

**TRAILHEAD** | 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and 2 Peter 1:16-21

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:21 – For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

RABBIT TRAIL | Psalm 19; 119; Romans 1:18-32; Hebrews 4:12-16; John 14-17**CHARTING OUR COURSE**

- I. Introduction to Bibliology**
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I. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLIOLOGY | The Study of the Word of God¹

A. Meaning of the Word of God

What are the different forms of the Word of God? What is meant by the phrase “the Word of God”? Actually, there are several different meanings taken by this phrase in the Bible. It is helpful to distinguish these different senses clearly at the beginning of this study.

♦ “The Word of God” as a Person: Jesus Christ

Sometimes the Bible refers to the Son of God as “the Word of God,” however, this usage is not common. But this does indicate that among the members of the Trinity it is especially God the Son who in His person as well as in His words has the role of communicating the character of God to us and expressing the will of God for us. Some key texts to orient our thinking: John 1:1-18; Hebrews 1:1, 2; First John 1:1-4; Revelation 19:11-16.

♦ “The Word of God” as Speech by God

- 1. God’s Decrees:** Sometimes God’s words take the form of powerful decrees that cause events to happen or even cause things to come into being. These powerful, creative words from God are often called decrees because they cause something to happen. These decrees of God include not only the events of the original creation but also the continuing of all things. Some key texts to orient our thinking: Genesis 1 and 2; Psalm 33:4-9; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:3.
- 2. God’s Words of Personal Address:** Sometimes God communicates with people on earth by speaking directly to them. Examples are found throughout Scripture, some of them are listed below for your consideration. In these and several other instances where God spoke words of personal address to individual people it was clear to the hearers that these were the actual words of God: they were hearing God’s very voice, and they were therefore hearing words that had absolute divine authority, and that were absolutely trustworthy. To disbelieve or disobey any of these words would have been to disbelieve or disobey God, and therefore would have been sin. Some key texts to orient our thinking: Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:8-19; 22; Exodus 20:1-21; 33:7-11; Matthew 3:17.
- 3. God’s Words as Speech through Human Lips:** Frequently in Scripture, God raises up prophets through whom He speaks. It is evident that although these are human words, spoken in ordinary human language by ordinary human beings, the authority and truthfulness of these words is in no way diminished – they are still completely God’s words as well. Some key texts to orient our thinking: Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Jeremiah 1:4-19; Ezekiel 13:1-16.
- 4. God’s Words in Written Form – The Bible:** The first instance where God’s words were put in written form is found in the narrative of the giving of the two tablets of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments (Exodus 31:18; 32:16; 34:1, 28). Further writing was done by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:9-13, 24-26), Joshua (Joshua 24:26), Isaiah (Isaiah 30:8), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:2; 36:1-32; 51:60); Jesus promises that His disciples would be reminded of His teachings through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14:25, 26; 16:12-15) and thereby able to write down the words of God to man.

B. An Overview of Bibliology

GOD

The incomprehensible and utterly transcendent God places Himself within our reach by stooping to our capacity – descending and accommodating His speech to our understanding.

REVELATION

The act of God by which He has made known what was otherwise unknowable. God's witness to Himself through creation, history, and the conscience of man (General). God's disclosure of Himself in salvation history and in the interpretive word of Scripture (Special).

INSPIRATION

The act of God by which He has revealed Himself to man through creation and by superintending the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Infallibility – Never misleading, reliable in all matters | **Inerrancy** – Free from mistake/error; entirely true
Authority – Its truthfulness warrants our complete faith | **Preservation** – Protection of His revelation

RESOURCES

Illumination – The working of God the Spirit upon the hearts and minds to understand revealed truth
Animation – The element of life/energy characteristic of the Bible that makes it unlike any other book

RESPONSIBILITY

Interpretation – The process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning
Application – The process of determining the current relevance of Scripture and our response

II. REVELATION OF THE BIBLE

A. Definition of Revelation

Revelation means an unveiling, uncovering, or disclosure of truth. Divine revelation is the act of God by which He has made known to man what was otherwise unknowable. We are incapable of discovering God without His help.

God introduces Himself on His own terms – when, where, and how he chooses. Strictly speaking, we do not come to know God – God reveals Himself. In our fallen condition, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God” (Romans 3:10-11). Yet God does not wait for the impossible move on our part. “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me” (Isaiah 65:1 NIV). God can be an object of our knowledge only if he has revealed Himself to us.²

B. General Revelation

By basic definition, *general revelation* is God’s witness to Himself through creation, history, and the conscience of man. Through general revelation all humans are exposed to the knowledge of God’s existence, His divine nature (character and attributes), and moral law.

C. Special Revelation

Special revelation is God’s witness to Himself through salvation history on display in His Son and in the written word, the Scriptures.

III. INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

A. Definition of Inspiration

The act of God by which He has revealed Himself to man through creation and by superintending the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original.

B. The Necessity of Inspiration

1. We were exposed to God – that He is knowable through creation.
2. We realize that we are accountable to God – the creature is subject to his Creator.
3. We rejected God – sin distorted man’s reception of revelation.
4. We are keenly aware that unless God provides a way of restoring this broken relationship with Him, we are hopeless and helpless – destined to face His wrath.
5. General revelation is inferior to special revelation in that, general revelation exposes who God is, our accountability to Him, and our need for Him. However, it doesn’t make us aware of how we can have this relationship with Him restored.



C. Exploring Biblical Inspiration

Trailhead: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 [context: 2 Timothy 3:1-4:8]

- ♦ In light of the difficult moral condition and persecution of the last days, how does Paul encourage Timothy to live? (v.14)
- ♦ What is the source or authority of Timothy's faith and practice? (v.15)
- ♦ What ability do these Scriptures possess? (v. 15)

"God alone has written a *Story* whereby He makes known who He is and what He does to those whom He created. This revelation or unveiling of His person and work enable His people to know Him. The relationship between God and man is one of gracious condescension. He has written each part of the *Story* with the intent of reflecting the glory of His being."³ The storyline of special revelation is singular as it unfolds – telling one cohesive *Story* with Jesus as the center. As recipients of this *Story*, we come to know and believe who Jesus is in His Person, what He has accomplished in His work, and the implications that are ours through this "so great a salvation."

- ♦ Which parts of the Bible (sacred writings) are inspired by God?

UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS

Able (*dynamena*) = to be able, powerful

Wise (*sophisai*) = to cause one to have wisdom and understanding

Salvation (*soterian*) = deliverance; salvation

Faith (*pisteos*) = to believe or have confidence in

Profitable (*ophelimos*) = useful; beneficial; advantageous

Doctrine (*didaskalian*) = teaching; instruction

Reproof (*elenchon*) = to rebuke; refuting error – state that someone has done wrong, with implication that there is adequate proof

Correction (*epanorthosin*) = restoration to a right state; improvement of life and character

Instruction (*paideian*) = denotes the training of a child, including instructions; teaching, train, instruct

Perfect (*artios*) = proficient; qualified

"The Greek adjective in 2 Timothy 3:16 (*theopnuestos*) is not really 'inspired' but 'God-breathed.' The words of the prophets and apostles are exhaled – as God's own speech to us."

Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*

- ◆ Since the entirety of the Bible is God-breathed, verse 16 goes on to state that it is also profitable in shaping how we live out our lives on the horizontal – *in our relationships with one another*. In what ways does God’s Word impact how we live and treat one another?

1) Doctrine –

2) Reproof –

3) Correction –

4) Training –



Trailhead: 2 Peter 1:16-21 [context: 2 Peter 1:1-3:18]

- ◆ Why does Peter feel compelled to emphasize that the apostles were not following cleverly concocted myths concerning the gospel of Jesus? (v.16)

- ◆ What is Peter’s message in verse 16?

	<i>Power (dynamis)</i> = power; might; strength; ability
	<i>Coming (Parousia)</i> = presence; arrival; advent
	<i>Majesty (megaleiotes)</i> = splendor; magnificence; grandeur

- ◆ What event does Peter claim to be an eyewitness of in verse 17-18? [cf. Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:1-9; Luke 9:27-36]

- ◆ What does Peter claim to be even more reliable than his eyewitness experience? (v.19)

- ◆ What exhortation does Peter give concerning this “more reliable” source of authority? How should they respond? (v.19)

♦ **Foundational truths concerning special revelation (v.20, 21) –**

- 1) No portion of Scripture originates with man
- 2) Scripture (prophecy) was never produced because of man's desire to author it or bring it into being
- 3) Scripture did originate, however, as holy men of God were sustained (carried along) by the Holy Spirit

IV. INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

A. Definition of Inerrancy⁴

The Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth.

The inerrancy of the Bible means simply that the Bible tells the truth. Truth can and does include approximations, free quotations, language of appearances, and different accounts of the same event as long as those do not contradict.

B. Exploring the Inerrancy of the Bible

1. Key Terms

- a) **Inerrancy** – The claim that the Bible is inerrant means that it is without error.
- b) **Infallibility** – The claim that the Bible is infallible means that it is never misleading and is a reliable guide in all matters.
- c) **Verbally** – The claim that the Bible is verbally inspired (God-breathed) means that these words are from God. Second Timothy 3:16 declares that it is the *grapha* or writings which are inspired.
- d) **Plenary** – The claim that the Bible is plenary inspired means that in its entirety, it is completely and fully the Word of God in all its parts. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us that 'All scripture is inspired by God,' therefore, everything that Scripture addresses in areas of history, philosophy, theology, morality, and science is *ALL* from God and completely authoritative.
- e) **Original Writings** – Technically speaking, only the original manuscripts, known as autographs are inspired, but for all practical purposes the present-day English Bible, in that it is an accurate transmission of the original, is the inspired Word of God. What we do have are very accurately copied manuscripts which have been adequately translated into English. Hence, for all matters of doctrine and duty (faith and practice), today's Bible is an adequate representation of the authoritative Word of God.⁵
- f) **Preservation** – The marvelous manner in which God has protected the Scriptures from being lost or destroyed, and thus providing for us a reliable, sufficient, and authoritative word from God to guide and govern our lives.

“God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings.”

-Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*

2. Support of Inerrancy⁶

- a) The nature and character of God – if the Bible is God’s Word and God is a God of truth, the Bible must be true.
- b) The witness of Scripture to itself (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) – the Bible testifies to its own truthfulness.
- c) The analogy of the living Word (Christ) and the written Word (the Bible) – both are fully human and fully divine; both are perfect.
- d) Fulfilled prophecy – there are multiple prophecies concerning Christ alone (over 300).
- e) The testimony of Jesus – His view of Scripture must be our view if we are to live under His Lordship (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:25-27; 44-49; John 10:35; 17:17).
- f) The need of a certain word from God (beyond general revelation) – if the Bible contains errors, it cannot be the word of God.

3. Summary of Inerrancy⁷

- a) The Scriptures are free from mistakes and errors. The Bible does not contradict itself and is accurate in all that says.
- b) Truth can and does include approximations, free quotations, the language of appearance, and different accounts of the same event as long as these are not contradictory.
- c) It only take one error to make an errant Bible. The Bible must be 100% accurate and error-free if it is to be credible. If God can be mistaken, or if He is unable to clearly communicate His will, then we cannot depend upon the record of revelation.

As we look at the complete work of Scripture we can see with greater clarity that this Book of books is divinely inspired, without error, and completely authoritative for our lives. In fact, as we see this drama unfold from Genesis to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures are completely unified in the *Story* it tells. This unity is on full display in its 66 books, with approximately 40 different writers from different cultures and backgrounds, penned over more than 1600 years, subjects varied and diverse – all with a unity of structure and content evident throughout.

V. CANONICITY OF THE BIBLE⁸

Which books belong in the Bible? How did the Bible come to have sixty-six books? Could there be more books that should be included in the Bible? What if archeologists uncover more writings by an apostle or prophet that are not currently part of our Bible? These types of questions are addressed under the subject called *canonicity*. While inspiration primarily addresses the authority of the Bible, the *canonization* of the Scriptures details the process in which the Bible received its final acceptance.

A. Definition of Canonicity

- 1. **Kaneh** (Hebrew) = measuring rod
- 2. **Kanon** (Greek) = a rod or ruler

The word *canon* is derived from the Greek *kanon* (a rod, ruler) which in turn comes from the Hebrew *kaneh*, an Old Testament word meaning ‘measuring rod.’ Even in pre-

“Canonicity is the measurement or test applied to literature to determine if it is a genuine and authentic part of God’s inspired Scriptures.”

-Sam Choi

Christian usage the word was broadened to indicate a standard or norm other than a literal rod or rules. The New Testament employs the term in its figurative sense to indicate a rule for conduct. In early Christian usage the word *canon* came to mean the 'rule of faith' or the normative writings (i.e., the authoritative Scriptures).⁹

B. Description of Canonicity

1. **Sacred books** (Deut. 31:24-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-16)
2. **Prophetic writings** (Zech. 7:8-14; Lk. 24:27; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
3. **Apostolic writings** (Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20; 3:5)

C. Discovery of Canonicity

1. **Questions for discovering canonicity** [cf. Geisler & Nix, *From God to Us*, p.67-71]
 - a) Was it written by a prophet, an apostle, or an associate of an apostle? (Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
 - b) Were the writers confirmed by an act of God? (John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:1-4)
 - c) Does it tell the truth about God? (Deut. 18:22; Gal. 1:8)
 - d) Does it have the power of God? (Heb. 4:12)
 - e) Was it accepted by the people of God? (Dan. 9:2; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:15)

2. **Tests for discovering canonicity**
 - a) Inspiration – Does the book claim to be divinely inspired?
 - b) Authority – Is the book written, edited, or endorsed by an accredited agent of God; such as a prophet, apostle, or otherwise recognized servant of God?
 - c) Genuineness – Can the book be evidenced to have been written when and by whom it professes to be? Is the manuscript evidence credible?
 - d) Authenticity – Is the book factually true, or does it contain scientific and/or historical errors?
 - e) Testimony – Was the book recognized as the Word of God by the people of God (national Israel), the Lord Jesus, or by the early church?
 - f) Authority – Does the book expect faith and obedience? (“Thus saith the Lord!” and similar expressions occur about 3,800 times in the Old Testament.)
 - g) Agreement – Is the book in doctrinal harmony with the other books of the canon? Although there is progressive revelation of doctrine in the Bible, **there is no contradiction.**
 - h) Fulfillment – Is there evidence for the fulfillment of its promises and predictions?
 - i) Endurance – Has the value of the book diminished over the years or does it continue to speak to succeeding generations of people?
 - j) Spirituality – Is the content of the book of a spiritual nature befitting the dignity and majesty of God?

Inadequate views for determining canonicity include the following 1) age of writing 2) language (Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic) 3) agreement with the Torah 4) religious value 5) Christian usage. A common mistake among these inadequate views is a confusion between determination and recognition. God determines canonicity (inspiration), while man discovers it. The Scriptures receive canonicity from God and recognition from the people of God.

D. Development of the Canon**1. Progressive development of the Old Testament canon**

- a) Moses wrote (Deut. 31:24)
- b) Joshua added (Joshua 24:26)
- c) Samuel added his writings (1 Sam. 10:25)
- d) Prophets were collected (Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:12)
- e) The OT Canon was the Bible affirmed by Jesus (Lk. 24:27, 44-45) – the Jewish canon of Scripture was Jesus' canon.

2. Process of recognizing the Old Testament canon

As Grudem points out, the formal writing of the Old Testament was begun with the giving of the 10 Commandments and was completed by 435 B.C. There is nothing in the New Testament to suggest that either Jesus or the apostles were in disagreement with the Jews over the canon of the Old Testament. The 39 books of our English translations of the OT agree with the 24 books of the Hebrew canon. The canon of the Old Testament was recognized in a formal way at the rabbinic Council of Jamnia in A. D. 90.¹⁰

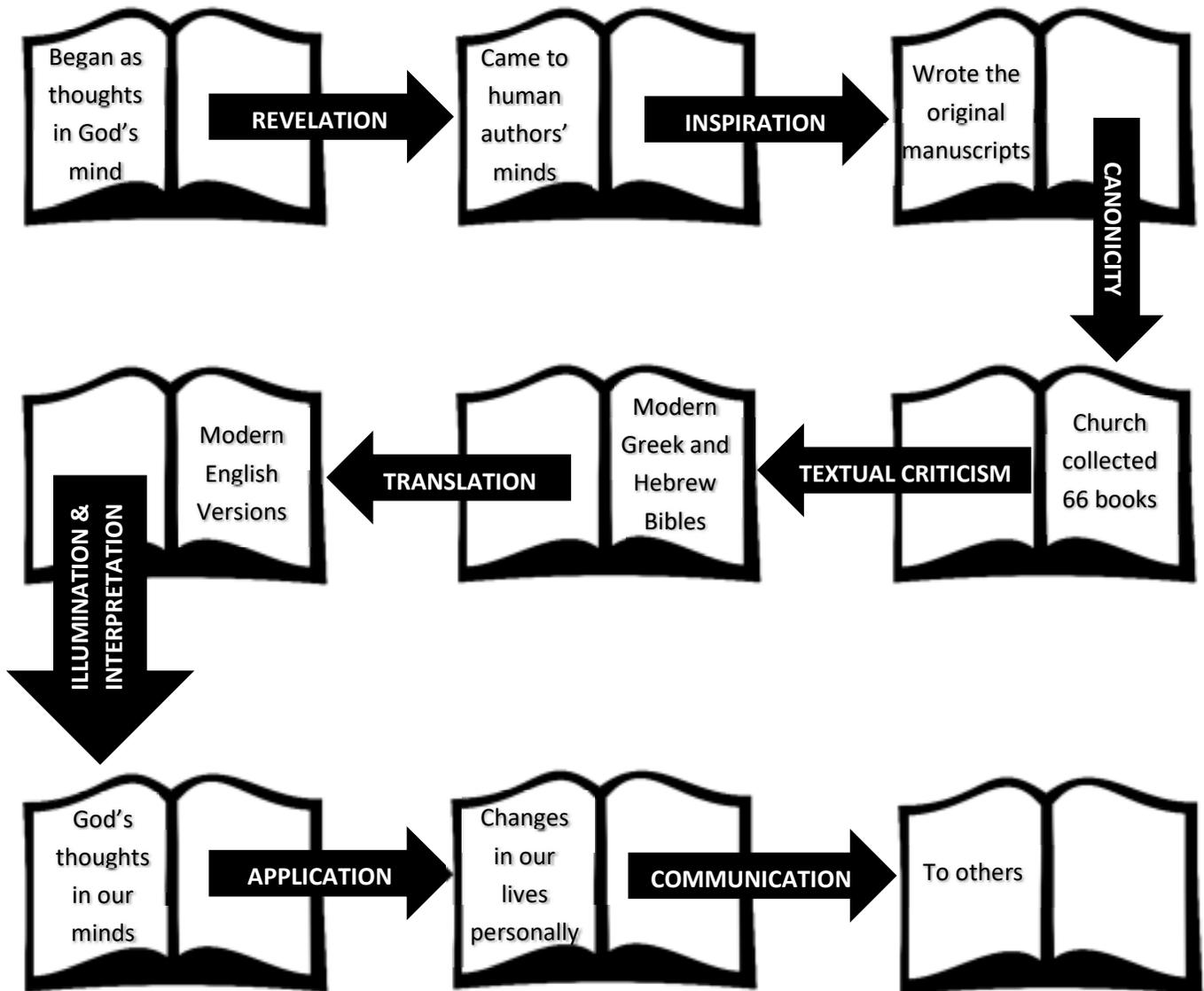
- ♦ No record of the Old Testament being recognized
- ♦ Josiah recognized Deuteronomy as canonical (2 Kings 22:8; 23:1-3)
- ♦ Ezra considered the books of Moses (Pentateuch) as authoritative (Neh. 8:1-3)
- ♦ The Law was evidenced as authoritative by its prominence in the temple:
 - 1) Preserved in the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:16, 21; Deut. 10:5; 1 Kings 8:9)
 - 2) Kept by the Levites at the side of the ark (Deut. 31:24-26)
 - 3) Found in the temple in the days of Josiah (2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chron. 34:15)
- ♦ The Law was accepted as authoritative:
 - 1) The King was to write a copy of the Law and use it to guide his decisions (Deut. 17:18-20; 2 Kings 11:12)
 - 2) Joshua was told to mediate upon and to keep the Law (Joshua 1:8)
 - 3) The New Testament recognized the Old Testament as the Word of God and authoritative
 - a) The Lord Jesus endorsed it (Matt. 22:29; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49)
 - b) The apostles endorsed it (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

3. Progressive development of the New Testament canon

- a) The NT refers to the OT Law and Prophets (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:27, 44)
- b) Paul's letters circulated among the churches (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27)
- c) Peter had at least some of Paul's letters and called them "Scripture" (2 Pet. 3:16)

4. Process of recognizing the New Testament canon

- a) Apostles to A.D. 140 – Dissemination; collection; regional recognition
- b) A.D. 140-180 – Developments toward a fixed canon (Marcion made first attempts)
- c) A.D. 180-240 – Universal confirmation and consensus
- d) A.D. 350-397 – Official recognition and final agreement (Council of Carthage A.D. 397)

An Overview of How Our Bible Came to Us¹¹:***The New Testament Process of Canonization¹²***

The first steps in the formation of a canon of authoritative Christian books, worthy to stand beside the Old Testament canon, which was the Bible of our Lord and His apostles, appears to have been taken about the beginning of the second century. This does not indicate a heightening estimate of New Testament books as if they were viewed one way prior to the establishment of a canon and then viewed in a heightened way after being placed in the canon. The books that comprise the New Testament were viewed as Scripture from the very beginning as Peter makes clear in 2 Peter 1:16-21. The books that now form the New Testament canon were received as Scripture.

As early as AD 115 Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, published a list of some of the books that now comprise the New Testament. This was followed by a similar list prepared by Irenaeus in about AD 180. A historical survey of the process of the canon of the New Testament reveals that by the year AD 170 most churches were in agreement independently as to what books made up the New Testament.

In AD 367 Athanasius circulated a letter which listed the twenty-seven books of the New Testament and referred to them as the well-springs of salvation, from which he who thirsts may take his fill of sacred words. In AD 397 the Third Council of Carthage met and defined the canonical books of the New Testament as the 27 books listed earlier by Athanasius.

There has been quite a bit of discussion as to the criteria used by the leaders of the early churches to determine which books would make up the New Testament. This discussion has led to quite a bit of disagreement, but one factor seems to be consistently mentioned. The writings received by the early churches as authoritative or scriptural were those that were written by the apostles and their closest companions, and the writings endorsed by them. The entire Old Testament was received by the implicit endorsement of the apostles. The Gospel of Matthew was written by an apostle. The Gospel of Mark was written by the apostle Peter's closest disciple. The Gospel of Luke was written by Paul's close companion. The Gospel of John was written by an apostle. The Acts of the Apostles was written by Paul's close companion. Thirteen letters were received from Paul. The epistle to the Hebrews was received as from Paul. The epistle of James comes from the brother of the Lord, who exercised authority in Jerusalem with the apostles. The epistle of Jude was from another brother of the Lord. The two epistles of Peter are from an apostle. The three epistles of John are from an apostle, who also wrote the Revelation.

Some disagreements arose along with the rise of heresies. The elders of the churches became wary, and even began to doubt some of the writings they had formerly received as copies from other churches. Writings which came under question were Hebrews, James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and the Revelation of John. The reasons for doubt were various. The author of Hebrews does not identify himself. James was not an apostle, and his message seemed to contradict Paul's message. Jude was not an apostle, and he quotes books which the churches did not receive as Scripture. 2 Peter, it seems, was not widely distributed at first. The author of 2 and 3 John does not identify himself plainly. The author of the Revelation identifies himself as John, but does not say that he is the *apostle* John, and the style of the book is different from the Gospel of John. Nevertheless, the majority of the churches received and used these books without questioning them, *while vigorously rejecting all others*.

By the time of the Council of Carthage in AD 397 these disagreements had been resolved and the New Testament as we know it had come to be accepted as Scripture alongside of the Old Testament. One thing needs to be emphatically at this point. **The New Testament books did not become authoritative for Christ's Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because they were already understood to be authoritative.** What the Council of Carthage did in AD 397 was not to impose something new upon the various Christian churches then in existence, but to codify [organize into a system or code] what was already the general practice of the churches.

VI. TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE

A. Definition of Textual Criticism

Textual criticism is the study of the copies and translations of any written composition of which the autograph (original) is unknown for the purpose of determining as closely as possible the original text.¹³

B. Explanation of Textual Criticism

1. Necessity of applying textual criticism to the New Testament

- a) No original copies of Scripture are still in existence
- b) No two existing *manuscripts* are exactly the same

2. How the early church acquired the Scriptures

- a) The minority received one (in some cases two) *autograph* works, however, the rest of the Bible would need to be copied (Example: Thessalonica received 2 letters from Paul, the rest of the Bible would need to be copied)
- b) Copies were made by hand (known as manuscripts)
- c) With multiple copies of manuscripts there would be greater opportunities for scribal and transcription errors resulting in many variations or *variants* among existing copies

3. Considering variants

- a) Types of variants include: wording used (various synonyms employed); word order; spelling; omissions; additions
- b) Occurrence: unintentionally (most would fall into this category) and intentionally [estimated number of variants range between 4,000 – 5,000]
- c) Groups of variants to consider: 1) variants that are neither *meaningful* nor *viable* 2) variants that are not meaningful but viable 3) variants that are not viable but meaningful 4) variants that are both meaningful and viable

Processing the Information:

Of all the possible ways in which the manuscripts (copies of the original writings/autographs) could differ from one another, we can confidently state that our copies of the Bible are reliable, accurate, and the preserved Word of God. Less than 1% of all possible variants impact both the way the text is translated and the possibility of that translation being a workable or possible option. However, within this group of less than 1% of debated texts, these textual issues have little or no doctrinal significance. Meaning, our Christian doctrines are not supported or impacted by these minor textual issues.

UNDERSTANDING KEY TERMS

AUTOGRAPHS: original document

MANUSCRIPTS: hand-made copies from an original or another copy

VARIANT: a version that is different from other forms or from a standard

MEANINGFUL: makes a difference in the way we translate

VIABLE: capable of working or functioning; feasible, possible, or workable solution

EXTENT: still in existence or existing today

C. A Basic Understanding of Greek Manuscripts

1. The four main forms of Greek manuscripts¹⁴

- a) **Papyri** – *Papyri* refers to manuscripts made of the papyrus plant (rather than animal skin, called vellum); they are in uncial (capital) script. Because papyrus does not stand up as well as vellum, only about one hundred of these manuscripts have survived, most of them in Egypt. These manuscripts are early (second to eighth centuries AD) and most of them have been discovered before the year 1900.
- b) **Uncials** – *Uncials* are manuscripts made of animal skins and are written in capital letter script. Of the about three hundred uncials that we have, only one of them has the complete text of the NT. They date from about the third to the tenth century AD.
- c) **Minuscules** – *Minuscules* are written in a cursive script that has smaller, connected letters. This script began to be used in the ninth century to save time and because the letters take less space than do uncial letters. These manuscripts (about 2,850 of them) are primarily from the Majority (or Byzantine) text type.
- d) **Lectionaries** – *Lectionaries* are service books of Scripture for church meetings and liturgy to be used as part of corporate worship. The text of lectionaries is ‘basically Byzantine’ and least important of the Greek manuscripts.

2. The Classification of Text-Types

The aim of the textual critic is to ascertain, as precisely as possible, what reading of any particular passage is closest to the original, or accurately reflects the original. The first step is to classify the manuscript evidence in such a way as to make it manageable.¹⁵

The Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are generally grouped into ‘text-types’. This means that the manuscripts belonging to a particular text-type all reflect the same sort of errors, the same variants at crucial passages, the same general pattern of development. Of course, because all of the manuscripts in any one text-type have themselves been hand-copied, no two manuscripts in any one textual tradition are *precisely* identical. Nevertheless a manuscript can often be assigned to one text-type or another; and if a manuscript reflects two or more text-types, it is said to be mixed.¹⁶

a) Alexandrian Text-Type

This ‘family’ of manuscripts is also known as the ‘minority text’ because there are fewer manuscripts in existence, however, these manuscripts contain the following notable aspects:

- ♦ They are the oldest known manuscripts in existence (as early as the 2nd century)
- ♦ Papyri (2nd and 3rd centuries)
- ♦ Uncials (most notable listed) – *Codex Vaticanus* (c.325-350); *Codex Sinaiticus* (c.330-360); *Codex Alexandrius* (c.425-450); *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (c.345); *Codex Washingtonianus* (4th or early 5th century)
- ♦ Generally judged to be a superior text-type by most scholarship on the basis of internal evidence and being closest to the original in date

b) Byzantine Text-Type

This 'family' of manuscripts is also known as the 'majority text' because it contains the most Greek manuscripts in existence. The most notable aspects are as follows:

- ♦ These texts were preserved with the Byzantine Empire (Greek was the native or primary language)
- ♦ Contains the most Greek manuscripts (approx. 80%)
- ♦ The vast majority of manuscripts are minuscules dating from the 9th through 15th centuries
- ♦ The Textus Receptus comes primarily from this family
- ♦ Notable uncial available to translation workers at the time was *Codex Bezae* (c.450 or 550), however, it was used only minimally as the majority of minuscules were given greater priority
- ♦ Generally judged to be inferior to other text-types by most scholarship on the basis of manuscripts being dated from the 4th century or later (most from the 9th through 15th centuries)

c) Other Notable Text-Types

- ♦ The Western Text-Type (Western Mediterranean area)
- ♦ The Caesarean Text-Type (mixture of both Western and Alexandrian text-types)

VII. UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE**A. Animation of the Bible****1. Definition of Animation**

Animation of Bible refers to that element of *life* or *energy* that is characteristic of the Bible and makes it effective in a manner unlike any other book.

**2. Exploring Biblical Animation**

Trailhead: Hebrews 4:12-13 (immediate context: Hebrews 3:7-4:13)

- ♦ **Consider the immediate context in which these two verses are found:**
 - 1) The focus = entering into the *rest of God* (eternal/salvation)
 - 2) The problem = an unbelieving heart; hardened by sin; not united by faith
 - 3) The result = unable to experience the rest of God; rejection of God and His Word
- ♦ **How is the Word of God described in verse 12?**

- ♦ **What does the living, active, and sharp tool of the Word have the ability to accomplish in our lives?**

Quick/Living (*zon*) = alive; living

Powerful (*energes*) = active; effective; able to bring about; at work [English word “energy”]

Sharper (*tomoteros*) = capacity to cut efficiently

Piercing (*diiknoumenos*) = penetrating; to go through or reach through

Soul (*psychos*) = life; soul (heart – thoughts, feelings, being)

Spirit (*pneuma*) = breathe; wind; **inner being**

Discerning (*kritikos*) = able to judge; critical; discriminative [English word “critical”]

Thoughts (*enthymeseon*) = thought; reflection; inward reasoning

Intentions (*ennoion*) = intention; purpose (motive)

- ♦ **What sobering reality does verse 13 wake us up to realize?**

B. Illumination of the Bible

1. Definition of Illumination

Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit by which He assists the reader to understand the meaning and importance of God’s revealed Word. The Holy Spirit is not providing any new revelation, since the canon of Scripture is closed, but rather is working in the hearts and minds of men and women to help them understand truths already revealed.



2. Exploring Biblical Illumination

Trailhead: John 16:12-15 [context: John 13:1-17:26]

Rabbit Trail: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 [context: 1 Corinthians 1:10-3:23]

- ♦ **Read through John 14-17 and note all the references to the Holy Spirit. How is the Spirit described? How does the Spirit function in the life of believers?**

- ♦ **How is the Spirit described specifically in 16:13?**

- ♦ **One of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is to “guide them into all truth.” What does this mean? Why is this important?**

- ♦ **What did Jesus mean when He indicated that the Spirit would not speak of Himself? Why would this be necessary?** (cf. John 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

- ♦ **What safeguard or test does verse 14 give us in discerning whether or not something is from the Spirit?**

C. Interpretation of the Bible

1. Definition of Interpretation

Interpretation is the process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning and the method of arriving at a proper understanding of the inspired Scriptures.



2. Exploring Biblical Interpretation

Trailhead: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 [context: 1 Corinthians 1:10-3:23]

Rabbit Trail: 2 Timothy 3:10-17 and 2 Peter 1:16-21

- ♦ **What has God chosen to reveal to us in the greater context of this passage?**

- ♦ **How has He revealed the wisdom of the gospel?** (2:10, 13)

- ♦ **What does verse 11 reveal about knowing God?**

- ♦ **How does the Spirit help us engage the text of Scripture?** (2:12-13)

- ♦ **Who is the natural man, and why is he unable to understand or accept the spiritual truths of the Scriptures?** (2:14-16)

3. Basic Principles and Tools for Interpretation

a. Basic Purpose of Interpretation

- ♦ **To understand revealed truth** – The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get the “plain meaning of the text.”¹⁷ God has revealed through creation and through His Word. This truth is neither subjective nor relative.
- ♦ **To know and enjoy God** – God has revealed Himself in order for us to know Him and enjoy a relationship with Him. The Word of God has been given to us in order that we will grow in our understanding of who God is, what He is like, how He interacts with His creation, and that He desires His creation to share in the joy that He has within Himself.
- ♦ **To make God known** – Although God is personally invested in us, our relationship with Him is not about us. We have been given the great privilege of knowing God so that we might make Him known to others. As disciples of Jesus, our desire is for others to know and believe this God and enjoy a relationship with Him.

b. Basic Convictions for Proper Biblical Interpretation

- ♦ The Bible is inspired (God-breathed) and beneficial to our lives.
- ♦ The Bible is infallible (credible; never misleading; a sure guide).
- ♦ The Bible is inerrant (without errors in the words of their original writings; it is consistent in its message and does not contradict itself).
- ♦ The Bible is authoritative and sufficient (final standard for faith and practice).
- ♦ The Bible is preserved (although God has not chosen to preserve the original writings, He has marvelously preserved and protected the Scriptures from being lost or destroyed in the multitude of manuscripts).
- ♦ The Bible is a finished and complete revelation (no new revelation from God).
- ♦ The Bible is animated (living and able to transform our lives).
- ♦ The Bible is understood through illumination (the enabling work of the Holy Spirit).

c. Basic Approaches to Interpretation

- ♦ **Allegorical** – In approaching the Scriptures allegorically, the ‘normal’ and literal understanding of words and descriptions is considered of secondary importance to the symbolic meanings ascribed to it by the interpreter.
- ♦ **Literary** – Also called normal or natural, the literary approach of interpretation takes the plain and common sense meaning of the words when placed within their proper literary genre, grammatical structure, and historical and cultural context.
- ♦ **Christological** – The NT writers read the OT from a Christological perspective – seeing Jesus as the centerpiece and fulfillment of all Scripture. If they did, so should we.

d. Basic Questions for Biblical Interpretation

- ♦ **“What does the text mean?”** Our goal must be to determine the author’s intended meaning.
- ♦ **“What is the point?”** Our goal must be to discern the truth of the text within its context.
- ♦ **“How should I respond to this truth?”** Our goal must be to exercise caution when making personal application of the text.

e. **Basic Tools for Understanding Context**

How do we determine the author's intended meaning and discern the truth of the text without misinterpretation and poor application?

- ♦ **Time and Culture** – We must consider the following factors of the author and his recipients if we are to properly understand the Scriptures: the time period in which this takes place and the geographical aspects – social, political, and topographical.
- ♦ **Occasion and Purpose** – We must try to discern who the recipients are, why this was written to them, how they would have understood it and applied it, and finally, what genre of literature it is [**Genres:** narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws of all kinds, various types of poetry, proverbs, prophetic oracles, riddles, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, and apocalypses].
- ♦ **Grammatical Structure** – We must understand that words have meanings within sentences; the grammar and construction of each sentence is important; sentences have meaning in relation to surrounding sentences (think paragraphs), and also in relation to the literary work as a whole.

SIMEON TRUST TOOLS

1. Outline the **structure** of the text in a way that represents the author's organization of the text. Include an outline that clearly indicates verse breaks for each unit and provide headings for each. *[Consider plot – setting, conflict, climax, resolution, and new setting; consider characters – particularly their actions and reactions, etc.]*
2. What **emphasis** does the structure reveal?
3. How does the immediate **context** – the closest passages on both sides of your text – inform the meaning of your text? *[Consider why this passage is in this place. Then, if relevant, consider any parallel texts or key cross references.]*
4. Drawing on your work in structure, emphasis, and context, state the central **theme** of the text in one complete sentence. *[A theme should reveal the author's big idea or primary teaching point in the passage.]*
5. What are a few ways that your text **relates to or anticipates the gospel** (i.e. the death and resurrections of Jesus Christ, repentance, forgiveness of sins)? Which of these ways best fits your text? *[Consider Old Testament citations/allusions as well as different methods of connecting such as typology, analogy, promise-fulfillment, biblical theological themes, etc.]*
6. In one sentence, what is the **author's aim** for his audience in this text? Given the aim, what **implication(s) and/or application(s)** for your audience would you draw out in your sermon, study, or lesson?

CONCLUSION

As we wrap up this study of Bibliology, “note that the objective of special revelation was relational. The primary purpose of this revelation was not to enlarge the general scope of knowledge. The knowledge *about* was for the purpose of knowledge *of*. Information was to lead to acquaintance; consequently, the information revealed was often quite selective.”¹⁸ Therefore, our next leg in the journey is to engage this knowable God in *Theology Proper*.

**ORIENTING OUR COMPASS TO TRUE NORTH**

- ❖ **DRAMA:** As we embark on this adventure in systematic theology, let us keep an eye on how and where each study fits into the overarching narrative of Scripture. Let us be mindful that Jesus is the centerpiece of this story and that we have been invited to share in the journey. When it comes to the study of Bibliology,
 - 1) How do we know that the entire Bible is telling a singular *Story*?
 - 2) How do we see Jesus as the centerpiece?
 - 3) In what way(s) are we invited to share in the journey?

- ❖ **DOCTRINE:** How do the truths discovered in Bibliology impact our worldview?

- ❖ **DOXOLOGY:** How does the doctrine of Bibliology shape our worship of God today?

- ❖ **DISCIPLESHIP:** How does the doctrine of Bibliology impact life on the horizontal? How does right thinking overflow into our actions and feelings?

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*,

² Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, p.36

³ Patrick Griffiths, *Jesus is Enough – Readings on the Greatness of God*, p.5

⁴ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, p.170-171

⁵ Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, p.15

⁶ Daniel Akins, *Why Insist on Inerrancy (the full truthfulness of the Bible)?* [taken from Pastor Samuel Choi’s notes on Bibliology]

⁷ Daniel Akins, *Why Insist on Inerrancy (the full truthfulness of the Bible)?* [taken from Pastor Samuel Choi’s notes on Bibliology]

⁸ Outline adapted from Daniel Akins, Southeastern Baptist Seminary

⁹ Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*

¹⁰ Sgbchapel.com

¹¹ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p.133

¹² Sgbchapel.com

¹³ Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, chapter 3, by W. Edward Glenny, p. 76

¹⁴ Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, chapter 3, by W. Edward Glenny, p. 77

¹⁵ D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, p. 25

¹⁶ D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, p. 26

¹⁷ Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, p.18

¹⁸ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p.176

*The following is a list of works and authors from which this lesson is comprised: 1) Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder, *One Bible Only?*; 2) D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*; 3) Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*; 4) Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*; 5) Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* 6) Norman Geisler and William Nix, *From God to Us*; 7) Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*; Patrick Griffiths, *Jesus Is Enough*; 8) Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*; 9) Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology* 10) Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*; 11) Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*; 12) Sgbchapel.com