

Lost Books?

- Can we be sure the correct texts made it into the Bible?
Several scholars, books and articles, movies and television specials have raised that challenge recently.
- Since God never sent us a specific list of what to include, who exactly decided the Bible should contain the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but not the Gospels of Judas, Tomas and Mary?
- Is there any truth to the charge that a Roman emperor in the fourth century orchestrated the list of books that we have in the Bible?
- Humans are drawn to conspiracy theories, supposed plots by people

Lost Books?

- Scholars promoting the lost books allege during the fourth century that orthodox Christians set or fixed the New Testament canon with the express purpose of snuffing out different points of view.
- They argue that we need to hear “the vibrant conversations that sparked the rise of Christianity.”
- But Christianity did not rise out of conversations among various communities; it arose from God the Holy Spirit as He guided the twelve apostles who were authorized by Jesus Himself.
- When we look at the three rules for canonicity—the rules that governed inclusion in the New Testament—we see they were not arbitrarily chosen; they arose organically out of the authority of the apostles.

Lost Books?

Rule One: Eyewitness and Apostolic Authority:

- Jesus spoke of the divine source of His apostles' authority at the Last Supper the night before He died, **These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 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 that I have said to you (John 14:25-26).**
- Immediately before ascending into heaven 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus told His apostles, **You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)**

Lost Books?

- When we discuss the writing of the New Testament and the formation of the canon, why is it essential not to overlook or omit the guidance of the Holy Spirit? (II Tim 3:16, John 17:17)
- How did the Holy Spirit elevate the apostles' authority above the "vibrant conversations" that were taking place within the various Christian communities?
- What are some of the conversations taking place within Christianity today that challenge the way God's Word has been historically understood?
- Why is it important that we always elevate the apostles' teachings in the New Testament above these conversations?

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Rule Two: Consistent with the Rest of Scripture:

- Many scholars view the biblical texts as nothing more than human opinions. But Peter wrote, “No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).
- Since the author of the sacred Scriptures is none other than the Holy Spirit, any lost writing claiming divine inspiration must be consistent with the rest of the Spirit’s revelation in Holy Scripture.

Lost Books?

- Jesus pointed to the Old Testament's continuity as He spoke with two disciples walking to Emmaus on the afternoon of His resurrection. **Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**
- Many people relegate the Bible to a place on their mental bookshelf equivalent to every other book sitting there. Does recalling the Holy Spirit's inspiration affect the way you view the Bible?
- Some challenge the consistency of the Bible, talking about the supposed contradictions they find in it. How do you deal with passages that appear to contradict one another in the Bible?

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Rule Tree: Use by Early Christian Congregations

- At first glance, this rule may appear to elevate the authority of early Christian congregations above that of the apostles, as though they decided which of the apostles' writings they would use and which they wouldn't.
- But the apostle Paul gave this direction to the Colossians: **When this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea (Colossians 4:16).**
- By doing so, the congregations submitted themselves to apostolic authority and recognized the authenticity of these writings.

Lost Books?

- How does the early, consistent use of landmark national documents like the *Constitution*, the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Bill of Rights*, and the *Gettysburg Address* help authenticate their authorship and their contents?
- In Luke 10:16 Jesus told His disciples, “The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me, and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”
- In John 10 He said, “I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me. ... And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. ...” (John 10: 14, 16a).
- As the early churches read the apostles’ writings, they heard the voice of Jesus their Savior. They were eager to use these Scriptures regularly in their worship. The Holy Spirit works through these same inspired writings to create faith in our hearts as we also recognize Jesus’ voice in the books of the Old and New Testament.
- NO CLASS NEXT WEEK