

UNIT 3: THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE – PART 1

LESSON 2 – The Books of the Bible



Introduction

- What we want to learn:
 - The contents of the Bible have been preserved by God's power
 - They remain a true witness of what He has done



Introduction

- What we want to do with what we learn:
 - Increase our understanding of what is in the Bible



Scripture Focus

- Joshua 1:8-18
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13



Anchor Statement

I believe that the Bible consists of the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books). These books combined are what the Church is convicted to uphold as God-breathed and profitable for teaching.



OVERVIEW



Overview

- The contents are set in stone.
- What were the criteria for determining the books of our Bible?



OLD TESTAMENT

LAW (5 BOOKS)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus

Numbers
Deuteronomy

HISTORY (12 BOOKS)

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 & 2 Samuel
1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Chronicles

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

PROPHECY (17 BOOKS)

MAJOR

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

MINOR

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habbakuk

Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

POETRY (5 BOOKS)

Job
Psalms
Proverbs

Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon



NEW TESTAMENT

HISTORY (5 BOOKS)

Matthew
Mark
Luke

John
Acts

APOCALYPTIC (1 BOOK)

Revelation

LETTERS (21 BOOKS)

PAULINE LETTER

Romans
1 & 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 & 2 Thessalonians
1 & 2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

GENERAL LETTERS

Hebrews
James
1 & 2 Peter
1, 2, & 3 John
Jude



THE SETTING



The Setting

- After Moses died, Joshua became the new leader of the Israelites.
- God encourages Joshua to be strong and courageous and to ensure that the people do not forget the importance of God's Word.



THE MAIN POINT



The Main Point

- The canon, or catalog, of Scripture was determined by which books showed the connection to Jesus and the story of the Gospel.
- The people were united and influenced by the Holy Spirit.



THE LEAD IN



Goal

To think about how the church determined which books should be included in the Bible.



Question

- What is your favorite sport?
- Most sports participate in some sort of a draft system to pick new players.



Draft System

- **What makes a good draft pick for a team in the sport?**
- **How would you determine if one player's selection was better than the other**
- **Could the criteria for selection change depending on the team's need?**



Criteria

- A standard by which players can be measure to determine which selection would best fit the team.



Brainstorm Exercise

- **What are some criteria that would be helpful in selecting the best player for their team?**



Specific Selection Criteria

- The church use a set of criteria to select which books were to be included in the Bible.



THE MAIN EVENT



Goal

- To understand HOW the contents of the Bible were determined
- To witness God's power in preserving His Word



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Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

POETRY (5 BOOKS)

Job
Psalms
Proverbs

Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon



Question

- **Why do you think God called His people to write and study so many different types of Scripture?**
- **Think of it like having multiple types of players on your team.**



Old Testament

Prophets

The Law

- Jesus is mentioned in every single category of Old Testament writing

Historical Writings

Poetry



In...The Law

- **We see the need for a Savior**
- **These books teach us about our shortcomings and sins and point us toward the need for restoration with God**



In...The Historical Writings

- **We see the genealogy, or family origins, of Christ**
- **We see when God makes promises to His people about the coming Savior – Jesus Christ**



In...The Prophets

- **They tell us all sorts of details about the coming of Jesus**



In...The Poetry

- **We see combined elements of each of these categories presented in a beautiful, artistic way**



OLD TESTAMENT

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Old Testament

- **The only thing they all have in common:**

**That God has a plan for His people,
and He is busy making it happen**



Question

- **What criteria might you use to determine which books should make up the Bible?**
- **Before we had the collection of books that make up the New Testament, there were several “councils” of Christians that were looking to answer that same exact question.**



Imagine

- **Imagine that you and most of your friends and family were not able to read**
- **Think about how different your lives would be**



Athanasius (Ath-en-ay-shus)

- **The first person, about 367 AD, who formed a list of the 27 books that make up the New Testament – the same 27 that we use today**
- **Some people were sharing false writings to deceive and confuse the church**
- **This concrete collection of books is often called a “canon”**



The Council of Hippo

- Athanasius was only the first
- In 393 AD
- The need for a restricted collection of reliable books for Christians
- There had been unspoken agreements but the need was important enough to be determined at the Council of Hippo in 393 AD



Questions

- **If you were invited to determine which books would make up the New Testament, what things would you bring up?**
- **What criteria would you fight for?**
- **What criteria would you fight against?**



New Testament Canon

- **Books written by someone who had a direct eyewitness to Jesus**
- **Books that aligned with the same truths taught by other authoritative books of the Old Testament**
- **Most Told Testament books are quoted in the New Testament**



New Testament Canon

- **Jesus himself endorsed the Old Testament books by using them in His teachings**
- **For example: He mentions Genesis and Zachariah in Matthew 23:35**



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Luke

John
Acts

APOCALYPTIC (1 BOOK)

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New Testament

- **You may see a similar pattern**
- **No restrictions on length or style of writing**
- **In the history section, we see multiple accounts of the same events**



Questions

- **How do you think the Holy Spirit led the people at the council when they were choosing the collection of books that would become the New Testament?**
- **Conviction – if people are unified in the Spirit of God, there will be peace about their decision**



Faith

- **It requires faith to believe that a group of people so long ago got it right**
- **There are many examples when people got together and did something incorrectly**
- **Our faith is not in the people – our faith is that God accomplished exactly what He wanted through those people**



When We Face Criticism

- **It is easy to use the logic of the world to try and defend what we view as Holy**
- **But the logic of the world can never get you there**
- **God has accomplished man things – big and small – through sinful, error-prone people like you and me**



How is Historical Information Collected?

- Example: letter written by Abraham Lincoln
 - Content seems consistent
 - Experts on Lincoln
 - But no direct access to Lincoln



In Contrast...

- We have direct access to the Author of Scripture – the Holy Spirit
- They used this access along with all the best information they could gather at the time



The Canon of the Bible is Closed

- No more books will be added
- God spoke through his Word and used the Holy Spirit to preserve it



Why?

- Until Christ returns, we have the only revelation that we need of who God is and what His purpose is



Joshua 1:8-9

- God's Word, in its entirety, has been preserved with this purpose in mind:
 - To not only learn about it
 - But to study it and keep it on your minds and hearts continually



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THE LAST WORD



Goal

- To invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you when you read God's Word



Remember

- The Holy Spirit is the One who speaks to our hearts and allows God's Word to speak to us



1 Thessalonians 2:13

- This verse captures the heart of why Scripture is more important to followers of God than it might be to non-believers



Exercise

- Write a prayer that you could use to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you before you read Scripture in any setting



Example Prayer

Lord, I am asking you to give me eyes to see Your Word, a mind that understands Your Word, and a heart that embraces Your Word. Without Your help, I am lost. Thank You for loving me and teaching me through Your Word. Amen.



Next Week

- We will dive deeper to see how God Himself spoke as the Author of Scripture



