

# Arlington Church of Christ

**Bible Study**

# Following the Scriptural Trail

**How were the  
Books of the Bible  
chosen?**

**How were the books of the Bible determined? We know that the apostles and prophets were inspired to write down the very words of God in books and letters, but how was it decided which would be included in the ‘canon’ of the Bible.**

**“Canon” is from the Greek and has the idea of a standard, a rule, or a means to determine the quality of something.**

**There were many religious writings during time of the Bible, so how was it determined which to include in the Bible and which ones to exclude? The seminaries often teach that the Bible books were determined at various ‘councils’ like the council of Hippo in 393 AD or the council of Carthage in 397 AD. But these councils did not decide which books to ‘include’, but rather to reject additional books being added.**

# In the Old Testament, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible:

Exodus 24:4-7

**Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.**

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. <sup>7</sup> **Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people.** They responded, **“We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.”**

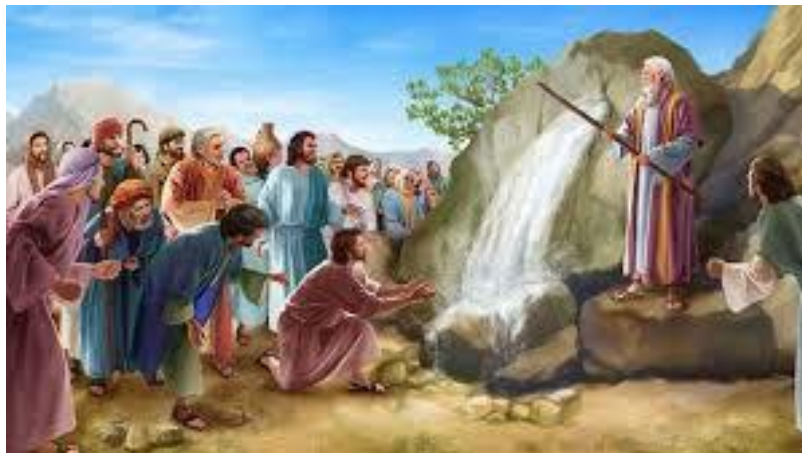
So Moses was a prophet and wrote down the first five books of the Bible having been told what to write by God.

**Deut 31:24-26** After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, <sup>25</sup> he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: <sup>26</sup> “Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you.

Why were the writings of Moses accepted as from God? The people saw the miracles, the works of God done through Moses and understood that Moses wrote God's true words.



## The Ten Plagues of Egypt





Then came Joshua:

**Joshua 24:26 And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.**

Joshua's words were written and added to the book of the law. People accepted them as the true words of God because they saw the miracles that God did through Joshua.



# Samuel also wrote down words from God

## 1 Samuel 10:25

Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

Samuel wrote a book and laid it before the Lord (added it to the words of the book of the law). People accepted the words of Samuel as scripture because the Israelites saw God working through Samuel.



What about the other prophets? Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all prophesied at the same time and each recognized the others as speaking and writing the words of God.



**Daniel 9:2**

in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

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**Isaiah 30:8**

**Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the days to come, it may be an everlasting witness.**

The people recognized these men as prophets of God by the things that they did and the Israelites immediately accepted the writings of the prophets as scriptures. This was long before any councils, votes, or decisions of groups of men.

The Israelites all accepted that the last genuine prophets were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

## Between the Testaments

**In the 400 year period between the Testaments, there were many books written, but none of them claim to have been written by prophets:**

**EX. In 1 Maccabees 4:46, 9:27, and 14:41 – the statement is made that there were no longer any genuine prophets during this time.**

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**In 2 Baruch 85:3 – the statement is made that all the prophets had fallen asleep**

**In the prolog to the book of Ecclesiasticus – it refers to the law, the prophets, and them that followed them. (who were not prophets)**

**Josephus says in his history that the writings of the Old Testament were completed by the time of Artaxerxes (400 BC) - in his history called 'Against Apion 1:8.' He then lists the 22 'books' of the Hebrew Bible (these same books are also listed by Origen in his history)**

These are the same 39 books found in our Old Testament due to the Hebrew Bible containing combinations of these books.

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua/ Judges

Book of Kingdoms – 1,2 Samuel, 1,2 Kings

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

The Twelve – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah,

Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,

Zechariah, Malachi



Psalms

Proverbs

Job

Song of Solomon

Ruth

Lamentation

Ecclesiastes

Esther

Daniel

Ezra/ Nehemiah

Chronicles 1,2

**The Catholic Bible in the Old Testament contains books called the Apocrypha which contains 11 extra books. (There were 14 in the Apocrypha, but the Catholic church accepts only 11 rejecting the books of Esdras, Tobit, and Judith. But none of these extra books are not found in non-Catholic Bibles – why?)**

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- there are no quotations from any of these books in the New Testament as there are from every accepted Old Testament book**
- there is no proof of any Greek Old Testament ever containing them**
- No church council ever even considered any of them before the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.**
- their inclusion was opposed by all early Christian historians**
- they were all written during the 400 year period between the Testaments (when there were no genuine prophets)**
- they were not added to the Catholic Bible until the Council of Trent in 1546 AD.**

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## **2 Peter 3:2**

**I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.**

## **Matthew 16:19**

**I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.”**

# The apostles were given the Holy Spirit to guide them:

## John 14:26

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

## Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

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**Hebrews 2:1-4 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. <sup>2</sup> For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. <sup>4</sup> God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**

**John 20:30-31 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

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**Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**

**2 Peter 3:2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.**

**Jude 17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.**

## **1 Corinthians 14:37**

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So how did the books written by non-apostles become accepted as scripture? Luke, James, Jude

The non-apostle writers were those who had received the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles hands. They were the 'prophets' having the gift of prophecy and the words they wrote were considered to be the inspired Words of God. For example, the apostle Paul quotes Luke 10:7 in 1Tim 5:18 and calls it scripture. The books written by these 'prophets' were immediately considered scripture by the church.

**Ephesians 2:19-20** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

# Paul's writings were called scripture by Peter in:

## 2 Peter 3:15-16

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. <sup>16</sup> He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.



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2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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**Colossians 4:16** After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

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**Other books have been 'discovered in recent years, and after examination were dismissed as not being inspired. For example:**

The Gospel of Mary (Magdalene) -- discovered in 1896, is a Gnostic version of a gospel supposedly written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. But it contradicts the other gospels and there were no living apostles or prophets at that time.

The Gospel of Judas – contains supposed secret conversations between Jesus and Judas Iscariot. It contradicts the other gospels and was rejected immediately by the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians.

The gospel of Thomas is supposed to be secret knowledge given to Thomas by Jesus. It was rejected because of its 'strange' theology – for example saying that the kingdom of God can only be obtained when one has gained enough of this secret knowledge (Gnostic teachings).

**Remember the words given in the scriptures included in the Bible are not from men as those of the excluded books were, but were given by the Holy Spirit:**

**1 Corinthians 2:13**

**This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.**

**So what should our response be to these facts?**



- Study it carefully

## **Psalm 1:1-2**

**Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, <sup>2</sup> but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.**

- **Allow it to guide your thinking and belief**

**Romans 10:3-4**

**Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.** <sup>4</sup> Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

**If a person does not allow God's word to guide their thinking, they will end up following their own ideas of what is right or wrong.**

- **Obey its teachings in our daily activities**

**John 14:15 “If you love me, keep my commands.”**

**1 John 2:3**

**We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.**