

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

Doctrine of the Bible Part 3: New Testament Canon,
History of the English Bible and Affirmations of Faith

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The Big Picture

- We seek to **become** and then **make** disciples (believing learners) by:
- Knowing what we believe.
- Why we believe it.
- Being able to communicate what we believe and why in an effective, winsome manner to fulfill the commands for all Christians in Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Peter 3:15-16.

The Canon of NT Scripture

- **The Council of Carthage in A.D. 397 officially established the NT Canon**
- **Roman Catholics consider their Bible to be an infallible collection of infallible books.**
- **Protestants consider their Bible to be a fallible collection of infallible books.**
 1. **Ester was the only disputed OT book because it does not mention God**
 2. **Philemon, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John and Jude are the only NT books that were challenged at any point in Church History**

The Canon of NT Scripture

- **The criteria for including a book in the NT was:**
 - 1. Written by an Apostle or under the authority of an Apostle**
 - 2. Accepted as authoritative by the early church**
 - 3. Consistent with the rest of Scripture**

Reliability of New Testament Manuscripts

- 1. From the early 2nd to the 16th century there are over 20,000 copies of the NT in various languages. 5700 are in Greek.**
- 2. Classical Greek and Latin authors average only about 20 copies.**
- 3. If all these manuscripts were lost, virtually the entire New Testament could be constructed from the writings of the ancient teachers (church fathers).**
- 4. 99 NT manuscripts exist written before A.D. 400. The average earliest manuscript of a classical author is about 500 years after it was written.**

Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

The Greek NT contains about 138,000 words. Of the 5700 Greek NT manuscripts there are about 400,000 textual variants divided into 5 categories.

1. Spelling or nonsense errors make up the largest group and do not affect meaning.
2. The second largest group involve minor changes and synonyms that do not affect meaning.
3. The third largest group are variants that have some possibility of reflecting the original text: *The gospel of God versus the gospel of Christ* 1 Thessalonians 2:9
4. Less than 1% of the variants changes the meaning to some degree: *we have peace versus let us have peace* Romans 5:1
5. The earliest and best manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11.

History of the Bible (pre reformation A.D. 1517)

~1450 - 435B.C. completion of the Hebrew OT

132 B.C. Septuagint (Complete Greek Translation of the Hebrew OT)

~ A.D. 70 - 95 completion of Greek NT

A.D. 384 *Latin Vulgate (Latin Translation of *Septuagint and Greek NT*)*

A.D. 397 Council of Carthage

A.D. 405 *Latin Vulgate (Latin Translation of *Hebrew OT and Greek NT*)*

A.D. 1229 Council of Toulouse bans the Bible in vernacular languages

A.D. 1382 Wycliffe Bible (first English translation)

A.D. 1455 Gutenberg Bible

A.D. 1516 Erasmus compilation of Greek NT

History of the Bible (post reformation A.D. 1517)

1522 Luther's German NT

1526 Tyndale NT

1534 Luther's Complete German OT and NT

1560 Geneva Bible

1611 King James Bible

1881/1885 English Revised Version

1901 American Standard Version

1952 Revised Standard Version

1971 New American Standard Version

1973 New International Version

1979/1982 New King James Version

2001 English Standard Version