

Can I Really Trust the Bible? **Why These Books and Not Those?**

I. REVIEW

A chain of five big questions (Greg Gilbert):

1. Can we be confident that the *translation* of the Bible from its original language accurately reflects the original?
2. Can we be confident that the copyists accurately *transmitted* the original writing to us?
3. Can we be confident that we're looking at *the right set of books* and that we haven't missed or lost a set of books out there that gives a different, but equally reliable and plausible, perspective on Jesus?
4. Can we be confident that the original authors were themselves *trustworthy*?
5. Can we be confident that the authors did, in fact, intend to give an accurate account of what happened and that what they described really took place? In other words, is it *true*?

II. INTRODUCTION: POPULAR DISMISSALS OF THE BIBLICAL CANON

- Bart Ehrman, *The Lost Scriptures*
- Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*
- Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*
- David Dungan, *Constantine's Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament*

Understanding the goal of our study: not convincing the skeptic but simply showing that we have good epistemic warrant for believing what we do about the Bible.

III. THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

→ Believing the canon of the OT is really an issue of believing Jesus (Luke 24:44)

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

Three common arguments made against it:

Two preliminary responses:

“The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity... Newton did not create gravity but recognized it.”

~ J. I. Packer

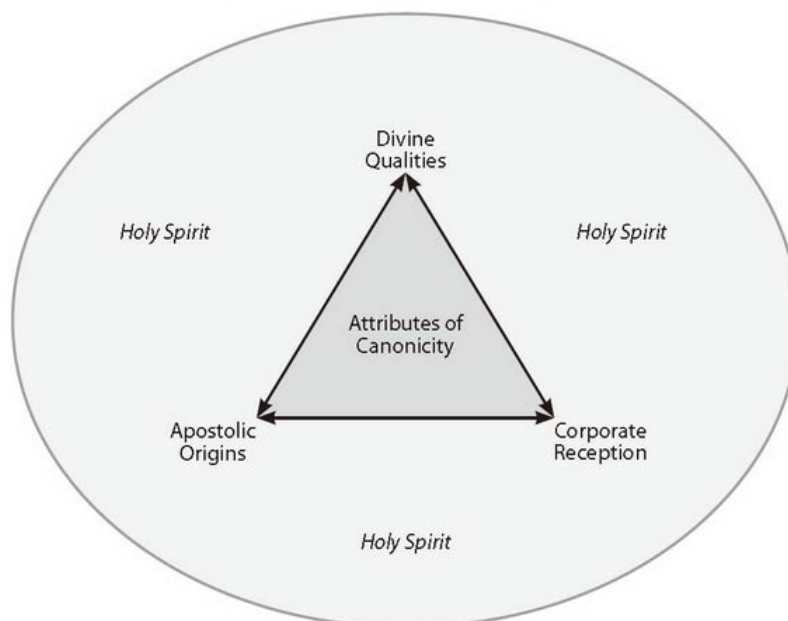
One defining question: what do these 27 books of the NT all have in common that unified them but excluded all others?

3 models [Kruger]

- Canon as community determined
- Canon as historically determined
- **Canon as self-authenticating**

Unpacking the self-authenticating model (i.e., what clues does Scripture give us for what is truly Scripture?)

Figure 1. The self-authenticating model



Spring Equip Classes 2019

The Bible: The Word of God for the People of God

(This course runs for 9 weeks from April 7 to June 16, excluding Easter Sunday and Memorial Day weekend.)

A general outline of the course:

- I. Introduction: *Rejoicing in God and His Word*
- II. What is the Bible? (dealing with doctrinal issues)
 - a. *God's Word Written: Inspiration & Inerrancy*
 - b. *Carried Along by the Holy Spirit: Human Authorship*
 - c. *Attributes of the Bible: Authoritative & Clear*
 - d. *Attributes of the Bible: Necessary & Sufficient*
- III. Can I really trust the Bible? (dealing with apologetic issues)
 - a. *Copies of Copies of Copies?*
 - b. *Why These Books and Not Those?*
 - c. *True Events from Trustworthy People?*
 - d. *Taking the Resurrected Jesus at His Word*

For how to better study, interpret, and disciple others with the Bible, join us for our upcoming *Impact* workshops:

- June 8 for men – *Fundamentals of Reading the Bible Well*
- June 21 & 22 for women

Resources used for the structure and content of this course:

- Craig Blomberg, *Can We Still Believe the Bible?*
- F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*
- F.F. Bruce, *The NT Documents: Are They Reliable?*
- Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word*
- Greg Gilbert, *Why Trust the Bible?*
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*
- Walter Kaiser, *The OT Documents*
- Michael Kruger, *Canon Revisited*
- J.I. Packer, *'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God*
- Derek Thomas, *The Bible*
- B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*
- Paul Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*