

Who Wrote the WORD?

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the popular explanations of how the Bible was formed?
2. What does inspiration mean?

What is a Canon?

The word *canon* originated from the Greek word *kanōn* and Hebrew word *qaneh*, meaning, “reed”. “The canon of Scripture refers to the collection of biblical books that Christians accept as uniquely authoritative.” (Introduction to Biblical Interpretation p.103)

1. It is important to understand the standard used to decide which books were to be included in the Bible since...
 - a. We believe that God has revealed everything He wants us to know through the sixty-six books of the Bible. There is no need to add or subtract books from the books of the Bible because they are sufficient for faith, doctrine and practice.
2. The Old Testament official criteria for canonicity have been lost through antiquity. The common belief is that the authority of the OT authors came from God Himself
3. The New Testament criteria for canonicity was developed through the council meetings of the early church and finalized in 397 A.D. at the Council of Carthage. There were three criteria for the canon of the NT: Apostolic Authority, Theology, and Spiritual Value.

“We must say that canon theoretically remains open... if some additional document could meet all the criteria for canonicity. But practically, the canon is closed, since a work that had not been used for nearly twenty centuries could not meet the criterion of catholicity and would almost certainly not command the acclaim of more than a minority of Christians today.” (Introduction to Biblical Interpretation p. 116)

How Did the Early Church Order the Old and New Testament Canon

The Old and New Testament were ordered in a natural and logistical manner that reflected God’s providence through history and culture.

1. The order of the OT in the Christian Bible
 - a. Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy)
 - b. Historical Books (Joshua-Esther)
 - c. Poetical and Wisdom books (Job-Song of Songs)
 - d. Prophetic books (Isaiah-Malachi)

2. The order of the NT
 - a. The Gospels (Matthew-John)
 - b. Acts of the Apostles
 - c. The Epistles of Paul (Romans-Philemon)
 - d. General Epistles (Hebrews-Jude)
 - e. The Book of Revelation

Who really wrote the Bible?

1. **The general answer is that the biblical authors were *divinely inspired* by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of God.** God, through the Spirit, guided humans to write using their own skill within their own linguistic, historical, and cultural context.
2. **Verbal Plenary Inspiration:** Verbal plenary inspiration means that every word written in the entire Bible is the divinely inspired revelation from God to the author.
3. Inspiration connotes breathing in and being moved intellectually, emotionally or spiritually. This is not accurate to the original Greek meaning is “breathed out by God” (theopnesutos in Greek) which was used by Paul in his second letter of 2 Timothy 3:16.
4. Scripture is defined as “a word that was a technical term for the New Testament authors, and it was used only of those writings that were thought to be God’s Words and therefore part of the canon of Scripture.” (Grudem; Systematic Theology p. 61)

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired (theopnesutos) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17 (NASB)

What about the Apocrypha and the Gnostic Gospels?

1. The Apocrypha (“things that are hidden” in Greek) are a collection of Jewish writings that are not part of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures.
 - a. Jewish scholars consider them important works to the Jewish culture and history but not verbal plenary inspired by God.
 - b. Jesus and the NT authors did not reference them in their ministry and writings.

2. The Gnostic Gospels were written after the 1st century A.D. by Gnostic mystics who denied the Truth the Jesus was fully man and God and that knowledge from scripture comes only through “secret wisdom”. The Gnostic Gospels fail the canonicity standard because
 - a. The authorship did not come from apostolic authority-these writings were written in the 1st century A.D. when all the NT writers have died and the authorship is unknown.
 - b. The theology of taught by the Gnostic gospels contradict the Four Gospels and the other NT writings.

“In all known literature, there no candidates that even come close to Scripture when the consideration is given both to their doctrinal consistency with the rest of Scripture and to the type of authority they claim for themselves (as well as the way those claims of authority have been received by other believers). Once again, God’s faithfulness to his people convinces us that there is nothing missing from Scripture that God thinks we need to know for obeying him and trusting him fully. The canon of Scripture today is exactly what God wanted it to be, and it will stay that way until he returns.”
(Grudem, Systematic Theology p. 68)