

How You Can Know That The Bible Came From God

Series: Gideon Sunday 2015
Topics: Canonicity, Doubts
Text: 2 Peter 1:16-21

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If you have any doubts that the Bible is God's Word...

1) Study the Eyewitness Testimony (vs. 16-18)

- A. The Bible was written by eyewitnesses. These words come from the very people who saw Jesus.
- B. John 1:1–4 (HCSB) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life—that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — what we have seen and heard we also declare to you...

2) Survey the prophetic fulfillment (vs. 19-20)

- A. J. Barton Payne's Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament, for a total of 1,817. These encompass 8,352 verses.
- B. One of my favorite prophecies is Psalm 22:16 which describes the crucifixion 400 years before the Phoenicians invented it:

3) Sense the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (vs. 21)

- A. The men who gathered to form the canon did not declare books to be inspired, they discerned inspiration.
- B. The early church councils applied several basic standards in recognizing whether a book was inspired.
 - 1. Is it authoritative ("Thus saith the Lord")?
 - 2. Is it prophetic ("a man of God" 2 Peter 1:20)?
 - A book in the Bible must have the authority of a spiritual leader of Israel (O.T. – prophet, king, judge, scribe) or and apostle of the church (N.T. – It must be based on the testimony of an original apostle.).
 - 3. Is it authentic (consistent with other revelation of truth)?
 - 4. Is it dynamic – demonstrating God's life-changing power (Hebrew 4:12)?
 - 5. Is it received (accepted and used by believers – 1 Thessalonians 2:13)?
 - (Norman L. Geisler & William Nix, A General Introduction To The Bible. pp. 137-144).

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. Use them for personal or family devotions to further dig into God's word. The following questions are taken from Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology:

1. Why is it important to your Christian life to know which writings are God's words and which are not? How would your relationship with God be different if you had to look for his words that were scattered among all the writings of Christians throughout church history? How would your Christian life be different if God's words were contained not only in the Bible but also in the official declarations of the church throughout history?
2. Have you had doubts or questions about the canonicity of any of the books of the Bible? What caused those questions? What should one do to resolve them?
3. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of other cults have claimed present-day revelations from God that they count equal to the Bible in authority. What reasons can you give to indicate the falsity of those claims? In practice, do these people treat the Bible as an authority equal to these other "revelations"?
4. If you have never read any parts of the Old Testament Apocrypha, perhaps you would want to read some sections. Do you feel you can trust these writings in the same way you trust Scripture? Compare the effect these writings have on you with the effect Scripture has on you. You might want to make a similar comparison with some writings from a collection of books called the New Testament Apocrypha, or perhaps with the Book of Mormon or the Qur'an. Is the spiritual effect of these writings on your life positive or negative? How does it compare with the spiritual effect the Bible has on your life?