

The Reliability of the Bible

Teaching Labs, 9/9/26

New Life Christian Fellowship, Fortville

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1. The Bible as the Word of God

1 Thessalonians 2:13 *"When you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God..."*

2 Peter 1:21 *"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

What three questions will we ask tonight about the Bible's reliability?

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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2. The Old Testament

1 Corinthians 10:6 *"Now these things took place as examples for us..."*

Romans 15:4 *"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction..."*

Archaeological evidence — fill in as we go:

The Habiru = the _____ ?

The Merneptah Stele (____ BC) — the first mention of _____ outside the Bible

The Tel Dan Stele (discovered ____) — mentions the House of _____ (see 1 Kings 19:15–17)

Sennacherib's Prism (____ BC) — parallels 2 Kings 18–19 and Isaiah _____

Jesus' Scriptures

Luke 24:44 *"The Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms"*

Josephus (AD 37–100) confirms this threefold division, giving the 1st-century Jewish perspective — and excluding the _____.

3. The New Testament

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..."

Evidence from within the New Testament

1 Timothy 5:18 quotes _____ as "Scripture"

2 Peter 3:15–16 “...just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters...”

The Canon Timeline — fill in the dates and names:

___ — Marcion rejects the Old Testament; makes his own list

___ — Tatian combines the four Gospels into a “Harmony” (the ___)

___ — Irenaeus (Against Heresies) cites 4 Gospels and ___ of our 27 books

c. 170–200 — The ___ Fragment — potentially the earliest surviving canon list

___ — Eusebius lists books recognized, disputed, and rejected

___ — Athanasius lists our exact ___ books in a pastoral Easter letter

How did the early church select which books belonged?

- Connection to the Apostles
- The “Rule of Faith” (2 Tim 1:13; Gal 6:16 — canon)
- What about other “gospels” (e.g. the Gospel of Thomas)? Why these four?

4. Manuscript Reliability

Critics sometimes cite ___ manuscript variants.

About ___% are insignificant — largely because we have so many manuscripts (over ___).

Conclusion

Isaiah 55:11 “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

For Further Reading

- The Apologetics Study Bible
- Michael Kruger, Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books

My Notes & Questions
