

The Bible is God's Word

1) How do we know that the Old Testament is God's Word?

A) Jesus' resurrection establishes His claim to be the Son of God. Since Jesus is God, whatever He says is true. Here is what Jesus said about the Old Testament (OT):

- We should believe the OT (Luke 16:16–31; 24:25–27).
- The OT is unbreakable (John 10:35).
- The OT is irrevocable (Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17; Luke 24:44).
- The OT has final authority (Matt 4:4, 7, 10; Matt 21:42; Mark 11:17).
- The OT is the truth (John 17:17; Matt 22:29).
- We should believe the teachings of Moses (Matt 23:1–5, 23; Mark 7:9–13; 12:26–27; John 5:45–47).
- We should believe the message of Daniel (Matt 24:15).

B) Jesus preached one of His first public messages from an OT text (Luke 4:16–19).

C) Jesus justified His own actions by referring to the OT:

- when He ate on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1–8).
- when He healed on the Sabbath (Matt 12:10–21).
- when he accepted the praise of the crowds at His triumphal entry (Matt 21:16).

D) Jesus believed in the literal history of the OT. He referred to:

- Creation (Mark 10:6).
- Adam and Eve (Matt 19:5–7).
- The murder of Abel (Luke 11:51).
- Noah's ark (Matt 24:38).

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:31–32).
- Lot’s wife (Luke 17:32).
- Destruction of Sodom (Luke 17:29).
- The burning bush (Luke 20:37).
- Moses and the serpent (John 3:14).
- The wilderness manna (John 6:31).
- The Queen of Sheba and Solomon (Matt 12:42).
- Elijah and the widow (Luke 4:25–26).
- Naaman the leper (Luke 4:27).
- Jonah and the great fish (Matt 12:40).
- The repentance of Nineveh (Matt 12:41).
- The murder of Zacharias (Matt 23:35).

E) It has been estimated that over 10% of Jesus’ recorded New Testament (NT) words were taken from the OT. In the four Gospels, 180 of the 1,800 verses which report His teachings are either OT quotes or OT allusions.

F) From this data, we conclude that the OT is God’s Word.

2) How do we know that the New Testament is God’s Word?

A) When Jesus was here on earth, He did not write His teachings down. Instead, He told His twelve disciples (also called “the apostles”) that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit as they taught others what He had taught them. Jesus said:

- The Holy Spirit would speak through them (Matt 10:19–20; Luke 12:11–12; Mark 13:11).
- The Holy Spirit would help them remember what Jesus said (John 14:26).
- The Holy Spirit would guide them into “all the truth” (John 16:13–16).
- The Holy Spirit would empower them to be Jesus’ witnesses to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 1:8).

B) Jesus' promise to the apostles was fulfilled during the early days of the church. The Holy Spirit guided them as they taught the new believers the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three of the apostles—Matthew, Peter, and John—wrote down this truth for us to read. Paul, who was later chosen by Jesus to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9; 1 Cor 1:1; Rom 13:11), also wrote down the truth given to him by the Holy Spirit and sent his letters to be read in the churches.

C) The remaining four authors of the NT—Mark, Luke, James, and Jude—were not apostles themselves, but were associates of the apostles and thoroughly knowledgeable of their teachings:

(1) Luke was Paul's companion (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 1:24).

(2) Mark was Peter's associate (Acts 12:12; 1 Pet 5:13).

(3) James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus (Matt 12:46; 13:55–56; Mark 6:3; John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19).

D) The NT, then, is a reflection of Jesus' teaching and the revelation that was given to these men by the Holy Spirit. The writers themselves declared their teachings and writings to be the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. They said that:

(1) Their writings were "Scripture." Peter refers to Paul's writings as "Scripture" (2 Pet 3:16). Paul quotes Luke's writings (Luke 10:7) and Deuteronomy 25:4 together under the single phrase "for the Scripture says" (1 Tim 5:18). Paul said that all "Scripture is inspired by God" (lit. 'God-breathed'), so it follows that the NT (as well as the OT) is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16–17, NASB).

(2) Their teachings and writings were the "Word of God." Paul said, "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thess 2:13, NASB; cf. 1 Thess 4:2, 8; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6, 14; 1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:6–9).

(3) Their writings were "prophecy." According to 2 Peter 1:20–21, no prophecy "was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (NASB). John, the author of the book of Revelation, classified himself with his "brethren the [OT] prophets" (Rev 22:9). By direct reference, therefore,

his writing claimed to be a prophetic writing. Paul also considered his writings to be prophetic. In Ephesians 3:3–5 he speaks of his revelation and mystery “which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now [in Paul’s time] been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit” (NASB). It is clear, then, that the NT writers considered their writing to be just as Spirit-directed as the OT.

(4) Their message was a continuation of the message of the OT and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1–2; 2:1–4).

(5) Their writings were divinely authoritative. Paul told his sons in the faith to “command and teach” his writings (1 Tim 4:11) “with all authority” (Titus 2:15), and he based his own authority and even the truth of the gospel itself on his apostleship (Gal 1:1, 12). Likewise, Peter reminded the believers of apostolic authority, saying, “Remember ... the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles” (2 Pet 3:2, NASB).

(6) Their writings were to be read and circulated in the churches. It is obvious that Peter had a collection of Paul’s letters (2 Pet 3:15–16), and Paul directed the Colossians to read and circulate their epistle (Col 4:16). The Thessalonians, too, were charged to read their epistle to all the believers (1 Thess 5:27).

E) The church confirmed these claims by their belief and obedience to the truth of the NT writings. In Acts 2:42 the believers “were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship.”

F) From this data, we conclude that the NT is God’s Word.