

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 15
Review and Issues of Canonicity

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Okay, let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your wonderful word, thank you for the Bible. Thank You, Lord that here is all the direction we need. Your word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Thank You for the freedom we have to learn about You and to preach Your word. And I pray that You will give us wisdom about how to draw people's hearts toward You. May our nation never forget that Your gracious hand has made all this possible. You told us when we are blessed, when we have eaten and are full that we will never forget what the Lord has done. We pray, Lord for our country's financial crisis. That the leaders might turn their hearts to You. Thank You for this class, in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are talking about the difficulties in inspiration. We were talking about variant reports. Variant reports are normally looked at in the gospels. Especially in Matthew, Mark, and Luke which are called the synoptic gospels. And I did not give you this fact last time, but I would like you to make a note of it. Approximately ninety-three percent of the material in John is not found in Matthew, Mark or Luke. In addition to the resurrection, the feeding of the 5,000 is mentioned in all four gospels.

Remember that these gospel writers are giving us a picture of Jesus' ministry which could have been as much as four years, perhaps three and half is better. And they could have had books three and four times their size. How do we know that? We know that from the statement in [John 21:25](#).

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

It would be impossible to record all the things that Jesus did. And I point that out because so many people when they look at the problem of variant reports, they act like Jesus only did something or said something on one occasion. And therefore there are three different views of it. The longer I have studied this matter, the more I have become convinced that they were spoken on many different occasions.

One of the major variant reports is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and Luke. People try to make a lot of that, but again if you realize that Jesus said things on different occasions, He didn't say them in exactly the same way. But there really isn't any variant report there. There is additional information in Matthew, so apparently the sermon that He delivered there was longer than the words that Luke heard on his occasion.

Sometimes when people are talking about variant reports, they haven't looked carefully at the background. For instance, in the context it may be that on one occasion He's in the wilderness, or out by a desert place. Or the other time it might be that He went up to a mountain, or one is in Northern Galilee and the other is in Judea. This is a very critical thing.

Just one example: some say that the supper He had in [Luke 7:36](#) is identical to the supper in [John 12:2](#). Now if you say that, then you've got a problem of variant reports. Let me just show you how people do this. In Luke 7, He was at the home of a Pharisee named Simon and a woman came in to wash His feet with her hair and tears. In John 12, He's at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, or presumably so, since Martha serves there and Lazarus is there. Some say that that very meeting, that supper was a celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus. But I simply point out that if you think they are the same story because of one detail—the woman who comes in from the street—if you think that is the same, then you have to go to all kinds of contortions to solve the problem. So many people have argued that the actual dinner in John 12, though in the town of Bethany, was hosted by Simon the Pharisee. But under this view, you have no proof that Simon the Pharisee ever lived in Bethany.

So that's what I'm trying to say is with variant reports, people push these things to a point that they act like it's the same story. And I don't believe that at all. I believe those are two different stories with two different impacts by the way, two different conclusions. They were in two different locations and two different times.

Be careful about concluding that each thing you read that looks similar in the gospels is somehow the same event. Background will often show you that it's not the same event. That's like the blind men that are healed. One blind man in one case ([Mark 10:46-47](#) and [Luke 18:35](#)), two blind men in the other ([Matthew 20:29-30](#)) and Jericho is mentioned [in each passage]. But as we know now in archaeology there are two Jerichos, there was old and new. So the actual details of Him leaving the city versus entering the city is exactly correct if you know the old and the new Jericho. But if you don't know that, it looks like an apparent contradiction—a variant report.

Now the next one that we're talking about is closely related to a variant report, and that's contradictory statements. It's a little different than variant reporting. This is what people believe is a direct, provable contradiction. Now, here's what I do and you'll have to do the same. And by the way, books like Gleason-Archer, the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, normally they will give you some insight into these supposed contradictions, most of them are listed in there.

But here's what you need to ask. First of all, is the passage in the original text or confirmed by manuscript evidence? Now what I have found is that, that question has become a very unimportant one, even though I still ask it. It is largely fostered by those who don't believe certain passages are in the Greek text. The woman taken in adultery, [John 8:1-11](#). The last few verses of Mark 16, which they say are not in a majority of the manuscripts. Yet I think there's no question the evidence points to Mark being included.

Some people use the discipleship passages to prove other contradictions. A disciple, *mathētēs*, is a simple learner. If you would see a rabbi, with a bunch of kids running around after

him and listening to his every word, they are called his disciples. They may or may not believe what he says. They are just listening to him. You may not believe all that you are hearing, but you are at least required to listen. So you are my disciples, at least in this sense of the class. But whether you are true believers in all that I'm saying, that's another question. And sorry for the inadequate comparison to our Lord, I don't mean anything by it except to illustrate that discipleship does not mean that you are a believer in Jesus Christ. That has been often held. And so some people use the discipleship passages to prove other contradictions.

An example is that you have to be a disciple under the terms of discipleship in order to prove you are born again. So therefore, salvation is something more than by faith. This led people to talk about lordship salvation. That somehow there's a difference between believing in Jesus Christ as your lord and following Him as your lord. Now you can follow Him and not be saved, which almost seems like an incredulous thought to us. But you could follow, hang around with Him, travel in the same caravan, hear all of His teaching, ask Him questions, all of that, and never be born again.

So you see when people say contradictory statements, you've got to know what's behind that. And in this case, is the passage in the original text? And the answer is, yes! It does belong in the original text, but some people try to get out of the contradiction by it not being in the text.

Now, there are other reasons why they'd leave out Mark 16. Or they'd say it is a contradictory statement. And that is the statement Jesus made about "these signs will follow those that believe" ([Mark 16:17](#)). One of them says "they will take up snakes and drink deadly poison." It's not just speaking in new tongues. And I don't know if you are into snake handling and poison drinking to prove your great faith in the Lord, but there are actually people, religious groups, who actually believe that. They believe that passage. Then someone comes along to them and says, "Well, it's not in the original text." Then they lose their confidence in the Lord and all of that.

Well, it is in the original text and Jesus really did say that. The question is: does that passage refer to all of us today? Or does it refer to the apostles? That's a very important issue.

Now did any of the apostles happen to have a poisonous snake bite them? Yes, Paul did in Acts. So you see we need to just back up a moment. When you're looking at supposed contradictory statements you've got to ask: Is the passage there in the original text? Is it confirmed by the manuscript evidence? And we haven't even talked about that in this class yet, but we are going to. And that is a serious subject.

A second question is: Is the translation absolutely correct? Many times the translation is quoting Old Testament Hebrew. It's a quotation of that. Or it might be quoting the Greek translation of an Old Testament passage and it may not quite have it. There are rare exceptions, but there are some where the English itself is not accurate. The more you learn about Jewish things, the more aware you are that not everything clearly represents what's actually said. Sometimes a contradictory statement is intended.

For example, "Which is easier for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God or for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?" (cf. [Mark 10:25](#)). Now, to show you how people have trouble with that, pastors are still parroting this illustration. They say that in the door of the sheep gate there was a little smaller door through which you had to really push. It would be very difficult, but you could get a camel through there, but mostly it was for sheep and goats. But you just push and shove and kick and squeeze, but finally you could get him in. The point is that it's difficult to get in, but rich men can get in. You know all that struggle to try to help everybody understand the Bible is not helpful. The word needle means needle. We're talking a weaver's needle. The point is that Jesus Himself used a contradictory statement to show you that without God it won't happen. In other words, no one, not somebody pushing a camel through a little tiny door, but no one, no rich man, no one can possibly get into heaven without the Lord! It's an impossibility! So

Jesus used it in a figure of speech in an unbelievable, fascinating way in terms of what we call contradictory speech.

But we have that in the Bible; we have hyperboles also in the Bible—exaggerations for effect. They couldn't happen, but it's a figure of speech. Now later in our course before we're done, we're going to show you those things. I think some of you are really going to have your eyes open to how we really read the Bible. How do we interpret the Bible? Many times when you're dealing with somebody about contradictory statements, there's more to that issue than meets the eye. And you have to deal with that. Is the interpretation the only possible one? And is our present knowledge final? In the case of the two Jerichos it wasn't final until archaeological evidence showed it.

When I was in graduate school they announced to us that the first known contradiction in the Bible that's provable was discovered. The Assyrian obelisk stone, it's an eight-sided stone, it sits in front of the Assyrian room in the Oriental Institute of Chicago. I was so disturbed, I went to see it. And it has a list of all the Assyrian kings except Sargon and the Bible mentions Sargon. He was a great leader, a great conqueror. And so people announced that here's a known contradiction. We got the Assyrian list of kings. Sargon's name is not on it, there's nothing close to it. Everybody's panicking, writing articles and everything else. But some dear guys working over in Iraq in an excavation, actually uncovered Sargon's entire palace and his name was engraved in every brick! We even found out why his name was off the list. Because the guy following him was so upset at all the prominence he had, he decided to wipeout every vesture of his name so that people would never remember him. So he took him off the list of kings, trying to make people believe he never even existed. Kind of like a lot of people do with the Holocaust under Hitler, try to act like it never happened.

So you understand that when you are dealing with these contradictory statements, ask yourself: "Is our present knowledge final?" Often archaeology, often the things that we have

discovered have proven the validity of the Bible. They did the same thing with the city of Hazor. They said, "Why does the Bible mention such a great city and then Joshua attacked it? If the Bible was true, we'd have evidence of it." Well, in your time and mine, they have uncovered all of Hazor. It is now a tourist site and they now know the Bible is exactly correct for what it said.

So you see, what archaeology does is it just causes us to catch up with the Bible. I would suggest you'd be a lot happier if you'd just believe the Bible to start with.

I don't believe unscientific expression is a problem, but every now and then it comes up. The reason why I mention this is that sometimes it doesn't come up from unbelievers, it comes up from Christians who are trying to make a big deal over these statements that appear to be unscientific. They're going all over the place trying to figure out where the ends of the earth are—probably magnetic poles—to try to prove their point. And class, it's totally unnecessary! Remember that in the Bible we have common people's vocabulary. And they use expressions. We do that. It's a hyperbole.

I would expect to see this definition of inerrancy if I were you: "The Bible is without error in its original autographs, accurately reporting all matters which are written in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments."

Why don't you just say that the Bible is without error in the original autographs and end it? Or why don't you just say the Bible is without error? Because it doesn't say all that needs to be said. What do you mean by the Bible? Some groups add the Apocrypha. Some groups add the Book of Mormon and so forth.

One of the most important words in that statement is original autographs. Why?—because we don't have them. Well then how do you know it's without error in the original autographs? Isn't that an interesting question? We're going to be dealing with all of this in terms of both canonicity and manuscript evidence. And when we talk about the Bible being without

error in its original autographs, we're up against it with a lot of people today in the Christian world. For example, there's a group called King James Only.

Now I happen to be a King James man, which I think you've fairly well concluded. I like the King James, but I'm not in the camp of King James Only. They actually teach, class, that inerrancy applies to the King James Bible. It applies to English. Now, if I was speaking another language from another culture, I would be offended. What do you mean? English is the language? Their answer is "Ninety-four percent of the world speaks English." Now I've never been able to evaluate that statistic. I just know there are a lot of people who don't. My personal opinion is that statistic is incorrect. And it's basically used by people who speak English. Why do they say that ninety-four percent of the world speaks English? It's because ninety-four percent of the entire population of the world lives in a country or a culture who has adopted English, at least as its second language.

Now you and I both know that when we go to school not everybody learns a [secondary] language. We both know also that not everybody goes to school, especially in third world countries. In my opinion this is overstating the case and will develop an arrogant prideful attitude about English. There are still languages and dialects in the world that have yet to receive one verse of Scripture in their own tongue. Be careful what you argue, class. Be careful what you say to people.

The Bible is without error in the original autographs but we don't have those, so how can we even know that it is without error in the original autographs? When we talk about inerrancy, we mean not that there aren't lies in the Bible. There are lies in the Bible. The devil, when he speaks, he usually lies. When men speak they are often lies, but they are accurately reported. That is the issue of inspiration and you add to that "without error." So you see, both of them have to go together. Some people say to me, "Why don't you just believe in the inspiration of the Bible? Why do you add inerrancy?" Because inspiration is stripped of its meaning if there is no

inerrancy. Inerrancy means there isn't any error. So if it's inspired, the writing, it means it's totally reliable. It's accurately reported. But if it has error in it then it can't be said to be accurately reported. Do you understand?

I don't know how many people have told me, just well-meaning Christians, "Why are you guys pushing this inerrancy thing? We have normally, you know, all of us have believed in inspiration. All Christians say the Bible is inspired, that's our unity. Why say it's without error?" Because there is no inspiration if it's not without error! That's why we had a few years ago what was called the Counsel on Inerrancy, which brought together leading pastors and theologians all over the United States and the world to discuss this issue. And it is a very important one.

The watershed of Christianity, if you'd put it that way, or the bottom line in this generation is the Bible itself. That is the battle. There have been many books written on the battle for the Bible, on inerrancy and all this and rightly so. Why? Because it is being undermined and Satan's behind it! And if they accomplish the goal to undermine people's confidence in the Bible, as the authoritative, inspired inerrant word of God, then we will eventually see Christianity crumble.

I am a very difficult person to talk to if you do not believe that the Bible is the word of God. I'm sorry; this is not a light issue class. I don't want to inflate the importance of this class, but it's one of the most important classes you can sit in because it really is a foundation behind everything else. You take a course in Isaiah or Daniel or something and you are reading through. I want to ask the question, wait a minute, do you believe that is without error and totally inspired of God? If you don't, it's undermining everything that's being said. This is a fundamental issue.

And so, I do want you to understand that it is not only without error in the original autographs, but it is accurately reporting whatever is said. If it's a lie it is accurately reported, that is what was said. There's no freedom here of private interpretation. The Bible says exactly the

opposite, "That no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" (cf. [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)). So this is a very, very critical issue.

And connected to this issue are two main issues. One is what we call canonicity that we're going to talk about now. How do you know that you've got all the books that belong in the Bible? And how do you know the ones you have here are supposed to be there? That is canonicity. Manuscript evidence, of course, deals with the text. How do you know what the original autographs are? And again, I do not believe the King James Version is the issue of inerrancy. I believe it is an excellent translation into English of the Greek text, the *Textus Receptus* that was received by the churches. But that isn't the original autograph. The original autograph was in Greek with some Aramaic Hebraisms also, and in Hebrew in the Old Testament with some Aramaic. So we need to look at this very carefully.

First of all, the meaning of canon, I will expect you to know this. Canon, it is a rule; it is a standard, by which something is measured. Now the usage of the word canon, which is a Greek word, appears in four passages: [2 Corinthians 10:13](#), [15](#), [16](#), and [Galatians 6:16](#). Some translations translate that "rule" or "line of things." Now it was first used in history by Athanasius. Athanasius was the advocate [who held] that the Bible teaches the tri-unity of God. He was the one who pushed [1 John 5:7](#) being in the Bible. Arius believed that this was not correct. [He believed] that the unity of God. God is one, therefore Jesus is not God; He is the Son of God. And that was a big controversy!

But Athanasius was the first one to use the term "canon" and here's what he said: "It refers to the authoritative and inspired writings that are collected." The term "canon" was used first by Athanasius in 367 A.D., to refer to the collection of authoritative and inspired writings.

Now the Old Testament canon (that is how we know what books belong in the Old Testament) was evaluated in a tremendous council meeting by men who were called the *Boulema*, a Greek word for council—BOULEMA. You know in Israel in the first century, we had the

Sanhedrin. You read about that in the gospels, Caiaphas, Annas, the Sanhedrin. Class, I hope you understand this. The Sanhedrin is a Roman puppet government. It is not something the Jews established. The priesthood was corrupt and [they] were treacherous betrayers to the people.

But there was a godly group of men who were loyal to the Bible. And they called themselves the *Boulema*. They were like Orthodox Rabbinical scholars who paid attention to the preservation of God's word. Seventy years after the destruction of Jerusalem, they immediately saw the need for their own survival protection and distinctness in God's plan, or uniqueness. They had a council at Jamnia. It went on for a long time. They evaluated every single book of the Old Testament and actually had some serious questions. For instance, the Song of Solomon because of its sensuality, they wondered if it should be included; Ecclesiastes because it seems so secular; Esther because it didn't mention the name of God. But all of those were eventually included on the basis of evidence that we're going to talk about.

Considerations for Canonicity

LANGUAGE:

Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic?

AUTHORSHIP:

Prophet or Apostle?

INSPIRATION:

Evidence: Divine, Human, Archaeological & Historic?

ACCEPTANCE:

Circulated, Read, Evaluated & Discussed?

COMPLETION:

Theological, Logical, Factual, Experiential & Biblical?

When you talk about canonicity, we have listed for you five issues. What determines the canon, or how many books are truly authoritative and inspired, and come from the Lord, are the following five things: Language, Authorship, Inspiration, Acceptance, and Completion...whether it's done or whether there is indication in the books you have that more is coming.

Now, let's take a look at language, class, these are just basic facts. But I expect you to know some of these that you are able to adequately explain to people. The Old Testament, in Hebrew has twenty-two books. I think I have mentioned this many times. Jews call it the Tanach. T-A-N-A-C-H. "CH" has a hard sound like "K." Tanach. Now they are the exact same materials as the thirty-nine books in the English Bible. But here's what I want you to watch out for. The verse numberings in your Protestant Bible do not always match the verse numberings in a Hebrew Bible. So, you have to be careful. In fact, in Proverbs some whole sections are reversed and turned around. So it's something to understand. But you have the same content. It's organized differently. Like Jeremiah and Lamentations being one book and Chronicles and Kings and Samuel are not divided up like we do in the English Bible.

Also, understand that the Aramaic, which is a form or a derivation of Hebrew. Aramaic is in Ezra and in Daniel. And it was the court and trade language of ancient Babylon and Persia.

Now the New Testament contains twenty-seven books in Greek with frequent expressions from Aramaic. And more people today are saying that they are Hebrew, not Aramaic. But Aramaic was the language spoken by Jews in Israel during the first century A.D. Although class, recent discoveries are proving maybe more than we ever understood that Hebrew was spoken by the Jews in Israel first century. Now, what would be the reason for this mix-up? Well first of all, Aramaic was spoken by all those who came from the captivity of Babylon. They learned the court language, they learned Aramaic; it was the trade language. They brought it into Israel. But do you remember in Philippians 3, when Paul was listing his pedigree? He said he was

a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Remember that? Now what that means is that he spoke Hebrew and he was therefore not what the common people were speaking.

Apparently the common people were speaking a little mixture of Aramaic and Greek. Greek was forced on them, since Alexander the Great through the Roman Empire, they spoke Greek. It was the international language. That is why you have in the Bible the term Hellenist, which sometimes people confuse for the word Gentile. But it doesn't refer to Gentile. Hellenist refers to somebody who speaks Greek and has been influenced by Greek culture. Do you remember in Acts 7 when they selected seven men of honest report to handle the distribution of funds to the widows? The problem was that the Hellenistic widows were being neglected. Now that wasn't a simple oversight. It's just that a lot of Jews when you don't follow strong Hebrew and Orthodox teaching, they put you outside the camp of Israel.

I received a form letter that had been made up in paper by the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America. This Orthodox Rabbinical Council sent me a paper to tell me that Zionism is not Judaism. Zionism refers to the movement to return people to the land of Israel. They literally do not recognize Israel and do not believe they are true Jews. These are Orthodox rabbis. Figure that one out!

You see the same thing was there in the New Testament. They believe Israel has adapted itself to the secularism of our world and its culture and they are not following what God said. The article is interesting. I was fascinated by it!

They said, "We will not get this land until the Messiah comes."

Actually that's true.

They said, "We should not build the temple until the Messiah builds it."

And that's true also. But we know in the Bible, don't we, that Israel will build the temple in the Tribulation. And we also know in the Bible that Israel will in unbelief become inhabitants of Jerusalem. So see the Orthodox rabbis have not been listening that carefully. If they heard me

carefully they would understand that I never said that they had come to believe in the Messiah. What I said was that they are a fulfillment of Bible prophesy because they are there exactly like the Bible said, "inhabiting Jerusalem, they are there waiting for the Messiah to come whom they will look on the one they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son" (cf. [Zechariah 12:10](#)). So you see there is some truth to what they said; there is also some error, but the big message that comes out is not all Jews are real Jews. And of course, it just delights me to be able to communicate with them that a very Orthodox Hebrew of the Hebrews wrote long ago that "A Jew is not one who is one outwardly, but is one who is one inwardly. That circumcision is not in the flesh but is in the heart" (cf. [Romans 2:28-29](#)). Of course that will not be well received by them.

But needless to say class, what we have in the New Testament about Hellenistic Jews being neglected, what's new under the sun? The problem would be no different today. So, we need to understand that Aramaic was what common people were speaking. They had brought it from Babylon, also Greek. But that Hebrew was still being spoken and especially by those who want to be committed to what God taught in His word. They wanted to be committed to the word, so they had a tendency to show their opposition to the Roman Empire by refusing to learn either Aramaic or Greek. This is all very interesting, as it relates to what the Bible is. For God put the Bible not only in the language of all of those who were faithful to the word of God, the Old Testament Tanach; but He also put it in the language of all the people of the world so they could hear the wonderful good news of Christ. And this New Testament in Greek quotes voluminously from the Hebrew Old Testament. So God sort of sealed the whole thing up.

Let's take a look at authorship and then we'll take a break. The second issue of canonicity is not only language. If I handed you a book that was in Arabic and I said, "This belongs in the canon of the Bible." You see, on the basis of the principles of canonicity that they use, it would never be accepted. Why? It's in the wrong language. If I hand you a book and say,

"You know, this is in the Songo language of Central Africa and it's definitely one of the original books of the Bible." I'm sorry. It's in the wrong language. But class, can't you see how troublesome this would be if we presented to you twelve books, all from the first century, all written in Greek and said they belong in the New Testament? So you see language isn't the only issue. We've got to keep moving. That's just one thing.

We do have to talk about authorship. What do we mean by that? Well, we're trying to determine what books belong in the Bible. Well to be part of the canon, the book has to be written by a recognized prophet or apostle. You say where did you learn that? In the Bible itself! Turn to [Ephesians 2:20](#). Ephesians was written by whom? Paul was a crucial element in determining canonicity. Why? Because not only the scholarship, but he's well known in history. There is no doubt; nobody can fight the influence of the apostle Paul. So therefore what Paul says about these matters is very important, since he himself claimed to have direct revelation from Christ in [Galatians 1:1](#).

In [Ephesians 2:20](#) he said that "This church, household of God, is built upon the foundation of *the* apostles and prophets" (cf. [Ephesians 2:20](#)). Now the definite article in front of apostles specifies it, among all the rest of the apostles. Are there apostles who did not write Scripture? Yes. Timothy, Silvanus, Epaphroditus, Epaphrus, Titus, Andronicus, Junius, none of them wrote Scripture; yet they are all called apostles. So it is *the* apostles. Notice he does not repeat the definite article in front of the word prophet. This is an elementary rule of Greek grammar, which says that when two nouns are connected by "and," and the definite article "the" is in front of the first noun but not the second, it connects equals. In other words, there is something about apostles and prophets that makes them equal. It is a particular group of them. Now, in case you missed this and didn't pick up on it, he specifically deals with it in chapter three as he continues on his discussion.

[Ephesians 3:3-5](#),

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his [what is it now?] holy apostles and prophets....

Once again, the definite article is there, though not indicated because there is an adjective, holy. And once again it is the same construction as [Ephesians 2:20](#). Why did he put the word holy there?—because all these men were sinless? No. The word holy means to set apart. The point is in [Ephesians 2:20-22](#), you know, is that there are only certain apostles and prophets that are the foundation of the church. So don't let anybody tell you that any old apostle could be. No, there are only certain ones who are the foundation. And in [Ephesians 3:5](#), we learn that these certain ones also had a specific task that made them that foundation. They were set apart for the communication of this revelation. Is everybody with me? I hope you did not miss that. Therefore, the early church demanded proof that a true apostle and prophet was the author of the book. It became one of the most serious issues of canonicity because many of the books were not written by a true prophet.

Now, how do you know who a true prophet is? You have to go back and examine like in Deuteronomy 18 or Deuteronomy 13. If he ever predicts something and it doesn't come true, you know he's not a true prophet. Now the reason why I'm telling you this is specific books called *The Lost Books of the New Testament*, which have been printed to kind of make us all think there are other books, in fact have authors who in the early centuries were predicting things, prophesying things that were ludicrous and never came true.

Now let me ask you a question. What about Joseph Smith? How do I know that these books do not belong in the Bible? Some people use the argument, "Well, we have a complete and

final revelation from God.” That is one of the arguments, but it isn’t the only argument. Is Joseph Smith a true prophet? I can give you one thing alone that tells me whether or not he’s a true prophet. He said there were “people on the moon.” Flat out, I don’t care how many Mormons respect him; he’s not a true prophet of God.

By the way, if they’re involved in more than one wife, they also go off our list. Did Joseph Smith have more than one wife? Did you know that the beautiful film they have in the temple in Salt Lake City tells the story of Joseph Smith. But you talk about a smooth lie! Joseph Smith is presented as having only one wife. Mormons aren’t dumb.

You see, there are many basis, when we look at how early church leaders and people examine whether a book is truly from God. How do we know? One of the most important is authorship because of [Ephesians 2:20](#) and [Ephesians 3:5](#). Now you’ve got a specific that you can deal with people on.

And now you need a break.