



THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BIBLE
OCTOBER 22 / 23, 2025
PSALM 1, PSALM 119; II TIMOTHY 3:14-17
GONZALEZ, CHAPTER 23

1. Psalm 1 and Psalm 119 describe the blessed life as one rooted in God's Word. What practices help you personally "delight in the law of the Lord"? How can we cultivate this kind of Scripture-centered life together as a church?
2. In 2 Timothy 3:14–17, Paul tells Timothy that "all Scripture is breathed out by God." How does this passage define the purpose of Scripture? How might this guide our approach to preaching, teaching, and decision-making in ministry today?
3. The early church did not *create* the canon but *recognized* it as authoritative. What does this suggest about God's providence and the reliability of the Bible we have today? How does this shape our trust in Scripture as the Word of God rather than a product of human choice?
4. Marcion and his followers rejected the Old Testament and edited the New. Why was his version of Christianity so appealing to some in his day? How might similar temptations exist today — to "edit out" difficult parts of the Bible or ignore parts of God's revelation?

5. Athanasius of Alexandria insisted that the 27 books of the New Testament alone were “the fountains of salvation.” Why was Athanasius’s clarity about the canon important for preserving the gospel? How does his example encourage us to guard biblical truth in our own generation?
6. Jerome labored to translate the Scriptures into Latin (the *Vulgate*) and distinguished between canonical and apocryphal books. Why does accurate translation and understanding of Scripture matter for the church’s mission? How does Jerome’s return to the original Hebrew texts anticipate the Reformation principle of *ad fontes* (“to the sources”)?
7. The Reformed / Protestant / Presbyterian tradition emphasizes *Sola Scriptura* — Scripture alone as the final authority for faith and life. How does the history of the canon reinforce this conviction? In what ways might the church today drift toward giving equal weight to other sources of authority (tradition, culture, emotion)?
8. The church recognized three criteria for canonical writings: apostolic origin, orthodox teaching, and widespread use. How can these principles guide our discernment today when evaluating spiritual books, teachings, or media claiming to speak for God?
9. In Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–35, the early believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and shared all things in common. How did devotion to the Word shape their life together? What might it look like for our community to be so deeply grounded in Scripture that it transforms our relationships and ministries?
10. The canon ended not with human decree but with God’s providential care. How does knowing this history deepen your appreciation for the Bible you hold in your hands? How might you encourage others in our congregation to engage Scripture with renewed gratitude, confidence, and joy?