

May 11 & 12

# REASONS <sup>to</sup> BELIEVE

## Canonicity

1. Actual events went down
2. Oral stories were passed around
3. Authors eventually wrote them down
4. Documents were then copied down
5. Church leaders organized and bound

## Was the Bible compiled responsibly?

Canon: the list of books considered to have divine authority.

1. Inspiration – The Holy Spirit spoke through humans
2. Authority – Those words carried divine weight
3. Canon – Those books with divine authority

What gives a book its authority is not its canonicity but its inspiration.

OLD TESTAMENT – should it be the 39 or should we add the Apocrypha?

Apocrypha: a collection of 12-15 Jewish books written primarily 100-200 years before the time of Jesus

Examples: 1,2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith

Reasons against the canonicity of the Apocrypha

1. The New Testament does not cite from it.
2. Jesus only mentions the 39 as Scripture.
3. 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews did not consider it canonical.
4. Neither did prominent early church leaders.
5. They contain theological issues.

Since Jesus, the New Testament writers, and the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century recognized only the 39 as canonical, so should we.

NEW TESTAMENT – are there documents left out that should have been added?

Pseudepigrapha: attaching a famous name to a document not written by that person to gain credibility

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2; 3:17 *Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us... I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.*

Examples: Gospel of Thomas, Epistle of Barnabas  
Other Writings: Shepherd of Hermas, 1 Clement

## Criteria for Canonicity

Apostolic Authority  
Extending back to the Apostles  
Inspired by God  
Orthodox Teaching  
Universal Usage

## CONCLUSIONS

The church was not the determiner of the canon, but the discoverer.

There's no need to get riled by the way it was compiled.