Stoa Apologetics Preparation for Monument Members

Season 22 Monument Release #6



Directions: Work through the source material in this download to help you understand this week’s selection of apologetics prompts. This release addresses approximately 5% of the total number of prompts you will need to be prepared for in your next tournament, so keep up the studying from week to week to ensure your knowledge in Apologetics. This week’s prompts are:

**Category 3: Scripture (Part 2)**

1. Does science contradict the Bible?
2. Can you take the Bible literally?
3. What does it mean that the Bible is inerrant? Why is this important?
4. Does the Bible condone slavery?
5. Respond to the statement: “The Bible is full of contradictions.”
6. Respond to the statement: “The Bible is simply the work of a great conspiracy where people sought to create a religion of their own.”
7. How did we get the biblical canon we have today, and how can we trust that it is truly the Word of God?

For a list of all the prompts for the year and all other downloads for NCFCA apologetics, visit your download page at <https://club.monumentmembers.com/stoa-apologetics/download-category/stoa-apologetics>.

Question: Science and Scripture

Does science contradict the Bible?

Bible Verses

[Job 35:11; 12:7-9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+35%3A11%3B+12%3A7-9&version=NIV)

[Ecclesiastes 1:13-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+1%3A13-17&version=NIV)

[Romans 1:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A20&version=NIV)

[Colossians 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A17&version=NIV)

Quotations

“Richard Dawkins regards faith as an evil to be eliminated; he takes all religious faith to be blind faith. (Dawkins says) ‘Scientific belief is based on publicly checkable evidence, religious faith not only lacks evidence, its independence from evidence is its joy, shouted from the rooftops.’ However, taking Dawkins own advice we ask: where is the evidence that religious faith is not based on evidence? Mainstream Christianity will insist that faith and evidence are inseparable. Indeed, faith is a response to evidence, not a rejoicing in the absence of evidence. The apostle Paul says what many pioneers of modern science believed, that nature itself is part of the evidence for the existence of God, ‘Since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made. So that men are without an excuse.’ Dawkins’ definition of faith turns out to be the direct opposite of the biblical one. Curious that he does not seem to be aware of the discrepancy.” -John Lennox

“If you’re sincerely seeking God, God will make His existence evident to you.” - William Lane Craig

“God is not an alternative to science as an explanation, he is not to be understood merely as a God of the gaps, he is the ground of all explanation: it is his existence which gives rise to the very possibility of explanation, scientific or otherwise. It is important to stress this because influential authors such as Richard Dawkins will insist on conceiving of God as an explanatory alternative to science—an idea that is nowhere to be found in theological reflection of any depth. Dawkins is therefore tilting at a windmill—dismissing a concept of God that no serious thinker believes in anyway. Such activity is not necessarily to be regarded as a mark of intellectual sophistication.” -John Lennox

“We must not build on the sands of an uncertain and ever-changing science…but upon the rock of inspired Scriptures.” -Sir Ambrose Flemming

Recommendations

“Science in the Bible: Does the Bible Contradict Popular Principles” by Rich Deems

(<http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/sciencebible.html)>

*Darwin on Trial* by Philip E. Johnson

*Skeptics Answered* by Dr. James Kennedy

*God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* by John Lennox

Commentary

It goes without saying: The Bible is quick to get a bad rap from the scientific community. Often, the belief in a God and the belief in science are juxtaposed as alternate methods of understanding the world around us. Predictably, it becomes a game of mudslinging—where science is praised as the worldview that embraces knowledge and learning, while religion is downplayed as the essence of blind faith and ignorance. And one of the best ways to answer that proposed conflict is to reexamine what the respective functions of Christianity and science are.

Christianity posits the agent behind the universe. Science offers the mechanism by which it functions (i.e. it can tell us how fast the earth spins, but never who spun it). Choosing one of these as alternatives is like seeing a Model T and being offered two methods of explanation: The Laws of Chemical and Mechanical Engineering, or Henry Ford. No one would reason this way! The existence of a scientific process never precludes the agent behind it. When Newton discovered the Law of Gravity, he didn’t say, “Marvelous, now I don’t need a God.” He recognized that the existence of a scientific law instead demanded the existence of a Lawgiver. Rather than observing the two as conflicting worldviews, he understood them as complementary, which is precisely the way God intended them to be viewed.

Literal Bible

Can you take the Bible literally?

## Bible Verses

Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 18:15-21

Psalm 19:7-11

Proverbs 30:5-6

Matthew 7:15-20

John 10:27; 18:37-38

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

1 Timothy 4:15-16

Hebrews 4:12-13

2 Peter 3:14-18

## Quotations

“It is always tempting to put our own meanings on verses in the Bible and come up with bizarre conclusions…The truth is that any message we hear—from any source—can be redefined, manipulated, or rationalized to make it subservient to our own whims and desires.” –Mark Mittelberg

“The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God’s help and being willing to follow it.” –Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

## Recommendations

http://www.thegracetabernacle.org/quotes/Bible-Interpretation-General.htm

http://www.thegracetabernacle.org/quotes/Authority-Bible.htm

## Commentary

This question was originally stated in the form of an analytical question: “What is your response to this statement by Michael and Lisa Gungor: ‘No reasonable person takes the entire Bible completely literally’?”

In looking at the analysis of the question, understand what is being implied here. Shaw is bluntly stating that Scripture’s meaning, the epitome of interpretation, is up to the reader. Truly, he saying that the reader determines what is the truth of Scripture. What blasphemy! In responding to this statement, point out where the matter of authority resides. Does the authority of determining truth reside with man or God?

There are many things you can emphasize with this topic, such as: how Scripture is properly interpreted, true source of authority on truth, false teachers, etc. Whichever avenue you choose to pursue, the main goal is to reject the twisting and relying on man to speak what God clearly says and teaches in His Word.

Inerrancy of Scripture *by Joshua Johnson*

What does it mean that the Bible is inerrant? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

[Psalm 12:6; 33:4; 119:160](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+12%3A6%3B+33%3A4%3B+119%3A160&version=NIV)

[Proverbs 30:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+30%3A5&version=NIV)

[2 Samuel 22:31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+22%3A31&version=NIV)

[John 14:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A6&version=NIV)

[Romans 3:4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+3%3A4&version=NIV)

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+3%3A16-17&version=NIV)

Quotations

“[D]uring the last twenty years [I have] examined dozens of these ‘problem texts’ that have been brought to [my] attention in the context of the inerrancy debate. In every one of those cases, upon close inspection of the text a plausible solution has become evident.” - Wayne Grudem[[1]](#footnote-1)

“As I have dealt with one apparent discrepancy after another and have studied the alleged contradictions between the biblical record and the evidence of linguistics, archaeology, or science, my confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture has been repeatedly verified and strengthened by the discovery that almost every problem in Scripture that has ever been discovered by man, from ancient times until now, has been dealt with in a completely satisfactory manner by the biblical text itself – or else by objective archeological information.” - Gleason Archer[[2]](#footnote-2)

“Supposed Bible errors are well known to Bible scholars and have all been addressed and found not to be errors after all. In every case, there is a logical explanation for the supposed error.” –Paul S. Taylor

“A *contradiction,* according to the Random House Webster’s College Dictionary, is ‘a statement or proposition that denies another statement or itself is and is logically incongruous’; a *contrariety*, however, holds two aspects of an issue in balance and in tension without violating the logical congruency of either. In the contrarieties within Jesus, we see how he represents the answer for all the tensions we feel within ourselves.” –Ravi Zacharias

“The internal and historical characteristics of the Bible are unique in its unity and internal consistency despite production over a 1500-year period by 40-plus authors in three languages on three continents discussing scores of controversial subjects yet having agreement on all issues.” –John Ankerberg

“Extrabiblical sources and archaeology tell us that the Bible is historically accurate and worth reading; Jesus tells us it is spiritually accurate and worth heeding.” –Mark Mittelberg

Recommendations

*The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask*, Chapter 3

*The Bravehearted Gospel* by Eric Ludy

*The Truth Project* by Del Tackett

*The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

*Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason L. Archer

*Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* by John Haley

<https://answersingenesis.org/answers/books/demolishing-supposed-bible-contradictions-1/introduction/>

<http://startingpoint.com/member/what-about-the-contradictions-in-the-bible/>

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-errors.html>

Commentary

The Bible is the most consistent and internally accurate book of all time. The Bible is trustworthy in every way and can most definitely be trusted, more so than any other book. However, there are some difficult passages that require research and study. But every alleged contradiction or difficulty has a solution. Every single one. So an effective response to the question would involve researching alleged Bible contradictions. The *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason L. Archer and the *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* by John Haley are fantastic resources that I highly recommend. Think about researching and speaking about several of the more common alleged contradictions and then explain their solutions.

For example, consider the genealogies of Jesus mentioned in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Matthew 1:16 recounts the genealogy of Jesus as follows: “… and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Luke 3:23 says that Jesus was “the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.” See the alleged problem? Was Joseph’s father Jacob or Heli? Well, when we examine the two passages in the historical context, we understand that Matthew’s account records *Joseph’s* heritage while Luke’s account records *Mary’s* heritage. Mary’s father was Heli, and when she married Joseph, Heli became Joseph’s father-in-law. In early Jewish culture, people would have just referred to Heli as Joseph’s father because the phrase “father-in-law” did not arise until approximately the mid-1300s. Therefore, these two passages–when examined in biblical and historical context–do not contradict one another; rather, they complement one another.

In conclusion, be careful about how you use Scripture. The Bible states that Scripture is inerrant but a skeptic will assume the opposite. So if you say that there are no contradictions in Scripture simply because the Bible states it is inerrant, a skeptic may consider this to be circular reasoning. So consider demonstrating first that alleged contradictions are not actually contradictions. Address several of the difficult passages first and show how they are consistent. Thereafter, you can cite verses like Proverbs 30:5 revealing Scripture’s inerrancy.

Blessings as you tackle this question!

Slavery *by Maggie Topper*

Does the Bible condone slavery?

Verses:

Galatians 3:28;

Exodus 20:12

Joshua 8:35

Titus 2:9-10

Exodus 21:16, 20

Philemon 1:8

1 John 4:20

Quotations:

“Although the gospel does not approve of removing slavery by social revolution, the gospel throughout history has brought the freedom of more slaves than any human philosophy, movement, or political system.”- John MacArthur

“If the design of the death of his Son is not only to reconcile us to God, but to reconcile alienated ethnic groups to each other in Christ, then will we not display and magnify the cross of Christ better by more and deeper and sweeter ethnic diversity and unity in our worship and life?” - John Piper

“Man and woman are one in essence. That is to say, Adam and Eve are equal in dignity, value, and glory. In essential unity there is absolutely no room for inferiority of person. The man and woman are equal in every respect except one – authority. Two different tasks are given to people of equal value and dignity. In the economy of marriage, only the job descriptions are different.” -R.C. Sproul

Recommendations:

<https://carm.org/slavery>

<http://coldcasechristianity.com/2014/four-differences-between-new-testament-servitude-and-new-world-slavery/>

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html>

<http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/god-created-man-male-and-female-what-does-it-mean-to-be-complementarian>

Commentary:

You will most likely meet people who, when they find out that you are a Christian, are astonished that you could believe a book that supports slavery and downgrades women (NOTE: The original question from Stoa included the degradation of women in this question). Fundamentally, people who hold this view have a misunderstanding of the culture of the time, and the details of matters concerning slaves and women in Scripture.

Let’s start off looking at slavery in the Bible, since I find this one is a little easier to explain in a satisfactory manner. There are usually one of two things people are thinking when they make a statement like this. The first is all the passages in the Bible (mainly Old Testament) that teach how to handle slaves and the fact that this slavery is never forbidden in the New Testament. The second problem people have is that historically, there have been many people who identified with Christianity and used the Bible to defend owning slaves. If someone is pointing out the latter issue, we really cannot defend this. It is true that in the past people have used the Bible to defend owning slaves in America, and it is terrible and tragic. However, just because people have used Bible verses to defend slavery does not mean the Bible *actually* means what they twist it to mean. The slavery spoken of in Scripture is radically different from what we understand slavery to be today.

The articles above do an excellent job going in-depth as to the context of slavery in the Bible, so I would encourage you to read them to get a really good handle on the subject. Chapter 25 of Leviticus will also give good context for what the person posing the statement may have in mind. One important thing to note is that the slavery of the Bible was almost always *voluntary.* The most common reason for slavery was that an Israelite was too poor to care for his family, and so he voluntary would serve another Israelite man. God’s law mandated that after six years of service, an Israelite slave must be set free. Now, this holds true in almost all cases of slavery, but in order to maintain intellectual integrity we have to respond to the fact that *“pagan”* slaves were allowed to be kept permanently. Our response to this must be to look at how God commanded slaves to be treated. The laws concerning the treatment of slaves in the Old Testament are very strict. Masters were not allowed to be severe with their slaves, and a slave could be released if a master was dealing harshly and cruelly with a slave. If a man went as far as to kill his slave, the master was to be killed as punishment. In the New Testament, we see these sentiments emphasized many times. There really are almost no similarities between modern day slavery and the slavery of the Bible. In fact, slaves were often so content with their masters that they would bond themselves to their masters for their entire life—of their own free will! That is where we get the term ‘bondservant’ that the apostles often use in their epistles. It is a servant who has committed himself to the service of his master for the rest of his life, just as we commit ourselves to the service of Christ for the rest of our life.

But now let’s turn to the second part of the statement—the oppression of women. This one can be a little harder to tackle, because many people may not be satisfied with the answer we have to give. We still must give the best answer we can, while handling God’s word with integrity and honesty. The argumentation behind this statement generally lies on the Bible’s teaching of gender roles and the command for women to submit to man’s leadership. We can’t deny this teaching in the Bible, it’s a very explicit one. I believe it is, when properly understood, a beautiful teaching. The key idea to remember is that the Bible *never* says women are worth less than men, and it *never* condones the oppression of women. In fact, historically, Jewish and Christian women were treated FAR better than women from any other culture. In Ancient Greece, men kept their wives under lock and key. In Ancient Rome, it was no better. Women were not allowed to talk in public, and husbands and fathers had the legal right to kill their wives and daughters. Even today we see Christianity’s positive influence on the treatment of women. In Islamic countries, women are treated despicably. In many African countries, girls are bought and sold like any piece of property, often in trade for animals. Even the elevated and glorified Confucius said that “ten daughters do not equal one son.” Yet, in Western countries that have been largely influenced and founded on Christianity, we see women being given many equal rights with men and an acknowledgement of their equal value and dignity as human beings.

Unfortunately, explaining all of that isn’t going to suffice. What people are upset by, and what the person saying this will call “oppression” is the fact that the Bible does not teach that men and women have *totally* equal roles. Women are not permitted to serve as pastors, and wives are to be in submission to their husbands. These teachings aren’t popular, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t obey them and stand by them. Because of our sin nature, we’re not going to like everything God commands us to do. But if we sincerely desire to glorify God, and love Him with all that is in us, we will love His commands. I think the roles that God teaches for men and women are beautiful, and as with all His commands, they serve a unique purpose. When understood and lived by, they are a tangible display of Christ’s relationship with His bride, the church. We are called to submit to Him, and He treats us with immense love. The clear illustration of this is through His death on behalf of His bride. And we have to remember that when women are called to submit to their husbands, God doesn’t tell the husbands that they can just order their wives around and treat them like slaves. No, God tells men to love their wives in the way Christ loves His bride. Gender roles are not taught to allow the oppression of women, they mandate the loving, sacrificial treatment of women. And women are not inferior to men, the Bible absolutely teaches that they are equally human. Both genders made in the image of God.

In summation, the Bible does *not* teach the oppression of slaves and women in any way. When slaves and women were and are treated in a Biblical way, they are treated better than any other culture treats them. Finally, oppression is completely inconsistent with the entire message of the Bible. Galatians 3:28 says it best, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” God’s offer of salvation is open to *everyone* regardless of their gender, race, or social standing. For all people are made in the image of God, and all people are equally offered that gift.

Biblical Contradictions *by Joshua Johnson*

Respond to the statement: “The Bible is full of contradictions.”

Bible Verses

[Psalm 12:6; 33:4; 119:160](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+12%3A6%3B+33%3A4%3B+119%3A160&version=NIV)

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[2 Timothy 3:16-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+3%3A16-17&version=NIV)

Quotations

“[D]uring the last twenty years [I have] examined dozens of these ‘problem texts’ that have been brought to [my] attention in the context of the inerrancy debate. In every one of those cases, upon close inspection of the text a plausible solution has become evident.” - Wayne Grudem[[3]](#footnote-3)

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<https://answersingenesis.org/answers/books/demolishing-supposed-bible-contradictions-1/introduction/>

<http://startingpoint.com/member/what-about-the-contradictions-in-the-bible/>

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Blessings as you tackle this question!

The Bible as Conspiracy *by Maggie Topper*

Respond to the statement: “The Bible is simply the work of a great conspiracy where people sought to create a religion of their own.”

Verses

[2 Peter 1:16; 21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+1%3A16%3B+21&version=NIV)

[Judges 2:11-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Judges+2%3A11-12&version=NIV)

[Romans 1:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A16&version=NIV)

[1 Corinthians 1:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+1%3A23&version=NIV)

[Psalms 14:2-3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+14%3A2-3&version=NIV)

[Hebrews 4:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+4%3A12&version=NIV)

Quotations

“These men’s writings do not read like the works of gullible, easily deceived or deceiving men. Their insights into human nature are profound. Their personal commitment is sober and carefully stated. Their teachings are coherent and do not look like the invention of unstable men. The moral and spiritual standard is high. And the lives of these men are totally devoted to the truth and to the honor of God.” - John Piper

“The Bible is not such a book a man would write if he could, or could write if he would.” - Lewis Sperry Chaffer

“The promises made to the Jews are for all who are in Christ; the inheritance is both for Jews and Gentiles. We are all members of one body. The immensity of this new knowledge is not only enough to cause every God-fearing Jew to scream curses at Paul, but is the very reason Gentiles like me have any hope whatsoever.” - Jim Eliff

“This is my reason for accepting Christianity and not merely the scattered truths out of the religion. I do it because the thing has not merely told this truth or that truth, but has revealed itself to be a truth-telling thing.” -G.K. Chesterton

Recommendations

<https://answersingenesis.org/the-word-of-god/3-unity-of-the-bible/>

<https://carm.org/new-testament-writers-conspired-together-gain-power-and-influence>

Commentary

This statement is multi-faceted, because it’s making several accusations wrapped up in one. The faulty assumptions can be broken down in the three thoughts of the claim, and they can be answered. The best answer, more than any logical syllogism, is the Bible itself. When you read through Scripture and really understand its key themes, the absurdity of this statement becomes clear. The Bible isn’t the kind of book man would write to create his own religion.

Let’s take a look at the beginning of the statement, “The Bible is simply the work of a great conspiracy.” A conspiracy is an action that two or more people plot together to perform. You’ve probably heard some pretty crazy conspiracy theories at some point or another.

People that say we never landed on the moon, there’s more to the JFK assassination than officials let on, or aliens landed in New Mexico in the ‘40s. If any of those conspiracy theories are true, then it certainly would have taken a *lot* of our government to work together and hide huge historical facts like that. They may, with some very complicated theorizing, be technically *possible*, but hardly *probable,* as it would have taken a massive amount of work to pull off conspiracies like that.

The same is true of the Bible. Perhaps there’s some *possibility* that it’s all a big conspiracy. Until Jesus returns, we can’t actually prove the statement wrong by cold, hard evidence. But it is incredibly *improbable*. It would have taken immense talent and labor to hold a conspiracy like that together. Forty different men wrote the Bible in its entirety, all 66 books. So you’d have to have 40 different men in on this conspiracy. Not only that, but it was 40 different men writing over the span of almost 2,000 years. Several of the Old Testament writers almost assuredly never met any of the other authors.

Yet, the Bible is unified. All 66 books point to the main theme, message, and character: Jesus Christ. They fit together beautifully and complement one another. For a work of the magnitude of Scripture, these so-called conspirators would almost have to be super-human! If the Bible is just a simple conspiracy, how can you account for the rapid spread and size of Christianity? It is the largest religion in the world. The Bible itself is the best-selling book of all time. It’s unlikely that a “simple conspiracy” could have that much influence on our world and stand the test of time for thousands of years.

As for the second part of the statement, “people sought to create a religion of their own,” my mind goes to the early part of the Old Testament. The creation of the Jewish religion was filled with sin and chronic rebellion. I don’t know about you, but I wouldn’t create a religion that said I was innately sinful, especially one that had rules that were impossible for me to keep.

Let’s look at the first of author of this supposed conspiracy: Moses. He wrote the first five books of the Bible. He was a pretty awesome guy in the beginning. He saved the Israelites from bondage to a tyrannical Pharaoh. He led them to the Promised Land. Maybe he really was just trying to create a religion and make himself the figurehead. But then, Moses finishes his heroic story relating his rebellion to God and how he wasn’t even allowed into the Promised Land that he’d spent forty years guiding these people to! It’s a pretty heart-breaking ending, and one that Moses — if he were a conspirator at all — would have most certainly edited out. In fact, most of the writers of the Bible re-tell their own failures in the books they wrote.

Another example of this is the lineage of Christ. Matthew is very faithful in recounting the line of Christ in the first chapter of his book. Now, keep in mind, Christ is the central character of the Bible. The Old Testament points to Him, and the New Testament tells of His coming and what His followers ought to do to serve Him. The New Testament writers write constantly of His perfection, glory, and deity. It seems if these conspirators were going to pick and choose the lineage Christ came from, they’d have picked all the heroes of the Old Testament, right?

You know Joseph in the Old Testament. God rewarded Him for his amazing integrity and faithfulness. And how about Joshua? Joshua was one of the most courageous men in the Bible. If Christ was conspired by men, it would have been tremendously fitting to put Christ in the line of these biblical heroes. But they aren’t. You know who is? Joseph’s brother Judah, arguably the cruelest and most despicable of Israel’s twelve sons. You’ve also got Rahab in Christ’s lineage, a prostitute — and Ruth, a pagan Moabite. There’s Rehoboam — the king who was responsible for the division of the Jewish kingdom. Not a very pretty line to be born into if you’re the Son of God. Now I won’t deny that there are also some really great people in Christ’s lineage, like Jacob or David or Solomon. But the authors of the Bible are also faithful to tell us all the terrible things these men did. The counter-intuitive lineage of Christ speaks to the unlikeliness that it was inspired by humans.

Finally, the end of the statement claims that this religion was created to be “their own.” You can here cross-apply all that the Old Testament says about what a rebellious nation Israel was. They were severely punished and humiliated for their wickedness. But you can also look to the entire message of the New Testament. The apostle Paul emphasizes over and over again that the gospel he preaches is not solely for the Jews. As he states in [Romans 1:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1%3A16&version=NIV), salvation is for everyone who believes! Christ didn’t die only for the Jews, He died for Gentiles like you and me. Paul himself was a Jew, and he’d been persecuting the first Christians! But after a miraculous encounter with God, he turned around and started preaching the good news of salvation in Christ. He believed his special calling was to share that message with the Gentiles. And what a beautiful message it is!

When you read through the Bible, you can see that this statement is hard to believe. The person making a statement like this likely hasn’t actually read Scripture. Be careful to explain these concepts in a gracious way that someone who isn’t familiar with the Bible can understand. And make sure you include a lot of what the Bible actually says! Encourage the person making this statement to read the Bible for himself before making this claim. Many conspiracy theories start to make less sense when you really dig deep into them.

In closing, I’d encourage you to make sure you’re really studying Scripture yourself. I know that every single time I sit down and read the Bible, I am immensely blessed. It’s a personal testimony to me that the Bible can’t just be some conspiracy. I have experienced the living power of the Bible, and no conspiracy can produce that sort of power. I pray you have seen and will continue to experience that yourself as you work to be a studious apologist for God.

Canon of Scripture

How did we get the biblical canon we have today, and how can we trust that it is truly the Word of God?

## Bible Verses

Deuteronomy 8:3; 12:32

Psalm 18:30

Proverbs 30:5-6

2 Timothy 3:14-17

2 Peter 1:16-21

Revelation 22:18-19

## Quotations

“How did the people of God discover that only these 66 books were inspired of God? Because only these had the “fingerprints” of God on them. These “fingerprints” of God include characteristics reflected in the answers to these questions: (1) Was it written by a prophet of God, such as Moses (Ex 4:1-9) or Paul (1 Co 9:1)? (2) Was it confirmed by acts of God (Heb. 1:1; 2:3-4)? Did the human author tell the truth of God known from other revelations and facts (Dt 18:20-22)? (3) Did it have the power of God to edify (2 Tm 3:16-17; Heb 4:12)? (4) Was it accepted and collected by the people of God?” –Norman Geisler in article titled “How Can We Know the Bible Includes the Correct Books?” from *The* *Apologetic Study Bible*

## Recommendations

The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell

<http://www.biblica.com/bibles/faq/7/>

## Commentary

This topic can be mundane if not constructed properly. The question is very narrow in only wanting to know the process, which I completely recommend for you to explain. However, don't stop there. Dig deeper. Consider the following approach to show the power and significance of this issue.

As you describe the process of the criteria of what books were "in" or "out," show why that criteria mattered. Explain the background of what was happening in the congregations, expounding on how there were all kinds of books being considered "from God" like the Gospel of Thomas and Peter's Apocalypse that didn't seem authentic and were in fact contradicting God's truth. From such confusion, they needed to test all the presented books to form the foundation God has ordained for us to cling to. Such is why this topic needs to be understood. The Bible we hold today would not have been here in its solid form, if God has not used His Spirit to lead His people to know what books were truly inspired by Him and which were not.

1. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, page 99, footnote 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gleason Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, page 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, page 99, footnote 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gleason Archer, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, page 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)