

*Is God there, is He fair, and does He care?*

1. We are all created in the **image of God**.
2. We are all responsible to **be true to ourselves** as bearers of God's image.
3. We are all **frustrated and hopeless** because of the brokenness in ourselves and our world.
4. Jesus came to us as a **gift of God's grace** to bear our sin, and impute His righteousness to us.
5. Many have **received** Jesus Christ by faith so as to stand before a holy God in Christ's image.
6. Many others have not believed and chose to **stand before God on their own merit**.
7. God will be perfectly **fair** in His judgment of both.

*No one is forced to receive Christ but anyone can!*

1

*"He who has ears to hear let him hear."*  
**What constitutes the Word of God?**

It is embodied in the person and work of Jesus.



Personification (flesh & blood)  
**Son of God**

It is the **MESSAGE** that enlightens those who have ears to hear.



It is written and passed on through documents.



Propositions (oral narratives - written truths)  
**Scripture**

2

*Why do I believe the Gospel?*

- ✓ I find the Gospel MESSAGE to be **PLAUSIBLE** to an open mind once I sense that there is a spiritual reality that exists beyond the purview of materialistic science.
- ✓ I find the Gospel MESSAGE to be **PALATABLE** to a sensitive soul seeking answers to the big questions of life like - Mortality (Why do I die?), Meaning (Why do I live?), Morality (Why do I have a sense of good and evil?).
- ✓ I find the Gospel MESSAGE to be **PREFERABLE** to the alternatives, realizing that we all start with faith assumptions of some kind.

3

Old Testament	The Law	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	History	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
	Poetry	Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	Major & Minor Prophets	Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
New Testament	Gospels	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	History	Acts
	Paul's Letters	Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon	General Letters	Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude
			Prophecy	Revelation

**How did the New Testament become a part of our Bible?**

4

*John 16*

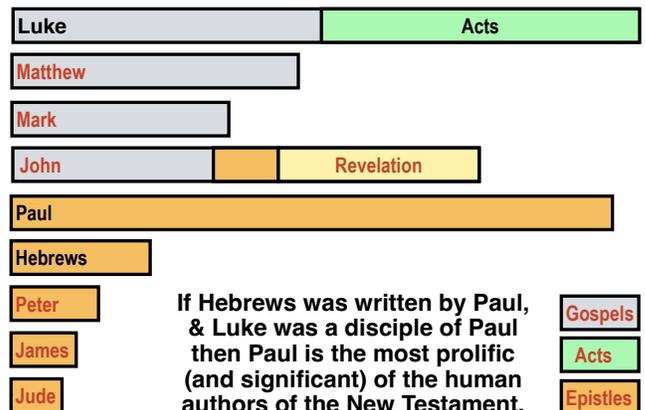
"<sup>12</sup> I have **many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now**. <sup>13</sup> **But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth**; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you."

*"The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing."*

**Jesus is the "main thing"**  
 not the Holy Eucharist, Holy Mother, Holy Spirit,  
**Holy Self, Holy Church,**  
**or Holy Bible.**

5

*Relative length of material by N.T. authors*



6

**Understanding Apostolic teaching is key to understanding Christianity.**

1. Christianity cannot be reduced to **ethical piety, emotional encounter, or social justice.**
2. Justifying faith is rooted in **moral virtue**, but not our own.
3. The New Covenant is not a **doubling down on the O.C. Law** but fulfilling its demands.
4. The whole Bible is written FOR us, but not always **TO or ABOUT us.**
5. Godly behavior is **motivated by love not fear.**

7

*John 1*

“4 **In Him was life**, and the life was the **Light** of mankind. 5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.”

*John 12*

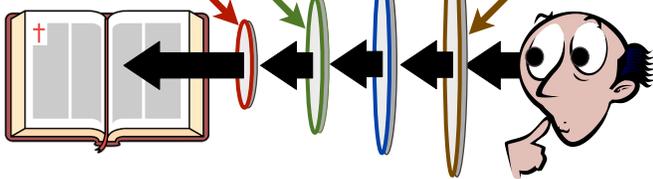
“25 **He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.** 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”

*John 17:26*

“... that the **love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them.**”

8

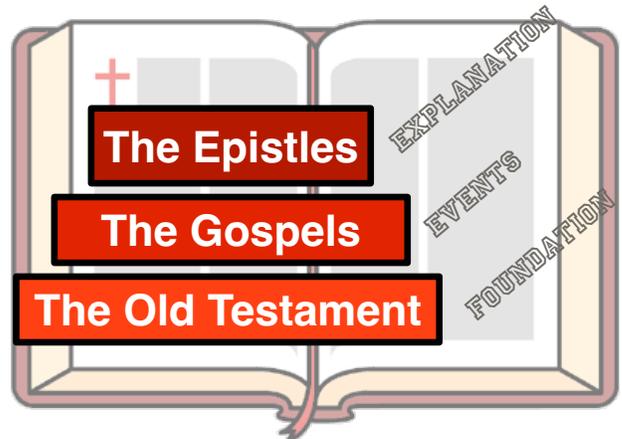
Old Testament - menu  
Gospels - meal  
Epistles - metabolizing  
Our world



**We interpret an infallible GOSPEL MESSAGE through lenses.**

9

**THE GOSPEL STORY**



10

*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.”

- The Bible was a **wise MESSAGE** from God through human writers for those who listen.
- The Torah was **dictated** in stone by God, the N.T. is **REVEALED** through the Spirit of Christ.
- The message of **APOSTOLIC TEACHING** and writing shaped the theology of the church.
- The O.T. is the **MENU**, the N.T. is the **MEAL**.

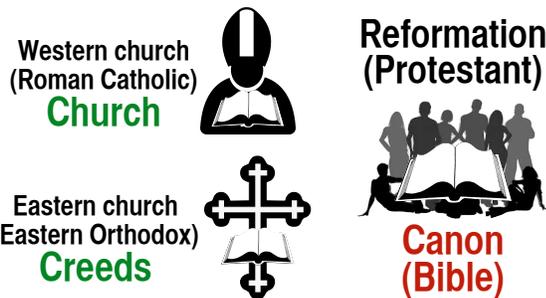
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**New Testament Introduction**

1. A new addition - **Inspired Scripture**
2. A new covenant - **The Biblical context**
3. A new message - **The Word of Life**
4. A new lifestyle - **The Way of the Cross**
5. A new nature - **The Spirit of Christ**
6. A new Israel - **The Body of Christ**
7. A new mission - **The Disciples of Christ**
8. A new hope - **The Return of Christ**

12

After the Apostles died,  
Christians needed an authoritative  
guide to the **GOSPEL MESSAGE**.



13

2 Peter 3

“15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother **Paul**, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which **the untaught and unstable distort**, as they do **also the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction.”

✓ The early church respected a canon of authoritative / **INSPIRED TEXTS**.

✓ The canon included **APOSTOLIC LETTERS**.

✓ Sound **TEACHING** is vital for a healthy church.

14

**THE REJECTED BOOKS** (pseudepigrapha or “false writings”)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>GOSPELS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS (Gnostic)</li> <li>2. THE INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS</li> <li>3. THE GOSPEL OF PETER</li> <li>4. PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES (devotion to Mary)</li> <li>5. THE GOSPEL OF THE HEBREWS (Gnostic)</li> <li>6. THE GOSPEL OF THE EGYPTIANS (Gnostic)</li> <li>7. THE GOSPEL OF THE NAZARAEANS (Synoptics)</li> <li>8. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATHIAS (Gnostic)</li> <li>9. THE BOOK OF THOMAS THE ATHLETE (Gnostic)</li> <li>10. THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP (Gnostic)</li> <li>11. THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS (Gnostic)</li> <li>12. EPISTLE OF AN APOSTLE</li> <li>13. APOCRYPHON OF JOHN</li> <li>14. THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH</li> <li>15. THE GOSPEL OF THE EDIONITES</li> </ol> <p><b>APOCALYPSE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH</li> <li>2. APOCALYPSE OF PETER</li> <li>3. THE FIFTH AND SIXTH BOOKS OF ESRA</li> <li>4. CHRISTIAN SIBYLLINES</li> <li>5. THE BOOK OF ELCHASAI</li> <li>6. APOCALYPSE OF PAUL</li> <li>7. APOCALYPSE OF THOMAS</li> <li>8. BOOK OF ENOCH</li> </ol> | <p><b>ACTS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ACTS OF JOHN</li> <li>2. ACTS OF PETER</li> <li>3. ACTS OF PAUL</li> <li>4. ACTS OF ANDREW</li> <li>5. ACTS OF THOMAS</li> <li>6. EARLY ACTS OF APOSTLES</li> <li>7. LATER ACTS OF APOSTLES</li> </ol> <p><b>EPISTLES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. THE KERYGMA PETROU</li> <li>2. THE KERYGMA PETROU</li> <li>3. THE EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS</li> <li>4. THE BETWEEN SENECA &amp; PAUL</li> <li>5. THE PSEUDO-TITUS EPISTLE</li> </ol> <p><b>BOOKS ACCEPTED BY SOME (apocrypha)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EPISTLE OF PSEUDO-BARNABAS</li> <li>2. EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (quotes from Hebrews)</li> <li>3. SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT (placed after Revelation)</li> <li>4. SHEPHERD (like “Pilgrim’s Progress”)</li> <li>5. DIDACHE (2nd century Christian theology)</li> <li>6. ACTS OF PAUL &amp; THECLA</li> <li>7. EPISTLE TO THE LAODICEANS</li> <li>8. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS</li> <li>9. EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS</li> <li>10. THE SEVEN EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

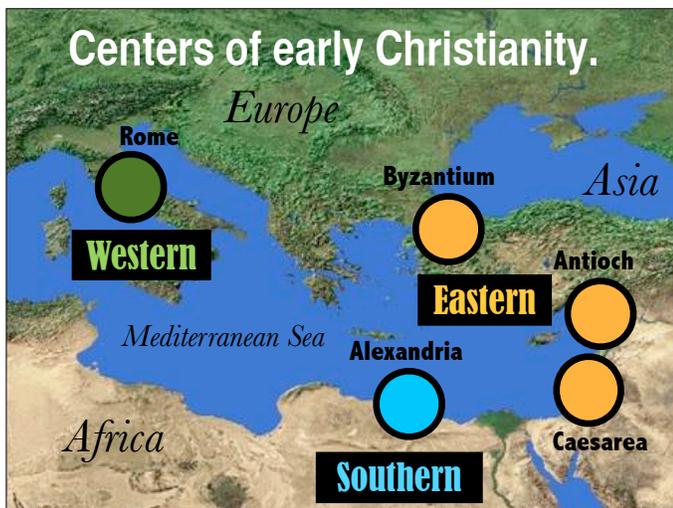
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**What criteria was used to identify a text as inspired?**



16

**Centers of early Christianity.**



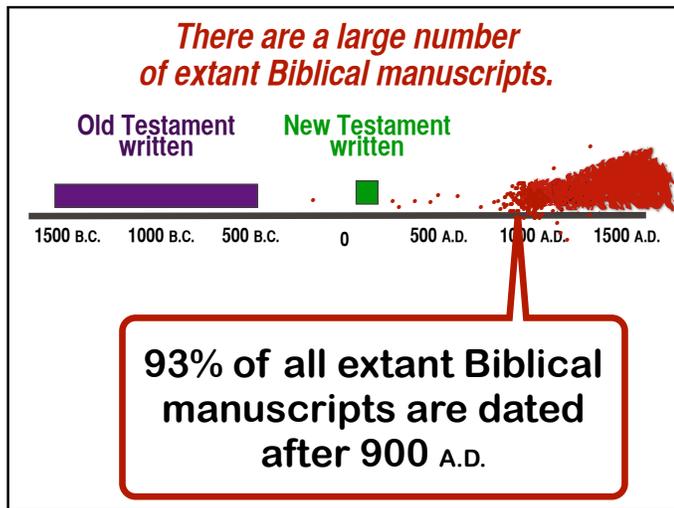
17

**End of the Gospel of Thomas**

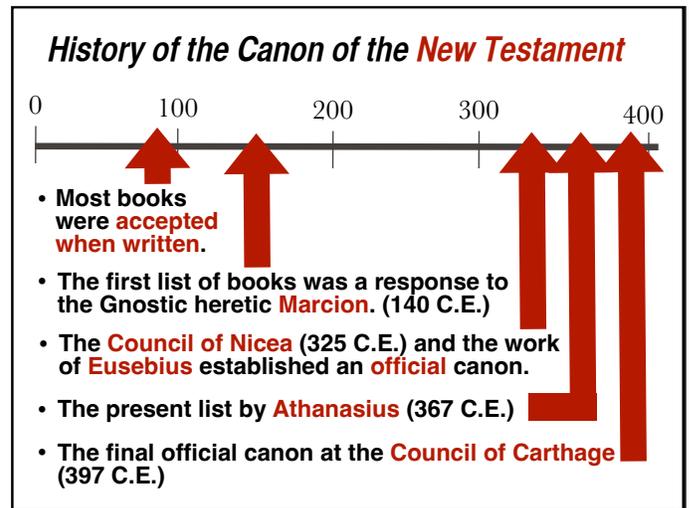
“Let Mary go away from us, because women are not worthy of life. I shall lead her in order to make her a male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Does this sound like the Gospel message of **Jesus and the Apostles?**

18



19



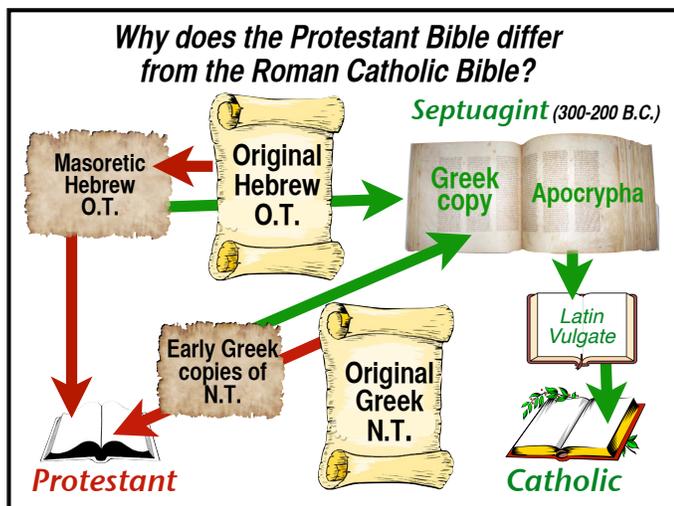
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- Why did it take so long for the N.T. books to be compiled together?*
1. The originals were **scattered** across the whole Roman empire.
  2. No **scroll** could contain more than one or two books.
  3. Christ was expected to **return** soon.
  4. No one church or leader dominated or represented a **headquarters**.
  5. The Apostles were still **alive**.
  6. The rise of **heretical** teaching.

21

- Which books were in dispute and why?*
- **Hebrews** - uncertainty of authorship
  - **James** - conflict with Paul's letters
  - **2 Peter** - different in style from 1 Peter
  - **2 & 3 John** - private nature and limited circulation
  - **Jude** - it quotes from Enoch (vs.14-15)
  - **Revelation** - its teaching of the millennium

22



23

- What should we learn from this?*
1. An appreciation of the **importance of the Apostolic message** recorded in the documents of the N.T.
  2. An understanding of the **criteria used to authenticate** the N.T. canon and its wisdom.
  3. An understanding of variations in **differing Christian translations**.
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24

# New Testament

Next week  
Gal.4:1-5

How does the  
N.C. relate to  
the O.C.?