

# UNLOCKING THE BIBLE!

1

## Can we trust it?

Where did the Bible come from?

How do we know it's reliable?



# Where did the Bible come from?

## How do we know it's reliable?

- “Bible”                      “Biblia”                      “Books”

### Old Testament

- Pentateuch = 5 scrolls (Torah = Law/Teaching)
- Histories
- Prophets. God's spokesmen
- Poetry collections – sacred and secular!
- Popular religious philosophy



# Where did the Bible come from?

## How do we know it's reliable?

### Old Testament

- **The Jewish Scriptures**
- **The Bible of Jesus and early Church**
- **A collection of books**
- **Many literary types**
- **Mainly unknown authors/editors**
- **Timespan of 1,000 years +**



# Where did the Bible come from?

## How do we know it's reliable?

### New Testament

- **Four Gospels – interpretations of Jesus' death, resurrection and its significance. Unique**
- **Only Luke/Acts claims to be “historian”**
- **The Letters – not consciously written as Scripture**
- **Apostle Paul penned 25% + of NT**
- **Revelation – Apocalyptic. Earthly encouragement from future/heavenly hopes**



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## New Testament – Timescales

- Paul's Letters. 50 AD to 65 AD
- Gospels. 60 AD to 100 AD
- Revelation. 85/95 AD?

By end of 1<sup>st</sup> century/early 2<sup>nd</sup> century –

➤ All our NT books in general church circulation



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## Formation of Canon of Scripture

### Canon

- **Reed/Rod.....ruler/yardstick**
- **Criteria for inclusion/exclusion**
- **Authoritative collection of God's Revelation**



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### Old Testament Canon

#### Criteria

**1. Written by/closely associated with, prophets/great leaders?**

**2. Authenticated by mighty acts of God?**

**3. Inspired by God's Spirit?**

**“Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Pet. 1:20-21.**



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### New Testament Canon

- Apostolic authorship or associations?
- “The ring of truth”? Ultimately by inspiration of God?
- Regularly read and used in churches? Early Church Fathers' endorsement?

### Late second century AD

- Most of our NT books recognised as Scripture
- Not 4<sup>th</sup> century!





# Where did the Bible come from?

## How do we know it's reliable?

### Reliability

- **Accurate oral tradition**
- **Links with eyewitnesses and Apostles**
- **Many ancient copies - largely accurate textual transmission**
- **Scribe - a skilled and respected profession**
- **Archaeology illuminates background – does not/cannot prove the Bible true**



# Where did the Bible come from?

## How do we know it's reliable?

### RELIABLE AS WHAT?

- God's saving activity throughout history
- God's self-revelation in Christ

### ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

- What kind of literature is this?
- What is the author trying to convey?
- What kind of truth? About God? About us?

### THE KEY – THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ILLUMINATION



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