

Question #1: What is the Bible?What It's Made Of**Jewish Scripture—OT: TaNaK**

- "Torah" / Law — five-book foundation story
- "Nevi'im" / Prophets — stories from prophets' point of view
- "Ketuvim" / Writings — wise sayings

Christian Scripture—NT:

- Gospels are eyewitness accounts about Jesus' life from different perspectives
- Acts — about the spread of the Jesus-movement beyond Israel, by Jesus' continuing power
- Letters — to different Jesus-communities around the ancient world about following Jesus
- The Apostles wrote everything with the belief that their recounting of Jesus' life and influence was the epic fulfillment of the TaNaK's story — God continued speaking to his people alongside the Jewish Scriptures

What It Claims to Be

- **Human** document (Exodus 24:4, Deuteronomy 31:9, Jeremiah 36:4, 1 Corinthians 16:21, Colossians 4:18, 2 Thessalonians 3:17, Philemon 19)
- **Divine** document (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)
- ➔ So, the Bible is a divine and human word, with a collection of genres of literature in different languages about the creator's rescue of his world in Jesus
- Resources:
 - The Bible Project's Video, "What is the Bible?" // www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4
 - "A Reader's Guide to the Bible," John Goldingay
 - "40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible," Rob Plummer

Question #2: How did some books get chosen and others didn't?

- From the beginning of the Christian movement, both the Old and New Testaments were valued as God speaking to his people
 - First-century: Apostles were writing with authority
 - 1 Tim. 5:18 cites Luke 10:7
 - 2 Peter 3:16
- Was a "core" of NT books (about 22 out of 27) functioning as Scripture from the early to middle second century
- All NT books needed to meet standards of (1) connection to Apostle, (2) congruent teaching, and (3) used by Jesus-communities
- ➔ So, the books of the Bible were recognized as having authority from their creation, and treated as scripture from the beginning
- Resources:
 - Michael J. Kruger's blog: "Canon Fodder" // www.michaeljkruger.com
 - "The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate," Michael J. Kruger
 - "40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible," Rob Plummer, pp.17-78.
 - "The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon," John Barton

- “Who Chose the Gospels?: Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy,” C.E. Hill

Question #3: Aren’t all the books of the Bible written by a single author?

- The Bible wasn’t just dropped on stone tablets out of the sky—divine and human word (Deuteronomy 34:5-7, Jeremiah 36:1-4, 32)
- Hebrew Bible has been edited together (Deuteronomy 34:10-12, Joshua 1:1-9, Malachi 4:4-6, Psalm 1:1-3)
- We’re dealing with a long textual tradition, a long river of literary work that has all been guided and preserved by God

→ So, the books of the Bible have multiple editions with differing authors, but one unified story

Question #4: Didn’t people just add what they wanted to the copies of scripture?

- Eyewitness account -> pondering -> writing -> copying -> passing along
- As copied, small variations came into the documents
- Textual criticism seeks to determine the most original reading, getting back to original
 - External tests: older = better, majority wins, uniformity in different manuscripts from different places
 - Internal tests: literary context, compare what else the author’s said, try to track down which reading could lead to the mistake, short = better, difficult = probably original

→ So, we have good reason to trust that we have accurate copies of the original manuscripts of the Bible, because God preserves his word and textual criticism continues to affirm accuracy

- Resources:
 - “Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World,” Josh McDowell
 - “New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide,” David Alan Black
 - “The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration,” Bruce Metzger
 - “The Text of the New Testament: From Manuscript to Modern Edition,” J.H. Greenlee

Conclusion: Purpose

- The more we know about the Bible, the better we can use it
- You can’t know what something is for (purpose), without knowing what it is (identity)
- Heart of issue: we default to a modern-westerner view the Bible—individualism
- Reading the Bible is like being good tourists = de-center and humble ourselves