



# HOW DID WE GET THE BIBLE?

*Understanding the Journey of God's Word Through History*

Based on *Written and Read – Season 1, Episode 2*

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## INTRODUCTION

When you open your Bible, you see one book.

But inside, there are many—Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Matthew, Romans, Revelation.

That leads to an important question many people quietly wonder:

**How did all of these writings come together into one Bible?**

The answer is not simple, but it is deeply encouraging.

The Bible did not appear all at once as a finished volume. It was written over centuries, copied by hand, preserved across generations, and eventually recognized as the collection of Scripture we hold today.

And this process was not random.

Christians believe that the same God who inspired His Word also preserved it and guided His people in recognizing it.

## THE WRITING OF SCRIPTURE

The story begins with the writing of Scripture itself.

The books of the Bible were written over approximately fifteen hundred years by human authors who were guided by God.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (2 Timothy 3:16)

The word *inspiration* means **God-breathed**.

This means:

- The writers used their own language and style
- But God directed the process so that what they wrote was exactly what He intended

The apostle Peter gives further clarity:

“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Peter 1:21)

So while real people wrote the Bible, the ultimate source is God.

### **What Did They Write On?**

The Bible was not originally written as a modern book.

- The Old Testament was written on **scrolls**
- Materials included **parchment and papyrus**
- These documents were carefully stored and handled

The original writings are called **autographs**.

We no longer possess those originals, but what we do have is something remarkable.

### **COPYING AND PRESERVATION**

If we do not have the original documents, how can we trust the Bible?

The answer lies in how carefully Scripture was copied and preserved.

#### **The Work of Scribes**

For centuries, scribes copied the Scriptures by hand.

This was not casual work. It was treated as sacred responsibility.

Scribes:

- Counted letters and words
- Checked each line carefully
- Verified accuracy multiple times

#### **The Manuscript Evidence**

Today, we have **thousands of biblical manuscripts**.

- Over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament
- Many additional copies in other languages
- Fragments that date very close to the original writings

When these manuscripts are compared, they confirm the text with an extremely high level of accuracy.

Rather than weakening confidence, the number of manuscripts actually strengthens it.

## **God's Promise to Preserve His Word**

Scripture itself speaks about preservation:

“The words of the LORD are pure words... Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psalm 12:6–7)

“The word of our God shall stand for ever.” (Isaiah 40:8)

The preservation of Scripture is not just history. It is a promise.

## RECOGNIZING THE CANON

Another important question is this:

### **Who decided which books belong in the Bible?**

The answer centers on the word **canon**.

### **What Is the Canon?**

The word *canon* means a measuring standard or rule.

It refers to the recognized collection of inspired books.

### **Recognition, Not Creation**

The church did not create Scripture.

The church **recognized** the books that God had already inspired.

This is a key distinction.

### **The Old Testament**

By the time of Jesus, the Old Testament was already recognized as Scripture.

Jesus Himself affirmed those writings.

### **The New Testament**

As the apostles wrote and their writings circulated, believers recognized their authority.

They looked for:

- Apostolic connection
- Consistency with Christ's teaching
- Widespread acceptance among churches
- Clear evidence of divine authority

This was not a matter of preference. It was recognition.

## CHURCH COUNCILS AND CLARIFICATION

Some people believe the Bible was decided by church councils.

That is not accurate.

Church councils did not create the canon. They confirmed what had already been widely accepted.

By the fourth century, the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were already recognized across the Christian world.

The councils simply affirmed that shared understanding.

## THE BIG PICTURE

When you step back, the process becomes clear:

- **Inspiration** – God revealed His Word through human authors
- **Writing** – Scripture was recorded in real historical settings
- **Preservation** – Copies were carefully made and protected
- **Recognition** – God’s people identified the books that were truly Scripture

This was not random.

God was at work in every part of the process.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Understanding how we got the Bible changes how we view it.

When someone says, “We don’t have the originals, so how can we trust it?”

The answer is simple:

We may not have the original manuscripts, but we have **thousands of carefully preserved copies** that allow us to know the text with remarkable accuracy.

When you open your Bible today, you are not reading a corrupted document.

You are reading **the preserved Word of God**.

## CONCLUSION

The Bible we hold today is the result of a long and careful process.

It was:

- Written under divine inspiration
- Preserved through history

- Recognized by God's people

And that should give us confidence.

The Bible we read today faithfully represents what God revealed.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

This leads to another important question:

**Why are there sixty-six books in the Bible?**

That is where we will go next.