

Introduction

Satan knows the power of the Word, so he attacks it. LAST WEEK: inspiration . . .

Why are some books in the Bible, while others were excluded?

- Why does the Catholic Bible have a whole extra section? What about books like the Gospel of Thomas (NEW AGE)?
- Was it just the books that were oldest that got gradually revered? No, because some were accepted immediately (while still new), while others were very old but never accepted.
- Was the canon determined by councils of men (Jamnia, Hippo) or was it determined generation by generation through acceptance of inspired writings?
Was it something decided by men at councils (Modern theory states that the canon of the Old Testament was determined by the council of Jamnia (90 AD) and was therefore determined by a group of Jewish rabbis. Our evidence will show, on the contrary, that the canon was known and immediately recognized as scripture as it developed in each generation. We know for a fact that some books were disputed for periods of time. Was it majority vote that weeded out dozens of other books (as the Jesus Seminar participants voted to weed most of the gospels' statements by Jesus)? Was it a matter of political maneuvering, getting enough supporters for certain factions' causes? In this case, people are deciding what books made it into the Bible. Are the postmodernists right, that the books in the Bible reflect the ideology of the "winners?"

Unless we are able to answer the above kinds of questions, our confidence in the Word may erode, and we won't be able to answer those who raise these questions (1 Pet. 3:15). If Satan introduces doubt regarding the integrity of the canon, he dilutes and corrupts the authority of God's truth. This is what is at stake in the subject of canonicity.

"Canon" comes from both a Hebrew word and a Greek word that denotes a "measuring rod" or ruler. *Canonicity is the study of the recognition and acceptance of the books given by God's inspiration.*

This is the first thing we need to understand. The criterion of canonicity is inspiration. "God gives divine authority to a book and men of God receive it. God reveals and His people recognize what He reveals. Canonicity is determined by God and discovered by man." (Norman Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Man: How We Got Our Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), Page 66.) Let's see how this process occurred in the Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament

Modern liberal theory states that the canon of the Old Testament was gradually recognized in a series of three steps:

- The Pentateuch accepted as scripture by 400 BC (1000 years after Moses wrote it. JEDP critics claim it is a collection of various sources compiled by redactors (editors). They deny Mosaic authorship.)
- The Prophets by 200 BC, and
- The Writings not accepted until the Council of Jamnia, in 90 AD.

Our evidence will show, on the contrary, that the canon was known and immediately recognized as scripture as it developed in each generation.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE CANON

The criteria used to determine whether a book was part of the canon of the Old Testament was *prophetic authorship*. During Old Testament times, God inspired the prophets as his official spokesmen. An inspired prophet could be identified using the two prescribed tests for prophets in Deuteronomy. The context is that they are about to go into the Promised Land and Moses will not be with them. They are not to appeal to diviners, sorcerers, etc. (Deut. 18:9-12) for direction. Rather, vs 15,18 imply that God would raise up a succession of prophets through which he would speak to Israel (Jer. 7:25). He did this for about 1000 years, from Moses (1400 BC) to Malachi (400 BC).

How would they know who God's spokesmen would be?

Test #1 for Prophetic Authorship

Accurate short-range predictions.

Deut. 18:18-22 "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about

that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

Deuteronomy 18:15-22 requires that prophets validate their claims by giving short-range, detailed predictions (implied in v. 22). The penalty for any inaccuracy in these predictions was death. Many subsequent passages show that the Israelites applied this test (1 Samuel 3:19,20; Ezek. 33:33; Jeremiah 28:7-9; Jeremiah 44:29,30).

1 Sam. 3:19,20 Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

Jeremiah 28:9 9 "The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the LORD has truly sent."

Ezekiel 33:33 "So when it comes to pass— as surely it will— then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst."

Test #2 for Prophetic Authorship

Content agrees with previous revelation.

Deut. 13:1-5 "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you."

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 states that in addition to accurate prediction of future events, prophets' theological and ethical teaching must also agree with what God revealed through Moses. Because God safeguarded his revelation through these two tests, God held the Israelites culpable for following false prophets and their gods (see Isaiah 41:21-29; 44:24-28; 45:20,21; 46:5-11; 48:1-8).

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR PROPHETIC AUTHORSHIP OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

1. Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Exodus 17:14; 24:4-7; 34:27; Deuteronomy 31:9,22,24; Ezra 7:6; Psalm 103:7; Joshua 8:31, 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3).
2. The Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel), except for Daniel, identify themselves as prophets. They stated that they were ordered to write (Jeremiah 30:2; Ezekiel 43:11; Isaiah 8:1) because they were aware that they were communicating revelation. This would account for the books by their names plus Lamentations (by Jeremiah).
3. All of the 12 Minor Prophets identify themselves as prophets.
4. 1st and 2nd Samuel, and 1st and 2nd Kings were written by prophets (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 20:34; 32:32; 33:19).
5. Joshua (Joshua 1:1; 5:13-15), Solomon (1 Kings 3:5ff.), and Daniel (Daniel 7:1) all received revelation from God, either directly or through dreams and visions, which squares with God's description of a prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1; Numbers 12:6-8). Joshua was the first fulfillment of Deut. 18:15—God's promise to raise up another prophet after Moses. This accounts for Joshua, Daniel, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

6. David and Asaph, the two main authors of the Psalms, are identified as prophets in Nehemiah 12:24,36 ("David the man of God") and 2 Chronicles 29:30 ("Asaph the seer").

Therefore, only Judges, Ruth, Chronicles, Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther lack internal evidence for prophetic authorship. This represents less than one-sixth of the Old Testament. *But since Israel used prophetic authorship as the determining principle of their canon, we are safe in assuming Israel included these books because they ascertained their prophetic authorship.* (See "EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE" for more on this.)

NOTE: Contrary to the "antiquity theory,"

- The prophets' writings were accepted immediately as scripture. Joshua received Moses' writing as scripture (Joshua 1:7,8; 8:32). Isaiah and Micah accepted each other's writings as scripture contemporaneously (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4). **Daniel accepted the book of Jeremiah as scripture (Daniel 9:2-Jer. 25:11)**. Jeremiah wrote 627-585 B.C. and Daniel was around 537 B.C.
- Other ancient writings were not accepted as canon. The OT authors were aware of other ancient writings such as the Book of Jasher (2 Samuel 1:18, Joshua 10:13) and the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14). These books were important old documents.
- "The book of Daniel, which critics have said was written as late as 165 BC was received as authoritative by 110 BC, but a book like Ecclesiasticus, similar in subject matter and also written in Hebrew, and dated about 180 BC was not accepted into the Hebrew canon." (Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, p. 154. 155)

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE FOR OLD TESTAMENT CANONICITY

1. Jesus and the Apostles evidently had the same Old Testament we have today. They quote from it over 600 times, and clearly view it as God's Word.
2. They also quote 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Job—books which lack internal Old Testament confirmation of prophetic authorship (see above).
3. They explicitly confirm the prophetic authorship of David (Acts 2:30) and Daniel (Matthew 24:15).
4. The only books not quoted in the NT are Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR PROPHETIC AUTHORSHIP OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS): Discovered in 1947, the DSS contained writings dated largely from the first and second centuries BC. They contain entire scrolls or portions of virtually every Old Testament book, except the book of Esther (R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1969, p. 139). They also contain writings that reflect this Jewish community's view of the Old Testament. It is clear that the DSS community recognized the same Old Testament canon we recognize.

- The Manual of Discipline and Zadokite Fragments quote from Isaiah, Deuteronomy, Numbers, Leviticus, and Proverbs with the formula "It is written." Zadokite uses the formula "God said" for Isaiah, Malachi, Amos, Zechariah, Hosea, Deuteronomy, Numbers and Micah. The Commentary on Habakkuk indicates that Habakkuk was considered to be inspired.
- The apocryphal books (more on this later) are quoted also, but never with one of the above formulae (more on the Apocrypha below).

Conclusion: Long before the Council of Jamnia in 90 AD, the Dead Sea Scrolls quoted from all three divisions as scripture and refer to all three as "the Law and the Prophets" or "Moses and the Prophets." The fact that they referred to all of the non-Pentateuchal books as "the prophets" is additional evidence that they had ascertained prophetic authorship of these books.

Josephus: Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote twenty years before Jamnia and over 300 years before the Talmud's Tractate *Baba Bathra* which is used to support the liberal three-stage

development theory. Josephus also had the actual Temple scrolls in his possession as a gift from the Roman general Titus. Josephus should therefore be considered more authoritative than the Talmud regarding the first century view of the canon. Josephus' Old Testament was identical to our own.

- He says there were 22 books in the canon of the Old Testament (5 books of Moses, 13 Prophets, and 4 Writings). This corresponds to our 39 books. He recognized Jeremiah and Lamentations as one book, as he also did Judges and Ruth, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, and Ezra and Nehemiah. The 12 Minor Prophets were also recognized as one book, called "The Book of the Twelve."

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind until his death. This interval of time is little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets." (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion* 1:8)

- The point: At 70 A.D. the Jews had the same OT as we do today.
- Josephus also indicates that there was an unbroken succession of prophets from Moses to Malachi, and that the histories written since Malachi were not inspired, because there had been no succession of prophets since the time of Malachi.

The Apocrypha

The Apocrypha is a collection of writings included in the Roman Catholic Bible which were composed by Jewish authors in the intertestamental period (200 BC to 50 BC). It contains both historical works and wisdom literature. The Roman Catholic Bible contains the apocryphal books (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch I & II, Maccabees I & II) and certain additions to Esther and Daniel. Since these works are the primary source documents for this period of Jewish history, they are very important from a historical standpoint. These books should not be included in the canon for these reasons:

- they were not written by prophets,
- they were universally rejected as scripture in their own day,
- they never make the claim to be scripture,
- and subsequently were rejected by both Jews and Christians,

JEWISH EVIDENCE THAT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS ARE NOT CANON

The apocryphal books themselves admit that the prophetic succession ended with Zechariah and Malachi.

And they laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, *till there should come a prophet*, and give answer concerning them. (1 Maccabees 4:46)

And there was a great tribulation in Israel, such as was not since the day, that *there was no prophet seen in Israel*. (1 Maccabees 9:27)

And that the Jews, and their priests, had consented that he should be their prince, and high priest for ever, *till there should arise a faithful prophet*. (1 Maccabees 14:41)

Josephus rejected the canonicity of the apocryphal books, apparently reflecting current Jewish thought.

From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records *because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets*. (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion* 1:8)

This view is also reflected in the Manual of Discipline in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Council of Jamnia held the same view.

They debated the canonicity of a few books (e.g., Ecclesiastes), but they changed nothing and never proclaimed themselves to be authoritative determiners of the Old Testament canon. "The books which they decided to acknowledge as canonical were already generally accepted,

although questions had been raised about them. Those which they refused to admit had never been included. They did not expel from the canon any book which had previously been admitted. 'The Council of Jamnia was the confirming of public opinion, not the forming of it.'" (F. F. Bruce, *The Books and Parchments* [Old Tappan, NJ.: Fleming H. Revell, 1963], p. 98)

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE THAT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS ARE NOT CANON

- Although it was occasionally quoted in early church writings, it was nowhere accepted in a canon. Melito (AD 170) and Origen rejected the Apocrypha, as does the Muratorian Canon.
- How then did it find its way into the Bible? It was sometimes included at the end of a New Testament codex copy. Since the codex was cut and assembled before copying began, pages were left over. These were often filled with one or more apocryphal books.

Jerome vigorously resisted including the Apocrypha in his Latin Vulgate Version (400 AD), but was overruled. As a result, the standard Roman Catholic Bible throughout the medieval period contained it. Thus, it gradually came to be revered by the average clergyman. Still, many medieval Catholic scholars realized that it was not inspired.

- When and why did the Roman Catholic church canonize the Apocrypha? The Roman Catholic Church did not officially canonize the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (1546). This was in part because the Apocrypha contained material which supported certain Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory, praying for the dead, and the treasury of merit.

And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchers of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, *he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.* (2 Maccabees 12:39-46)

- Consider also the fact that many apocryphal references are objectionable.
Ecclesiasticus 25:19 Any iniquity is insignificant compared to a wife's iniquity.
Ecclesiasticus 25:24 From a woman sin had its beginning. Because of her we all die.
Ecclesiasticus 22:3 It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined, and the birth of a daughter is a loss.
Be wise and loving with this information. Do not use it to belittle your Catholic friends or family members. Most Catholics don't really understand these teachings or in some cases even know about them.

The New Testament

Inspired authorship is again the determining factor of the New Testament canon. *Apostolic authorship* in the New Testament corresponds to prophetic authorship in the Old Testament. Jesus authorized the apostles as his official spokesmen, which included the authority to write scripture (see Matthew 10:40; John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:13).

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP

- The thirteen letters of Paul all indicate that he is the author. Although the Pauline authorship of some of these letters has been challenged by some modern scholars, the evidence strongly favors their authenticity.
- The gospel of John indicates that the author is one of Jesus' original disciples (John 21:23,24).
- The 3 epistles of John are identical to the gospel in style. 1 John also claims to be written by an eyewitness of Jesus (1 John 1:1).

- Revelation claims to have been written by John (Revelation 1:4,9).
- Both 1 Peter and 2 Peter claim Petrine authorship (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; 3:1).

This leaves only Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, James, and Jude without direct internal claims to apostolic authorship.

EARLY CHURCH EVIDENCE FOR APOSTOLIC AUTHORSHIP OF REMAINING BOOKS

- Early church writings state that the apostle Matthew wrote the gospel named for him. **Papias** (140 AD) states that "Matthew composed the oracles in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as he was able." (Penguin Classics: Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 152.) **Irenaeus** (180-192 AD) states: "Matthew, among the Hebrews in their own dialect, brought out also a gospel while Peter and Paul in Rome were preaching and founding the church." (Penguin Classics: Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 210.)
- John Mark was Peter's *amenuensis*—(an understudy who researches or writes under the supervision of an apostle). (Paul and Peter both used *amenuenses* in some of their letters. See Tertius in Rom. 16:22 and Silvanus in 1 Pet. 5:12. Paul implies that he used amenuenses in Gal. 6:11 and 2 Thess. 3:17.) **Papias** said that "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered . . ." (Penguin Classics: Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 152.) **Irenaeus** says that "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also himself committed to us inscripturated the things being preached by Peter." (Penguin Classics: Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 210.) **Tertullian** (200 AD) also states: ". . . that (gospel) which Mark had published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was." (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, IV, 5, cited in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Robertson and Donaldson, vol. 3, p. 350.)
- Luke functioned as Paul's amenuensis. **Irenaeus** said of the gospel of Luke: ". . . Luke, the follower of Paul, the gospel being preached by that one (Paul) he put down in a book." (Penguin Classics: Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, pp. 210,211.) It is clear that Luke and Acts have the same author (refer to Luke & Acts introductory comments; read Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*). **Origen** says that Luke, "composed for Gentile converts...the Gospel commended by Paul." (Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, preserved in *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*, vi. 25.6. Cf. *Zint*, vol. 2, p. 385). **Tertullian** called it "Paul's gospel written by Luke." (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, iv. 5, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, p. 350)
- Hebrews is of uncertain authorship, although it is theologically and conceptually connected with Paul. At the same time, the grammar and vocabulary are quite different from Paul's other books. Two options are possible: Clement of Rome (quoted by Eusebius) said that "the epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's," originally written in the Hebrew dialect but later translated by Luke into Greek for use among Greek Christians. This would account for the obvious difference in vocabulary and style between Hebrews and Paul's letters. One of Paul's companions may have written it under his supervision, possibly Timothy (see Hebrews 13:23). This would explain the difference in style and vocabulary, as well as the author's third-person reference to the apostles in Hebrews 2:3,4.
- Two explanations are possible with James and Jude. The books may have been written by Christ's half-brothers (Matt.13:55; Mark 6:3) who were closely associated with the Apostles (Acts 1:14). James was designated as an apostle after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:19). Early church sources indicate that James and Jude, the half-brothers of Jesus, are the authors of these books. They may have been written by James and Jude the Alpheus brothers, two of Jesus' original disciples (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). This possibility comes about from a comparison of the crucifixion accounts, which seem to establish that James the Less (James Alpheus) and Jesus were first cousins on their mothers' side. Therefore, James the Less

might have called himself "the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1:19) within the common usage of the day.

Conclusion: Therefore, the church did not create or determine the New Testament canon. Church leaders and councils debated apostolic authorship of select New Testament books. After they determined apostolic authorship, they recognized the books as inspired.

"We need speak of no strong intuition of the early church, as does Westcott, whereby these holy writings were distinguished from others. It was not an intuition: It was simple obedience to the known commands of Christ and his apostles." (R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity*, p. 234)
"By thirty years after the death of John virtually all of them were known and used in all the centers from which our evidence comes. Certain of the smaller books were still, in some quarters, questioned as to their authorship, and therefore as to their authority, for perhaps another fifty years." (Ibid. p.246.)

"What is particularly important to notice is that the New Testament canon was not demarcated by the arbitrary decree of any church council. When at last a church council-the Synod of Hippo in AD 393-listed the 27 books of the New Testament, it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established canonicity." (F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, pp. 112,113)

New Testament Pseudepigraphal Writings

New Testament pseudepigraphal writings refer to a large body of literature written from the second century AD into the middle ages. "Pseudepigraphal" means "false writings"-works that are forgeries, claiming apostolic authorship so they will be viewed as authoritative. In general, these writings fall into two categories:

1. Cheap devotional literature focusing on the miraculous and bizarre, written to satisfy the desire for further information about the life of Jesus and the careers of the apostles, EXAMPLE: The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* dates from the middle of the third century. It records various alleged incidents in Jesus' early childhood. For example, Jesus molds clay pigeons on the Sabbath. When people object to this, he claps his hands and the pigeons fly away. When another child disperses a pool of water Jesus made, Jesus calls him an insolent, godless dunderhead and paralyzes him. When another child bumps into his shoulder, Jesus becomes exasperated and kills the child by cursing him. When his parents complain about this to Joseph, Jesus smites them blind.

This account clearly portrays Jesus as an amoral (or immoral) miracle-worker.

Furthermore, the canonical gospels indicate that Jesus did not perform miracles until the wedding at Cana (John 2:11).

2. Attempts to propagate different and heretical teachings (e.g. Gnostic).

Pseudepigraphal literature was written by heretics in an effort to foist their ideas on the church with the alleged endorsement of Jesus or the apostles (which shows that the false teachers had the same criteria of authority: apostolic authority). Some of these writings are historically valuable because they provide information about the post-apostolic church and the doctrinal aberrations it faced. But they are not apostolic and therefore should not be regarded as canonical.

The Gospel of Thomas is the best known writing of this sort. Recently, it has been used by New Age advocates to claim Jesus' support of their views of spirituality. It was written in the early second century, and was discovered in 1945 among the literature excavated at Nag Hammadi. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of 114 alleged sayings of Jesus, many of which are similar to canonical sayings, but many of which (like the following) clearly contradict the canonical gospels.

- "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down. And he (Thomas) said, `Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.'" (1)
Notice the Gnostic view of salvation which comes through learning secret knowledge.
- "Jesus said, ` . . . the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, you will dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.'" (3)
Salvation is not receiving God's forgiveness through Christ; it is coming to realize that we are already sons of God.

- "Jesus said, 'Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man.'" (7)
- "The disciples said, 'We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?' Jesus said to them, 'Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.'" (12)
Heaven and earth weren't made for James the righteous!
- "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like.' Simon Peter said to Him, 'You are like a righteous angel.' Matthew said to Him, 'You are like a wise philosopher.' Thomas said to Him, 'Master, my mouth is totally incapable of saying what you are like.' Jesus said, 'I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out.'" (13)
Jesus is saying Thomas has become so impressed by his teaching that Thomas has wrongly ascribed to Jesus an authoritative role. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Lord, etc. and when Thomas worshipped him as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28), Jesus accepted this worship.
- "Mary said to Jesus, 'Whom are your disciples like?' He said, 'They are like children who have settled in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, "Let us have back our field." They will undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field and to give it back to them . . .'" (21)
- "His disciples said to Him, 'When will the repose of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?' He said to them, 'what you look forward to has already come, but you did not recognize it'" (51)
In Matthew 19:28, Jesus clearly speaks of the millennial kingdom as a future event, and of the disciples' roles in that future kingdom.
- "Simon Peter said to them, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of Life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'" (114)
I wonder why New Age advocates of this book don't quote this saying!

Memory Verses (COVERED LAST WEEK)

Matt. 5:17,18*- The Old Testament is completely accepted by Jesus.

Matt. 24:35*- Jesus' own words are authoritative.

Matt. 10:40*- Jesus pre-authenticates the Apostles' words.