

Series Title: The story of the greatest Story
Sermon Title: Week 1: The Bible- it's for you
Date: 02-09-20

† Week 1 Recap: Revelation!

- We cannot know Him unless He chooses to REVEAL himself
- God has revealed Himself generally through CREATION, specifically through the history of ISRAEL, and ultimately in JESUS CHRIST
- The authoritative and objective revelation of Jesus Christ is Holy Scripture, the Bible

The Question! *If the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament are God's Revelation, then how, when, and why did these come together to form the Bible as we know it?*

† The Old Testament in a snapshot

- Parts existed in oral tradition for centuries before being written down
- **Torah, Writings of Moses (Gen, ex, liv, num, deut)**
 - Written across roughly 1,000 years spanning approximately from 1,500 to 500 B.C.
 - Written by at least 26 authors, primarily in ancient Hebrew, also in Aramaic.
 - All the O.T. books we know today existed and were translated into Greek by the mid to late third century B.C. This Greek translation of the O.T. is called the *Septuagint*.
- **NEW TESTAMENT- 27 books made up of FOUR types/ genres of literature**
 - **4 Gospels. Theological historic narratives. Primary purpose isn't historical detail, but theological content in historic context. Influenced by background of author and intended audience.**
 - **Example- car wreck seen by people on 4 corners**
 - **1 History (Acts)**
 - **21 Letters (Epistles- 13 by Paul)**
 - **1 Apocalypse- Greek word meaning 'revelation'**
- **SIX of NT books don't claim authorship, including gospels, acts, and Hebrews.**
- **However, there is solid conservative evidence for the Authorship of the Gospels, as well Acts.**
- **Hebrews remains anonymous, but broad consensus that it is apostolic- written by an early apostle**
- **WORD ABOUT LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP- has challenged authorship and dating of almost every NT book. Study unto itself, but these objections can be soundly answered. I'm coming from conservative Biblical position.**

† The New Testament was written by nine authors across approximately either 26 years or 52 years, depending on the date of the book of Revelation.

- The first gospel written was either **Mark** or Matthew (Mid 40's to early 50's)
- Some place James and Galatians as the earliest NT books (Mid to late 40's)
- The last book written is Revelation, either around A.D. 70 or A.D. 95-96
- **Turns out date of Revelation is disputed even among conservative Scholars, and argument is influenced by how you interpret the book of Revelation.**
- **What's key is that both dates are consistent with the book being written by John, and while many of first generation of believers were still alive.**
- **BOTTOM LINE- IMPORTANT!! Conservative Biblical scholarship asserts- with great evidence- that ALL of the NT books were written in the first century, by First-Hand eyewitnesses or people directly familiar with the events surrounding the life/DBR of Christ, and the birth and first generation of the church.**

– *Let's talk about that evidence. JUST A FEW...*

† Evidence of complete first century authorship of entirety of the New Testament

– *AD 70- Almost impossible to conceive that NT writers would not have made any reference at all to event of this magnitude that so directly impacted 1st century Jews and the church in Jerusalem. EXAMPLE:*

Matthew 24:1-3 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen...”

– *IT HAPPENED IN AD70, only reasonable explanation for Matthew not mentioning is that it hadn't happened*

– *Reference of early church fathers from 1st and 2nd centuries- more on that...*

– *Date of copied manuscripts. We have manuscripts of complete books from around 200AD, and almost the complete NT by 250. Possessing copied, circulated manuscripts within 100-150 years of original writings, in ancient world, is remarkable and unique. NO OTHER BOOK from ancient world has this small a time frame from origin of writing to preserved circulated manuscript.*

– *One more reason this is so important- if these NT books, particularly gospels accounts of Resurrection, WERE WRITTEN within living memory of CROSS, and Jesus had NOT been resurrected, then these books would have had NO credibility to early church. This early 1st century date is powerful argument for authenticity of the story they tell.*

– *HOW DID BOOKS COME TOGETHER into NT...*

† Development of the New Testament Canon: Six historic criteria

– *“Canon”- means ‘measuring stick’- NT collection was called the ‘canon’ because these books met the requirement of the ‘measuring stick’ used by early church leaders to determine what would be the Christian Scriptures.*

• **Apostolic authority:** Written by or connected closely to an apostle.

– *Luke, Mark, not apostles. But were known by and spent time directly with many of the Apostles.*

• **Antiquity:** Written within first century. Younger writings were rejected

– *Lots of writings from second century not included- reasons I covered above. Eyewitness or connection to eyewitness key. EXAMPLE- I didn't see WWII, but I can talk to someone who did.*

• **Orthodoxy:** Content of book consistent with accepted church teaching. No presence of doctrinal deviation, nothing causing doctrinal concern to early church.

– *Gnostic gospels- Gospel of Thomas (DaVinci Code)- from 3rd/4th century, contain huge doctrinal issues*

• **Universality:** Book accepted by the broad geographic span of the early church

– *Is there evidence that books were in use, seen, as scripture by most of church in all places*

• **Traditional use:** Book had been in use by many church for longest time frame.

– *Similar, but also had been used going back into early 2nd century, if not late first century.*

• **Inspiration:** Book held by broad segment of early church as being inspired.

- **KEY: Almost every book of the New Testament is explicitly cited as Scripture by early church fathers. By around 300, nearly every verse in the New Testament was cited in one or more of over 36,000 citations found in the writings of the Church Fathers.**
- **SO, why does OUR BIBLE not include the extra books found in Catholic bible? These are the reasons- when CANON was first established, these books did not meet the measuring stick.**

✠ Timing of the Canon

- **A criticism sometimes levied against authenticity of NT is that it took until 300's to come together. But this doesn't tell the full story.**
- **Majority- if not all- of our NT books were referenced by early 2nd century writers**
 - **Evidence that as early as 50 years after last book was written, majority of NT as we know it was in circulation and being used by the church.**
 - **In 2nd Peter, Peter refers to Paul's letters as scripture. This indicates that at least some of Paul's letters were being circulated, and seen as scripture, in 1st century.**
- **The Muratorian Canon lists 22 of 27 NT books by A.D. 170**
 - **Fragment discovered in 1700's, itself from 7th or 8th century, but written in Greek that dates to second century. Contains core of NT as we know it.**
 - **KEY- the vast majority of the NT was widely accepted by the church within the 2nd century. The debates that lasted into the 200's and 300's were over a small handful of books.**
- **The 27 book New Testament Canon were universally referenced by Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, and accepted by Council of Carthage in A.D. 397.**

✠ Authenticity of the ancient texts

- **We possess no original manuscripts of the NT, only copies (Greek MSS)**
 - **This is true of ALL ancient writings. If you discount NT because it is copies, then you must discount every work of ancient literature known to man.**
- **There are almost 5,600 MSS, and none are exactly alike.**
 - **These are thousands of fragments, books, collections... entire science of cataloging, maintaining, studying these ancient manuscripts...**
 - **SOMEONE MAY SAY... they are all different!!**
HOWEVER...!!!
- **Of these thousands of manuscripts, they are over 98% alike. There is no other ancient document with this level of textual accuracy. Not even close.**
 - **Most copied manuscripts even dating into much more recent history- prior to printing press- don't have this level of accuracy.**
- **The 2% disagreement are matters such as word order, spelling, and grammar. KEY! There is not a single disputed doctrinal problem or issue among all the MSS.**
 - **There ARE several instances where an older manuscript will not contain a section of text found in later MSS. John 8- woman caught in adultery is example, as well as end of Mark.**
 - **These can be studied, but they don't raise doctrinal issues, which is why they are included.**

– **CHAPTERS AND VERSES! SUM UP! Not original to the text. OT and NT is a slightly different path, but earliest evidence is 900's AD (OT). It wasn't until the 1500's that Chap/Verses as we know them came fully into use. KEY!! SCRIPTURE WAS NOT originally intended to be studied a verse at a time! More later...**

† **TAKEAWAY!** This all matters for one reason, and one reason only... **Not just ancient book! It is, with evidence, WORD OF GOD.. This is here so that we may...**

John 20:30-31 *Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*