccabees 4:46; 9:27; 14:41).
4. Some books have major historical errors. For example in the book of Judith, Nebuchadnezzar is said to be the king of Assyria, and in the books of First and Second Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanies is recorded as dying three different ways in three different places.
5. Some books promote doctrinal error. For example, prayer for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:45-46), attainment of complete sanctification and sinlessness.
6. Some of the books accept practices that the Bible condemns such as suicide, assassination and magical incantation.
7. Josephus, who rejects the Apocrypha and other books outside of the Jewish Scriptures says: "From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets." (Against Apion 1:8)
8. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not consider the Apocrypha as inspired.
9. Jerome rejected the inspiration of the Apocrypha and originally refused to translate them as part of his Latin Vulgate – but did include them in the end at the request of the Roman bishop. He warned readers not to "apply them to establish any doctrine" concerning "these portions which exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture."
10. The Apocrypha lacks any prophetic authorship or content and so there is no possible prophetic fulfillment to confirm their authority.
11. In accepting these writings in 1546, the Council of Trent broke with the traditional views of the Jews, the early church, and major Church councils in the past.
12. The Council of Trent made its decision in reaction against Martin Luther's criticism of their doctrine of praying and collecting indulgences for the dead.
13. The Council of Trent accepted only 11 of the apocryphal books. They accepted 2 Maccabees because it supported their belief in prayer for the dead, but rejected 2 Esdras because it opposed prayers for the dead.

The New Testament Apocryphal Books

There are books from the first and second century that have been compiled as the so-called New Testament Apocrypha. These books can be broken down into two groups: books written by known authors that are not considered Scripture, and pseudo-writings which are books written by unknown authors claiming to be someone else (For example: an author who wrote a book with his own ideas and doctrine but signed Peter's name to

it to help it gain acceptance).

Some books written by known authors from the early church that are authentic but not considered Scripture are Clement's letter to the Corinthians, Ignatius' seven letters written on his way to martyrdom in Rome, and others. A few books written by unknown authors who ascribed the writings to apostles or other famous Christians are the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, and the Apocalypse of Peter.

These books are rejected because they do not meet the requirements of canonicity listed above. In addition:

1. They were never recognized by a major Church council.
2. If they were ever listed in the same document with the canonical books they were always placed on a separate list.
3. None of these books ever received universal acceptance by the churches. At best they experienced local acceptance (or consideration), and then only for a limited time. Once they were tested and carefully considered they were universally removed from acceptance in the canon.
4. Some of these books are clearly fables, deceptions, or products of some early unorthodox group trying to gain acceptance into Christendom.

Process of God Revealing His Word to Men of Every Generation



Bible Trivia

- The Bible was written by about 50 different men from many walks of life - kings, farmers, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, shepherds, warriors, pastors, scribes, craftsmen, captives, ambassadors, priests, rabbis, historians and more.
- Luke was the only Gentile writer. The others were all Jews.
- The Bible was written over a period of about 1600 years but may include documents from over a 4,000 year period.
- The Bible was written over a period of 40 generations.
- The Bible was written in different places - wilderness, dungeon, palaces, prison, homes and more.
- The Bible was written on three continents - Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- The Bible was written in three languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- The first translation of the Bible into English was initiated by John Wycliffe and completed by John Purvey in 1388.
- The Bible was divided into chapters (which are used yet today) by Archbishop Stephen Langton in 1226 at the University of Paris.
- Between 1244 and 1248, Cardinal Hugo de-santo-Caro also devised a systematic chapter division of the Bible.
- The Gutenberg Bible was the first book printed with movable metal type. It was printed by Johannes Gutenberg in 1456, in Mainz, Germany.
- The Old Testament was divided into verses by Rabbi Isaac Nathan in 1440, but it wasn't until 1659 that Athias, a Jew from Amsterdam, made a Hebrew edition of the Old Testament with verses within Hugo's chapters that match what we use today.
- The New Testament was divided into verses by Robert Stephanus in 1551.
- The first printed Bible divided into verses was a Latin edition by Pagninus, printed in 1528.
- The first complete English version of the Bible divided into verses was the Geneva Bible, printed in 1560.
- There are over 2,930 different people mentioned in the Bible.
- There are over 1,551 geographical sites mentioned in the Bible.
- The Bible includes poetry, prose, history, romance, biography, mystery and more.
- There are many different forms of writing material mentioned in the Bible: stone, dirt, clay, wood, papyrus, parchment, leather.
- Number of languages the Bible has been translated into: over 2,123
- Number of languages with a completed Bible translation: 349
- Number of languages with a New Testament: 841
- The average American home has 4 Bibles.
- Almost every American home has at least one Bible.
- The oldest book in the Bible is Job.
- The oldest written material is in Genesis.
- A Bible in the University of Gottingen is written on 2,470 palm leaves.
- According to statistics from Wycliffe International, the Society of Gideons, and the International Bible Society, the number of new Bibles that are sold, given

- away, or otherwise distributed in the United States is about 168,000 per day.
- About 30,000,000 copies of the Bible are distributed annually.
- The United Bible Societies estimates that their group alone has distributed around 9 billion Bibles since 1947.
- The Bible can be read aloud in 70 hours.
- There are 8,674 different Hebrew words in the Bible, 5,624 different Greek words, & 12,143 different English words in the King James Version.
- A number of verses in the Bible (KJV) contain all but 1 letter of the alphabet: Ezra 7:21 contains all but the letter "j"; Joshua 7:24, 1 Kings 1:9, 1 Chronicles 12:40, 2 Chronicles 36:10, Ezekiel 28:13, Daniel 4:37, and Haggai 1:1 contain all but "q"; 2 Kings 16:15 and 1 Chronicles 4:10 contain all but "z"; and Galatians 1:14 contains all but "k".
- Five of Paul's letters were written from prison: Ephesians 3:1, Philippians 1:7, Colossians 4:3, Philemon and Second Timothy.
- The word Christian is first mentioned in the Bible in Acts 11:26 and is found in only two other places in the Bible: Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16.
- The oldest person in the Bible was Methuselah. He died when he was 969 years old.
- Two men in the Bible never died. They were Enoch and Elijah.
- Isaiah prophesied most about the coming of Jesus. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 lists more than 20 details concerning the incarnation.
- "Do not be afraid" appears 365 times in the Bible.
- The word "God" appears in every book of the Bible except Esther and Song of Solomon.
- The first Bible printed in America was an Indian language in 1663. This translation was made and published by John Eliot, the so-called "Apostle to the Indians." This is the earliest example of the whole Bible translated and printed in a new language for the purpose of evangelization.
- The first English Bible printed in the United States was in 1782.
- The first translation of the Bible made in the United States was printed in 1808 by Charles Thomson.
- The first translation of the New Testament published in America was printed in 1826.
- Noah Webster, author of "Webster's Dictionary", made a translation of the Bible which was published in 1833.

Bible Facts

Number of chapters: 1189
 Number of books: 66
 Chapters: 1,189
 Verses: 31,101 or 31,173 (KJ)
 Words: 783,137 or 773,692 (KJ)
 Letters: 3,566,480
 Number of promises given in the Bible: 1,260
 The oldest parable in the Bible is in Judges 9:8-15
 Commands: 6,468
 Predictions: over 8,000
 Fulfilled prophecy: 3,268 verses
 Unfulfilled prophecy: 3,140
 Number of questions: 3,294
 Longest name: Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah 8:1)

Longest verse: Esther 8:9 (78 words)
Shortest verse: John 11:35 (2 words: "Jesus wept") – but Job 3:2 is shorter in NIV
Middle books: Micah and Nahum
Middle verse: Psalm 118:8 or Psalm 97:8 or Psalm 103:1, 2 depending on translation
Middle chapter: Psalm 117
Shortest chapter (based on number of words): Psalm 117
Longest book: Psalms (150 chapters)
Shortest book (based on number of words): 3 John
Shortest book (based on number of verses): 2 John (13 verses)
Longest chapter: Psalm 119 (176 verses)
Number of times the word "God" appears: 3,358
Number of times the word "Lord" appears: 7,736
Number of different authors: 40
The Old Testament has more than 60 references to Jesus.
The New Testament contains more than 260 Old Testament quotations.

Old Testament Facts

Number of books: 39
Chapters: 929
Verses: 23,114 or 23,214 (KJ)
Words: 602,585 or 592,439 (KJ)
Letters: 2,278,100
Middle book: Proverbs
Middle chapter: Job 20 or Job 29
Middle verses: 2 Chronicles 20:17,18
Smallest book: Obadiah
Shortest verse: 1 Chronicles 1:25
Longest verse: Esther 8:9
Longest chapter: Psalms 119
Largest book: Psalms

New Testament Facts

Number of books: 27
Chapters: 260
Verses: 7,957 or 7,959 (KJ)
Words: 180,552 or 181,253 (KJ)
Letters: 838,380
Middle book: 2 Thessalonians
Middle chapters: Romans 8, 9 or Romans 13
Middle verse: Acts 27:17 or 17:17
Smallest book: 3 John
Shortest verse: John 11:35 (KJ) – but Job 3:2 is shorter in NIV
Longest verse: Revelation 20:4
Longest chapter: Luke 1
Longest book: Acts. It has 28 chapters. Matthew also has 28 chapters, but it is shorter.