

WHERE DID THE BIBLE COME FROM? PART II

How did we get our Bible?

- Jesus designated apostles to convey his teaching
- in other words, the New Testament was not an accidental creation

Mark 3:14-15

¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons.

avpo, stoloj – apostle, “emissary, authorized representative”

John 20:21-22

²¹ “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

John 14:26

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 have said to you.

Galatians 1:12

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though Jesus never wrote anything down, he commissioned his apostles to be *witnesses* and *authorized messengers*

Acts 10:39-42

³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

To receive the teaching of the apostles is to receive Christ himself

- this, by the way, is the problem with “red letter” editions of Bible

Matthew 10:40

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.”

Luke 10:16

“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

Hebrews 2:3-4

³ How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Thus the apostles are very careful to demonstrate their *bone fides* as authentic witnesses of Christ

1 John 1:1-5

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Therefore, apostolic writings are Scripture (the “Word of God”)

- notice the NT writings are self-aware that they are new Scriptures

2 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

The New Testament is self-conscious of its canonical status

1 Timothy 5:18

For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” [Deut. 25:4] and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” [Luke 10:7]

1 Corinthians 14:37-38

³⁷ If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

³⁸ If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

Revelation 1:1-3

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Revelation 22:18-19

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Deuteronomy 4:2

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.

This is also how we know the canon is closed

Jude 1:3

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

But how do we know we have the right number of books?

John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

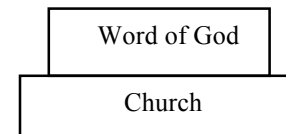
God providentially caused the early church to recognize the 27 books of the New Testament to be Scripture

- all throughout the early church, recognition New Testament writings were authoritative and divinely-inspired
- by early 4th century, we have near universal agreement

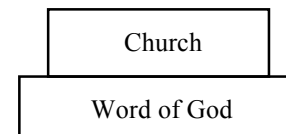
Therefore, the early church did not choose the canon, the canon choose itself

- church is like thermometer, not a thermostat
- chronologically, church precedes the New Testament
- but theologically, the NT establishes the church
- because the church was called into being by preaching of apostles which were later inscripturated

Not



But



The Bible II Notes

How did we get our Bible?

- skeptical view is that Jesus never made provisions for the writing of the New Testament
- but quite contrary, Jesus very intentionally selected disciples so they might learn from him
- and in turn, they would carry his message to the world as his spokesmen
- which means the NT writings was not an accident of history, but forethought

Mark 3:14-15

¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons.

The disciples were *to live and learn from Jesus up close*

- not just as students, but ultimately “to preach” – to reproduce Jesus’ teaching

avpo, stoloj – *apostle*: “emissary, authorized representative”

- technical term – authorized representative
- in world in which personal communication across distances impossible
- designate a personal representative who carried your full authority
- example: king’s emissary with full authority to negotiate terms

John 20:21-22

²¹ “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

“I am sending you”

- **pe,mpw** – doesn’t just mean “send” but to “appoint” or to “commission for task”
- notice parallel with Jesus being “sent” by Father | same way, apostles are “sent”

Notice connection to *Holy Spirit*

- with his special commission comes special enablement

John 14:26

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 have said to you.

How will apostles *correctly convey Jesus’ message*?

- Holy Spirit will instruct apostles on what to say

One of myths is that apostles *just making it up as they went along*

- but very clearly, apostles were not free-lance agents
- but everything they taught and preached is from God via Spirit

Galatians 1:12

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Notice Paul is *very careful to source his teaching*

- it did not have any mere human origins
- but Paul's teachings comes directly from Christ

So here is *basic answer to question – where did we get the New Testament?*

- Jesus instructed and equipped his apostles to write down his words

Though Jesus never wrote anything down, he *commissioned his apostles to be witnesses and authorized messengers*

- the complaint is that Jesus never wrote anything down
- but Jesus never intended to write anything down
- that was the designated role of the apostles

Acts 10:39-42 | Peter before Cornelius' household

³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

Notice the same *two-step process*

- apostles were specifically chosen to be eye-witnesses (v. 41)
- and then commanded to preach and testify (v.42)

To *receive the teaching of the apostles is to receive Christ himself*

- this, by the way, is the problem with “red letter” editions of Bible
- implicit in “red letter” editions is idea that Jesus' words have greater weight
- but that assumes apostles are operating independently, chiming in with their own opinions
- rather, all the apostolic writings have equal weight as the words of Christ

Matthew 10:40 – Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

Luke 10:16 – The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.

Hebrews 2:3-4

³ How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Notice the *order of the message*

- Christ declares it | then, “attested” by Jesus’ apostles (those who heard)
- and finally received by Christians

Interesting that writer of Hebrews *differentiates himself from apostles*

- he’s not an eye-witness to the resurrected Christ
- so why is Hebrews in the NT canon?
- not apostolic authorship, per se, but apostolic authorization
- Mark, Luke and Hebrews are in apostolic circle
- NT are apostolic writings, but not necessary all apostolic authorship

Apostles are very careful to demonstrate their *bone fides as authentic witnesses of Christ*

- because teachings only have authoritative weight if from Christ, this is why apostles spend so much energy establishing their eye-witness credentials

1 John 1:1-5

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

The NT writings comes out of *eye-witness testimony*

- they actually saw and heard and witnessed the risen Christ

Therefore, apostolic writings are *Scripture* (the “Word of God”)

- notice the NT writings are *self-aware* that they are new Scriptures

2 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

The term “*Scriptures*” means the authoritative words of God

- even as they were writing the New Testament, the authors knew they were “Scripture”
- this was not an emerging consciousness or an evolved point of view
- but the writers themselves knew from beginning they were writing Scripture

The New Testament is *self-conscious* of its *canonical status*

1 Timothy 5:18

For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” [Deut. 25:4] and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” [Luke 10:7]

Two citations

- one is from *Deuteronomy 25* and other is nowhere in the Old Testament
- Paul is quoting from *Luke 10:7*
- so Paul recognizes that the Gospel of Luke is Scripture, the Word of God

1 Corinthians 14:37-38

³⁷ If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. ³⁸ If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

Paul's writings are not mere opinions or theological musings

- they have divine weight – they are very commands of Christ
- again, “red letter” edition idea is false – all of Paul’s writings have equal weight

Revelation 1:1-3

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Notices John calls the *Book of Revelation* “the word of God”

Revelation 22:18-19

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

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John is deliberately echoing prohibitions of Deuteronomy

- meaning, even as he was writing Revelation, he understood it had equal weight with Torah!

This is also how we know the *canon is closed*

- how do we know revelation does not continue?
- there is no explicit verse in New Testament that canon is closed

Jude 1:3

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Apostolic ministry is a “*once-for-all*” event

- Ephesians 2:20 – apostles and prophets are foundation of church
- apostolic age is redemptive historical event which only happens once for all time

Therefore, *implicit* in that is the close of the canon

- since only living eye-witnesses can be apostles
- the New Testament is necessarily confined to the 1st century
- no second century document can be accepted into the canon

But how do we know we have the *right number of books*?

- first of all, almost all other books are 2nd and 3rd century writings, therefore excluded
- and all of the canon New Testament writings come from 1st century
- no competing books were written inside 1st century

But 27 book canon goes deeper than that

- because it's not just the bare fact that writing came first century
- but we can trust that God made it so that the church correctly recognized Scripture

John 10:27 – my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me

But why did it *take until 4th century* for there to be a consensus?

- first, disagreements were relatively minor | first lists were in response to heretics
- mostly, exclusions, and exclusions centered around a few books like James, 2 Peter, Hebrews, etc
- large majority of NT was never questioned – for example, four Gospels, Paul's 13 letters
- second, the church is not infallible, so perceptions and understanding can be flawed
- so in a sense, two stages of the canon
- first, canon from beginning – it was not an emerging consciousness
- second, canon historically came together gradually over centuries, finally crystalizing 4th century

Therefore, the early church did not choose the canon, the *canon choose itself*

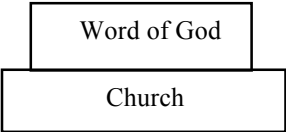
- canon forced itself on the church – for it could not help but to recognize it

Church is like thermometer, not a thermostat

- church does not “pick” the canon, as skeptical scholarship maintains
- but church “recognized” the canon – like thermometer, not thermostat

Therefore, theologically, the Bible establishes the church, not other way around

Not



But

