

# **APOLOGETICS**

## **DEFENDING THE**

### **BIBLE**



# QUESTIONS

- ▶ What is the Bible?
- ▶ Where does the Bible come from?
- ▶ How do we know that this is the inspired word of God?
- ▶ Is the entire Bible authoritative? Or only parts of it?
- ▶ Are there any mistakes in the Bible? Is the Bible accurate?
- ▶ How do we know that other books shouldn't be included as well?
- ▶ Who collected the writings, and on what principles?
- ▶ What circumstances led to the fixing of a list, or canon, of authoritative books?

# Quotes challenging Biblical authority

- ▶ William Kent, a former member of the United Methodist Committee to Study Homosexuality.
  - “The scriptural texts in the Old and New Testaments condemning homosexual practice are neither inspired by God nor otherwise of enduring Christian value. Considered in the light of the best biblical, theological, scientific, and social knowledge, the biblical condemnation of homosexual practice is better understood as representing time and place bound cultural prejudice.”

# Quotes challenging Biblical authority

- ▶ Gary David Comstock, Protestant chaplain at Wesleyan University
  - “Not to recognize, critique, and condemn Paul’s equation of godlessness with homosexuality is dangerous. To remain within our respective Christian traditions and not challenge those passages that degrade and destroy us is to contribute to our own oppression. These passages will be brought up and used against us again and again until Christians demand their removal from the Biblical canon or at the very least formally discredit their authority to prescribe behavior.”

# Quotes challenging Biblical authority

- ▶ Professor Brian Blount, the professor of New Testament Interpretation at Princeton Theological Seminary
  - “The New Testament’s words on homosexual behavior are also clear. They are words of condemnation; I don’t try to deny that. I don’t think anyone should. I don’t think the words are any longer living, but are, rather, dead words if we try to read them without contextually understanding them today.”
  - He says that what God says “will be different according to the variable conditions in which the human spirits who encounter it find themselves.”



# Quotes challenging Biblical authority

- ▶ Luke Timothy Johnson, professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology at Emory University
  - “The Bible nowhere speaks positively or even neutrally about same-sex love. I think it important to state clearly that we do in fact reject the straightforward commands of Scripture and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same-sex unions can be holy and good and what exactly is that authority? We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witness to which tells us that to claim our own sexual orientation is to in fact to accept the way in which God has created us. By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality.”

# What is the Bible?

- ▶ The Bible is the Word of God
- ▶ It bears perfect witness to God's living word – Jesus Christ
- ▶ The whole focus of the Bible is Jesus Christ, everything points to him.
- ▶ Where did the English word “Bible” come from?
  - Latin “Biblia” – Books
  - Greek “Biblos” – Papyrus

# FAST FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- ▶ 66 books of the Bible
- ▶ Old Testament (39) & New Testament (27)
  - Testament means “covenant” or “contract.”
- ▶ Authors of the Bible
  - 40 different authors: shepherds, farmers, tent-makers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings
- ▶ When was the Bible written
  - Approx. 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ)



# OLD TESTAMENT (39 Books)

- ▶ **Pentateuch / Law** (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
- ▶ **History** (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)
- ▶ **Poetry and Wisdom** (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)
- ▶ **Major Prophets** (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- ▶ **Minor Prophets** (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

# NEW TESTAMENT (27 Books)

- ▶ Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- ▶ History (Acts)
- ▶ Letters of Paul (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)
- ▶ General Letters (Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, Jude)
- ▶ Prophecy (Revelation)

# FAST FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- ▶ **What is the oldest book in the Old Testament?**
  - Many scholars agree that Job is the oldest book in the Bible, written by an unknown Israelite about 1500 B.C. Others hold that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) are the oldest books in the Bible, written between 1446 and 1406 B.C.
- ▶ **What is the youngest book in the Old Testament?**
  - Many scholars agree the book of Malachi, written about 400 B.C.
- ▶ **What is the oldest book of the New Testament?**
  - Probably the book of James, written as early as A.D. 45.
- ▶ **What is the youngest book in the New Testament?**
  - The Book of Revelation is the youngest book of the New Testament, written about 95 A.D.
- ▶ **What languages were the Bible written in?**
  - Three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

# FAST FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- ▶ **How many languages has the Bible been translated into?**
  - Over 2,000 languages, with countless more partial translations, and audio translations (for unwritten languages). (This is an enormous amount of translations. In comparison, Shakespeare, considered by many to be the master writer of the English language, has only been translated into 50 languages.)
- ▶ **How many copies of the Bible have been sold?**
  - According to Guinness World Records, the Bible is the best-selling book of all time with over 5 billion copies sold and distributed.
- ▶ **When was the first translation of the Bible made into English?**
  - 1382 A.D., by John Wycliffe.
- ▶ **When was the Bible first printed?**
  - The Bible was printed in 1454 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg who invented the “type mold” for the printing press.



# Is the Bible...

- ▶ Inspired?
- ▶ Authoritative?
- ▶ Inerrant?
- ▶ Infallible?
- ▶ Sufficient?

# Inspiration and Authority – The Bible is God-breathed

- ▶ 2 Timothy 3:16–17
  - <sup>16</sup> 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.
- ▶ Exodus 17:14
- ▶ Jeremiah 1:9
- ▶ Ezekiel 1:2–3
- ▶ Hosea 1:1
- ▶ Mark 12:36



# Inerrant and Infallible

- ▶ Inerrant – free from error
- ▶ Infallible – incapable of making mistakes or being wrong; unable to deceive
- ▶ Does this mean that the Bible doesn't have any mistakes? Is every word perfect? Is every copy/manuscript perfect?
- ▶ Did early church leaders use words like “Inerrant” and “Infallible”?

# Inerrant and Infallible

- ▶ "You have searched the Scripture, which are true and given by the Holy Spirit. You know that nothing unrighteous or counterfeit is written in them. – Clement of Rome, 1<sup>st</sup> Century
- ▶ "All Scripture, which has been given to us by God, is perfectly consistent. The parables harmonize with the passages that are plain; and statements with a clearer meaning serve to explain the parables." Irenaeus of Lyons, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century
- ▶ "I am entirely convinced that no Scripture contradicts another." – Justin Martyr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

# Inerrant and Infallible

- ▶ "The statements of Holy Scripture will never contradict the truth." – Tertullian of Carthage, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century
- ▶ "It is the opinion of some that the Scriptures do not agree or that the God who gave them is false. But there is no disagreement at all. Far from it! The Father, who is truth, cannot lie." – Athanasius of Alexandria, 4<sup>th</sup> Century
- ▶ "I have learned to give respect and honor to the canonical books of Scripture. Regarding these books alone, I most firmly believe that their authors were completely free from error. If in these writings I am confused by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it." – Augustine of Hippo, 5<sup>th</sup> Century