

Sun., Aug. 2: Holy Communion

Message Series: FAQs: Your Questions Answered with Biblical Facts

Message Series Theme Verse: Psalm 119:130

Message: "FAQs #5: What Is the Origins of the Bible?"

Memory Verse: "Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character." 2 Timothy 3:16

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Blurb: FAQ: What is the origin of the Bible? Where did the Bible come from? People wrote it, right? But Christians also claim that it is God's Word. Are both true? This Sunday Pastor David will open the covers of this greatest-of-all books and discover how this is God's words for God's people. Don't miss it! (And then next Sunday we'll take up why we can trust it.)

Prep: Greeters outside, handing out bulletins and Holy Communion elements

Doors propped open.

Every other pew roped off.

Offering plates available as people leave.

OPENING MUSIC: *Surrounded (Fight My Battles)* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

Everyone is invited to receive Holy Communion in this service.

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character." 2 Timothy 3:16

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify (acoustic)

God of Creation

O Word of God Incarnate

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

Worship Prayer -Pastor Andrew

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE: "Bible FAQs" -Pastor Andrew

OFFERING: Please leave your offerings in the box as you leave.

MESSAGE: FAQs #5: "What Is the Origin of the Bible?"

PP#1: FAQs: Your Questions Answered with Biblical Facts

What Is the Origin of the Bible?

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word." -Psalm 119:9

Frequently Asked Questions: Your Questions Answered with Biblical Facts. What is the Origin of the Bible? Psalm 119:9, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word."

PP#2: “*Homo unius libri!*” -John Wesley
[“I am a man of one book.”]

The Bible is the key text for Christians. It is the “one book.” John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was perhaps the most widely read person of his day. The fortune he made—and which he systematically gave all away—came from his publishing, of his own writings and that of others. Yet, he was clear in always stating, “I am a man of but one book.”

PP#3: “The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.”-Article V, *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*

Why is this book so important? Because we claim that it is the very word of God. It is God’s Words, gifted to people, so that we can know God, can know the path of life, and can know how to live our best lives. The United Methodist Church, in our *Book of Discipline*, in Article V, says, “The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.” In current language, that means that the Bible is the sufficient account of human salvation.

PP#4: *Biblia* (Greek) = “Book”
Scriptura (Latin) = “Writing”
Sacra (Latin) - “Sacred”

The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word book. Scripture is the Latin word for writing. Our Bibles are titled The Holy Bible, or The Holy Scriptures, because they are from God. This is God’s special word for God’s people. There are tons of other godly writings, and lots of other holy writings, but this special collection is not the complete, or exhaustive, but the sufficient account of human salvation. If you need to know it, it’s in there. Article IV in *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*, “The Holy Bible,” states, We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for salvation. It is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be made an article of faith nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation.”

PP#5: Old Testament (39 books): Jewish Scriptures, the First Covenant

Genesis - Deuteronomy (5 books): Law
Joshua - Esther (12 books): History
Job - Song of Songs (5 books): Poetry
Isaiah - Daniel (5 books): Major (longer) Prophets
Hosea - Malachi (12 books): Minor (shorter) Prophets

Now as Pastor Andrew taught us recently, the Bible has two major parts. There is the first part, which we call the Old Testament or Old Covenant. This is roughly three-fourths of the Bible, and contains books like Genesis and Exodus, Psalms, and the prophets like Jonah and Isaiah. The Bible is bound and published as one book, but actually, it’s a compilation of many smaller books, 66 of them to be exact. There are 39 books in the first section. These are also claimed by the Jews as their holy texts, although the Christian Bible arranges the individual books in a different order than they are in the Jewish *Tannakh*. The Jewish Scriptures account the first, or older, covenant/testament of salvation. This is the temporary system of salvation God gave to humanity as atonement through the system of animal

sacrifice: temporary until the coming of the Messiah, to fulfill God's ultimate plan of salvation through a Savior.

PP#6: The New Testament (27 books): The Covenant of Jesus

Matthew - John (4 books): Gospels (Story of Jesus)

Acts (1 book): History (of the early church)

Romans - Philemon (13 books): Letters by Paul

Hebrews - Jude (8 books): Letters by others

Revelation (1 book): Apocalypse

The last fourth of our Bible we call the New Testament or Covenant. It's the story of Jesus, who came as our Savior (that's the English word), or Messiah (that's the Hebrew word), or Christ (that's the Greek word). This is God's full plan of salvation, how He earned atonement through Jesus becoming the sufficient sacrifice for all human sin, winning salvation for all who claim Him. Now, even though we are people of the New Covenant, Pastor Andrew taught us that we must still keep the Old Testament in our Bibles, as it is still God's Word, it reveals God's person and character, and it is essential for our understanding the New Testament. There are 27 books in the New Testament.

So, 66 books in our Holy Bible. But where did it come from?

PP#7: *Image of a biblical author (like John) writing by inspiration.*

It just didn't appear one day, sitting on a special rock, right?

Well, certain people wrote each of the books. Moses wrote the first five, Joshua wrote Joshua, later scribes collected and wrote down Judges through Job. King David wrote most of the Psalms. King Solomon wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. And the rest of the Old Testament was written down by, or recorded the words of, the prophets that bear their names, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joshua and such. Actually, many of the books were spoken first, and written down later. They were memorized and passed down orally, before finally being written down when systems of writing became accessible.

The Old Testament was already in tact by the time of Jesus, they were the Scriptures Jesus read. It was "set" or "canonized" as the official Jewish Scriptures, one to two hundred years before.

The 27 New Testament books were all written in the 60 years after Jesus. Many bear the name of their authors—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—and those that don't were written by Paul...well, almost all. Revelation was written by John, and no one is really sure who wrote Hebrews.

Now, wait a minute! Earlier I said that the Bible was God's word. Now I just explained that different people wrote the different books of the Bible. How do we understand this?

PP#8: 2 Peter 1:16-21

16 We didn't repeat crafty myths when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Quite the contrary, we witnessed His majesty with our own eyes. 17 He received honor and glory from God the Father when a voice came to Him from the magnificent glory, saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice from heaven while we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Well, it's time to go get some facts from the Bible itself. Let's turn to 2 Peter 1. Let's start at verse 16, "We didn't repeat crafty myths when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Quite the contrary, we witnessed His majesty with our own eyes. 17 He received honor and glory

from God the Father when a voice came to Him from the magnificent glory, saying, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.’ 18 We ourselves heard this voice from heaven while we were with Him on the holy mountain.

PP#9: 2 Peter 1:16-21

19 In addition, we have a most reliable prophetic word, and you would do well to pay attention to it, just as you would to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Most important, you must know that no prophecy of scripture represents the prophet's own understanding of things, 21 because no prophecy ever came by human will. Instead, men and women led by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

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Now, if I author a book, that book contains my thoughts and ideas, my intellectual property. And each of the Bible's 66 books had a human author. Even so, Peter tells us here in chapter 1, that the Holy Scriptures is God's intellectual property. It comes from God! In verse 16, he says, “When we came to you and we began to preach to you the Scriptures and talk to you about truth, we did not follow crafty myths.” What they brought was not ideas from people. That's not what Scripture is. In verse 20, he says that Scripture never came about by the prophet's or the writer's own interpretation, by their own ideas. The Bible did not begin with humans, he says. For example, David wasn't walking along out in the hillside and thinking to himself, “You know, I probably ought to write some things down, some things that will motivate my children and my children's children. So let's see here, what would sound good? How about ‘The Lord is my chief.’ No, no. Doesn't quite grab me. Let's take a quick look at the thesaurus. How about ‘shepherd?’ Now that's good! The Lord is my shepherd. Wow, I need to write this stuff down before I forget it!” That's NOT how the Scriptures began. The Scriptures began in the heart of God.

But the writers of the Bible weren't simply scribes of what God dictated to them. The Bible doesn't begin with, “And God said,” and then *quote*, with the *unquote* following at the end. The authors did choose the words and made decisions about what to include and what not to include.

PP#10: What Is the Origin of the Bible?

1. Inspiration - “Receiving the breath of God”

So, the Bible is not one long quotation of God. Nor is merely the composition of the authors. Instead, the Bible itself explains that the human writers wrote the holy words of God through *divine inspiration*.

Now, in today's world there are a variety of things that inspire us. You could listen to a Mozart opera, look at a Monet painting, or read a play by Shakespeare, and they may inspire you to write something wonderful. But, the English word itself reveals its original meaning. Inspiration literally means, “to receive the breath of God,” or to be “in-spirited by God's Spirit.”

2 Timothy 3:16 puts it this way, “All Scripture is *God-breathed*.” I love that visual picture, that the Scriptures I hold in my hand is the very life-giving breath of God! It was breathed out by God for us!

PP#11: “The Lord God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and *blew life’s breath* into his nostrils. The human came to life.” -Genesis 2:7

Remember back in Genesis in the story of creation, it says that when God created the plants and animals, God *spoke* and they simply became? God spoke things into being. But when God created a human being, God created them in His own image. To do that, He scooped dirt from the ground, and then God breathed. God breathed life into a human being. That life from within God is what makes human beings so special. So, when we say that Scripture was inspired by God, it doesn't mean that the words or the thoughts of the Bible come from God. It means that God actually breathed out His life and His language so that the authors would write down the living and life-giving word of God. It's not just a really good book, a helpful resource, one of many good guides. Only Scripture has the special status of being God-breathed...just like people are! Scripture is the word of life for the people of life, who are to live the life God gives. Inspiration.

PP#12: What Is the Origin of the Bible?

1. Inspiration - “Receiving the breath of God”
2. Transmission - God protecting the writing

But what about the human component, those people God inspired. How much of them ended up in the words they were inspired to write? This is the second thing that Peter explains in our passage: the Bible’s transmission. Transmission is how God used people to write the Scriptures.

When I read my Bible, Isaiah sounds different than Amos. Isaiah writes with a very eloquent, literary, beautiful style, but Amos is a shepherd. When I come to my New Testament, the writings of John are beautiful; they are very different than the writings of Paul, who was very legal and very carefully well-argued. The books of the Bible each carry the personality of their writers.

Transmission means that God’s Spirit guided the authors to write about what God wanted written, and God’s Spirit inspired them to write it in a way that captured God’s intention. But God also had each author be personally invested, so their skills, personality, and style all are reflected in their writing. What they wrote is not a dictation, but a testimony, a witness. God’s inspiring Spirit guided and protected their special writings. They wrote about their own setting, their own experiences, their own lived experiences of God. Other people did, too, but for these writings, God came in a special way and inspired them with the specific purpose of making their writings Scripture: eternally true, revealing the very character and will of God, applicable in all situations, relevant to all people, with layers of meaning that apply to their own context, but to yours and mine, too. Scripture combines inspiration, information, and testimony.

PP#13: 2 Peter 1:21

“No prophecy of Scripture represents the prophet’s own understanding of things, because no prophecy ever came by human will. ...

Inspiration: “... Instead, men and women spoke from God ...

Transmission: “... as they were led by the Holy Spirit.”

This is what Peter writes in verse 21. He says that “no prophecy of Scripture represents the prophet’s own understanding of things, because no prophecy ever came by human will. Instead, men and women spoke from God [that’s inspiration] as they were led by the Holy Spirit [that’s transmission!].” The Holy Spirit specially protected the writers of Scripture so that the end product was exactly what God needed them to share with us.

Think of an architect. She designs the building—say this church—and drafts all the necessary details. Yet the contractors who follow the blueprints bring their own experience to know what to do first or last. They can fill in details that the architect didn't need to specify. So, this building shows faithfully the intention of the architect, but we can also see fingerprints of all the contractors, too. That's our Bible. Just because there are human writers, doesn't mean it doesn't reliably reveal what God intended. God's Spirit gave inspiration in writing and protection in transmission.

The New Testament books were all written by AD 90. Many other writings also emerged. The Church in the early days had to sort out which ones were Scripture and which ones weren't. The Bible we have today was established within a hundred and fifty years after Jesus, and it was officially sealed in AD 397. More on that next week.

PP#14: What Is the Origin of the Bible?

1. Inspiration - "Receiving the breath of God"
2. Transmission - God protecting the writing
3. Application - You engaging and living the Bible!

So, if that's the origin of our Bible, what does that mean for us?

Well, I hope all this has reminded you of how special and important the Bible really is. God worked hard to create this and preserve it so that His people would have what they need. It is a special gift. It is what God knows we need in order to live our best life that God intended.

I hope all this has set in you a renewed resolve to treasure and value the Bible. But the only way to treasure the Bible is to engage it! What value is it to have the world's best recipe for brownies if you simply leave it on your shelf?

Church, we have grown lazy. We've grown complacent. We have more copies of the Bible than any other time in history. My guess is that each of us have multiple copies. We own copies of the greatest treasure on earth. But what do we do with it? We leave it on the shelf and live our own way.

At best, we look for the cliff notes, the redacted summaries, commentaries written by others—seeking it's information rather than it's life. It is only when we live with the Scriptures can we be inspired by them.

You see, God's word continues inspiration! It *was* inspired in its writing. But it is only holy scripture when it *is* inspired in it's reading. You can even read the Bible for information. But it will remain dead.

But when we come with faith, it reveals the words of life itself.

Church, whenever you come to Scripture, pause and pray for inspiration. Pray that the same inspiration of the Holy Spirit that gave the word, that protected the word, that preserved the word, would also make your reading of the word inspired for you.

Charles Spurgeon, the great prince of preachers, testified, "The one whose Bible is falling apart usually himself isn't." The person who has dug into God's word and reads it and loves it and explores it and studies it and values it and turns its pages and uses it as a tool for life, finds that his or her life is alive with the life that God intends.

Psalms 119:9, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word."

You don't have to understand it all. The Holy Spirit will grow you as you read. As you learn and live more, more and more will become real to you, and you will change and grow. The Holy Spirit will use this holy book to make you more and more into the holy disciple of Jesus you desire to be.

In his book, *The Reason for God*, Timothy Keller says this about wrangling with the difficult passages of Scripture:

“If you don’t trust the Bible enough to let it challenge and correct your thinking, how could you ever have a personal relationship with God? If you pick and choose what you want to believe and you reject the rest, how will you ever have a God who can contradict you? You won’t. You’ll have a stepford [robotically obedient] god. You don’t want a god like that—a god essentially of your own making and not a god with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction. Only if your god can say things that outrage you and make you struggle as in a real friendship or marriage will you know that you have gotten ahold of a real god and not a figment of your own imagination. So, an authoritative Bible is not the enemy of a personal relationship with God, it is the precondition for it.”

So, expect this inspired word of God to change you: challenge your thinking, your heart, your life.

What would it mean to become a Christian of but one book? What is the Holy Spirit speaking into your heart right now about your reading and living the Bible? What will you do differently this week?

PP#15: *Image for Jesus being the living Word of God.*

Only this book contains the very thoughts and heart of God. Only this book “containeth all things necessary to salvation.” Only this book sufficiently reveals Jesus, and Jesus is the Word of God!

Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION: -Pastor Dan Hair

Preparation: Time of prayer/Prayer of Confession

Great Thanksgiving - Intro to Holy Communion

Words of Institution - “On the night Jesus was betrayed...”

Prayer of the Holy Spirit - Blessing of the elements

Lord’s Prayer - All together “Our Father....”

Receiving of the Elements - All take bread and juice in our seats

Closing Prayer

CLOSING SONG: *I Love to Hear You Speak* -Sanctify

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

Next week’s question: How Can I Know the Bible Is Trustworthy?

This Wednesday: Kid’s Summer Bash! Each Wednesday through August.

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character.” 2 Timothy 3:16

BENEDICTION -Pastor David

CLOSING MUSIC -Sanctify