



The Origin of the Bible

Part 1 ~ Introduction



Why Study the Origin of the Bible?

1. Almost everything we know about the Bible we have heard in a sermon.
2. Few of us have looked behind the doctrines and common sayings of our upbringing to wrestle with how this book came to be in our hands.
3. Doubt abounds regarding the authority and accuracy of scripture, and its role in our life.
4. Many people discount the Bible, without investigating whether their skepticism is warranted.





Series Outline

Textual Criticism (Accuracy of the Transmission)

Inspiration (Scripture as God-Breathed)

Old Testament & New Testament Canon

Inerrancy and Infallibility

Translation of Scripture





Your Questions

Transmission:

Who wrote the early books of the Bible? How?

How was the Old Testament passed down?

How accurately was the Old Testament transmitted?

What did it mean for someone to “author” a book in the ancient Near East?

What was written down during the time the first Hebrew scriptures were “penned”? What other / similar forms of literature existed?

What do we make of the differences in quotations, for example, when Paul or one of the gospel writers quotes an Old Testament text slightly differently from the original wording?





Your Questions

Transmission:

How can we know that the scribes didn't fudge things on purpose?

The Canon

Who decided that there needed to be a canon and why?

What was the test for whether something was included in the canon?

Who made the decision on the order of the books included and which books to include?

Which books / letters were left out and what led to exclusion?





Your Questions

The Canon

What books were almost not included? Why did they remain?

Why do different churches have different canons?

Why are some verses included but with caveats?

What are other writings were still highly regarded?

Why is the book of Enoch quoted in the New Testament but not found in the canon?

What's the point of having four different gospel accounts?

Why isn't there just one account with everything combined?





Your Questions

The Canon

Knowing that humans decided what to include/exclude, how loosely do we hold to its infallibility?

How should we view non-canonical texts? Should we be alarmed by how “out there” they can be?

How do we know that “attributed books” really came from those sources?

Why should we adhere to decisions by church councils about what books should be included in the Bible?

Should we read Bibles that have more books than the Protestant Bible?

Did the Catholics have 66 books before the reformation?





Your Questions

Language & Translation:

What were the original languages each book was written in?

Why are there so many translations (versions) of the Bible?

Which is the most accurate translation?

Which translations of the Bible should we use more / use less?

How do editors of a new translation (version) of the Bible decide what to change?

Which Bible is "better," King James Version or NIV?





Your Questions

Inspiration:

What does “God inspired” mean? Who came up with the idea? What is it based on?

What does it mean for a writer to be “inspired” by the Holy Spirit.

Where does inspiration occur? Before writing? During writing?

How do we make sense of the fact that it was inspired by God yet written by humans (and some books by more than one author)?

How much of the Bible can be attributed to culture, as far as issues related to gender, etc.?

How do we grapple with God’s sovereignty when we consider human authorship and human fallibility?





Your Questions

Inerrancy & Infallibility:

Is the Bible without errors? If not, do we know what is reliable and what is not?

Where does the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy come from?

What would it mean if we discovered evidence that contradicted the Bible?





Questions We're Not Covering

What are the dates that each of the books were written?

What is the historical validity for the contents of the Bible (archaeology / anthropology)?

What scientific proof / other outside sources are there to verify the Bible is more than just a bunch of fables and fairy tales?

What proof can we offer that the Bible is inspired and true to someone who doesn't believe it is authoritative?

What do you say to someone that believes the Bible and all organized religion was just created to control the masses?

How can there be such a vast distinction between the testaments (an angry God who endorsed one nation above all others verses a God who humbles Himself in incarnation, suffering and death as an expression of love?)





Questions We're Not Covering

What are the primary views currently on how to interpret the Bible?

What was the primary perspective on interpretation for the people who determined the canon?

How do we deal with conflicting opinions / perspectives presented in the Bible (genocide vs. loving enemies, women's roles, etc.)?

How do we know what parts of scripture are to inform our living. In what way should we be influenced by the Bible?

Didn't Constantine convene a Biblical council to solidify political power in the Roman Empire?

If the Bible is authoritative because of the Holy Spirit directing the church, where does that stop / where is the line drawn?





Two Contrasting Questions...

What reason is there for trusting in the Bible? How can we trust any of it to be true?

How important is it that one understands issues of authorship / validity regarding the Bible? At the end of the it all, doesn't it simply come down to faith that the Bible is actually the word of God?





Two Contrasting Questions...

Insistence on Cartesian-Certainty Beyond any Possibility:

What reason is there for trusting in the Bible? How can we trust any of it to be true?

Reliance on Uninvestigated Faith:

How important is it that one understands issues of authorship / validity regarding the Bible? At the end of the it all, doesn't it simply come down to faith that the Bible is actually the word of God?





Two Contrasting Questions...

Faith

“Trying to learn about something leaves no room for faith.”

“Faith means ‘believing what you know ain’t true.’”

Faith is believing something despite the fact that you do not have sufficient reason to believe it is true.”





Two Contrasting Questions...

Faith

Reasoned, Justified Belief
in Which You Have Actively Placed Your Trust

“Now Faith is being sure of what we hope for
and certain of what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1





Two Contrasting Questions...

Faith

Reasoned, Justified Belief
in Which You Have Actively Placed Your Trust

“Now Faith is being sure of what ~~we hope for~~^{God has promised}
and certain of what we do not see.”

Hebrews 11:1





A Starting Point

Inspiration

“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.”

2 Timothy 3:14-17





A Starting Point

Inspiration

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Matthew 5:17-18





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We all have questions. But we learn together in a way that tackles the deepest part of our doubts while making sure that our purpose is clear: to always know the reason for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, and to be prepared to share that answer with everyone who asks us about that hope.

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