



**CREEKSIDE**

# DEFENDING YOUR FAITH

**A Basic Course in Christian Apologetics**

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## WEEK 1

- Introduction to Apologetics
  - What, Why, Who and How
- Where Does Faith Fit In?
  - Faith and Reason
- The Arguments from Reason & Morality
- The Word of God
  - Different Forms of the Word
  - How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word?
  - How We Got Our Bible

**CREEKSIDE**  
CHURCH

# What is apologetics?

**Apologetics** (from Greek ἀπολογία, "**speaking in defense**" or "**story**") is the discipline of **defending** a position (often religious) through the systematic use of information.

**Apologetics** is the use of **reasoned arguments** or writings in justification of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine.

**Apologetics** seeks to answer questions and make propositions like:

Does God _____? There are good reasons to believe God exists. If God exists, it matters.	Did Jesus _____? There are good reasons to believe Jesus rose again. If Jesus rose, it matters.	Is the Bible _____? There are good reasons to believe the Bible is reliable. If the Bible is reliable, it matters.
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# Why do apologetics?

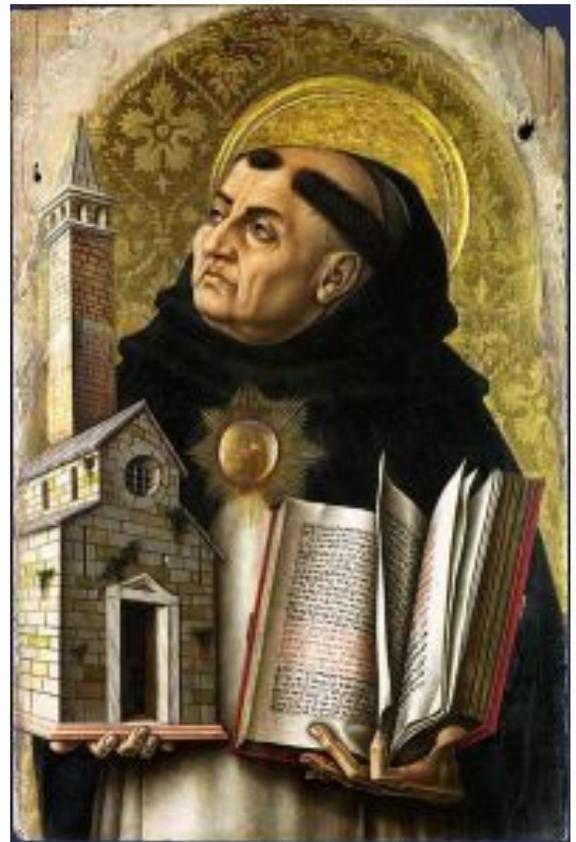
Because it matters for **everyone**.

**We are made to \_\_\_\_\_**  
"God created man **in His own image**..." (Genesis 1:27 NASB) "Come now, and **let us reason** together," Says the Lord..." (Isaiah 1:18 NASB)

**The Great \_\_\_\_\_ (Evangelism)**  
"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you [b]always, even to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20 NASB)

**Preach the \_\_\_\_\_**  
"...Preach the word; **be prepared** in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Timothy 4:2 NIV)

"...since both in my imprisonment and **in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel** all of you became partners in God's grace together with me. ... I am placed here **for the defense of the Gospel**." (Philippians 1:7,16 NET)



## Who does apologetics?

**Jesus:** “Do you not believe...the words...the works...” (John 14:10-11)  
 “...love the Lord your God with all your heart...all your soul...**all your mind.**” (Mat. 22:37)

**Paul:** “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens...**he reasoned** in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day....” (Acts 17:16-34)

**Peter:** “...know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this they were **cut to the heart...**” (Acts 2:14-41)

**Isaiah:** “To the **teaching** and to the **testimony!**” (Isaiah 8:11-22)

**Prophets (OT), Apostles (NT) and all Christians (History)**



## How to do apologetics

*The banner verse of many apologists:*

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." (1 Pet. 3:15 NIV)

**“...in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.”**

First, to do apologetics, you need to be a believer in Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_.

**“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”**

Reason for hope. This can be as much for \_\_\_\_\_ as for others. Apologetics is a way of affirming what you believe to grow yourself as well as an outreach to others. You can best defend the truth for others if you know it and own it yourself.

**“But do this with gentleness and \_\_\_\_\_.”**

- “...we will speak the truth in love...” (Ephesians 4:15 NLT)
- “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22,23a NASB)
- “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.” (Prov. 26:4,5)
- Arguing (presenting a case) is not the same as quarreling (fighting with words). We don't quarrel.
- Rarely does anyone come to Christ at the end of an apologetic debate. We don't save people; the Holy Spirit convicts and leads people to their right senses about the truth and their need for a Savior. Your conversation may be a great seed and a step toward their salvation. Our job is obedience to God's word by doing apologetics and then prayerfully leaving the results to Him.

## Where does faith fit in?

*Does apologetics give too much emphasis on reason? Shouldn't we walk by faith and not by sight?*



Faith is the \_\_\_\_\_ of our belief, so it has to come **first**.

“Faith is the \_\_\_\_\_ in what we hope for and the assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)

“By faith we \_\_\_\_\_ that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” (Hebrews 11:3 NIV)

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_...” (Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 9:10)

### By faith we understand

- God is the Christian’s most important belief there is. God is *properly basic* and represents our *ultimate commitments, deepest convictions, highest authority, most fundamental presuppositions, first principals, axioms, or ‘a priori’ assumptions*. In other words, our **most important belief**.
- Our most important beliefs require **faith**. Why?
- We can’t prove our most important belief (God) by anything **more** important, so it must be held **by faith**.

Christianity, and ALL RELIGIONS / BELIEF SYSTEMS hold to their most important beliefs by faith. Even atheism (atheists generally do not like to hear this).

Christianity, and ALL RELIGIONS / BELIEF SYSTEMS ultimately rely on \_\_\_\_\_ to support their most important beliefs, because they cannot be supported by anything **more** important (Circular arguments are unavoidable when reasoning for highest authority).

What sets Christianity apart from other belief systems?

**Our faith in what we can’t see makes sense of what we \_\_\_\_\_.**

### Faith vs. Reason

**True or False:** Faith and Reason are incompatible. ( \_\_\_\_\_! )

Secular culture likes to say you have to choose between faith and reason, the Bible and logic, or religion and science. This type of argument is a \_\_\_\_\_

**LOGICAL FALLACIES** {

- False Dichotomy** (False Dilemma): Presenting 2 opposing views as if that’s all there is.
- Straw Man:** Misrepresenting an argument in a way that makes it easier to defeat.
- Red Herring:** A deliberate attempt to distract from the real issue.

In reality, faith and reason are \_\_\_\_\_.

# The Argument from Reason

## The Christian claims by faith:

1. Logic and reason come from \_\_\_\_\_

### What we observe:

2. Logic and reason are \_\_\_\_\_ we follow
3. Laws of Logic are universal and unchanging
4. You can't NOT know the Laws of Logic

***Faith in what we CAN'T see (the God of the Bible)  
makes sense of what we CAN (universal laws of logic)***

## Naturalists claim by faith:

1. Laws of Logic from a mindless \_\_\_\_\_

### What we observe:

2. Laws don't come from mindlessness
3. Laws of Logic aren't personal preference
4. We would need logic to \_\_\_\_\_ logic

**Naturalism** is the belief that nature is all there is. Not all atheists re Naturalists, but Naturalism is atheistic (no God or supernatural beings).

**Christian faith makes sense of what we can observe.  
Faith in Naturalism does not make sense of what we can observe.**

# The Argument from Morality

## The Christian claims by faith:

1. Morality (right and wrong) come from God

### What we observe:

2. Moral obligations are Laws we follow
3. Moral Law are universal and unchanging
4. You can't NOT know about Moral Law

***Faith in what we CAN'T see (the God of the Bible)  
makes sense of what we CAN (universal, unchanging moral law)***

## Naturalists claim by faith:

1. Morality is a product of human \_\_\_\_\_

### What we observe:

2. Morals/Ethics are Law-like
3. Moral obligation is not \_\_\_\_\_
4. We would need morality to invent morals

**Christian faith makes sense of what we can observe.  
Faith in Naturalism does not make sense of what we can observe.**

(The moral argument often provides an easy segue way into talking about the \_\_\_\_\_)



# The Word of God

## What are the different forms of the Word of God?

“The Word of God” as a \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ .

“The Word of God” as \_\_\_\_\_ .

God’s Words as Speech Through \_\_\_\_\_ .

Deut. 18:18-20 “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, **and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.** <sup>19</sup> And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him. <sup>20</sup> But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.”

**Other ways God communicated to man before the Bible was completed:**

God’s Words in \_\_\_\_\_ .

First time:

Not everything was \_\_\_\_\_, only what God wanted.

John 21:25 – “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.”

## **Blessings** of being on this side of the completed Bible:

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### **I Peter 1:23-25**

“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, <sup>24</sup> because “All flesh *is* as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, <sup>25</sup> But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

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### **Joshua 1:8**

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

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### **Psalm 1:1-2**

“Blessed *is* the man  
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;  
<sup>2</sup> But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.”

### **Personal Reflection:**

- Do you think you would pay more attention if God spoke to you from heaven or through the voice of a living prophet than if He spoke to you from the written words of Scripture?
- Would you believe or obey such words more readily than you do Scripture?
- What changes might you need to make to your attitude toward Scripture more like the kind of attitude God wants you to have?

### **3 Main Questions to Answer:**

1. How do we know that the Bible is God's Word?
2. How did we get our Bible?
3. Are there any errors in the Bible?

## **How Do We Know That The Bible is God's Word?**

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture

### **O.T. Claims**

- "Thus says the Lord" is repeated 100s of times.
- ""And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, **and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him...**'" Deut. 18:17-22

### **N.T. Claims about O.T.**

- **2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (NIV)
- **Luke 24:25-27** "Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

### **N.T. claims about itself**

- **2 Peter 3:15-16** "...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures."
- **1 Timothy 5:18** "For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (quote of Deut. 25:4 and \_\_\_\_\_)



- **2 Peter 3:2** “that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, **and** of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,”  
(Old and New)

**The \_\_\_\_\_ guided the N.T. writers**

- **John 14:26** “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”
- **2 Peter 1:21** “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

“God’s providential oversight & direction of the life of each author was such that their personalities, their backgrounds & training, their abilities to evaluate events in the world around them, their access to historical data, their judgment with regard to the accuracy of information, and their individual circumstances when they wrote, were all exactly what God wanted them to be, so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were fully their own words but also the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as His own.” (Grudem, 81)

**Objections (Internal):**

1. **Apostles were not as \_\_\_\_\_ as Jesus**

Example: I Corinthians 7:12 “But to the rest I, not the Lord, say...”

Answer:

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **using the Bible to prove it is the Word of God**

Answer:

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Example: Differing accounts in the 4 gospels of the same event, like the accounts of 1 vs 2 demon-possessed men in the Gadarenes, or Judas hanging himself vs falling headlong.

Answer:

How are \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible's claims to be God's Word?

**I Cor. 2:14** "...the things of the Spirit of God...are spiritually discerned."

**John 10:27** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

**The Truthfulness of Scripture: It is impossible for God to lie**

(Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; 2 Sam. 7:28; Num. 23:19)

**Personal Reflection:**

1. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other cults have claimed present-day revelations from God that they count equal to the Bible in authority. What reasons can you give to indicate their claims are false? In practice, do they treat the Bible as an equal authority to these other "revelations?"
2. If you want to persuade someone that the Bible is God's Word, what do you want that person to read more than any other piece of literature?
3. Can you say that what you read in the Bible speaks to you from your Creator in a way that is true of no other book?
4. Do you ever find yourself believing something simply because it is written in Scripture? If you do believe things simply because Scripture says them, what do you think Christ will say to you about this habit when you stand before His judgment seat? Do you think that trusting and obeying everything that Scripture affirms will ever lead you into sin or away from God's blessing in your life?

# How We Got Our Bible

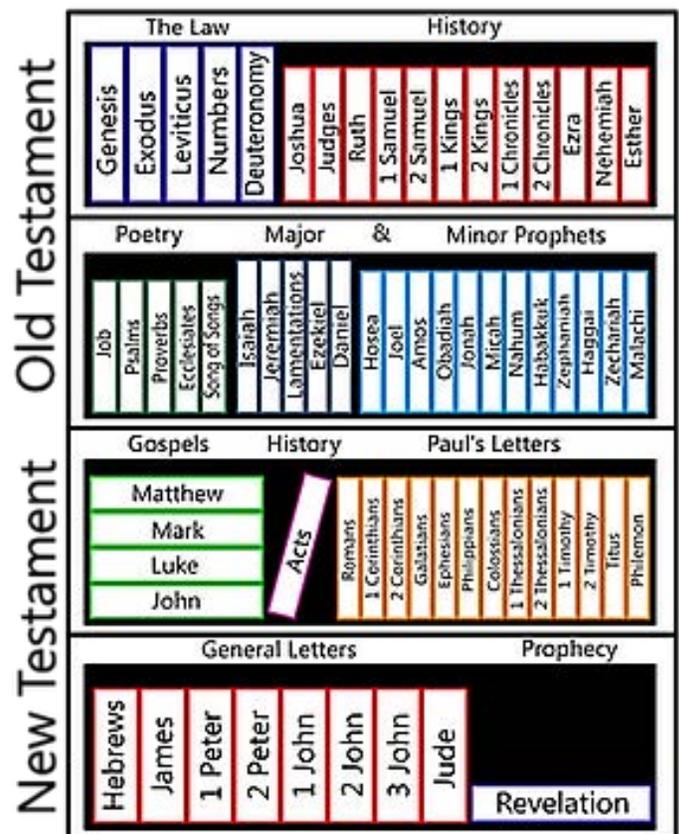
## What Belongs in the Bible and What Does Not Belong

### Questions:

1. Why is it important to your Christian life to know which writings are God's words and which are not?
2. Have you had doubts or questions about the inclusion or exclusion of any of the books of the bible? What caused those questions? What can we do to resolve them?

### Bible Timeline

1. **Genesis – Deuteronomy** (the “Pentateuch” - 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books) (Deut. 31:24-26) by Moses (political leader, trained in Egypt) around 1,400 B.C.
2. **Joshua** = Joshua (military general) (Josh. 24:26); also the last 8 verses of Deuteronomy (34:5-12).
3. **Samuel** = Samuel (I Sam. 10:25)
4. **Psalms** = many by David (1,000 B.C.) (a shepherd, warrior, king, prophet)
5. **Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon**, and compiled **Proverbs** = Solomon (king)
6. **Judges, Ruth, Esther, 2 Samuel**
7. **Kings, Chronicles** = Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Jehu, Isaiah (I Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 20:34; 32:32)
8. **Isaiah, Jeremiah (Lamentations), Ezekiel, Daniel** (prime minister, prophet) (**Major Prophets**)
9. **Hosea – Malachi (12 Minor Prophets** - minor because they are shorter) (Malachi completed about 435 BC)
10. 400 Years Silence! No prophet in Israel from Malachi until John the Baptist
11. **4 Gospels = Matthew** (tax collector), **Mark, Luke, John**
12. **Acts** = Luke (doctor, 2 books with Gospel of Luke)
13. **Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon** = Paul (13 total)
14. **Hebrews** = Unknown – The Holy Spirit (some say Paul or Barnabas)
15. **James** = James (1/2 brother of Jesus)
16. **1, 2, 3 John** = John
17. **Jude** = Jude (1/2 brother of Jesus)
18. **Revelation** = John (5 total with the Gospel of John)



**In what language(s) was the Bible written?**

**How do we know what belongs in the Bible and what does not belong?**

“Neither the church nor councils made any book canonical or authentic; either the book was authentic when it was written or it was not. The church or its councils recognized and verified certain books as the Word of God, and in time they were collected together in what we now call the Bible.” (Ryrie, Basic Theology p.43)

**Canon** = rule, measuring rod (a cane, a reed, a carpenter’s rod, a testing rule or measure)

**The Canon of the Bible is the collection of books which passed a test of authenticity and authority. They are also books that are our rule of life.**

**The Tests for Canonicity**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_

Old Testament writers had to be:

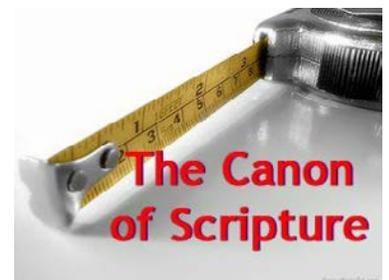
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New Testament writers had to be:

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ within each book that shows it is inspired and authoritative revelation from God.

3. The churches’ \_\_\_\_\_.





**Old Testament Approval:**

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 11:51**

“from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.”

**Luke 24:44**

“Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.””

• \_\_\_\_\_, & \_\_\_\_\_

**New Testament Approval:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> church council to list all 27 books of the N.T. was the Council of Carthage in A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.
- Individual books of the N.T. were acknowledged as Scripture \_\_\_\_\_ they were written (2 Peter 3:16; I Tim. 5:18b), and most were accepted in the era just after the apostles.
- The collection of the 27 books were \_\_\_\_\_ accredited as inspired and authoritative Scripture. “The bible is not an authorized collection of books, but a collection of authorized books” (Gaebelein, Exploring the Bible).

**Challenge!**

How can Christians believe that these 27 books written by fallible men are the Word of God by recognition at a 4<sup>th</sup> century council?

**Answer:**

We can be \_\_\_\_\_ that the final formation of the N.T. canon was such a long and difficult process. They wanted to be absolutely sure these books met the high standards of Scripture.

## Are There Any Books That Got Left Out?

### “The Apocrypha”

- There are \_\_\_\_\_ non-canonical books called the Apocrypha. 1 & 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The Rest of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, The Song of the Three Holy children, the History of Susanna, Bell and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 & Maccabees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ by the Jews or by our Lord on the same level as the O.T. The N.T. quotes the O.T. 295 times, but nothing from the Apocrypha.
- They had historical and geographical inaccuracies, \_\_\_\_\_, and did not have the distinctive elements of Scripture, such as prophetic power.
- Roman Catholic Church vs. Martin Luther:

### The Gnostic Gospels

Writings from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century, after the book of Revelation in 95 A.D. that were never given serious consideration, and have some bizarre writings.

The Gospel of Thomas Saying 114: Simon Peter says to them: "Let Mary go out from our midst, for women are not worthy of life!" Jesus says: "See, I will draw her so as to make her male so that she also may become a living spirit like you males. For every woman who has become male will enter the Kingdom of heaven."

## Should we expect more writings to be added to the canon?

No, there is a \_\_\_\_\_ to the bible we have.

**Heb. 1:1-2** “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds”

**Heb 2:3-4** “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, <sup>4</sup> God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

**Rev. 22:18-19** “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; <sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.”

### Conclusion:

The canon of Scripture today is \_\_\_\_\_ what God wanted it to be, and it will stay that way until Christ returns.

## **More reading on these topics**

*The Allure of Gentleness* by Dallas Willard

*A Reason for God* by Timothy Keller

*Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis

*Cold Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace

*God Breathed: The Undeniable Power and Reliability of Scripture (2015)* by Josh McDowell

*Is The Bible True...Really? (2011)* by Josh McDowell

*When Skeptics Ask (2008 version)* by Norman Geisler

*How We Got the Bible* by Rose Publishing

*How The Bible Came To Us* by Meryl Doney

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem

*Basic Theology* by Charles Ryrie

*www.GodAndNeighbor.net* (Mike Johnson's blog)