

Why We Can Trust The Bible

Imagine that you are sitting in the passenger seat of your car. Someone else is driving your car. You have just left a birthday party that continued after midnight. It is very dark this night because there is no moon to provide at least some light. The car is moving along a rural road. Then suddenly you see a very large, green eye that fills your side-view mirror. You are even able to see the blood vessels in the eye. Then you see the printing on the mirror in small letters which says, “Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear.” So, what is not immediately obvious? At first you might say the eye belongs to some creature which is very large. Then you realize what was not immediately obvious. The creature is extremely close to your car and looking at your car! Some things are not immediately obvious!

Inspiration of Scripture. We could ask the same question about the Bible. What is not immediately obvious about the Bible? Let’s assume that you are reading the Bible. Let’s assume you study it. Let’s assume you believe it. But then one day you are studying Matthew 5:32 and discover that Luke 16:18 seems to disagree. Then you find that Mark 10:11-12 also seems to disagree with Matthew 5:32. Now how would you respond? What is not obvious to some is that there is no conflict because God both wrote these passages and He does not lie.

A very important starting point for anyone studying the Bible is to understand who wrote the Bible. 2 Timothy 3:16-

17 tells us. It says,

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

The Greek word that is translated as “inspired” literally means, “God-breathed.” That is, all Scripture is breathed by God. God wrote the entire Bible. In theology this is called the inspiration of Scripture. But how did this occur? The answer is given to us in 2 Peter 1:20-21. The passage says,

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB)



Here we are told that Scripture came into existence as the result of the Holy Spirit moving men to write. But what does “move” mean? The Greek word that is translated as “moved” means “to carry along.”

The grammar of the word also has that idea! That is, the Holy Spirit was actively in control as the authors wrote Scripture. Therefore, this passage reveals God wrote the Bible, and a human author wrote each book of the Bible under the con-

trol of the Holy Spirit. This means the book of Genesis was written by God and Moses wrote it too! The gospel of John was written by God and the apostle John. God wrote the book of Ephesians, and so did the apostle Paul. Every book of the Bible has two authors. Consequently, since God used human authors, each author used different vocabulary, and had a unique style and emphasis. Yet, the Holy Spirit guided each writer to write what He what wanted written.

Examples of Dual Authorship. There are several examples in Scripture that reveal this truth. That is every book of the Bible has two authors or dual authors (2 Samuel 23:2; Ezekiel 3:24, 27; Zechariah 7:12; Matthew 10:20; Acts 1:16; 4:25;

Acts 1:16 (NASB)

Who did the apostle Peter say wrote the Scripture that is mentioned in verse 20? Peter said the Holy Spirit and David. This is another example of inspiration and dual authorship.

In 1 Peter 1:10-12 we are told,

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which

Scripture was written by both
God and human authors.

21:4; 28:25; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:40; Revelation 1:10-11). But we will only consider a few of them. First, Zechariah 7:12 says,

They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore, great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. Zechariah 7:12 (NASB)

This verse is disappointing because it says the Israelites made their hearts like flint. As a result, they did not hear the Scriptures. The message is they heard the Word of God, and because their hearts were like stone, they did not obey. But notice the next important fact. We are told they did not hear the words that were sent by whom? The answer is His Spirit and the former prophets. That is dual authorship.

In Acts 1:16 we read,

Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)

This is a most intriguing passage. Many things are revealed here. But notice one thing. We are told the prophets knew the Holy Spirit was writing Scripture through them. This is another example of inspiration. This gives us our first principle. Scripture was written by both God and human authors.

Plenary Inspiration. Galatians 3:6 tells us that even the plurality of words in the Bible are inspired by God. Galatians 3:16 says,

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. Galatians 3:16 (NASB)

Notice that the Holy Spirit was very careful. He did not say “seeds,” but “seed.” Scripture is accurate even to the plurality of a word. If we were to read Matthew 5:18-19, we would dis-

cover the Holy Spirit controlled every letter and the strokes in Hebrew words. So, the inspiration of Scripture includes the thoughts, the words, and even the letters. In theology that is called plenary inspiration. This gives us our second principle. Inspiration of Scripture extends to the smallest letters of the words.

Scripture is Without Error. As a result, the Bible is completely accurate and without error in the original autographs.

Now we need to know which books God wrote. Which books belong in the Bible? This is a good question since the Roman Catholic Church, cults, and other groups include additional books they claim God wrote.

So, we will begin by asking what did Jesus consider to be inspired? We will look at several of Jesus' statements and discover what He considered to be Scripture. The first statement is from Matthew 21:42. It says,

*I*nspiration of Scripture extends to the smallest letters of the words.

Why? Numbers 23:19 says,

God is not a man, that He should lie . . . Numbers 23:19 (NASB)

Titus 1:2 also says that God cannot lie. Therefore, since God controlled every detail of what was written, all Scripture is without error.

So, how should we respond to what appears to be a dis-

Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures,

'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,

THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone;

THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?'"

Matthew 21:42 (NASB)

*A*ll Scripture is without error.

agreement between Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; and Luke 16:18? The answer is that three different human authors wrote those passages, but the same Holy Spirit wrote all three passages. So, there is no error or disagreement. That is the starting point. The solution to understanding the apparent disagreement is that since all three passages are truthful, Matthew included a statement that Christ made on a different occasion that Mark and Luke did not include. This gives us our third principle. All Scripture is without error.

The Canon - The Old Testament is Scripture.

Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22 and referred to it as Scripture. That means Jesus considered the book of Psalms to be inspired. Jesus also referred to other Old Testament books as Scripture (Matthew 22:29; 26:54; John 5:39). There are several passages in the Gospels that reveal Jesus considered other Old Testament writings to be Scripture. The first verse that helps us understand this point is Matthew 5:17. It says,

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. Mat-

The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)

The Law	The Prophets	The Writings
Torah (Pentateuch) Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Former Prophets Joshua Judges Samuel (1 & 2) Kings (1 & 2) Latter Prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Poetry Psalms Proverbs Job Five Rolls Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Esther Ecclesiastes History Daniel Ezra-Nehemiah Chronicles (1 & 2)

[threw 5:17 \(NASB\)](#)

Another similar passage is Matthew 7:12 and Luke 16:31. We will discover soon that these verses reveal that Jesus considered the Law and Prophets to be Scripture. The next passage ties these verses together. It is Luke 24:27, 44. They read,

Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (NASB)

Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Luke 24:27, 44 (NASB)

These two verses help us understand this truth once again. Now Jesus refers to Moses and the prophets in verse 27, and the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms in verse 44. This

time Jesus includes the Psalms as part of Scripture.

Now we are at an important point. What did Jesus mean by the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms? This becomes clear if we look at the books the Jews included in their Scriptures. They are called the Hebrew Scriptures or the Tanakh. We call them the Old Testament.

The Law of Moses included the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. The Prophets included Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and all the major and minor prophets. The rest of the books were included in the Writings. So, when Jesus referred to Psalms, He referred to the largest book in that section. This means Jesus affirmed the Old Testament as Scripture. Also, the apostles Paul and Peter affirmed the Scriptures as being written by God (Acts 26:22; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

But one of the strongest affirmations that the Old Testament is inspired is that all the books of the Old Testament, except for Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations are quoted in the New Testament. That is the greatest endorsement of the Old Testament as being written by God.

Human Authors of the New Testament

Books	Apostles	Companions	Jesus' Half- Brothers
Matthew	Matthew		
Mark		John Mark	
Luke		Luke	
John	John		
Acts		Luke	
Romans-to-Philemon	Paul		
Hebrews	-	-	-
James			James
1 & 2 Peter	Peter		
1, 2 & 3 John	John		
Jude			Jude
Revelation	John		

New Testament is Scripture. Our next question is, “Are the books of the New Testament inspired?” The answer to this question is found in John 14:26. This verse records a statement that Jesus gave to the disciples. He said,

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. John 14:26 (NASB)

This is an important statement. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember everything that He, Jesus, said. He is the One who helped the human authors write Scripture.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching . . . Acts 2:42 (NASB)

Ephesians 2:20-21 tells us the church is built on the apostles. It was the apostles who wrote the New Testament Scriptures. For example, in 2 Peter 3:15-16, Peter tells us that Paul wrote Scripture.

And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to

The New Testament Is Scripture.

Consequently, the apostles were then able to teach truth to the early church. Acts 2:42 says,

their own destruction. 2 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB)

Peter tells us that Paul wrote letters. He says, “In all his

letters.” Peter adds that some of Paul’s writings are difficult to understand. But notice at the end of verse 16, he reveals that Paul was writing Scripture. That also means Peter was reading Paul’s letters, evaluating them, and determining if they were Scripture. That is an encouraging thought.

This means that Paul wrote Scripture. Paul wrote thirteen books of the New Testament: Romans through Philemon. If we read 1 Timothy 5:18 we discover this statement from Paul.

[the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea. Colossians 4:16 \(NASB\)](#)

1 Thessalonians 5:27 tells us that Paul commanded that his letter be read to the entire congregation.

If we connect these verses together, we discover three important facts. First, the writings of the apostles were being distributed by their companions and read to everyone in the

The canon of Scripture is closed.

[For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” 1 Timothy 5:18 \(NASB\)](#)

Here Paul quotes two passages of Scripture. The first is Deuteronomy 25:4. Then he quotes a passage that we cannot find in the Old Testament. Do you where we can find it? It is found only in Luke 10:7. That means Paul endorsed the gospel of Luke as Scripture. Since the author of this gospel is Luke, that implies the book of Acts is Scripture, since Luke wrote Acts.

churches. But the most important fact is that the apostles were determining which writings were Scripture. Second, the New Testament was written by the apostles, their companions, and the brothers of Jesus. Third, the books of the New Testament were determined and affirmed hundreds of years later by church councils.

It is also important to know that a document called the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 140-170) contains a list of all the books of the New Testament except for seven books. They are Matthew, Mark, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and 3 John. The document is called a fragment because pieces of the document are missing. That seems to be the reason Matthew and

The Scriptures are the only source of absolute truth!

Now how did Peter know what Paul was writing, and how did Paul know what Luke was writing? The answer is the letters of the apostles and their companions were being distributed to the various churches. For example, in Colossians 4:16 we read,

[When this letter is read among you, have it also read in](#)

Mark are missing from the list. This reveals that all the New Testament books were most likely already determined by the time the last apostle, John, died. Subsequent early lists of the books of the New Testament include all of the books. Now this gives us another principle. The New Testament is also Scripture.

The Canon of Scripture is Closed. We have an

important question to ask. “Are any other books outside of the Bible inspired?” Some people quote passages in the Old and New Testament as proof that the Bible is closed (Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Jeremiah 26:2). That is, new books cannot be added to the Bible. Some like to quote Revelation 22:18-19 as proof that new books cannot be added to the Bible. The verse says,

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19 (NASB)

But this warning only applies to the book of Revelation.

Can We Add New Revelation? Therefore, can we add to the Bible today? If someone says that he had a revelation from God about Jesus, how would you respond? Let me suggest that you tell them the Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah was coming (Isaiah 40:3; Micah 5:2; Malachi 3:1; Mark 1:2-3). When the Messiah Jesus Christ came, He taught us truth. (Matthew 4:23; 5:1-2; Mark 9:31).

We also know that Jesus trained twelve men to be His disciples. It was their responsibility after He returned to heaven to go everywhere, make disciples, baptize, and teach. They were to build the church. Jesus told them the Holy Spirit would help them remember everything that He had taught them.

Now we have a principle. The Old Testament prophesied the coming of the Messiah. We were to look for His coming. He came and taught us truth. Then Christ endorsed twelve disciples to build the church. They were to teach, and they did. They wrote Scripture. But who did any of the apostles tell us to look for after they died? Whose teachings were we to follow? We should not be surprised that they told us what teachings to follow. Listen to Jude 3,

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to

write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. Jude 3 (NASB)

Jude tells believers to “contend earnestly for the faith.” The Greek word for “contend” has the idea of conflict. We are to fight for the content of faith. Jude adds, it was “once for all handed down to the saints.” The idea is that it was complete. Then Jude 17 tells us how to do this. It says,

But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Jude 17 (NASB)

The point is that we are not to look for anyone else to teach us Scripture. The Old Testament told us to look for the Messiah. Then Christ told us to listen to His disciples. Next, the disciples told us to not listen to anyone else. We are to remember what they, the apostles taught. We can add, “and what they wrote.”

This gives us our final principle. The canon of Scripture is closed. Commentaries, teachers, pastors, CDs, books, videos, sermons, and anything else outside the Bible is not inspired. They are not Scripture. Those things can be helpful tools, but they are not Scripture. For those who have systematic theologies in your library, they are not inspired either. The canon of Scripture is closed.

Conclusion. So when you are studying the Bible, remember:

- Scripture is written by both God and a human author. This helps us understand that we can read the different books in the Bible and they will not contradict each other. Collectively, they help us understand truth.
- Inspiration of Scripture extends to the smallest letters of the words. Even the smallest letters or words in Scripture are inspired. Every detail is important. Do not skip words and generalize the meaning. Pay attention to the details.
- All Scripture is without error. Remember there is a credible and reasonable explanation for every apparent contradiction or conflict.

- Both the Old and New Testaments are Scripture. The Old and New Testaments are equally important.
- The canon of Scripture is closed. Remember that ancient writings in the Dead Sea scrolls, the early church fathers, your favorite Bible teacher or pastor, those commentaries in your library, and those Christian books, magazines, CDs, videos, and radio programs are not inspired. If they violate the teachings of the apostles as given in the New Testament, they must be ignored.

These four principles will help us when we study the Bible to come to the truth.

In our first study, we discovered that a person must be a believer in order to understand what they are reading. We also learned that we must have an intense desire to know The Truth in order to find The Truth. Without an intense desire to study the Bible, your journey will not last long. We also learned that the Bereans pleased the Lord by studying the Scriptures.

In this study, we found that the book God wants us to study is called the Bible. It is inspired by God. Even the plural endings of the words are inspired. There are no other books or revelations given by God. Consequently, it is the book that we should devote ourselves to during our lifetime. When it speaks, it speaks absolute truth.