

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

WORD IN THE WORLD SERIES

Pradeep Dias

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A decorative graphic consisting of a white L-shaped line that frames the top and left sides of the text area. A vertical green gradient bar is positioned to the left of the text, transitioning from a lighter green at the top to a darker green at the bottom. A horizontal green bar is positioned below the text, extending from the left edge of the text area to the right.

PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

SERIES OBJECTIVES

- Gain a deeper understanding of what the Bible is
- Increase their confidence in the Bible
- Minds expanded and Faith Deepened
- Understand the challenges to the Bible in culture and society
- How to read and study the Bible?

WHAT WILL WE LEARN TODAY?

- Introduction to the Series
- Introduction to the Bible

WHAT TOPICS WE WILL COVER?

- Week 1 Introduction of the course and format
Introduction of the Bible
- Week 2 What does Inspiration, Inerrancy and Infallibility mean?
- Week 3 What does the Necessity and Sufficiency mean?
- Week 4 Can I trust the Old Testament?
- Week 5 Can I trust the New Testament?
- Week 6 Contemporary challenges to the Bible – Pt 1
- Week 7 Contemporary challenges to the Bible – Pt 2
- Week 8 How to read & interpret the Bible?

WEEK 1

What is the Bible?

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WHAT WILL WE LEARN TODAY?

- 8:00 AM Start on Time (Etiquette / Prayer)
- 8:05 AM
 - Intro to the series
 - Intro to the Bible
 - Background to the Bible
 - Who wrote it?
 - Where and when was written?
 - How can we know for sure?
 - Why does it exist?
 - How was the Bible formed?
 - What about the other books?
- 8:45 AM Specific Questions / Discussions
- 8:55 AM
 - Wrap Up
 - Next Week's Topic
 - Prayer

TRANSITION SLIDE

- I remember when I was about 6 or 7. I was so taken up with the Bible that I started to translate it from English to Sinhala 😊
- 500 years ago, the Bible was not available freely like we have it today.
- It is no coincidence the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther coincided with the printing press in Wittenberg
- The key themes of the Reformation was
 - By Scripture Alone, By Faith Alone, By Grace Alone, Through Christ Alone
- Martin Luther reminded us of our mandated, that we are all priests and this meant each priest had to have access to the Bible in their language.
- This Bible had such a profound impact on civilization and human history
 - Reformation, Scientific Revolution, Abolishing of Slavery, Civil Rights Movement, Workers Rights, Human Rights
- These leaders did so not by abandoning the Bible, rather by going deeper

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED
GENESIS

BY FAR THE GREATEST BEST SELLER OF ALL
TIME, 100 MILLION COPIES IN 2020 AND
TRANSLATED TO 690 LANGUAGES. A PROMISED
LAND BY BARAK OBAMA ACCOUNTS FOR CIRCA
6 MILLION COPIES (TOP 10 NY BEST SELLER)

WHAT IS THE BIBLE ALL ABOUT?

- Facts about the Bible:

- 66 books, 39 in the OT and 27 in the NT
 - Written over a period of 1600 years
- Has more than 40 authors
 - Kings, generals, diplomats, fishermen, doctor, tent maker, etc.
- It was originally written in
 - Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek
- Where was it written?
 - It was written in three continents (Asia, Africa, Europe)
- Made up of various genres (styles of writing)
 - Historical narratives, biographies, poetry, wisdom, law, prophetic, letters, apocalyptic
- Written in
 - Stone (10 commandments), clay and wooden tablets, papyrus and parchment (animal skin)

WHAT IS THE BIBLE ALL ABOUT?

- What the Bible is Not:

- It is NOT a book on biology or cosmology or psychology or sociology
- It is NOT an encyclopaedia
- It is NOT a book only on right living
- It is NOT a book only on history
- It is NOT a human book only

- What the Bible IS:

- It IS a book about God, about us and His Grand Plan of Redemption
- It IS a book where you can trace divine finger print from start to end
- It IS written in History with Real People, Real Place, Real Names and Real Events
 - It IS NOT fantasy stories to communicate moral truth
- It HAS propositions about science, history, sociology, archaeology
- It tells us about what is the Right and Wrong and the Right Way to Live

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THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED
GENESIS

**BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY REFUSES TO SEPARATE
HISTORICAL FACT FROM SPIRITUAL MEANING.
ITS CORE CLAIM IS THAT THE LIVING GOD HAS
ACTED IN HISTORY, ESPECIALLY IN THE LIFE,
DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS – NANCY
PEARCY**



DISCUSSION

What is the Bible?

WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE BIBLE?



WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE BIBLE?

- It stems from God.
 - He is personal, relational, loving, wise, all knowing, all powerful, ever present God
 - Part of being loving and relational is communication.
- The Bible ultimately God's communication to us.
 - It is His great love letter to us and the fulfilment of this love to us in Christ Jesus.
 - The OT looked forward to the Messiah
 - The NT revealed the Messiah and the ushering in of the Kingdom of God
- It was not only His idea, but He also wrote the first words that is in the Bible; He wrote down the 10 commandments on the stone tablets at Sinai.
- It is ultimately there to tell us about
 - God, about us, the way to God, and the way to live a life that is worthy of God's call.



**“I NEVER SAW A USEFUL CHRISTIAN WHO WAS
NOT A STUDENT OF THE BIBLE.”**

D. L. MOODY

An aerial photograph of a city with a grid of buildings. A large green rectangular area is overlaid on the left side, and a grey rectangular area is overlaid in the center. The text is centered within the grey area.

DISCUSSION

What is the Bible?

HOW DID WE GET THE OLD TESTAMENT?



HOW DID WE GET THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- The 39 books of the OT was written between 1400BC to 435BC
- The first book is Genesis and the last book in Malachi
- It is important to remember there are prophetic and historical books
 - The prophetic finishes with Malachi (last three after the second exodus)
 - The historical finishes with Esther (she married Artaxerxes)
- From 435 BC there was no prophetic voice in Israel.
- With the end of the prophetic, so did the OT Scriptures
- Jewish Historian Josephus who was a Pharisee (not Christian), writing in AD 93, lists the books of the OT
 - He lists 22. This is because he combines some of the OT books in our modern bible

WHAT ABOUT THE APOCRYPHA?



WHAT ABOUT THE APOCRYPHA?

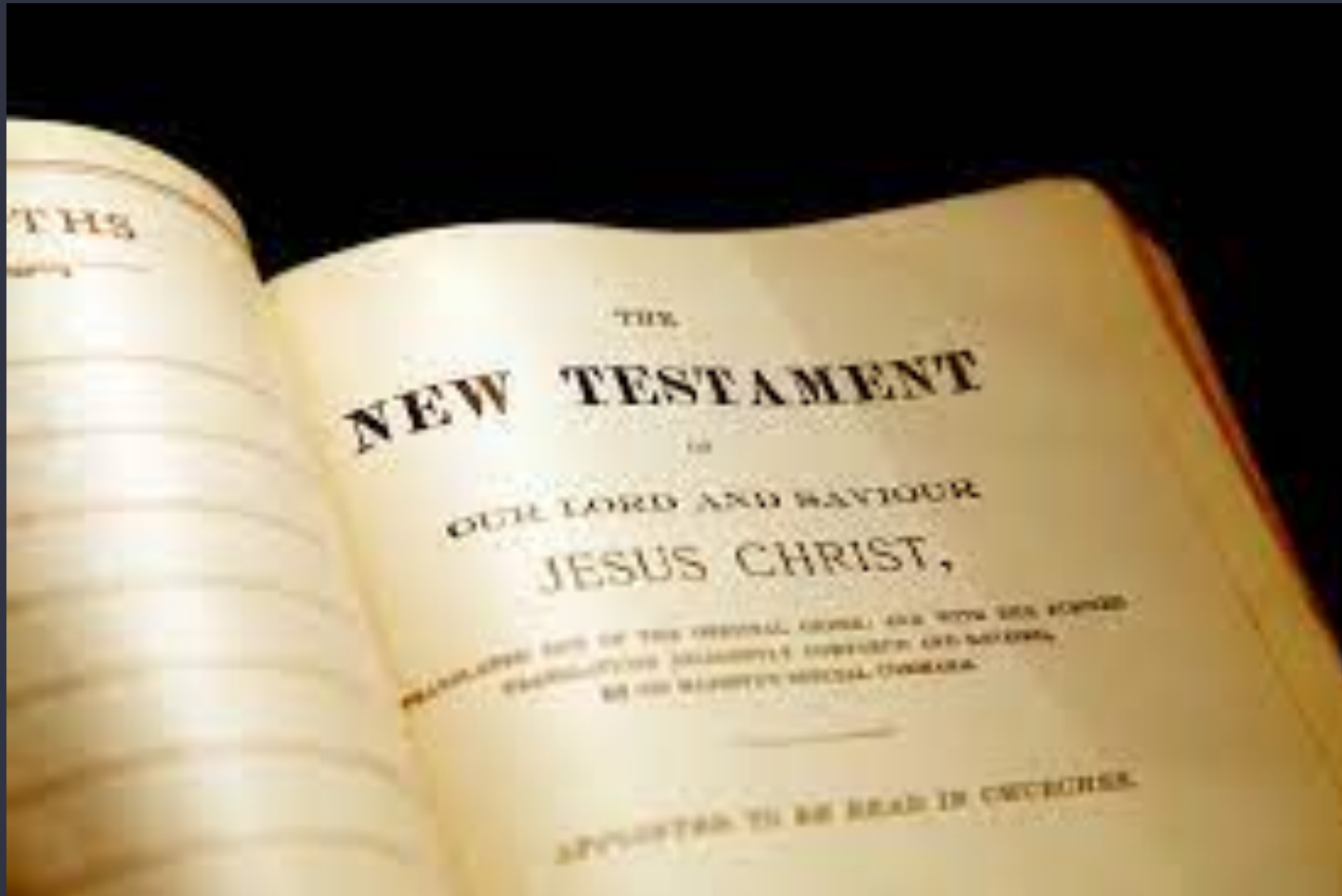
- Apocrypha is a set of 15 additional books such as Tobith, Maccabees, Judith, etc. that is found in the Catholic Old Testament.
- This is historical literature and wisdom literature included.
- Both Historians and the Apocrypha admit that the OT cannon was closed with Malachi and Prophets.
- Josephus goes on to say
 - About 435BC with Artaxerxes (book of Esther) many documents written but none of it stands up to the test of Scripture.
- The Jews continued to record history e.g. 1 and 2 Maccabees but admits there was no prophets in Israel.
- The Talmud, Azariah and Sirach admits that there were no prophets in Israel
- Additionally,
 - Jesus nor the apostles quoted from the Apocrypha
 - Early church fathers did not recognize Apocryphal books as scripture

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DISCUSSION

What is the Bible?

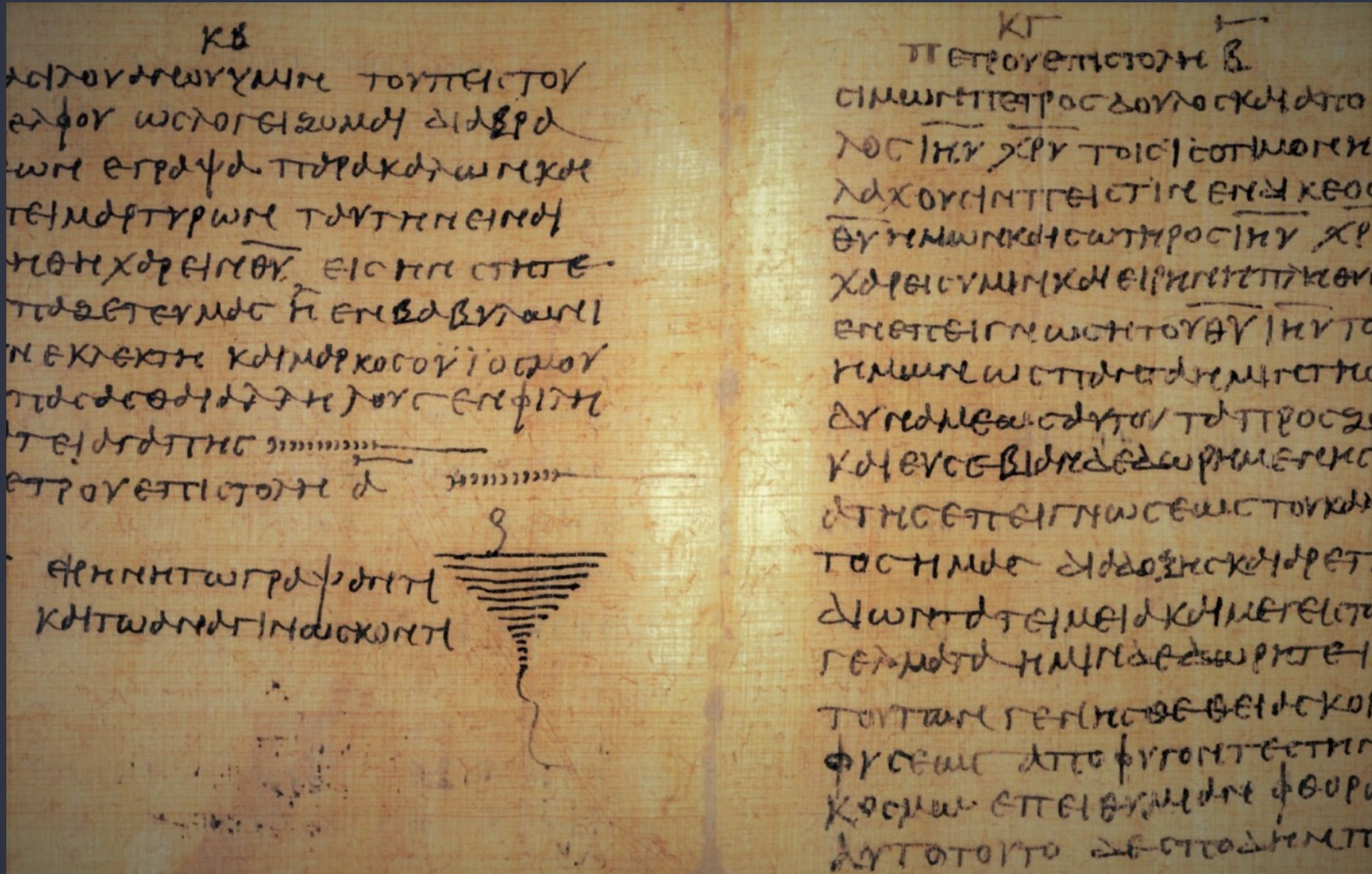
HOW DID WE GET THE NEW TESTAMENT?



HOW DID WE GET THE NT?

- When John the Baptist appears in Palestine, that is over 430 years later.
- The nation is waiting for a prophet, feeling abandoned by God.
- Imagine the excitement and the message of readying the way for Christ
- What the OT was foreshadowing, the NT revealed: Jesus Christ
- It was no longer the prophet that was writing. It had shifted to apostles.
- Jesus promised the Holy Spirit that will lead them to all truth, bring things to remembrance accurately.
- The apostles claims the same level of authority as the prophets calling NT as Scripture (2 Pet 3:16, Luke 10:7).
- The NT scriptures were written by apostles or people under apostolic authority.

DID IT TAKE CENTURIES FOR THE NT TO FORM?



DID IT TAKE CENTURIES FOR THE NT TO FORM?

- The short answer is No!
- Many of the NT books was in distribution within 30 years of Jesus' death in AD33.
- The last book (gospel of John) was written in AD 90
 - 110 AD – Ignatius (martyred, mentions 7 Pauline letters as Scripture)
 - 125 AD – Papias (affirms Mark, Matthew, John, some Pauline letters)
 - 155 AD – Polycarp (martyred, 7 Pauline letters as Scripture)
 - 160 AD – Justin (affirms the gospel alongside the prophets)
 - 180 AD – Muratorian Cannon (22 of the 27 NT books incl. the 4 gospels)
 - 180 AD – Irenaeus (22 of the 27 NT books incl. the 4 gospels)
 - 189 AD – Clement (24 of the 27 NT books e.g. James, Jude missing)
 - 230 AD – Tertullian (affirms all except 2 Pet, James, 2 and 3 John)
- Don't be afraid that not all 27 was in early. That is because the church was super careful on deciding what made the NT vs. not. They were very selective.

IS THE NT CANNON STILL OPEN?

- The short answer is No!
- 95 AD – Clement (bishop of church, he is not an apostle and his writing is not scripture).
- 110 AD – Ignatius. He doesn't compare with the apostles
- Anti-Nicean Father (before 320 AD). 1000s of pages of early Christian writings quoting only from the NT you and I have. This is before the 300s.
- More importantly
 - The final and greatest revelation is Jesus Christ. He is the climax (Heb 1:1-2)
 - There is a finality to the revelation of Jesus Christ. Once this revelation is complete, no more is to be expected.

HOW DID THE NT COME TOGETHER?

- Rejected books
 - The other gospels were either fantastical, legendary, and doesn't align with the theology communicated by the apostles
 - Some of the productions were very late with no apostolic authority
 - Obvious forgeries
 - Some of the rejected books were orthodox e.g. Clement. However as Clement himself acknowledged, he nor his writings were apostolic. This is like reading Tozer, CS Lewis, John Stott, etc. They are orthodox but not scripture.

The most popular example of Gnostic writings is the Gospel of Thomas. It certainly wins the most scandalous passage award: “Simon Peter said to them, ‘Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.’ Jesus said, ‘I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven’” (Saying 114).

- It is not that the church didn't know about them, rather they knew and rejected them.



Q&A

What is the Bible?

An aerial photograph of a city with a grid of buildings. A large green rectangular area is overlaid on the left side, and a grey rectangular area is overlaid in the center. The text 'WRAP UP AND LOOKING TO WEEK 2' is centered in the grey area.

WRAP UP AND LOOKING TO WEEK 2

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