



The Reliability and Relevance of the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:14-17

A GOOD PLACE TO START

As we will use the Bible to find our way through the jungle of questions

The Bible says about itself: able to make us wise and complete: **2 Timothy 3:15,17**

If this is true, it is the greatest of treasures! **Psalm 19:19**

OVERVIEW

66 books. 40 or more authors. 3 languages. 3 continents. Over a span of some 1500 years. Different cultures, contexts with one overarching unified story.

HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE THE SAME WORDS AS THE ORIGINALS?

We have no original manuscripts, only copies of copies.

Oldest copy of an OT manuscript:

An Aaronic Blessing fragment (650-587BC), Dead Sea scrolls (150BC-70AD)

We have more copies of the NT than any other book in history

5,800 Greek, 10,000 Latin, 9,300 Other languages

Oldest: Fragments of John on Papyrus: dated around 125AD

Many copies allows for excellent detective work to determine the originals

Detecting common errors like eye-skipping

Principle of the shorter reading and/or the more difficult reading

DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT BOOKS?

Having confidence in the originals, we can now ask if we have the right originals

The OT books in Jesus day, different order: **Luke 11:51**

Jesus accepted the books of the OT of His day as sacred: **Matt 5:18**

The canon of the New Testament: thoughts from Dave Shelton

UNDERSTANDING INSPIRATION

Assuming we now have the right books and the rightly preserved words

Are these old books relevant today: some 3500-2000 years later?

Are these words God's? If so, they remain relevant for all time: **Isaiah 40:8**

The NT's witness about the OT: **2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20,21, Matt 5:18**

Rooted in the story of God giving the law to Moses

Rooted in the OT prophetic tradition: see **Deuteronomy 18:21-22**

Peter applies this to Paul's writings: **2 Peter 3:15-18**

Add to this Jesus' promise that His words would be preserved: **John 14:26**

The church believes the OT and NT were supernaturally inspired and preserved

Inspiration defined: God-breathed, human context preserved

Similar to the dual nature of Jesus: fully God, fully human

This requires the work of extracting the peanut from the shell

A CHOICE TO BE MADE BY FAITH

We are still left with an act of faith to believe this Bible to be inspired

1) For me I take the step of faith by following Jesus' example

Jesus revered the Scriptures. I want to do the same.

2) For me the Bible has proven true.

It's principles work in real life for me and others who follow it

The Bible coheres. It holds together from beginning to end.

It has stood the test of scrutiny

Archaeological discoveries continue to authenticate Biblical claims

3) What better authority is there out there?

All persons operate under a worldview guided by an authority

All people either submit to an external authority, or trust themselves

To trust oneself is to ape the original sin of humans (according to Bible)

I encourage seekers to compare the Bible with other authority options

Submit to the Bible's authority in principle

Work hard in community to understand it and interpret and live it well