

What is the Bible?

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 3-23-16

What is the Bible?

The Bible is God's _____ - _____

- Comparison with Islam (transcendent, unitary, and unknowable) - no relationship, just submission
- Christianity - Trinity of God who wants to be _____
- Question: Can he make himself knowable?

Revelation

- Is _____
 - Not philosophical facts, but as person to person
 - Persons make themselves known through their words and deeds
 - Not comprehension, but relationally know
- Is _____
 - He speaks and acts in space and time with real people
 - John 1:14 - He himself actually entered in
- Is _____
 - Every interpersonal interaction has a **history** (the record of God's actual, personal dealings with people and situations in the world).
- Is _____
 - The need for an accurate record
 - The whole canon of Scripture is needed for the complete picture of God's revelation
- Is _____
 - Canon = "reed" or "standard". An official list.
 - 66 canonical books
- Is _____
 - All of his revelation points to, makes sense in light of, and culminates in the person of Jesus Christ
- Is "_____ - _____"
 - 2 Tim. 3:16
 - The Holy Spirit is the active agent for inspiration - 2 Pet. 1:21
 - God used many and various methods - Heb. 1:1
 - "plenary" - His inspiration extends to the very _____ of Scripture

The uniqueness of the Bible - Not just another book!

- In its _____
 - Written over a 1,500 year span, over 40 generations
 - Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life (Kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, doctors, etc.)
 - Written from many different places in many different times
 - Written in different moods
 - Written on 3 continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe)
 - Written in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)
 - Contains hundreds of controversial topics spoken of with continuity and harmony from Genesis to Revelation
- In its circulation and translation
 - First translation was the Septuagint (Gr. OT in 250 BC)

- Been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book
- In its survival - Through time, persecution, and criticism
- In its teachings
 - Prophecies - between 300-350 prophecies
 - Mathematical probability:
 - 1 person fulfilling 8 prophecies: 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000
 - 1 person fulfilling 48 prophecies: 1 chance in 10 to the 157th power
 - 1 person fulfilling 300+ prophecies???
- In its influence

How did the Bible come about?

OT

- Oral transmission vs. oral tradition
 - Transmission = was the process that the facts and details of God's revelation were faithfully transmitted from generation to generation
 - Tradition = schools of thought that arose throughout times around a particular interpretation of a text
- Fall of Jerusalem (70 AD) + scattering of Jews + proliferation of Christianity = formal collection of written books
 - Canonization already established
 - Jesus affirms (Luke 24:44) - law, prophets, and writings
 - Luke 11:51 - "From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah" = the entire OT
 - His disagreement with the Pharisees was over their oral traditions
 - Mark 7 - (v. 8); Matthew 15 - (vv. 1-3)
 - Prologue of *Ecclesiasticus* (extra-biblical sources - 130 BC) indicates established OT canon
 - The NT witness to the OT as sacred Scripture: Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26: 54, 56; Luke 24; John 5:39; 10:35; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; I Cor. 15:3-4; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30; I Tim. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:20-21; 3:16
- **Summary:** While not consolidated in a formal collection of written books until the first century, the OT canon was established long before the time of Jesus and transmitted orally.

NT

- Everything in the NT was written during the _____ generation of followers.
 - Existing oral transmission (cf. Luke 1:1-4)
- Some fragments from as early as 125 AD
- 25,000 manuscript copies of portions of the NT



WORK	WHEN WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME SPAN	NO. OF COPIES
Homer (<i>Iliad</i>)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs.	643
New Testament	40-100 A.D.	125 A.D.	25 yrs.	over 24,000

AUTHOR	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	59 B.C.-A.D. 17			20
Plato (<i>Tetralogies</i>)	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (<i>Annals</i>)	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	20 (-)
also minor works	100 A.D.	1000 A.D.	900 yrs.	1
Pliny the Younger (<i>History</i>)	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (<i>History</i>)	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Suetonius (<i>De Vita Caesarum</i>)	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (<i>History</i>)	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Horace			900 yrs.	
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	193
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 B.C.		1,100 yrs.	2
Catullus	54 B.C.	1550 A.D.	1,600 yrs.	3
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,500 yrs.	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	200 *
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	49 †
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	10

* All from one copy.
† Of any one work.

Summary: The NT was written within the first generation following the events of Christ and we have copies of the original manuscripts from as early as the 2nd century. We can be extremely confident that the Bible we have in its present form has accurately preserved the original authors' writings.

Summary

- God wants to be known
 - He has made himself personally knowable
- The Bible is utterly unique
- The Bible as we have it today was formed over hundreds of years, but we can have confidence that the form it is in today is faithful to the what the original authors wrote
- Ultimately we resort to a statement of faith: If God wants to be known, is able to be known, then we can believe that he will ensure he is knowable to every generation