

- H. The Bible has stood the test of time and has undergone more scrutiny than any other literature. It has also withstood attempts of destruction throughout history.
- I. The purpose of this course is to investigate how the Bible came about, look at different available translations, and become competent with general rules of hermeneutics.

2. How the Bible Was Compiled

- A. The word “*kanon*” is used to describe a collection of books or writings accepted by a group of people as the basis for their beliefs and how they should live and worship. Almost all major religions have their own canon. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. all have their own canons.
- B. The Greek word *kanon* originally signified a “standard” or “measuring rod.” The canon of Scripture is a phrase used to refer to the authoritative Scriptures that are in the Bible. These are books that were measured by a standard of divine inspiration and were judged to be inspired by God and were considered “God-breathed.”
- C. The Bible was originally written in three languages: Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek.
 - 1. Aramaic has been a dead language for centuries. But the portions of the Bible that are written in Aramaic are few and there are extra Biblical sources to corroborate translation. Furthermore, Aramaic is a close cousin to Hebrew.
 - a. Jesus probably spoke Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. He was well versed in the Scriptures and thus knew Hebrew. Because He lived in Palestine He would have been able to communicate in Greek. But Aramaic would have been His heart language.
 - b. The entire Bible was written long before the printing press. The Biblical languages were spoken much more than they were written. Most people could not read or write, so nearly all

- L. In 303 A.D. the Emperor Diocletian ordered the burning of all sacred books. This necessitated a clear definition of the canon.
- M. Several factors influenced the church in recognizing a book as being inspired, authoritative and canonical.
1. It was written by an apostle or someone who was well acquainted with an apostle (they had to be alive at the time of Jesus).
 2. It had to have been widely circulated and accepted by the church.
 3. It had to be accurate and theologically reliable.
 4. It had to be "God-breathed" and inspired. This was verified by the inner witness of the believer and evidenced by the church that lives were being impacted and changed.
 5. It had to stand the test of time.
- N. The list of authoritative New Testament books was finally established by 367 A.D. In a letter from Athanasius, pastor of the church in Alexandria, he lists the same twenty-seven books that are in our New Testament today.
- O. At a council in 397 A.D. church leaders in Carthage declared and affirmed that the twenty-seven books were the canon of the New Testament.

3. The Credibility of the Bible

- A. The Bible is credible because of its preservation. No other book has been preserved for so many years and with such careful attention. It was meticulously copied and handed down from generation to generation with great precision.
1. In 1945 the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered. These were Old Testament documents that dated back to 140 B.C. When compared to

intended. This is usually employed when the recipients have not understood or received the message in other ways (1 Cor 4:8).

- h. Euphemism is an understatement and a way of packaging something so it is more palatable for the hearer. In our culture, we say someone has passed away when they have died. In Jn 11:11 Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus had “fallen asleep.”
5. Understand the difference between parables and allegories. A parable is a story with a spiritual meaning. They are essentially illustrations with a central truth (in parables, words are used literally). An allegory is a story or teaching that is meant to convey a figurative meaning (in allegories, words are used figuratively).
 6. Be cognizant of the law of silence. When God is silent about something, it is important that we do not conclude He is saying the opposite. For example, when Jesus addressed the issue of fasting, he dealt with people’s motives. He did not say what kinds of liquids one should or should not drink (Mt 6:16-18).
 7. Read the Bible for its plain and obvious meaning. God chose to reveal Himself to us through the Scriptures and He want us to understand His message. Don’t read the Word as though there is some cryptic or hidden meaning that only certain people can understand.

7. Bible Translations

- A. God has chosen to reveal Himself through His written Word. He wants to communicate to us and He wants us to understand what He is saying.
- B. Because the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek (with small portions in Aramaic), it is important to remember that there are no perfect translations. But that does not mean that the Bible is full of errors or that people have changed the meaning of the Bible.
- C. Translating from one language to another can be a daunting task. The best translators are those who have mastered both the original language and the one into which he or she is translating. The translator must