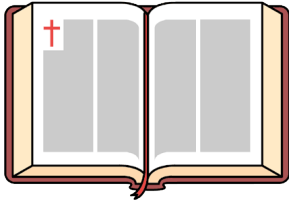


The Canon



Why were some books excluded from the Bible?

1. The Gospels disagree on some details.
2. Does this destroy the credibility of their message?
3. Are they the inventions of the early church or are they inspired by God?

2 Peter 1:16

“We did not follow **cleverly invented stories** when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”

Historical Critical example *The Gospel accounts contradict each other.*

Mark 16:2-5

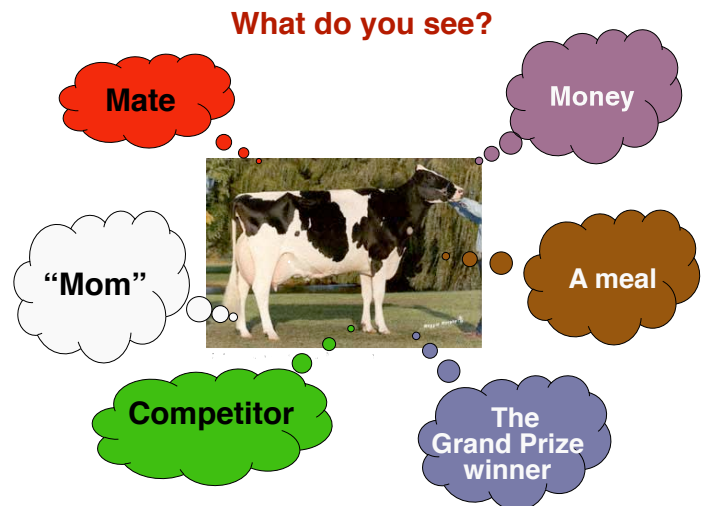
On entering the tomb they saw a **young man in a white robe** seated at the right-hand side.

Luke 24:1-4

As they stood there not knowing what to think, **two men in brilliant clothes** suddenly appeared at their side...

Matthew 28:1-4

And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow...



Comparison of the four Gospels

John - The Mystic's story: This is a **poetic** revelation of the **divinity** of Jesus with an emphasis on the **meaning** of Jesus' words and actions.

Mark - The Rebel's story: This is a concise revelation of Jesus as a **revolutionary** prophet who calls his followers to **sacrificial** action.

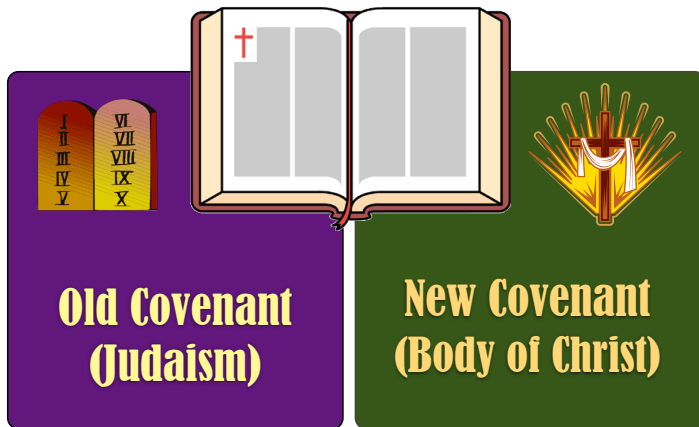
Luke - The Chronicler's story: This is an **orderly** story of Jesus as a compassionate **hero** who appears as the **climactic** event of human history to change the world.

Matthew - The Rabbi's story: This is a defense of Jesus as the Jewish **Messiah** in **fulfillment** of the Old Testament promises.

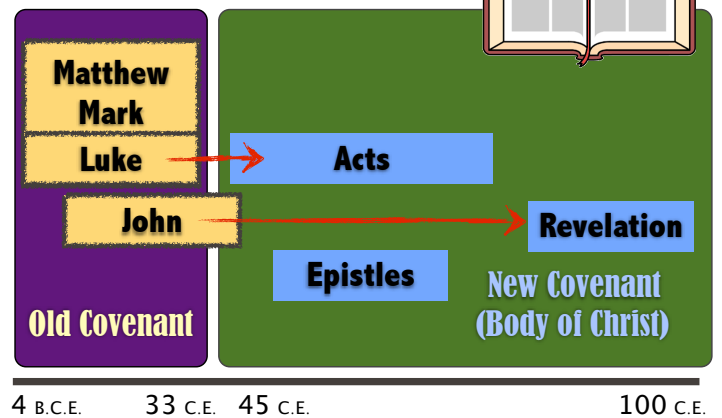
Help in Reading the Gospels

1. Treat them as inspired essays not as technically precise histories.
2. Read with a hard mind and a soft heart.
3. Remember that they may be written for but not about, or directly to, us.

Our Bible consists of two testaments - Old and New



The Covenant contexts of the New Testament documents.



2 Timothy 3

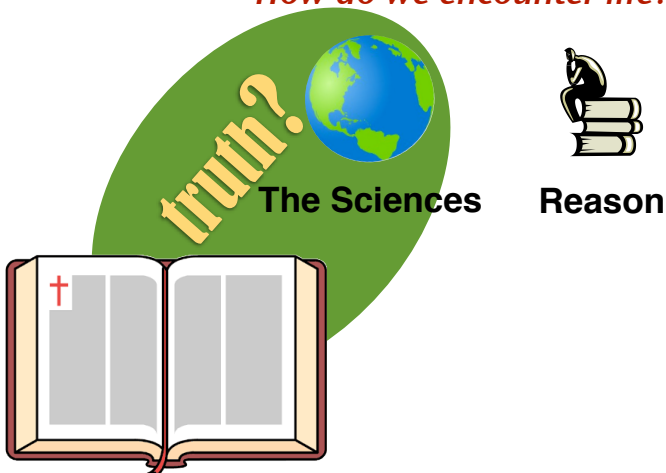
“¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings**, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ **All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

- * **A canon of sacred texts was recognized early in the church.**
- * **These texts were viewed as “God breathed.”**
- * **The teaching of these texts shaped the life of the church.**

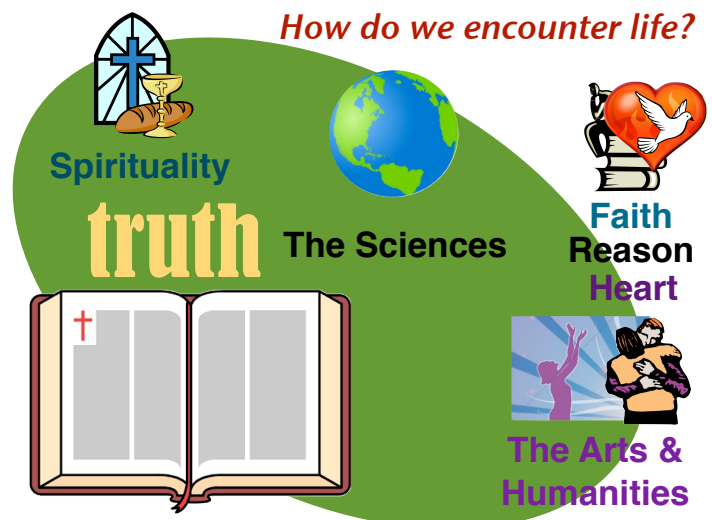
The canon of the New Testament

1. **The stories of the formation of the canon are influenced by differing presuppositions.**

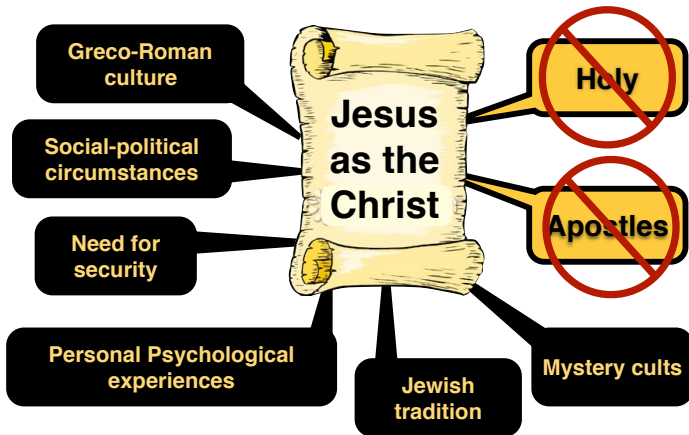
How do we encounter life?



How do we encounter life?



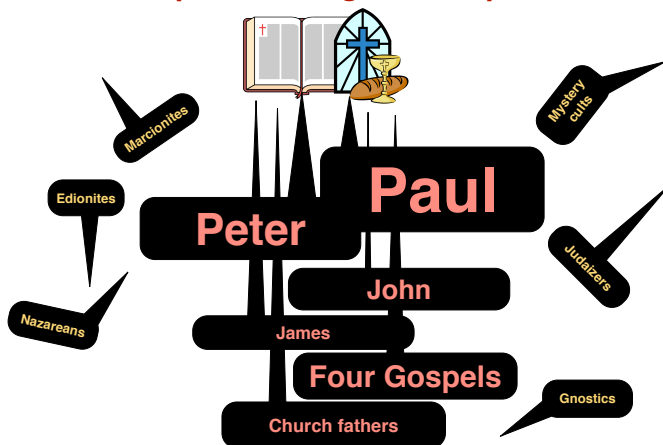
Critics insist that the New Testament can be explained fully by natural cultural sources.



Critics insist that the early church created or invented the N.T. canon.



Christians did not invent but identified the inspired writings as Scripture.



Christians did not invent but identified the inspired writings as Scripture.



Conclusions

- Respect the authority of Scripture.
- Respect the nature and limits of historical critical approaches to Scripture.
- Respect the nature and limits of Biblical inerrancy.
- Respect the challenge to properly discern the meaning of Scripture.