

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- Only Two Choices
- Realize the Significance
- Is it Faith or Science?
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- Guess at the Evidence
- Inspect the Evidence
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- No Compromise
 - DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- Love - GOD and MAN
- Increase - GROW
- Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure
- Eternity – Past, Present, Future

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- Personal and Loving
- Omnipotent
- Wise and All-Knowing
- Everywhere and Eternal
- Righteous and Reliable

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason
- Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time
- Loving
- Enforced
- Steadfast

Why Only the Bible is God's Word					
	The Bible	The Koran (Qur'an)	Book of Mormon	Hindu Scripture	Buddhist Writings
Claims to be from God	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
The Truth					
Supported by History?	Yes	No ⁽¹⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	n/a	n/a
Supported by Science?	Yes	No ⁽²⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	n/a	n/a
Accurate Prophecy?	Yes	No ⁽³⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	n/a	n/a
The Whole Truth					
Answers BIAS questions?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	Partially
Agrees with observations of world?	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	No	No
Foundation for logic, nature, morality?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Doesn't use other "sacred" writings?	Yes	No (O.T. and Gospels)	No	Yes	Yes
Nothing But the Truth					
"Canon" is trustworthy?	Yes	No ⁽¹⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	Not known	Not known
Writings are preserved accurately?	Yes	No ⁽¹⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	No	No
Writings are widely available?	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	No	Somewhat
Writings are internally consistent?	Yes	No ⁽¹⁾	No ⁽⁴⁾	No	No
(1) http://www.debate.org.uk/topics/history/quran.htm (2) http://www.answering-islam.org/Campbell/contents.html (3) http://answering-islam.org/Shamoun/false_prophecies.htm (4) See the two-volume work <u>A Mormon's Unexpected Journey</u> by Carma Naylor					

Related Notes:

The Bible

The Bible is a unified, consistent set of writings even though it is comprised of 66 books, written by over 40 authors, written on three different continents in three languages over a span of 1500 years. It is historically reliable, all prophecies that can be tested have proven accurate, and it is both internally consistent and consistent with reliable external evidence.

- As one example of prophecy, there are over 300 predictive references to the Messiah in the Old Testament that were all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is statistically impossible for this to happen by chance. The odds of just 8 of these being true in one person is 1 in 100 quadrillion (10^{17}). (Josh McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 166-167)
- William F. Albright, recognized as one of the greatest archaeologists, testified that there is no doubt that archaeology “has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition.” (McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pg. 65)
- The existing manuscripts for the New Testament provide overwhelming evidence for the accuracy of the text. The Old Testament texts were copied with painstaking procedures that make them also very reliable. (See McDowell’s “Evidence” book for extensive documentation)
- I like the way the unity of the Bible is summarized in Answers to Tough Questions by McDowell & Stewart:
 - The Old Testament is the preparation (Isaiah 40:3)
 - The Gospels are the manifestation (John 1:29)
 - The Book of Acts is the propagation (Acts 1:8)
 - The Epistles are the explanation (Colossians 1:27)
 - The Book of Revelation is the consummation (Rev 1:7)

I also like the following description I heard in a talk by Dr. Voddie Baucham because it emphasizes that the Bible was written by eyewitnesses during the time of other eyewitnesses (who could have challenged the writings if they were false):

“The Bible is a reliable collection of historical documents written by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses. They report supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and they claim that their writings are Divine, rather than human, in origin.”

The Islamic Koran (Qur’an)

The source of the Qur’an is one man, Muhammad, who supposedly received it from the angel Gabriel. Early in his life Muhammad was likely exposed to different sects (and heretics) of Christianity as well as Jewish Scripture, and he apparently respected the Bible. At age 40 he started receiving “revelations” that were supposedly from God. It is very suggestive that at first he was convinced he was possessed by a “jinn” (demon). Muhammad was illiterate and did not write the visions down but transmitted them orally. A portion was dictated during his life and a portion was written after his death by his disciples. Only later in his life did he state that his teachings were from God and were replacing the “corrupted” version of the Bible, although the writings contain some inconsistencies and contradictions you wouldn’t expect from God. Muhammad himself was a false prophet (research Muhammad’s Satanic Verses for one example) so he is not trustworthy as a reliable source of God’s Word.

The Book of Mormon (and other uniquely Mormon books)

The source of Mormonism’s unique claims is primarily one man, Joseph Smith. Smith proved to be a false prophet on several occasions (such as his prophecy that the temple would be built in Missouri during his lifetime), which disqualifies him as a credible source for God’s Word. Smith supposedly translated the Book of Mormon from some ancient writings he dug up with the help of an angel named Moroni. Some hieroglyphics he “translated” were later found to be nothing but Egyptian burial documents. In addition to the problems with Smith, the church teaches that the current heads of

the church can receive new revelations from God, which means that no doctrines are completely settled or trustworthy. See the two-volume work [A Mormon's Unexpected Journey](#) by Carma Naylor for extensive documentation of the many problems with Mormon writings.

Jehovah's Witness Bible

I did not include this in the chart, but it's worth mentioning that the Jehovah's Witnesses have their own translation of the Bible that has been modified to suit their doctrines. Examples include the denial of the Trinity, the related denial that Jesus is God, and the denial of Jesus' bodily resurrection. In addition, many of their founders who initiated these unique doctrines (such as Charles Taze Russell and Joseph F. Rutherford) proved to be false prophets as they inaccurately predicted the date of Christ's return.

Hindu Scriptures and Buddhist Writings

Since these do not claim to be from God (and don't even agree on a concept of God) these are not candidates to be God's Word.

So...Who Would You Believe?

Any book is only as trustworthy as the author and his motives. Who seems to be a more reliable human author for God's Word?

1. A former treasure hunter who repeatedly made false predictions and whose mysterious translation of some hidden golden tablets gave him the benefits of a powerful position as head of a new religion? (Joseph Smith)
2. A man who thought he was possessed by demons when he received his first "revelations", had some "revelations" that were later retracted because they were thought to be from the devil, yet went on to proclaim himself as THE prophet who succeeded all other prophets. His ongoing "revelations" gave him enormous power as head of an empire. (Muhammad)
3. A group of men who gained nothing personally from their writings and who were often persecuted and killed for the ideas they proclaimed. (The men who wrote the Bible)

Life's true rules are revealed by God in the Bible, which contains **the Truth** (is all true), **the Whole Truth** (answers all of life's important questions), **and Nothing But the Truth** (is not mixed with errors and does not contradict itself).

The CANON of Scripture

One common question about the Bible is “how do we know the Bible includes the right books?”. I’m not an expert on this, but I’ll outline what I understand at this time.

The Hebrew (Old) Testament books were widely agreed upon in Israel. The Law, Prophets, and Writings (Psalms) Jesus referred to in Luke 24:44 included the books we now call the Old Testament. The Jews organized them differently than the Bible, but the text is the same. Christians simply adopted the writings that Jews accepted as being from God.

The Apocryphal books are NOT part of the Bible and were generally rejected by both the Jews and the early church. They were written 200 years after Malachi, they do not claim to be from God or to contain prophecies, and they contain doctrinal errors, sub-biblical morality, and historical inaccuracies.

The Roman Catholic church leaders first accepted the Apocrypha at the Council of Trent (1545) primarily as a response to the Reformation and to use them as justification for some of their non-biblical doctrines.

The New Testament books were letters circulated among the early church, and the 27 books of the Canon were confirmed by the church at councils in the 4th century. These councils did not “decide” which books to include, but instead merely agreed upon which ones had already been validated by the church as being God’s Word. Below is an acrostic CANON to summarize some “tests” they applied to verify that a book was from God. The book had to be:

- **C** - Consistent with orthodox beliefs and other scripture
- **A** - Apostolic in origin and Authoritative in tone
- **N** - Normally used (widely accepted by the church)
- **O** - Old and Original (in use since the early church)
- **N** - Inspired in nature (had the “feel” of authentic inspired writings)