

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

(Article 2, EFCA Statement of Faith)

During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther said: “sola scriptura”.

During the Free Church Movement, their motto was: “where stands it written?”

1. Old and New Testaments

The word *bible* comes from a Greek word for book_____.

The New Testament calls the Old Testament Scripture, from the Greek word meaning “writing_____.”

Like history, the Bible is divided into the period prior to Jesus’ coming (BC or “before Christ”) and the period following his coming (AD or *anno Domini*, which is Latin for “in the year of our Lord”).

The Old Testament is made up of thirty-nine books and was originally written in Hebrew_____, with parts of Daniel and Ezra in Aramaic over the course of more than one thousand years.

The New Testament has twenty-seven books and was originally written in Greek_____. Every New Testament book was completed by the close of the first century A.D.

The original manuscripts were written on papyrus_____—a form of paper made out of reeds; and on parchments_____—prepared animal skins.

“A synagogue roll [scroll] must be written on the skins of clean animals, and prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew. They must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex. The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of 30 letters. The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words should be written without a line, it is worthless. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe. An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate. No word or letter, not even a *yod*, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him...Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; between every new *parashah* [section] the breadth of nine consonants; between every book, three lines. The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so. Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, wash his whole body, not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, and should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.”

-Samuel Davidson, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*

In the early 1200s a lecturer at the University of Paris created the Bible's chapter divisions. Verse divisions were fully developed by 1551 in an effort to provide addresses (like our homes & neighborhoods) to help locate particular sections. Today there are 1,189 chapters and 31,173 verses in the English Bible.

The Old Testament makes up over 77 percent of the Christian Bible with 929 chapters and 23,214 verses. The New Testament has 260 chapters and 7,959 verses.

The longest Old Testament book is Psalms, the shortest is Obadiah.
The longest New Testament book is Acts, the shortest are 2 and 3 John.

The Old Testament ended with the prophet Malachi promising that the next major event in redemptive history would be the coming of John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Jesus (Malachi 4:5-6).

Between the Old and New Testaments were four hundred years of silence during which no book of the Bible was written until John came as promised (Luke 1:11-17).

The New Testament ends with its final book, Revelation, telling us that no other books of the Bible are to be written after it (Revelation 22:18-19), and that we will again have silence until Jesus comes again, (Revelation 22:20-21). We do not need any more information but rather the fulfillment of the promises we have already received. The Bible tells us that Jesus is God's final word to us (Hebrews 1:1-2) and that we should not add anything to God's revealed word (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6).

The early church father Origen (185-254) was the first to refer to Old and New Testaments. Before this time Jews and early Christians would have referred to what we call the Old Testament as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings or all of them generally as the Scriptures. Origen's reading of Jeremiah 31:31 led to the confusion. Jeremiah's use of the word "new" did not refer to something detached from the prior works of God, but something renewed or fulfilled.

The New Testament then, is dependent upon and linked to the Old Testament as its renewed fulfillment. The New Testament includes about three hundred direct quotes and over four thousand Old Testament indirect references. Of 260 New Testament chapters 209 of them quote the Old Testament!

The Old Testament, then, is a series of promises God makes and the New Testament is the fulfillment of those promises.

An example of how the New Testament is God keeping his Old Testament promises: Abraham believed by faith that his seed (Jesus) would save him—this is the gospel of Jesus Christ that Christians today still trust for salvation.

- Galatians 3:7-14
- Romans 3:27-4:25

"As we read the Old Testament we must remember that our position in history is not entirely unlike the Old Testament Christians. They read the Old Testament in faith, anticipating the first coming of Jesus to fulfill the promises of the Old Testament. We now read both the Old and New Testaments in faith, eagerly awaiting the second coming of Jesus to fulfill the remaining promises of Scripture given to his people."

-Mark Driscoll, *A book you'll actually read On the Old Testament*

Which books are to be included in the Bible?

Canonization is the process by which books were included in the Bible.

Canon is a term meaning “a measuring stick.” The canon refers to those books which were measured by a standard and accepted as divinely inspired.

Tests of Canonicity:

1. Is it divinely inspired?
2. Was it written by a Prophet of God (OT) or by an eyewitness testimony (Apostle) to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (NT)? (Deuteronomy 18:18-22; John 19:35; Acts 1:1-3; 1 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Peter 1:16)
 - a. The prophet's authority was confirmed by an act of God, (Hebrews 2:3-4).
3. Does the writing tell the truth about God in agreement with God's other prophets and the rest of Scripture? (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:22; 2 Corinthians 11:1-6; Galatians 1:8)
4. Can it be traced to the time and place of the writer?
5. Did the writing reveal God's power by transforming people's lives? (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 3:1-3)
6. Did God's people recognize the prophet's writings as truth and inspired by God? (Deuteronomy 31:24-26; Joshua 24:26; 1 Samuel 10:25; Daniel 9:2; John 10:14; 2 Corinthians 1:12-14; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:27; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16)

Facts about the Canon:

1. Prophetic and Apostolic authorship comprises the canon.
2. The body of Christ affirms the canon.
3. God alone determines the canon.

Many other books were written during the 400 years between the end of the Old Testament and the coming of Jesus. These books are known as the Apocrypha, meaning “hidden” or “concealed.” These books included works of history, fiction, wisdom, and end-times speculation and were read by many devout Jews yet they were never regarded as Scripture.

Reasons not to include the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon in Scripture:

1. Many of the apocryphal books were written under a pen _____ name _____ so the true identity of the author would remain unknown.
 - a. These pen names were often biblical names (e.g. Enoch, Adam, Abraham, Solomon) deceiving readers to believe the books were written by these biblical men.
2. None of the Apocryphal books are quoted _____ or referenced _____ in the New Testament (with the only exception being a much debated section of Jude).
3. Jesus did not accept these books as inspired by God. (Luke 24:44; 11:50-51; Genesis 4:8-9; 2 Chronicles 24:20-22)
4. Though written by Jews for Jews about Jews, the Jews have never considered the Apocrypha to be inspired by God.
 - a. Josephus (a highly respected 1st century A.D. Jewish historian) declared that no scriptures were added after the time of Persian King Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.), the era of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi.
5. The return of God's people from captivity marked the last of prophetic voices with Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The next big event in redemptive history would be the coming of John _____ the Baptist _____ to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah to come to the Temple. (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6)
6. The Apocryphal books themselves deny _____ divine inspiration. (1 Maccabees 9:27; 14:41) While the Old Testament affirms 3,808 times that it is transmitting the very words of God ("Thus says the LORD"), the Apocryphal writers did not themselves believe they were inspired by God. (2 Maccabees 2:23; 15:38)
7. The early _____ church _____ as a whole never accepted these books as God's Word.
 - a. Responding to criticisms of the Protestant Reformation ("*Sola Scriptura*") the Catholic Church voted to insert new books into their Bible (over 1500 years after they were written and rejected as God's Word) at the Council _____ of Trent _____ in 1546.
 - b. Rather than repenting and changing their unbiblical beliefs & practices the Catholic Church simply changed their Bible.

2. Verbally Inspired Word of God

a. **Verse:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“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.”

b. **Term:** inspiration

c. **Definition:** All the words of Scripture are God’s words.

i. “All” means that 100 % of Scripture is inspired.

ii. “Scripture” in this verse primarily refers to the Old Testament, but the New Testament books were also being recognized as God’s word:

1. In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes Luke 10:7 and calls Luke’s words “Scripture.”

2. Peter was appointed by Jesus as the leader of the disciples. He states that Jesus spoke through the New Testament apostles in the exact same way he had through the Old Testament prophets in 2 Peter 3:2 and in 2 Peter 3:16 he refers to Paul’s words as “Scripture.”

iii. “God-breathed” may also be translated “inspired.”

1. “Verbal” inspiration means that the *very words* were given by God (not just thoughts or ideas).

2. “Plenary” inspiration means that *every word* was given by God (not just some of the words).

iv. Jesus himself taught that the words of the Bible were God’s words.

1. Matthew 4:4 – Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

d. Yet the words of the Bible were also written by men, each with unique and obvious differences in education, style, occupation, personality, etc. Thus, we believe in the dual authorship of Scripture; the Bible was written by both God and humans, (John 12:38, Acts 28:25).

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – “And we also thank God constantly for this, that 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, which is at work in you believers.”

i. How can they be *both* God’s words and human words?

1. The divine and human authorship of Scripture is much like Jesus himself, who was both fully God and fully man. God chose to work through the humanity of Jesus to reveal himself much like he had previously revealed himself through the men who wrote the Old Testament.

ii. What was the *process* of inspiration?

1. 2 Peter 1:20-21 – “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. The Holy Spirit _____ allowed humans to record His words so that they could write and faithfully record the exact words as God had intended (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15).

a. God accomplished this in many different ways but the end product was always His Word...

- i. Dictation (Exodus 20:1-7)
- ii. Personal Experience (1 John 1:1-4)
- iii. Dreams & Visions (Isaiah 6:1)
- iv. Songs & Poetry (Psalms)
- v. Reflection (Ephesians 3:4-6)
- vi. History (Luke 1:1-4)
- vii. Nature (Romans 1:19-20)
- viii. Other revelations (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)
- ix. Jesus Christ (John 1; Hebrews 1:1-2)

3. Without Error

a. **Verse:** Psalm 12:6

“And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.”

b. **Term:** inerrancy

- c. Definition:** The Bible does not affirm _____ anything which is contrary to fact _____.
- i.** Though the term “inerrancy” is not used in Scripture it is a logical result of inspiration:
 - 1.** All the words of Scripture are God’s words – 2 Tim 3:16
 - 2.** God is truthful _____ and cannot lie _____ or speak falsely (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2).
 - 3.** Therefore, all the words of Scripture are true and without error _____ in any part (*inerrancy* John 17:17; Proverbs 20:5).
 - ii.** Jesus believed the Scriptures were without error and “cannot be broken.” Because they come from God, they possess His authority and power.

-John 10:35
-Matthew 5:18
 - iii.** “**Inerrancy**” *allows for things such as:* figures of speech, poetic language, idioms, round numbers, vague statements, loose quotations, unusual grammar, etc. None of these things affect the Bible’s truthfulness _____.

4. Complete Revelation & Ultimate Authority

a. Verse: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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.”

b. 2 Terms: Necessary _____ & Sufficient _____

- i.** *Necessary:* We absolutely need _____ the Bible.
 - ii.** *Sufficient:* The Bible is absolutely all _____ we need.
- c. Explanation:** The Bible contains everything _____ God wants us to know for:

- i. *Salvation through faith in Jesus* (John 5:39-40; 2 Timothy 3:15)
- ii. *Spiritual growth* (Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2)
- iii. *Fully knowing, trusting, & obeying God* (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:1)

Are we missing parts of the Bible?

- The Bible indicates that we do *not* have:
 - A comprehensive record of all that Jesus did. (John 21:25)
 - All the writings of the Apostles. (Colossians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 5:9)
- The Bible warns that:
 - Some letters claim to be inspired but are not. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)
 - Some will depart from the faith and devote themselves to demonic, deceitful, and silly myths. (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 7; Titus 1:14; 2:1; 2 Peter 1:16)
- The Bible indicates that we *do* have:
 - The writings God inspired through his chosen prophets to reveal himself, his works, his will, and his plan of salvation in Jesus. (Exodus 34:6-8; Isaiah 55:8-9)
 - An adequate and trustworthy testimony of Jesus' teachings, life, death, and resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:1-11; 2 Peter 1:16)
 - All that we need for life, salvation, and fulfilling God's will for our lives. (2 Timothy 3:15; Romans 10:17; John 17:6)

d. Example: The Bible is our metaphorical Supreme Court _____.

- i. Practically, this means that the truths of all human understanding, discoveries, and developments are to be evaluated in accordance with divinely inspired Scripture.

Besides the Bible's claims of itself, what evidence do we have that the Bible is reliable, trustworthy, and God's Word?

1. Indestructibility _____: the Bible has survived countless accusations against its truthfulness and attacks against its physical existence.
2. Fulfilled _____ prophecy _____: Jesus Christ personally fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies.
3. Accuracy _____: The Bible is continually proving itself to be true in academic disciplines such as: history, archeology, and geography.

4. Consistency _____ : The Bible was written by 40 different men (from different backgrounds, locations, and times in history) over a span of nearly 2,000 years yet all of them agree on the same themes.
5. Effect _____ : The Bible has played a transformative role in countless lives and has promoted positive changes in societies.

Though these may be convincing reasons to believe the Bible is God's Word and is true; ultimately, we will not be persuaded until:

The Holy _____ Spirit _____ speaks through the words to our hearts _____.

- Acts 16:14
- John 10:27
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13