



GLORY of CHRIST
FELLOWSHIP

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE
LECTURE OUTLINES
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Course Outline

- I. The Doctrine of Revelation.
 - a) General Revelation.
 - b) Special or Specific Revelation.

- II. The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture.
 - a) The Nature of Inspiration.
 - b) Inerrancy, Authority, and the Power of Scripture.

- III. The Texts and Cannon of Scripture.
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 - b) The Old Testament Cannon.
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- IV. The Truthfulness of Scripture.
 - a) The Bible has a unified theme and purpose.
 - b) The Bible accurately portrays history.
 - c) The Bible is confirmed by archaeology.
 - d) The Bible accurately predicts the future.
 - e) The Bible accurately describes the human condition.
 - f) The Bible is confirmed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - g) The Bible has been used by God to transform lives.
 - h) The Bible has survived many attempts to destroy it.

SESSION ONE: THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

a) General Comments:

- i) The word “revelation” means “to unveil or uncover.” This unveiling is necessary because of God’s greatness and our sinfulness (Is 40:6-31).
- ii) God has revealed himself in two ways which are most often referred to as general revelation and special or specific revelation.

b) General Revelation.

- i) God reveals himself in creation (see Ps 14:1, 19:1-6, 33:6; Acts 14:17, 17:22-31; Rom 1:18-23). Historically, theologians have included in this category the physical universe and everything that’s in it, the flow and details of human history, and human personality (since we are made in the image of God). To put it succinctly, all things exist to display the being, power, and beauty of God.

The Scholastics of the middle ages, and most notably Thomas Aquinas, referred to this type of revelation as “natural theology” to distinguish it from “special or revelatory theology” which I’ll say more about in a moment.

General revelation is indeed an “unveiling of God” and yet it is limited because it gives us very little specific details about God. All of creation screams that God exists but it says almost nothing about precisely who he is and what he’s like. It says almost nothing about his names, his character, his purposes, his will, his ways, and so forth. And furthermore, even where creation is clear (e.g., about the power of God) we in our sinful nature are prone to distort what is plainly displayed.

Because of this, there arose quite a lot of debate, especially in the sixteenth century, about whether or not it is proper to refer to creation as a revelation of God at all. I won’t go into the details of the debate, but suffice it to say that in the end the theologians of that era concluded that creation is indeed an unveiling of God but that it’s insufficient and open to much misinterpretation because of human sinfulness. And this leads us to the second type of revelation, special or specific.

c) Special or Specific Revelation.

- i) I prefer the term “specific” because the term “special” seems slippery to me, so I will use it throughout.
- ii) Specific revelation refers to the direct unveiling of God by God to humanity. This began with audible speech from God to persons like Adam and Abraham (Gen 3:14-19, 6:13-21, 7:1-4, and 12:1-3), it continued through the specific revelatory experiences of persons like Moses and Samuel (Gen 18:1-15, Ex 3:1-22, 34:6-7, 1 Sam 3:1-14), it extended to the giving of written speech through Moses and others (Deut 31:24; Josh 24:26; Jer 25:13, 30:2, 45:1, 51:60; Dan 12:4; Rev 22:7-9), and it culminated in Jesus Christ (John 1:1-18; Gal 4:4-5; Heb 1:1-4). Hebrews 1:1-4 teaches that since God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, there’s no further need for revelation. This is why Christians believe there will never be another book added to the Bible.

God has never been trying to hide himself from us rather we in our sinfulness have been trying to hide ourselves from him. As Jesus said in John 3:20, “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.” The problem is not, and has never been, that God failed to provide light.

SESSION TWO: THE INSPIRATION & AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

- a) The Nature of Inspiration.
- i) We believe in what's called the "verbal-plenary inspiration" of the Scripture. The word "inspiration" derives, for Christians, from the Greek word *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος) which literally means "God-breathed." Thus, when we use the word "inspiration" we mean, not that the biblical writers were inspired as Shakespeare was when he wrote poetry, but that the very words and ideas they committed to paper were given to and through them by Holy Spirit. In fact, in both Hebrew and Greek the word for "Spirit" and the word for "breath" are the same word so that when the Bible says it's "God-breathed" it's the same as saying that it's "Spirit-breathed," that is, given directly from the Holy Spirit himself—and the Holy Spirit is God.
 - ii) The word "verbal" implies that the inspiration of the Scripture extends to the very words of Scripture and not just to the general thoughts or ideas (1 Cor 2:13, Eph 3:1-6, 2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:19-21). This doesn't mean that God dictated the Bible to the various authors exactly but it does mean that he has a purpose for every single word, and indeed every single letter, that is there. This is, admittedly, a mystery but at the end of the day this teaching implies that the actual words of the Bible matter—they really matter.

One point of clarification: this does not mean that every statement in the Bible is true because the Bible records people lying. But it does mean that it reports those lies truthfully and that the overall message the Bible's conveying is true.
 - iii) The word "plenary" means "whole" and it implies that the inspiration of the Scripture extends to all 39 books of the OT and 27 books of the NT. We'll talk more later about why we believe that these books, and only these books, are inspired by God as mentioned in 2 Tim 3:16.
- b) On the Inspiration of the OT: Why we believe the OT is "God-Breathed."
- i) The OT claims to be inspired by God around 3,000 times (this includes all of the texts that say something like, "Thus says the Lord," implying that the words thereafter derive from God).
 - ii) The OT contains many prophecies that later came true in surprising detail, especially with regard to Jesus Christ (for example, Is 9:1-7).
 - iii) Jesus referred to the OT as if it was given by God and yet he failed even to mention the hundreds of other religious books that existed in his day (Mat 5:17-20, 22:41-46; Lk 16:16-17; Jn 10:35).
 - iv) The NT writers referred to the OT hundreds of times as the source of divine authority and they quoted no other text in like manner, with the possible exception of Jude 1:14-15 (see Hebrews 1:1-14 which quotes or alludes to the OT 9 times; the book of Hebrews quotes or alludes to the OT 80 times in just 13 chapters).
- c) On the inspiration of the NT:
- i) The NT claims to be given by God in texts like Acts 1:2, Rom 1:16, 1 Cor 2:13, Eph 3:1-6, 1 Thes 2:13, 1 Tim 5:18 (refers to Luke 10:7), 1 Pet 1:3-25, 2 Pet 3:15-16, and Rev 22:18-19.
 - ii) The early church, after the generation of the Apostles, looked to the NT as Scripture on par with the OT. In fact, the text of the NT can be almost completely reconstructed from the quotes found in the early church fathers. They do quote other texts here and there but not with the same appeal to authority as with the NT.

- iii) The church throughout the last 2,000 years has, for the most part, continued to affirm that the NT is “God-breathed” even as the OT.
- d) The Divine-Human Nature of the Bible. To say that the Bible is God-breathed is not to deny that there is a human element to the Bible. This human element is seen in the various writing styles, personal expressions, cultural locations, and theological emphases of the authors. Precisely how God breathed his Word through sinful authors is a mystery nearly as perplexing as the incarnation of Jesus Christ and all we know for sure is this: somehow, by the riches of God’s grace, the divine and the human co-joined to manifest God to us through the Scriptures.
- e) Inerrancy, Authority, and the Power of Scripture.
 - i) Inerrancy: If the words of the Bible were in fact “God-breathed” it follows that they must be without error and the church has long affirmed this fact though they have used various terms to do so. We don’t have the time to get into the details of this today but I refer you to the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” which articulates the nuances of this doctrine better than any other statement I’ve seen.
 - ii) Authority: If the words of the Bible were in fact “God-breathed” it likewise follows that they carry with them all the authority of God. The authority of words derives from the one who speaks. So my words have some measure of authority in certain contexts, a cop’s words have some measure of authority in certain contexts, President Obama’s words have a measure of authority in certain contexts—but God’s words have ultimate authority in all contexts because he is God.

This means, at the end of the day, that the words of God as expressed in Scripture have the final say on all matters which they touch. As the Bible says in Is 14:24-27, “²⁴ The LORD of hosts has sworn: ‘As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, ²⁵ that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot; and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder.’ ²⁶ This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. ²⁷ For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?”

- iii) Power: If the words of the Bible were in fact “God-breathed” it likewise follows that they have effective and transformative power (Rom 12:1-2).

SESSION THREE: THE ORIGINAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

a) On the Original Manuscripts of the Bible.

- i. **Writing Media:** The most important mediums for writing in the ancient world were (1) stone (or plaster with wax overlay), (2) clay, (3) wood and wax, (4) metal, (5) ostraca or potsherds, (6) papyrus, and (7) parchments. The oldest portions of the Bible were written on stone (10 Commandments), papyrus, and perhaps even clay, but in time it was copied onto and preserved on parchments. In fact, the Talmud required that “A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals.” As for the NT, it was probably written on papyrus to begin with but was then almost exclusively copied onto parchments in the form of Codices.
- ii. **The Organization of Papyri and Parchments:** As writing developed in the ancient world, lengthier writings were joined in the form of rolls. Here’s how that worked: sheets of papyrus would be glued or sewn together and then fastened to wooden rolling pins so that one would unroll the one side and re-roll the other. These rolls averaged about 10” in height and 35-40’ in length. It was difficult at best to handle them and thus someone at some point in some place—no one knows who, when, or where—invented the idea of the “codex.”

A codex is a gathering of papyri or parchments that are folded in the middle and then sewn or glued together so that they can be flipped and read like a modern day book. This form of binding eventually replaced the older idea of rolls except where rolls still served a religious or ceremonial purpose, as with many synagogues today.

So to summarize: the Bible was written on papyrus and parchments, mostly parchments, and nearly all the surviving copies we have today are organized in the form of Codices (though a few rolls from Qumran and elsewhere do still exist). In fact, this is why the Bible is called “the Bible.” The English word “Bible” derives from the Greek word “βιβλιον or βιβλια” which in turn translates the Latin word “codex.” Thus, the word “Bible” simply means “books or codices.”

- iii. **The Languages & Grouping of the Bible:** The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It was then collected in smaller portions because of the limits of their technologies so that the Pentateuch or the Prophets or the Gospels or the letters of Paul would be gathered together as separate units. In that day it would have been exceedingly rare to have a copy of the entire OT or NT, much less both, in one single binding.

This reality probably explains, in part, why the Jewish Bible is organized the way it is to this day. Their Bible is identical in content to our—or rather ours to theirs—but it’s organized in three sections: the torah, the prophets, and the writings. The Hebrew words for these three begin with the letters “T-N-K” and thus the Hebrew Bible is often called “The Tanak.” I will give you a handout in a few minutes that details exactly how they organize the 66 books.

Likewise, many ancient collections of the NT are organized somewhat differently than our and yet the content is precisely the same. Our modern Bibles follow the organizational scheme developed by the biblical scholar Jerome in the early fifth century which he published in a very important Latin translation of the Bible called the Latin Vulgate. His main concern in organization was chronology.

- iv. **OT Manuscripts:** Compared to the NT we have relatively few OT manuscripts. The two most important ones are the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex.
 1. The Aleppo Codex, so named for the Syrian city in which it was long kept, was once a complete manuscript of the Hebrews Bible dating from the 10th century but unfortunately it was severely

damaged in a 1947 skirmish between the Arabs and Jews. It is housed in Jerusalem and is still of immense value for our understanding of the text of the OT.

2. The Leningrad Codex, so named because it's housed in St. Petersburg Russia which used to be called Leningrad, is a complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible dating to the early 11th century, most likely the year 1010.
3. Both of these manuscripts derive from the Ben Asher family of scribes which was located in the city of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Ben Asher family was part of a larger group of scribes most often referred to as "the Massorettes."
4. The Hebrew word "masorah or massorah" means "tradition" and around A.D. 500 it came to refer to that group of scholars whose job it was to copy the text of the sacred Scriptures. In former times this group was simply known as "the scribes" but from the beginning of the sixth century forward they came to be known as "the Masorettes." Of the Masorettes, the Ben Asher family—for a number of reasons—was the most prominent and remains so to this day.

We'll have to leave the reasons for this to another time but for now let me say that they were amazingly meticulous scholars. They counted everything in their manuscripts that could possibly be counted: books, sentences or lines as they would have said, words, letters, and necessary scribal marks. A Masorete could tell you the middle line, word and letter of any book of the Hebrew Scriptures, of the Pentateuch as a whole, and of the entire corpus as a whole. In fact, they made marks on their manuscripts to show where all of these things are and this became one of the main means by which they ensured the accuracy of their copies.

5. Now, the Masorettes were not the first scribes in the history of Israel to be so meticulous, a fact which is proven by the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls. I have just told you that the two most important manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures date to the 10th century A.D. The 20 complete scrolls of the book of Isaiah found in the caves of Qumran near the Dead Sea date to the first or second century B.C.—so that's a difference of 1,100-1,200 years.

When textual scholars compared these 20 texts to each other and then to the Masoretic Codices, they found a difference of less than 1%. This means that of all the thousands of letters and words contained in the 66 chapters of Isaiah, only a small handful varied from a copy of that same text that was made over a millennium later! One scholar I read this week commented that reading the Dead Sea scrolls is for all intents and purposes precisely the same thing as reading the MT.

- v. NT Manuscripts: Although the count is always changing based on the latest finds, we currently possess over 5,300 manuscripts of the NT, most of which are just fragments but some of which are near whole books of the NT, whole books of the NT, gatherings of whole books of the NT like the gospels or the letters of Paul, or the whole NT.
- vi. These numerous manuscripts are divided into two major types: (1) uncials or majuscules and (2) cursives or minuscules. Like English, the Greek language can be written in capital letters or small letters, however, these two forms are sometimes quite different. Uncials were written in capital letters and were used when a more formal or official copy of a book was being made and thus the most important NT manuscripts are in the form of Uncials. Cursives or minuscules, on the other hand, were written in small letters, and sometimes in a cursive form. This was the preferred form of writing in the early church and thus the minuscules make up the lion's share of the manuscripts we have to this day. However, the uncials are still the most important manuscripts of which I want to highlight three.

1. The Vatican Manuscript (B). This manuscript, so named because it's been housed at the Vatican in Rome since around 1448, dates to the fourth century and contains most of the OT in Greek as well as the majority of the NT. It is, however, missing the latter portion of Hebrews (9:14-end), the Pastoral Epistles, and Revelation.
2. The Sinaitic Manuscript (Ⲙ). This manuscript, so named because it was "discovered" in the nineteenth century at St. Catherine's Monastery at the base of Mount Sinai, dates to the fourth century and contains about half of the OT in Greek as well as the entire NT as we know it. The man responsible for discovering and publishing this text is Constantin von Tischendorf, a name you should note and research later. This manuscript is now housed at the British Library in London.
3. The Alexandrian Manuscript (A). This manuscript, so named because it was housed in Alexandria Egypt for several centuries, dates to the fifth century and contains most of the OT in Greek as well as the majority of the NT—only small portions of Matthew, John and 2 Corinthians are missing. It is now housed at the British Library in London.

Session Four: The Canon of Scripture

Having said something about the manuscripts of the Bible, we must now address the question of why the Bible is made up of 39 OT books and 27 NT books. In other words, we have to address the question of the canon of Scripture.

a) The Old Testament Canon.

- i. The word “canon” derives from the word “reed” which were used as measuring rods. Thus, the word “canon” was employed by ancient writers, both secular and religious, to denote a rule or standard.
- ii. The criteria for why particular OT books were included in the OT canon are not known but it seems that it was established before the time of Jesus and maybe even as early as 400 B.C. We gather this, not from any official decisions made by the Jews, but from the way they spoke about the 39 books that make up our OT and the way they bound these books. In the ancient Jewish culture, those responsible for handling the biblical texts either rolled or bound them differently from all other books so as to set them apart and in this way we know that they considered these books, and only these books to be unique.

Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, both Jesus and the early church referred to these 39 books as the Word of God and referred to no other books in this way. This fact had no impact whatsoever on the thinking of the Jews but it is significant, I think, for our purposes.

b) The New Testament Canon.

- i. The main criterion by which books were tested in the NT era was “apostolicity,” that is, was the book in question closely connected to an Apostle? This does not mean that everything the Apostles wrote became Scripture (cf. 1 Cor 5:9; Col 4:16) but it does mean that all NT Scripture bore the mark of at least one Apostle. Because of this it is extremely unlikely that any new book will be added to the NT canon.
 1. Gospels & Acts: Matthew, Mark (Peter), Luke-Acts (Paul), John.
 2. Epistles: Romans-Philemon (Paul), Hebrews (unknown but most likely not Paul), James, Peter, John, and Jude (not an apostle but the half-brother of Jesus).
 3. Revelation: John.
- ii. As the church grew and dispersed throughout the world, it encountered various issues and heresies that caused it, in various places, to determine which books were in and which books were out. Thus, the story of the canon of the NT is first told in the development of several different ‘local canons’ which provided the context for the discussion of the global canon, that is, the canon that would apply to the entire church around the world.

Thus, by the middle of the fourth century, a scholar named Eusebius organized the various books under consideration into the following categories: accepted, disputed, rejected, and heretical (3.25). And just a few years later, in A.D. 367, the first complete list of all 27 books of the NT as we know them was published in the famous Easter letter of Athanasius. By the end of that century the church formally accepted Athanasius’s list and, for all intents and purposes, the issue of the NT canon was settled.

- iii. Process not an Event: For both OT and NT the formation was a process not an event. This is actually great news because it means that the Word of God has stood the test of time. John said we ought to

“test the spirits” and even the Lord himself subjected his own words to this process—how humble and gracious is our God! This is totally unlike the Book of Mormon, for example, which is only half as old as the NT was before it was “canonized.”

- iv. Recognize not pronounce: This process further shows that the church does not pronounce any book or group of books to be the Word of God, rather, we recognize them as such. In other words, the books of the Bible are books of the Bible because God has said that this is so not because we have said this is so.
- v. As for the verse divisions, although the Masortes made some attempt at adding them, the first real attempt was made by Stephen Langdon in 1228. However, the system that stuck was designed by Robert Stephanus whose Latin edition was published from Geneva in 1551. The Hebrew was organized by the lines of the manuscripts, while the Greek seems to have been organized by a random jabbing of the finger onto the pages of Scripture—some jokingly say that he wrote in the verse numbers while riding on an ox cart!

c) The Septuagint:

- i. Translation of Hebrew into Greek begun in third century B.C. and completed in the second or first century B.C. The myth is that the ruler of Egypt commissioned 70 Jewish Scholars to translate the Bible on their own and that they miraculously translated it in precisely the same way. This is, of course, not true, but there may be a grain of truth to the story. The Dead Sea Scrolls have confirmed that the LXX is a very literal translation, on the order of the NASB—in other words, so literal that it’s clunky.
- ii. Over the years different versions of it were produced and utilized by the first century Jews and the early church. These differences explain many of the problems that arise with how the OT is quoted and utilized in the NT (see that article in Carson’s book).

d) The Apocrypha:

- i. The word is taken straight from a Greek word (*apokrypha*, ἀπόκρυφα) which means “that which has been hidden.” Various scholars take guesses at why this term was applied to these books but the truth is that no one knows for sure and it probably doesn’t matter. Catholics reject the term Apocrypha in favor of the term Deutero-Canonical which means “second canon.”
- ii. The Apocrypha contains the following books (see pages 11-12).
 - 1. Josephus referred to several of these books and deemed them “not worthy of equal credit with the earlier records,” by which he meant the OT or Hebrews Scriptures (*Against Apion* 1.41).
 - 2. Jerome said they were not “books of the canon but books of the church.”
 - 3. The Reformers stood with Jerome and recommended them for reading but rejected them as Scripture.
 - 4. The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) only declared these books to be within the canon at the Council of Trent in 1546 after the Reformation. The evident reason for this is that several crucial Catholic doctrines rest upon these texts alone, e.g., purgatory, prayers and offerings for the dead, and justification by faith plus works. This is why they reject the term “Apocrypha” in favor of the twin terms “proto-canonical” and “deutero-canonical,” that is, first and second canon. They offer specious explanations as to why they use these terms but there’s no getting around the fact that the RCC added to the canon quite apart from the Jewish and Protestant traditions.

iii. Reasons why Protestants do not accept them as Scripture:

1. They do not claim divine authority as do the other writings.
2. Jesus, as far as we know, neither mentioned nor embraced these books as canonical.
3. The NT never quotes these books as authoritative with the possible exception of Jude 1:14-15 (see also Acts 17:28).
4. The early and middle church did not embrace these books as canonical.
5. These books contain clear falsehoods (e.g., geographical details) as well as internal and external inconsistencies.

e) The Pseudepigrapha:

- i. This word is a compound Greek word meaning “false writings or epigraphs.”
- ii. There is no one “Pseudepigrapha,” that is, one complete collection of false writings, rather there are numerous false epigraphs the world over that have developed in a variety of ways throughout history. The common thread among them all is that they are clearly false in their attribution or content or both.

f) Conclusion.

- i. Trust God—he who inspired the Bible also oversaw the process of canonization and if the Bible is in fact his Word, he will show it to be just that. We have no need to fret. However, we are welcome to humbly test the Word by reading, studying, understanding, and obeying.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND APOCRYPHA

The following table gives the names of books included in the Old Testament of the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and the King James Version (1611). Names of apocryphal books are italicized. The books enclosed in square brackets in the Septuagint column are books which appear in only some copies of that version.

Hebrew Bible	Septuagint	Latin Vulgate	King James Bible
THE LAW	Genesis	Genesis	Genesis
Genesis	Exodus	Exodus	Exodus
Exodus	Leviticus	Leviticus	Leviticus
Leviticus	Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Numbers	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy	Deuteronomy
Deuteronomy	Joshua	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges	Judges	Judges
THE PROPHETS	Ruth	Ruth	Ruth
Joshua	1 Samuel	1 Samuel	1 Samuel
Judges	2 Samuel	2 Samuel	2 Samuel
1 Samuel	1 Kings	1 Kings	1 Kings
2 Samuel	2 Kings	2 Kings	2 Kings
1 Kings	1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles	1 Chronicles
2 Kings	2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	2 Chronicles
Isaiah	<i>[Prayer of Manasseh]</i>	<i>Prayer of Manasseh</i>	Ezra
Jeremiah	<i>1 Esdras</i>	<i>1 Esdras</i>	Nehemiah
Ezekiel		<i>2 Esdras</i>	Esther (Hebrew)*
Hosea	Ezra	Ezra	Job
Joel	Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Psalms
Amos	<i>Tobit</i>	<i>Tobit</i>	Proverbs
Obadiah	<i>Judith</i>	<i>Judith</i>	Ecclesiastes
Jonah	Esther (with <i>insertions</i>)*	Esther (with <i>insertions</i>)*	Song of Songs
Micah	<i>1 Maccabees</i>	<i>1 Maccabees</i>	Isaiah
Nahum	<i>2 Maccabees</i>	<i>2 Maccabees</i>	Jeremiah
Habakkuk	<i>[3 Maccabees]</i>		Lamentations
Zephaniah	<i>[4 Maccabees]</i>		Ezekiel
Haggai	Job	Job	Daniel (Hebrew)**
Zechariah	Psalms	Psalms	Hosea
Malachi	<i>[Psalm no. 151]</i>		Joel
	<i>[Odes]</i>		Amos
THE WRITINGS	Proverbs	Proverbs	Obadiah
Psalms	Ecclesiastes	Ecclesiastes	Jonah
Proverbs	Song of Songs	Song of Songs	Micah
Job	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	Nahum
Song of Songs	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>	Habakkuk
Ruth	<i>[Psalms of Solomon]</i>		Zephaniah
Lamentations	Isaiah	Isaiah	Haggai
Ecclesiastes	Jeremiah	Jeremiah	Zechariah
Esther	Lamentations	Lamentations	Malachi
Daniel	<i>Baruch</i>	<i>Baruch</i>	
Ezra	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>	APOCRYPHA
Nehemiah	Ezekiel	Ezekiel	<i>1 Esdras</i>
1 Chronicles	Daniel (with <i>insertions</i>)**	Daniel (with <i>insertions</i>)**	<i>2 Esdras</i>
2 Chronicles	Hosea	Hosea	<i>Tobit</i>
	Joel	Joel	<i>Judith</i>
	Amos	Amos	<i>Additions to Esther*</i>
	Obadiah	Obadiah	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>
	Jonah	Jonah	<i>Ecclesiasticus</i>
	Micah	Micah	<i>Baruch</i>
	Nahum	Nahum	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>
	Habakkuk	Habakkuk	<i>Song of the Three Children**</i>
	Zephaniah	Zephaniah	<i>Story of Susanna**</i>
	Haggai	Haggai	<i>Bel and the Dragon**</i>
	Zechariah	Zechariah	<i>Prayer of Manasseh</i>
	Malachi	Malachi	<i>1 Maccabees</i>
			<i>2 Maccabees</i>

*Esther in the Septuagint has six extra paragraphs inserted at various places. In the Vulgate these are all removed to the end of the book. English versions omit them entirely, or remove them to an Apocryphal section.

**Daniel in the Septuagint has *The Story of Susanna* inserted at the beginning, the *Song of the Three Children* inserted in chapter 3, and the story of *Bel and the Dragon* added to the end. In the Vulgate *Susanna* is moved to before *Bel*. English versions omit them entirely, or remove them to an Apocryphal section.

Greek Orthodox Canon	Protestant Apocrypha	Roman Catholic Canon
1 Esdras Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Song of the Three Children Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees 3 Maccabees 4 Maccabees Psalm 151	1 Esdras 2 Esdras Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Song of the Three Children Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Song of the Three Children Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees

N.B. These charts were taken from www.bible-researcher.com/canon2.html.

Session Five: Introduction to the Truthfulness of Scripture

a) Introduction:

- i. The manuscripts of the Bible are by far the most reliable in ancient history. This matters because we need to have confidence that the things we read in the Bible are true to what was originally written. But now that we've dealt with that, there's one more issue with which we must deal, namely, whether the things we read in the Bible are true. So the first question we dealt with in this class was this: are the manuscripts of the Bible true to what was originally written? Answer, yes. Now the second question we have to deal with is this: are the claims which the Bible makes true? It's one thing to show that what we have in our possession today is essentially identical to what was originally written but it's another thing to show that the things that are written are true.
- ii. For example, suppose someone wrote these words in a manuscript 3,500 years ago: "the earth is square and pigs can fly." Then suppose that we have in our possession a copy of this manuscript that is 1,000 years old so that there's 2,500 years distance between the two. On this second manuscript are found these words: "the earth is square and pigs do fly." Is the copy true to what was originally written? Pretty much. There's one small change but it doesn't affect the meaning so we can say that this manuscript is a reliable copy of the original. Now, is the statement which this manuscript makes true? Is the earth square? No. Can pigs fly or do they? No. Therefore, even though the manuscript is reliable the claims of the manuscript are false.
- iii. So I hope you can see that there are two important questions we have to answer about the Bible: first, are the manuscripts reliable—answer, yes—second, are the claims which those manuscripts make true?

b) Over the next several weeks I'm going to offer six answers to this second question that, when taken together, imply that the claims of the Bible are indeed true. Let me just lay them all out for you and then we'll deal with each of them in the coming weeks:

- i. The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors and yet it has a singular, consistent message without significant contradictions. Not all of its authors had access to the writings of others and so it is truly astonishing how, when you read the Bible, it reads as though it's one book. This shows that God himself was superintending the entire history and process of penning the Bible and that the claims it makes are true.
- ii. The Bible accurately describes historical persons, places and events and therefore it is likely accurate when it makes claims about God and truth. In other words, since it's faithful with little things like history then it's likely to be faithful with big things like truth.
- iii. The Bible is confirmed by archaeology. The use of archaeology as a proof for the Bible has a long and storied history, and I will be the first to admit that proofs for and against the Bible can be adduced by believers and skeptics alike. However, when weighed in the balance and considered with care, the scales of archaeology tip heavily in favor of the truthfulness of the Bible, especially when compared in this respect to other religious books like the *Book of Mormon*.
- iv. The Bible predicted future events which then came to pass in the way it described. For example, the book of Daniel predicted the rise and fall of various kingdoms which did indeed come into and out of being as it had been written. And most notable, the details of the birth, life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ were prophesied in a number of books, all of which came to pass. Since the Bible accurately and miraculously predicted the future it is likely to be accurate when it makes claims about God and truth.

- v. The Bible accurately describes the human condition. It speaks of us in ways that are true, and it offers solutions that work when applied. As we come to understand the depth and accuracy of the Bible's portrayal of the human condition, we grow in the confidence that its claims about God and truth are also true.
 - vi. The resurrection of Jesus puts him in a category all his own and he affirmed the Bible alone as the Word of God. Since the most significant human being ever to have lived endorsed the Bible, and since he was raised from the dead, it is likely that the Bible is true.
 - vii. The Bible has worked powerfully in the lives of many to save and transform them. I'll say more when we get to this week, but for now let me say that I myself was saved by the power of the Word of God and my life was radically transformed, and I have several friends whose lives were changed in a similar manner. And not only did the Word exercise power in our lives at one point in time, but it kept exercising power in our lives over time. God uses the Bible as a sword to instruct, guide, convict, etc. If the Bible has such a powerful and transformative effect on the lives of many it is likely that its claims are true.
 - viii. The Bible has survived numerous attempts to destroy it from ancient days to the days of Jesus to the middle ages to modern times. The near miraculous endurance of the texts of the Bible in the face of such virulent opposition leads to at least consider that a great force is working to protect it, and of course, we believe that "force" is in fact the Almighty God who so graciously spoke to his creation and so graciously preserved his speech over time.
- c) There are other ways to establish the truthfulness of the Bible but these are eight important ways. Before we get into the meat of these things, I do want to say that we cannot absolutely prove that the Bible is true—we can only build a circumstantial case. At some point every believer has to make a leap of faith and believe in the being and the speech of God, however, the more we learn about the Bible the less of a leap that becomes. In other words, the more we learn, the more we come to understand that the manuscripts of the Bible are indeed reliable and its message is true.
- i. Obviously, there are many in this world who do not agree with what I just said, and this will always be the case, but when skeptics say that our belief in the Bible is unintelligent or irrational they're simply wrong. We have solid logical reasons for believing that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.
 - ii. Several years ago a young man asked one of the foremost atomic scientists in the world a very simple question: "What is an atom?" The scientist gave him the textbook answer but the young man replied, "I am aware of that definition of the atom but I'm asking you as someone who's worked with atoms all of your life: what is an atom, really?" When the scientist saw that this young man's question was a bit deeper than he had initially thought, he looked skyward and thought about it for several minutes. Finally, he opened his mouth and said, "I don't know." One of the foremost atomic scientists in the world could not definitively describe an atom, and therefore he could not prove that our conception of it is accurate and true. But the inability to prove something doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, it just means that we can't prove it.
 - iii. So just because we can't completely prove that the Bible is true does not mean that it's not true, it just means that we can't prove it. But we can build our conviction on solid ground which is what I hope to help us do in the coming weeks.

Session Six: Argument One—The Unity of the Bible

- a) This and other lessons in this section are forthcoming.