

1 BIBLE BASICS

2 Review Proofs of the Bible

- 1 **Internal Evidence:** The Bible is called the Word of God, claims it came from God, and that God is its author.
- 2 **External Evidence:** Continuity, revelations, influence, talks about the unknown and unknowable.
 - The Bible is scientifically accurate.
 - It is historically accurate.
 - The Bible has endured for millenniums.
 - The Bible is like a lion that needs no defence.
- 3 "The Bible is a reliable collection of historical documents, written by eye-witnesses, during the lifetime of other witnesses, that report supernatural events, which took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies, and claim that their writings are divine rather than of human origin." Yostle Beacham

3 THE BIBLE'S CANONICITY

What process was followed to decide which books were to be in the Bible?

4 What is Bible Canoncity?

- The word "canon" refers to a rule which serves as a measure.
- When we speak of the canon of Scripture, we refer to the 66 Books that measure up to divine inspiration.
- Canonization has to do with determining which books deserve the designation of "Scripture" and ought to be included in the Bible. It is not so much a process of *deciding* which books we want to include in the canon, but rather a process of *discovering* which books belong there. Downey, Paul W. From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man, p. 31

5 What is Bible Canoncity?

- Every God-inspired Book was part of the biblical canon the moment God had it written down. God knew what He Inspired!
- However, in some cases, it took time for Christians to agree that a Book was part of God's canon.
- Church councils did not create the canon; they simply recognized the Books in God's inspired canon.
- Today, books in the canon are those that are universally recognized by Christians on the official list of books of Scripture. Christianity accepts sixty-six books of the Bible, thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books. Towns, Elmer, Doctrine of the Bible, Inerrancy and Canoncity, theWord edition.

6 Human Guidelines for Identifying the Old Testament

- The book must have been written, edited, or endorsed by a prophet. Many of the books claim divine authority.
- At that time, Israel recognised the divine origin and inspiration of the book. The books spoke with the power of God.
- Recognised scrolls were left in the safekeeping of priests.
- The New Testament quotes all but seven of the Old Testament books. (Obadiah, Nahum, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah.) Sickerson, Stanley, Notes on Theology: Bibliology Canoncity, theWord edition. Downey, p. 39

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The Dead Sea Scrolls are also important to show that the Old Testament canon was mostly set between the testaments. "The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in eleven caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea between the years 1947 and 1956... The Dead Sea Scrolls were most likely written by the Essenes during the period from about 200 B.C. to 68 C.E./A.D...

Interestingly, now with manuscripts predating the medieval period, we find these texts in substantial agreement with the Masoretic text as well as widely variant forms."

www.centuryone.com/25dssfacts.html

8 Human Guidelines for Identifying the New Testament

- They included books that were written by apostles or an author in special relationship to an apostle, such as Mark, Luke, and James. They were suitable for public reading.
- The contents were revelatory (special revelation) in nature . . .
- The church accepted books that were universally recognized as Scripture. These were the books that were used in preaching and teaching.
- The books that were considered inspired [by God] or gave evidence of inspiration where placed in the canon. Towns, Downey, p. 48

9 Rejection of the Apocrypha

- The word Apocrypha is the name given to the Jewish religious books of obscure origin (*apocrypha*, meaning "secret, hidden").
- These were late books (between the second century B.C. and the first, or even the second, century after Christ), which never were included in the Hebrew canon. "The Catholic church called them scripture in 1546 AD."*
- Christ and the apostles never referred to them.
- First century Christians did not include them in their inspired Scriptures. Pache, Rene, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, Chicago: Moody Press, 1971, p. 171-72, formatted
- They do not claim to be the Word of God. Downey, p. 41, * p. 44

10 Canoncity Dates

- The Old Testament canon was basically accepted before the time of Christ.
- The New Testament canon was mostly recognized by the second century. The following books were universally and unquestionably recognized as early as the second century: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, the thirteen epistles of Paul, 1 Peter, and 1 John. Pache, p. 176-78
- The earliest church council to list a New Testament canon was the council at Laodicea (AD 363). Downey, p. 55

11 The Bible is Complete

- All the truth that God is going to reveal has been revealed. This means God will not add to the truth about himself that he revealed in the Bible. Towns
- God's task of revealing truth is completed.
- We have a completed Bible containing 66 books.
- Those today who claim to receive new revelations from God are frauds.

12

Paul used this argument when writing to the Corinthians, "Ye are our epistle written in our heart, known and read of all men" (2Co 3:2). People today will not recognize the Bible for what it is until they see it lived out in our lives.

- Elmer Towns

13 **Summarise the Canonicity of the Bible**

- 1 **Canonization** has to do with determining which books deserve the designation of "Scripture" and ought to be included in the Bible. Every God-inspired Book was part of the biblical canon the moment God had it written down. God knew what He Inspired!
- 2 The **main criteria** for identifying a canonical book were:
Written by a prophet, apostle, or associate
Claimed to be God's Word
Accepted and used by believers
- 3 The **apocrypha** is not God's Word.
The **canon was identified** by AD 363.
God is not revealing new truth to men today. The Bible is complete!