

Introduction to the Bible

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Part 1: Starting at the Beginning

In the advertising for the class, I asked a few questions to challenge your Bible knowledge. Here are the answers to those questions.

10 Commandments

1. Have no other gods in front of or in place of the God of the Bible.
2. Make no idols.
3. Do not use the name of the Lord in a wrong way (without respect, for example).
4. Keep the Sabbath set apart by resting on it. It is the seventh day, because God created in six and rested the seventh.
5. Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness/lie.
10. Do not covet.

Four Gospels

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

Twelve Disciples of Jesus

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Peter, son of Jonah | 8. Matthew the tax collector, also known as Levi |
| 2. James, son of Zebedee | 9. James the son of Alphaeus (the Less) |
| 3. John, son of Zebedee | 10. Thaddaeus |
| 4. Andrew | 11. Simon the Zealot (a political faction) |
| 5. Philip | 12. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus |
| 6. Bartholomew | |
| 7. Thomas | |

There were actually two others, so “twelve” isn’t the whole story, even though it is the common way to speak of the list of apostles. The others were:

13. Matthias (chosen after Judas was gone)
14. Saul, also known as Paul, who was commissioned later.

Introducing the Class

This is designed to be a stand-alone class that can be followed by other classes, as the audience's interests may direct.

Our goals today are as follows:

1. To understand the basic structure of the Bible.
2. To understand where and when the Bible was written.
3. To understand how the Bible was written and by whom.
4. To have a basic idea of the story-line or "big picture" of the Bible.
5. To answer some of your questions about the Bible.

Introducing the Teacher

Pastor Matt Postiff has been studying the Bible in a formal way since 1996 or so. After completing a Ph.D. in computer engineering (University of Michigan, 2001), he studied for the next 9 years received two master's degrees in the Bible's theology and languages (Master of Divinity, 2005; Master of Theology, 2010, both from Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary). His second master's degree required the writing of a lengthy thesis, and his was entitled *How God Knows Counterfactuals*.

Structure of the Bible

1. The Bible is a book that is a collection of 66 smaller books.
2. We sometimes call the Bible by another name: the "Scriptures." This word means "sacred writings."
3. The Bible is divided into two parts called testaments. Think of the word testament as a synonym for the word "covenant." A covenant is an agreement or contract between God and His people, just like you might be in a marriage covenant or have a contract with someone about some matter. The Old Testament has 39 books, and the New Testament has 27 books.
4. The Old Testament is the Hebrew Bible of the Jewish people. That is their entire Bible because they do not accept the New Testament. The New Testament builds on and completes the Jewish faith.
5. We abbreviate Old Testament and New Testament as OT and NT as shorthand.
6. In the Jewish approach to the Old Testament, they see the Old Testament divided into three segments: Law, Prophets, and Writings.
 - a. Law = Torah
 - b. Prophets = Nebi'im
 - c. Writings = Kethubim
 - d. So the whole Hebrew Bible is known by the acronym TNK, TaNaK.
7. Christians typically see the sections of the Old Testament this way:
 - a. The Pentateuch – the first five books, also known as the Law.
 - b. The Historical Books – the next 12 books.
 - c. The Poetic and Wisdom books – the next five books.
 - d. The Major Prophets – the next five books.
 - e. The Minor Prophets – the last 12 books.

- f. Detail: The Major Prophets are “major” because they wrote longer books; the Minor Prophets are “minor” because they wrote generally shorter books.
- 8. The New Testament has four sections:
 - a. The Gospels – the first four books.
 - b. History of the Early Church – the book called “Acts”.
 - c. The letters of the apostle Paul – the next 13 or 14 books.
 - d. The general letters, the last 8 books.
 - e. Detail: some folks will include one of Paul’s letters in the group of general letters, and some will separate the last book, Revelation, into its own category.
- 9. The order of the books is not chronological as we might hope. The sections are generally arranged in chronological order as to the events they describe, but the books within the sections are not. There is just too much going on throughout the events covered in the Bible to make an easier linear arrangement of the material, so there is some complexity that we have to just deal with.
 - a. Detail: The Hebrew Bible arranges the books in a different order than the Protestant Bible. The major and minor prophets are moved forward to be after 2 Kings, and the order ends with Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and finally 1 & 2 Chronicles.
- 10. For purposes of studying the Bible and looking things up, it is helpful to memorize the order of the books. Because there are many translations of the Bible into English, it is not really possible for me to say, “turn to page such and such in your Bible.”
- 11. Many centuries after the Bible was written, students of the Bible found it convenient to divide the books into chapters and then further into verses. The modern chapters divisions have been used since Cardinal Stephen Langton marked chapters in 1205 A.D., and verse divisions were in place since 1551 (NT) and 1571 (OT), thanks to Robert Estienne (Stephanus).
- 12. We identify a particular location in the Bible with its address in the form Book Chapter:verse or Book Chapter:verse1-verse2. For example, one of the most well-known verses in the Bible is at the address “John 3:16.” Another portion that tells about how one can obtain eternal life is at the address “Ephesians 2:8-9.” Some books are so short that they only have a single chapter. In that case, we can omit the chapter number and just say, for instance, Jude 17. That is equivalent to saying Jude 1:17.
- 13. The Catholic Bible has seven additional books in its Old Testament. We call these apocrypha and do not believe they are of Biblical quality because of their content and style. The names of these books are Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch.

Where and When the Bible was Written

In the advertising for the class, we mentioned that the Bible is not a book of European origin. That is a common misconception because many people think of the Bible as being Catholic from Rome, or as translated by Martin Luther in Germany, or translated by commission of King James in the early 1600s in England. But the Bible came out of the Middle East.

But the Bible is not a “white man’s” book, as it might be called. Why?

1. It was written by Middle Eastern authors who wrote mostly in Israel. Later, some of the New Testament was written by Hebrew Christians as they traveled throughout the Mediterranean world. The apostle Paul who wrote half of the New Testament books was a Jew born in south central Turkey (known as the region of Cilicia at the time).
2. Many manuscripts of the Bible that give us evidence of what the original text included are of African origin. Most manuscripts are of Mediterranean origin as they came from countries that surround the Mediterranean on the north, east, and south.
3. The Bible includes black people in it. Simon called Niger is one who was almost certainly a black person (Acts 13:1).
4. People of many ethnicities are found in Scripture, including Egyptians, Ethiopians, Persians, and others. The Queen of Sheba is mentioned in 1 Kings 10; scholars believe she was from either Yemen or Ethiopia, and some tie her to Egypt.

The Bible was written over a span of about 1500 years.

1. The famous leader of Israel named Moses wrote the first five books (Pentateuch) of the Bible around 1400 B.C. as the nation of Israel moved back into Canaan from Egypt.
2. The New Testament books were written after the life and death of Jesus Christ, between 45 to about 95 A.D.
3. The apostle John wrote the book called Revelation sometime in the 90s A.D.

How the Bible was Written and by Whom

1. The Old Testament was written mostly in the Hebrew language, and a few small parts in a related language called Aramaic. Therefore, we must read it in an English translation.
2. The New Testament was written in a type of Greek called Koine Greek—the common language of the people throughout the Roman Empire.
3. The texts of the Bible were written by hand and then copied manually by scribes until the invention of the printing press around 1440 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg.
4. It is common to hear people say that the Bible was written by man just like any other book. This is only partly true because the authorship of the Bible is actually two-fold: God worked with human authors so that they would convey in the original manuscripts precisely what He wanted them to say. Christians call this divine superintendence of the words of the Bible by the technical term *inspiration*. We can study that idea in detail another time. But what we want to grasp for now is that Christians truly believe and teach that the words of the Bible—a good translation of the Bible—are the very words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The Bible is God's words to man. The Scripture has dual-*authorship*.

There are about 40 human authors of the Bible. About 30 of them wrote in the Old Testament. They include:

1. **Moses**, a Hebrew raised and educated in the palace of the Egyptian Pharaoh, turned sheep herder, and then leader of a nation of several million people.

2. Other leaders of Israel such as **Joshua** (successor to Moses), and later kings probably had material written and archived which was later used to compose the history of Israel.
3. The Hebrew King **David** and his son King **Solomon** wrote much of the books called Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes around 1000-900 B.C.
4. Records of Israel's history and conquest of their homeland were kept, and compiled at times that are not exactly known to us. Much of that work was completed by the time of the priest **Ezra** (480-440 B.C.).
5. Israel's prophets spoke many messages to the nation and her neighbors, and wrote some of those down. One of them was **Isaiah**. Another was **Jeremiah**, a priest. Then there was **Ezekiel**, another priest who was about 20 years younger than Jeremiah. Contemporary to Ezekiel was **Daniel** who wrote a short but significant book that predicts the general course of world history. These authors wrote during the period 700-500 B.C.
6. Then there are the minor prophets, 12 of them: **Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi**. These books were written between the 800s B.C. and 400s B.C.

The authors also include eight men who wrote the New Testament:

1. **Matthew**, a tax collector turned Christian minister.
2. **Mark**, an associate of the apostle Paul, who as a young man witnessed the ministry of Jesus and particularly his betrayal, arrest, death, and resurrection.
3. **Luke**, a physician and accomplished historian. He was a travel companion to the apostle Paul. He wrote the gospel that is named after him, and also the early history of the church called Acts.
4. **John**, a young man who was a follower of Jesus during His time on earth, a witness of His miracles, death, and resurrection. He wrote a gospel, 3 short letters, and the last book of the Bible called Revelation.
5. **Paul**, from the Jewish tribe of Benjamin, was before his conversion to Christianity a Pharisee. This means he belonged to a conservative politico-religious party of the Jewish people who believed in strict adherence to the Old Testament. They went beyond what was written into all kinds of minutia. He was very zealous, well educated, and even was a persecutor of early Christians.
6. **James**, the oldest half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3) wrote a letter to Jewish Christians.
7. **Peter**, a fisherman, wrote two letters to Christian friends which are Scripture.
8. **Jude**, another half-brother of Jesus.
9. The author of the book of Hebrews is not known. It may be Paul, Luke, or possibly a man named Apollos who was an eloquent Christian preacher brought up in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Big Picture of the Bible

The Bible covers the very beginning of time through eternity future. It gives God's perspective on human history: where we come from, where we are going, how to know God, get to heaven, why death occurs, and many other things. It is important to note that the Bible is a book of actual historical events and facts in addition to its teaching of spiritual matters. The spiritual and the historical are intermingled in such a way that one could not be separated from the other without destroying the whole.

The central theme of the Bible has to do with God's kingdom. Namely, God created a realm for His subjects to live in and enjoy perfect fellowship with Him, but they rebelled and then received the consequences of that rebellion. Subsequently, God began a restoration program in which His Son Jesus Christ would redeem fallen humanity and restore humanity to a perfect relationship with Him forever.

For a summary of its content, see the handout entitled "The Bible Summarized in Three Pages."

Where Should I Start Reading the Bible?

It would be good to read the entire first book, Genesis, and then the second book, Exodus, at least through chapter 24, and then read chapter 32.¹ This will give you a good start in understanding things from the beginning.

You can also read the Gospel of John as a good starting point into the New Testament. Actually, any of the four gospels is a great starting point.

After that, you can read through the remainder of the books. It is generally good to do so in the order they are found in the Bible. It will take a couple readings through to start to get things organized in your mind, but it will be well worth your time!

¹ Some of the other chapters are a bit tedious and not as critical to read at the first.

Part 2: Is the Bible True?

Why Don't We Avoid Pork and Shellfish?

Similarly, can we eat a milk product with meat in the same sitting? Some have ridiculed Christians for not following the dietary laws of Jews. We find the answer by reading the passages about diet in their context: God gave them to the Jewish people for a limited time from about 1400 A.D. until the time of Christ. Those dietary laws never were given to Gentiles, and they do not apply to Christians today. We can eat a ham sandwich with cheese without being hypocrites in our belief of the Bible.

Truth or Fiction?

Now, to our question for this class: is the Bible true? This question is a bit controversial in our post-modern age. Can anything be "true"? Or are some things true for some people some of the time, and false for other people at the same time?

We believe there are things that are true, and things that are false, for all people, at all times, and in all places. For example:

True: Sunlight takes about 8.3 minutes to travel from the sun to the earth.

False: The moon is made of cheese.

True: $2 + 2 = 4$.

False: $2 + 2 = 5$. That answer is close, but it is still wrong.

True: God exists, God created everything, and God has revealed Himself in the Bible.

These are also all true, like any truth that we all hold to be obvious, like $2+2 = 4$. But not everyone accepts those facts as true.

But to understand the question "Is the Bible true?" we have to understand its origin and transmission down to our day, and then consider how we ourselves can know it is true.

How Did We Get the Bible?

1. **Revelation.** This is the starting point of God's communication to man. It is a supernatural expression of God's will to mankind using a variety of means. Nature, conscience, dreams, visions, direct speech, and the Bible are among the means God has used to disclose Himself and His plan to mankind.
2. **Inspiration.** Inspiration is a miracle by which God through the Holy Spirit superintended the action of the human authors of the Bible so that in their writing of His **revelation**, they did not err, omit, or add anything to the words God wanted recorded in the original manuscripts of Scripture. Inspiration applies to the process of writing or "reducing God's word to paper" and to the result of that writing. Inspiration applies to the very words of the Bible, and to every word of the Bible.

3. **Preservation and Transmission.** The Bible was copied by hand in the early years—in fact, for the first 2800 years of its existence. We have thousands of manuscripts of the Bible or portions thereof, which outnumber the manuscripts of any other ancient literature by orders of magnitude. Only since the printing press in 1440 A.D. have we had printed manuscripts that can be duplicated in large numbers with little, if any, variation between them. God promised to preserve his Word, not miraculously, but providentially. This does not mean that all of its books are available at all times to all people (), but it does mean that the Bible is generally available to humanity. There are no lost books.
4. **Canonicity.** It took some time for the church as a whole to recognize all the books that belong in the Bible. The process by which this recognition became formalized is called canonicity. The list of books so recognized is called the canon. The Biblical books were "canonical" from the moment they were written, but the process of recognition and acceptance took a bit longer. People did not just uncritically accept any book that came along purporting to be Biblical.

Of the 27 NT books, 20 have been almost universally accepted by Christians as Biblical from the beginning. The other 7 are the following, along with questions that caused them to be books which were “spoken against.”

Hebrews – question about authorship

James – teaching on justification

2 Peter – style different than 1 Peter

2 & 3 John – arguments about authenticity

Jude – reference to pseudepigraphal book of Enoch

Revelation – premillennial teaching

Of the 39 books in the OT, only five were questioned or doubted. They were:

Ecclesiastes – written from a human perspective; focused on physical pleasure

Song of Solomon – too sensual

Esther – does not mention God

Ezekiel – the size of the temple in Ezek 40-48 is wrong compared to the first temple

Proverbs – some apparent contradictions.

Recognition was granted to books that met certain conditions. They had to be authored by a recognized apostle, or one of the close associates of the apostles. For a NT book, the book had to be universally applicable to the church, even if it was a letter written for a specific occasion. It had to teach correct doctrine, and agree with all the other books. Finally, the book had to be in regular use by the churches. With these qualifications, you soon come to a closed set of books.

For an OT book, it had to be authored by Moses or an accepted prophet, agree with the contents of the Torah, and had to be important for the nation of Israel.

5. **Textual criticism.** Because the text of the bible had to be hand copied, there were inevitably errors that arose in the copying process. As a result, if you look at 100 representative manuscripts of the same passage, you will undoubtedly find differences between them. Then the question is, "what was the original text?" This is the question that the science of textual criticism answers. "Criticism" is not meant to be negative. It is meant to indicate that discerning judgment has to be made if there are differences in order to ascertain which variations

represent the original text. For instance, if only 1 of the 100 manuscripts disagrees with the other 99, then it is most certainly the case that the 99 have it correct. Now, if you had 100 non-representative manuscripts, the single one could be correct and the 99 wrong!

6. **Translation.** All of the above just brings us a Bible in Greek (NT) or Hebrew (OT). Then we need someone skilled in those languages who is able to translate the text into our mother tongue. In our case, we have a wealth of translations available. In many language groups (more than 1500), there are no portions of the Bible translated into that language. 1.5 billion people in the world are in this boat (wycliffe.org.uk).
7. **Reading.** Now that you have a Bible in your own language, you have to actually pick it up off the shelf and open it, and then read it. It does no good if it sits there unused!
8. **Interpretation.** Finally, when you read the Bible you have to interpret it to extract the meaning of it. There are principles by which this is done to ensure that the God-intended meaning is understood.

Accuracy of Transmission

The Bible has been transmitted very accurately over the centuries. Consider data given by James White in his book *The King James Only Controversy*, p. 39–40. There are variants in about 10,000 locations in the New Testament. Only about 1/8th of these variants have any significance, the rest being trivial differences like spelling and so forth. This means if you compare the text behind the KJV with the text behind say the NIV or ESV, you will find the text is 98.33 percent without problems. This is remarkable for such an historic document with 5,300 Greek manuscripts of the NT. Of these variants, there are only about 400 that affect the sense of a passage, and 50 that are of enough weight to worry about. Schaff, a liberal church historian, said that none of these affected “an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.” Greek scholar A. T. Robertson says that only 1/1000th of the entire text is of any concern.

The bottom line for me is that we have a document that very accurately represents the original. No claims of corruption are realistic.

How Do I Know it is True?

The emphasis here is how to I personally know the Bible to be true?

1. The main way I know it is true is that God conveys to me, as a believer, certainty and acceptance of its truth. I know that it is the Word of God, and not the word of men (1 Thessalonians 2:13). That may be hard to accept at first, so I offer some other thoughts on the matter to show you the reasonableness of accepting God's Word as true.
2. Fulfilled prophecy. Detailed events were predicted in advance, and later these events in fact happened just as they were predicted. For example, Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 name a Persian King—Cyrus—years before he ever came on the scene. Isaiah 53 expresses details about the Jewish Messiah that were fulfilled 700 years later. Daniel predicted the rise of Gentile kingdoms after Nebuchadnezzar, including Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, long before those events occurred.
3. Consistency of its contents despite being written over hundreds of years by about 40 authors.

4. Corroboration of eyewitnesses. One example is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Probably thousands saw him die on a cross outside of Jerusalem, and we have a record of over 500 people seeing Him after he was raised. Another example is the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. The entire nation of Israel at the time saw remarkable events on the mountain in which God spoke to Moses the fledgling nation's new "constitution."
5. The tremendous effect that the Bible, Judaism, and Christianity on the world. While not a bullet-proof argument, this is evidence for the truth of Scripture. It has "civilized" the society; it has touched music and art, technology and education, it has raised the place of women where it has been practiced, and has emphasized helping the poor. In 2009, Alvin J. Schmidt wrote an entire book on this subject entitled *How Christianity Changed the World*.² The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, with copies numbering into the billions.
6. The fact that the Bible depicts man as a sinner is another evidence that the Bible is not a work of fiction. It paints an un-retouched picture of the evil of mankind. It is not a glowing recommendation for the goodness of man, and it doesn't hide anything embarrassing about humanity.
7. That it has been corroborated by archaeological and scientific discoveries throughout the recent centuries.

Other Religious Books

There are other religious books out there. How do we know that they are not the right ones? We consider four of them:

1. The extra books in the Catholic Bible and the extra-biblical teaching of the Church. These books have problems that show they are not canonical. For instance:

NRS Sirach 3:3 Those who honor their father atone for sins.

That is an obvious reference salvation by works. Or, consider:

NRS 2 Maccabees 12:44 For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. 45 But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore **he made atonement for the dead**, so that they might be delivered from their sin.

This text supports the doctrine of prayer for the dead and thus making atonement for them. The problem is that this has no connection with the gospel whereby we are called to repent and believe in our lifetime, else we will be lost forever with no chance of recovery, not even by prayers of very pious people.

These books have several characteristics besides bad theology that show they lacked the general recognition of the church. They are not quoted in the NT. No council of the church included them as canonical. The Jews never included them as part of the Hebrew Bible (OT). They contain historical and chronological errors. However, their witness to the canonical status of other books is helpful. For instance, the prologue to Ecclesiasticus was written about 130 B.C.

² <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000SETW8Y/>

and gives evidence of a three-fold structure to the OT. It indicates this structure was completed some time before 130 B.C.—in fact, by about 400 B.C. it was completed.

These apocryphal books (except 1 & 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh) were accepted as canonical by the Roman Catholics at the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546.

"It is in the context of dealing with the 'Judaizers' that St. Paul says we are 'justified by faith apart from the works of law.' **He did not eliminate works as necessary for salvation in any sense.** He specified the works of law because these were the very works without which the Judaizers were claiming a person "cannot be saved."³

2. The Book of Mormon and its related literature.
 - a. The Book of Mormon is a fantasy story about a lost tribe of the nation of Israel who came to the Western Hemisphere and was later visited by Jesus. There are no archaeological data to back up its claims.
 - b. The Book of Mormon in 2 Nephi 25:23 says "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, **after all we can do.**" This is the opposite of what is taught in the Bible in Ephesians 2:8-9 where Scripture says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Mormonism teaches works come **before** salvation; Christianity teaches works come **after**!
3. The literature of the Jehovah's Witnesses Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.
 - a. The Watchtower teaches such wrong doctrines as annihilationism, rejection of eternal punishment for sin, salvation by works, and that Jesus Christ is not God the Son.
 - b. "The Society explains: "[Belief] involves taking in accurate knowledge of God's purposes and his way of salvation. Then faith has to be exercised in Jesus Christ as the Chief Agent of salvation. **This places the Christian in a saved condition, but he must now persevere in doing God's will and continue to adhere to all of God's requirements for the rest of his life. Only then will he be saved to eternal life**" (Watchtower, December 15, 1989, p. 30). To prevent any confusion regarding these requirements for salvation, the Society gives four requirements that must be fulfilled by each Jehovah's Witness."⁴ These include Watchtower membership and proselytizing.
4. The Quran (also known as the Koran).
 - a. Commands of violence toward unbelievers. [www.thereligionofpeace.com /pages/quran/violence.aspx](http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/quran/violence.aspx) says, "The Quran contains at least 109 verses that call Muslims to war with nonbelievers for the sake of Islamic rule. Some are quite graphic..." Jihad indeed is holy war against so-called infidels, *not* a spiritual struggle like Christian sanctification.

³ <http://www.catholic.com/blog/tim-staples/are-good-works-necessary-for-salvation>

⁴ <http://www.watchman.org/articles/jehovahs-witnesses/jehovahs-witnesses-working-out-their-salvation/>

- b. In contrast, the Scriptures teach Christians to love their enemies, and try to persuade them to repent of their sins—not to kill them! See Matthew 5:44 and Romans 12:17-21.
- c. Invariably, someone will object that God commanded Israel to destroy everything in its path during the taking of the land we now know as Israel. This conquest included the destruction of men, women, children, animals, and cities. And that is found in the Bible. This is no better than the command to kill infidels in the Quran, it is claimed. But there are a couple of key differences. First, this command was a one-time type of event. It is not enjoined on the followers of God for all time in all places—it was just against the people of Canaan. Second, the people of Canaan were extremely wicked and God, after permitting them hundreds of years to reform their ways, finally brought judgment upon them by means of the Israelite conquest. A helpful academic resource in this regard was authored by Professor Kyle Dunham, now at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. His article is entitled “Yahweh War and Herem: The Role of Covenant, Land, and Purity in the Conquest of Canaan.”⁵

It should be evident that the Bible stands out very uniquely from these religious books. I find the Bible far superior morally, far more consistent with God's holiness, and consistent with the way of salvation by grace through faith.

But again, the bottom line is that God has convinced me personally of the truth of Scripture so that I embrace it as it is – the Word of God. God cannot lie, and thus all of the Word is truth.

⁵ http://www.dbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2_Dunham_J_2016.pdf