

INTRODUCTION

Opening Remarks

- Will try to save the *content* of the NT and of Jesus' teachings for next week
- This week, we will examine the questions:
 - o 1. Did Jesus exist?
 - o 2. Is the New Testament Reliable?
 - o 3. What does inerrancy mean? Is it tenable?
 - o 4. Do some of the claims of the Da Vinci code hold water?
- Very important since:
 - o The Da Vinci code ranks (by some estimations) as the fifth to the first best-selling book of all time
 - o Works like Zeitgeist and HBO specials continue to propegate similar ideas
 - o Reputable outlets like MacLeans magazine and Netflix specials propegate the same materials!

Overview of Class:

- I. Discussion of "Liberalism" and methodology
- II. Challenges from Archaeology
- III. Reliability of the New Testament

SECTION ONE: Discussion of "Liberalism" and Methodology

A. Definitions: what is Liberalism?

- 1) In previous two classes, mentioned Liberalism
 - a. So far, very *negative* presentation of Liberalism
- 2) Liberalism can be: "A political movement"
 - a. The Democrats in the US
 - b. The Progressive Liberals and (to some degree) the NDP in Canada."
(we are not talking about this)
- 3) Liberalism can be: "A Christian sect which denies miracles..."
 - a. ... thus rejects the core teachings of the Christian faith

- b. including the inspiration of the Bible, the virgin Birth, and salvation by grace through faith.
- 4) Liberalism can also be: "A religion studied from the outside looking in."
- a. A study of a religion which seeks to establish *what really happened* as opposed to what the religion claims about itself."
 - i. 1. Operates within a framework of naturalism (methodological naturalism)
 - ii. 2. No faith-based claims are accepted without proof
 - iii. 3. An attempt is made (although difficult to maintain!) to work in an atmosphere of professional neutrality
 - iv. 4. One seeks to follow the evidence where it leads
 - v. I will try to refer to this as "Secular Academia" to draw a distinction: but I may slip at times!

B. "Two Hats"

- We are used to choosing between the perspectives
- Often, one perspective demonizes the other
- Today, we will switch between the two

1) The limitations of a faith-based perspective

- a. It is difficult to make "scientific" progress
 - i. Difficult to ask the hard questions, because of emotional/spiritual discomfort with questions
 - ii. Religious establishment can become a hindrance to free thought
- b. It is difficult to share findings in evangelism
 - i. People do not trust the results
 - ii. People accuse of a biased process
 - iii. At times, over-use of control pre-conditions people to believe conspiracy theories, like the DaVinci code

2) Limitations of a "Liberal" (or "secular academia") perspective

- a. Rules out valid information
 - i. For example, what could we really prove about our grand-parents? But they really existed!**
 - ii. What we can *prove* is not the same as "what really happened"

- iii. E.g. tombstone illustration
 - b. Rules out miracles
 - i. If miracles *really happened*, a Liberal could never find them, because they *rule out miracles* methodologically
 - ii. The perspective of naturalism may not make sense.
 - 1. We have proven that God exists
 - 2. People all over the world attest that miracles happen
 - a. Especially in the third world
 - b. Also, very commonly in hospitals
 - 3. The Bible is reliable in other matters, and records miracles
- 3) The Perennial Conflict
 - a. Liberalism is "toxic" to the Christian faith
 - i. Faith is based on *assurance* of what we *cannot see* (Heb. 12:1)
 - ii. Liberalism *questions* everything, and only deals with *what we can actually see*
 - b. Liberalism is not afraid to ask questions that are insulting, painful, even blasphemous
 - i. Like, "Did Jesus have a wife? Was Jesus crazy? Was Jesus a myth? Did He never even exist?"
 - c. We may be tempted to reject, out of hand, Liberalism, but...
 - i. Remember limitations of Fundamentalism
 - 1. Hard to make progress
 - 2. Findings not respected by outsiders
 - 3. It is helpful for *someone* to pose the questions, even if only so that conservatives can answer them!
 - ii. It must be said that *while new discoveries and ideas* in Liberalism were, for many generations, toxic, these ideas have not been appropriated by Evangelicals. Now, Evangelicals lead the way in Jesus studies and Critical studies, because these support our faith, rather than destroy it
 - 1. In some places, Christians need to be "brought up to speed" on these developments: they are still living in

the bomb-shelters of the 1920's, the wars of
Modernity and Fundamentalism

2. This war is still ongoing!
3. ...but in many cases:
 - a. Simply hiding is what they expect us to do,
and it is not very effective
 - b. The evidence is on our side!

4) Two hats!

- a. To help us signal when I am switching between the two, I will
literally put on a different hat! ☺
- b. This will be especially important when we discuss *inerrancy* and
historical reliability

5) ...where we're going next:

- a. Archaeology and the Bible
- b. The Reliability of the New Testament

SECTION TWO: Archaeology and the Bible

- Note: clearly, we don't have time to examine *everything* here
- Note: We will largely skip the OT questions. Because we didn't look at them last week, this subject simply will be passed over. May pick it up in podcasts (need to do some personal research)
- Note: usually, look at archaeology purely as support. It is very true that there are huge amounts of info. Which supports the Bible! There are also some points which provide challenges. I want to remind you that there are resources out there that talk about the evidences from archaeology. I want to talk about the issue of the challenges (often not discussed)

A. The Three Buckets

1) Faith vs. Fact

- a. Two perspectives: express with faith vs. fact
 - i. Faith = facts
 - ii. Faith ≠ facts
 - iii. Faith = (facts)
 - Cf. podcast "Science vs. Religion"

2) Two methodologies: each with limitations

- a. Cf. Grandparents illustration
 - b. Facts actually, "Information that can be verified to a high degree of certainty."
 - i. Lots of things that really happened cannot be verified
 - ii. ...but *they really happened* whether we can prove it or not!
 - iii. Other, less "scientific" forms of proof can often fill in the gaps, give us a much richer picture of a historical person
 - c. Again, we are reminded that the secular/liberal perspective rules out miracles from the outset
- 3) Dropping things into buckets
- a. Faith = Facts
 - i. Israel, the temple, the Israelites in Egypt, in Palestine, in Babylon, scattered, religion, etc.
 - ii. Jesus existed, NT written in 1st century, Christian religion started from Jesus' followers
 - b. Faith ≠ Facts
 - i. "We really have no evidence for...Abraham, David, Jesus.."
 - ii. "It is clear that the earth is more than 6,000 years old"
 - iii. Jericho wasn't destroyed at the right time
 - iv. Jesus scholars are divided on the details of his life
- 4) Interpreting the Buckets
- a. What sorts of things are in the two buckets? (conflict vs. agreement)
 - i. The main facts of the Judeo-Christian religion are verified:
 1. Existence of Jewish people, main facts of their history. Existence of Jesus, etc.
 2. By contrast, main facts of Mormonism shown to be fraudulent
 - ii. This is enough to conclude that the Bible is "historically valuable" document
 1. This is different from saying it is "inerrant" and "inspired," which is a religious claim
 2. This is enough to establish the historicity and works of Jesus, as we will see

- iii. As a last resort, we can “fall” from inerrancy to Barth or “historically valid” documents position. But better, use for purposes, then return to inerrancy
- b. What *doesn't* belong the conflict bucket?
 - i. Arguments from silence
 - 1. “Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” (unless we would *expect* to find evidence)
 - 2. Abraham, patriarchs, etc.
 - 3. What evidence *would we expect to find* of such people?
 - ii. New Discoveries
 - 1. David was recently discovered
 - 2. Throughout history, new discoveries often made, disproving long-held anti-Christian theories
 - a. Nineveh, Belshazzar’s dad, prefects in Acts...
- c. How can we interpret what remains?
 - i. (New discoveries, above...) **...leading us to have *legitimate hope* that remaining issues will someday be cleared up**
 - 1. Especially since Archaeology is a relatively young science
 - 2. Also because it is a science in continual flux and motion, with new ideas overturning old. How could it ever accord with an unchanging revelation?
 - 3. Also, sadly, radical Islam is an anti-archaeological force. With ISIS destroying relics, and all digs forbidden in Syria, where the most valuable information lies buried
 - ii. This belief is a *logically coherent faith-statement*
 - 1. It would not be rational, if major issues were in the conflict bucket (as with Mormonism)
 - 2. It would become difficult to maintain, in face of continued archaeological info
 - 3. At this point, we are switching hats. That doesn’t mean we are not able to switch back! It doesn’t

invalidate work we do from a position of
methodological naturalism

- iii. This belief allows us to hold on to inerrancy, while being scientifically informed
 1. This is the position of the Chicago Statement
 - a. "*WE DENY that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.*" Chicago Statement, Article XIV
 - b. This wording *admits* that challenges exist, and allows for *hope* that these issues will be resolved to serve as a way to hold to inerrancy
 2. A further, important distinction is that while there may be some apparent "errors," many of these evaporate when we understand more about ancient writing styles and genres
 - a. "*We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.*" Chicago Statement, Article XIII

5) Miracles

- a. This is a *huge* discussion
 - i. Should look at David Hume's work, "Miracles"
 - ii. Should look at C.S. Lewis, and others
- b. Simply want to say:
 - o There is no conflict with science
 - i. This arises from misunderstandings, perhaps chronological snobbery
 1. Ancient people, as well as moderns, knew that axe heads don't float, virgins don't give birth, and people don't rise *naturally* from the dead

2. Miracles are, by definition, an aberration from the norms of science
- ii. It is reasonable to believe miracles occur
 1. Because, as we have proven, it is more likely than not that God exists
 2. Because they are reported all the time
 - a. Especially in the developing world
 - b. Especially in hospitals
 - c. People have done studies, written books on this
- iii. As seen, we can examine our religion from miraculous, or non-miraculous perspective
 1. As we will see, this can give very different pictures
 2. The main part of changing hats is miracles
 3. On some topics, non-naturalistic bias gives good info: on some, it gives skewed info (esp. since we believe miracles do exist!)
 - a. In general:
 - i. Lower Criticism (Fully accept!)
 - ii. Higher Criticism (Reject most)
 - iii. Jesus studies (Accept, with qualifications)

SECTION THREE: The Reliability of the New Testament

A. Transmission of the New Testament

1) Traditional Argument

- a. "The New Testament was passed on faithfully & meticulously"
 - i. Copied by faithful Jews and monks
 - ii. Stories told of the extreme devotion of Jews, who counted the characters on a page, washed after writing the name of God, etc.
 - iii. Many tests show an extremely high degree of accuracy through the years
- b. This argument is still *true*, it's just not strictly necessary, with today's scholarship**

- c. Through archeological finds and "Text Criticism" (or "Lower Criticism") we are able to reconstruct the New Testament in virtually its original form

2) Lower Criticism

- a. It is not like a game of "Telephone" (aka "Chinese Whispers")
- b. It is a real, recognized discipline
 - i. We are putting on our "secular" hat!
 - ii. It will deal in degrees of certainty
 - iii. More documents = more certainty
 - iv. Closer to actual events = more certainty
- c. The New Testament fares extremely well!
 - i. FAR more than any other ancient work: over 5,800 Greek texts, 10,000+ Latin, etc.
 - ii. Dating to 125 AD (P52, the "John Rylands Fragment")
 - iii. This is far better than comparable sources
 - 1. 2,000 copies of Homer's Iliad
 - 2. Only dozens of works like Pliny, Aristotle, Plato, etc.
- d. Basically, we *have* the New Testament of the early Church
 - i. Through text criticism, can reconstruct the New Testament to a level of 92-99% accuracy (Liberal vs. Conservative)
 - ii. Contrary to popular opinion:
 - 1. The entire New Testament is now recognized to have been written in the First Century
 - 2. The text of the New Testament which you have in your Bibles (except the KJV) is substantially what was originally written
 - 3. Where there are differences, or possibilities of other translations, they are highlighted in the footnotes

3) Objection 1: "But what about the 8-1%?!"

- a. All agree, none of these differences affect doctrine: they are mostly typos that creep in through normal human translation
 - i. Give example
 - ii. They do not affect meaning
- b. (put secular hat on)
 - i. These are exactly what we would expect to find
 - ii. They in no way invalidate the *historical reliability* of the NT

- c. (put on conservative hat)
 - i. For us, it raises the religious question, "How can God's word be subjected to errors?"
 - ii. Answer:
 - 1. The *original documents* are inspired
 - 2. Our documents are inspired to the degree to which they represent these documents
 - 3. Since these documents have been preserved/restored to an almost miraculous level of accuracy, our Bibles very reliable!
 - 4. ...of course, there will always be a slight imperfection to work with, because we do not have the originals
- 4) Objection 2: What about the sections not in the NIV/NASB Bibles?
- a. A few famous, smaller passages
 - i. John 5:4 (an explanatory note that crept in)
 - ii. Mark 9:29, Mat. 17:21 (agenda for fasting crept in)
 - iii. Acts 8:37 (smoothing theological discomfort)
 - iv. The Lord's prayer: different versions (Mat. 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4)
 - b. Reactions?
 - i. Clearly, this sort of thing is *disconcerting*, especially if your sermon text turns out not to be in the text!!
 - ii. We are in a transition time: those used to older Bibles need to just check to make sure their verses are in there!
 - iii. We should *be proud* of our religion, which has the confidence/ability to adapt to new information: Islam has instituted the death penalty for anyone doing critical studies of the Koran!
 - iv. I would encourage people to *read* the footnotes. Especially those who are bilingual, will appreciate the complexity of the translation process, and connect with the richness of a translated work
 - c. Some larger sections
 - i. The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)
 - 1. This whole section not in the original texts
 - 2. John Piper's reaction:

- a. It is in *keeping* with Jesus' teachings, and is a powerful illustration of them
 - b. It is very early, and may reflect a *true* story that was integrated into the accounts later
 - c. It has been used by the church for centuries
 - d. ...for these reasons, he still taught on it, even though it's not in the original
- ii. The Ending of Mark
1. The KJV ending is not in the originals
 2. Theories include:
 - a. The gospel was intended to end abruptly at Mark 16:8, or (more likely)
 - b. The original ending of Mark is lost
 3. This is, clearly, very disconcerting for Christians, on first hearing
 4. This leads to the obvious question: "What if some day we *find* the ending of Mark? What if it completely negates everything we believe about Jesus?!"
 5. We should temper this (often sensationalized) possibility with the following:
 - a. Throughout Mark, Jesus, the "son of man"...
 - i. Has authority to forgive sins (2:10)
 - ii. Has authority to drive out demons (3:22-30)
 - iii. Has authority to make new laws (2:28)
 - iv. Will judge the earth (8:38, 13:26, 14:62)
 - v. Will suffer and die for humanity (9:31, 10:33)
 - vi. Will rise from the dead (9:9, 9:31)
 - vii. Seals a new covenant with His blood (14:24)
 - viii. Calls Himself "God" ("I am") (14:62)
 - ix. Is called the Son of God (1:1, 15:39)

- b. The other Gospels (written only a decade later) all speak of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances
- c. Paul's writings and sources, which *predate* Mark, speak of Jesus' resurrection and post-resurrection appearances
- d. For these reasons, the lack of the ending of Mark does not change anything substantive: if we ever find it, one would expect it to have material in keeping with the rest of Mark, and the other writings from the Christian community

5) Objection 3: "Only the King James Bible is authorized!"

- a. Considering the "discomfort" we have already experienced, this reaction is certainly understandable!
- b. This debate can be very contentious: I don't want to go there extensively. However, could divide it into three categories:
 - i. Stubborn Fundamentalism
 - 1. Some simply wish to avoid all of this discussion, and "just stick to the text of Scriptures"
 - 2. I certainly have no objection to this, except that:
 - a. This sort of faith is hard to pass on
 - b. The KJV is becoming increasingly difficult, as people loose touch with the language: in some cases, even for those who use it, the meanings can be lost
 - c. An over-devotion to the KJV can actually be against the Bible: since slight errors were found in the KJV, why not get version closer to the original?
 - ii. God promised preservation (Mat. 5:18)
 - 1. The argument goes:
 - a. God has promised to perfectly preserve His word (down to the very letters!)
 - b. God *could* preserve His word, and give us an authorized translation in every language

c. THEREFORE, the KJV is that translation

2. Answer:

a. Since it is proven that there are "typos," the question is more: how do we deal with Mat. 5:18, in the face of the missing end of Mark, etc.?

b. It seems reasonable that what Jesus meant was that *the content* or *message* of His ministry would be communicated.

c. Typos are a normal part of human communication: they may not have been considered a flaw to early readers

iii. The Wescott-Hort text vs. the *Textus Receptus*

1. The issue: the received text came through church transmission, while the WH text came through archaeology, and lower criticism, culminating in the work of Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)

2. The latter is sometimes maligned for:

a. The *location* of the texts (often found in Egypt)

b. The *character* of W & H (who were probably Liberals, and may not have been "saved" by Evangelical standards)

3. Both of these critiques are *ad hominem* attacks, which fail because:

a. North Africa is a very likely place to find Jews and early Christians after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70

b. The climate of North Africa was responsible for preserving many texts

c. The religion of Egypt didn't affect the texts themselves, as far as I know

d. The character of W & H doesn't enter into the equation, because they had their "secular" hats on, and were simply trying to follow the evidence where it leads

- iv. The real issue here is the approach of *retreat* vs. *engagement* with the issues
 - 1. I am *proud* that the Evangelical church is, for the most part, able and willing to engage with the facts
 - 2. Although it is more *complicated*, and it is *disconcerting* at times, it actually shows a more *firm* foundation for the faith
 - 3. To me, personally, the fact that we have enough precision to detect minor flaws and typos speaks not of the invalidity of the sources, but of *how close we have to the originals*. (Like an electron microscope, butterfly wings). Remember, it is the *originals* that are inspired. We have them, to an amazing degree of certainty!
 - a. E.G. Like butterfly wings in an electron microscope

B. Dating & Authorship of the New Testament

1) Introduction

- a. As we know, the New Testament isn't one book, but a library of books
- b. We need to divide the books up into sections: the epistles, the Gospels, and Revelations
- c. We need to further divide the sections into individual books
- d. We can (cautiously!) divide the books further into their sources

2) Source criticism

- a. This is forbidden territory!
 - i. Cf. Chicago Statement, article XVIII
 - ii. The *reason* is because:
 - 1. Perceived intent to "relativize, dehistoricize, or discount" the actual documents
 - 2. "Higher Criticism" is
 - a. Based on naturalistic presuppositions
 - b. Highly speculative (compared to lower criticism)

3. Scholars often differ on the extent and nature of the sources (most famously, "Q")
 4. It seems unreasonable to play an actual document off against an hypothetical, source document
- b. Rightly understood, source criticism is valid
- i. The NT itself claims to be build on valid sources
 - ii. Sources may include:
 1. First-person recollection (John 14:26)
 2. Faithful second-hand source material (John 19:35)
 3. Careful research (Luke 1:1-2)
 4. A written document (Luke 1:1-2)
 5. A creed or communal saying (1 Cor. 15:3-9)
 6. Slogans, or communal vocabulary (1 Cor. 16:22)
 7. Songs, communal poetry (Phil. 2:5-11)
 - iii. The only logical alternative to sources is one's imagination: the NT adamantly denies this (2 Peter 1:16)!
 - iv. **Although determining some sources becomes quite speculative, others display themselves quite naturally**
- c. Source criticism (switching hats) makes Evangelical claims more likely than not
- i. The texts were written very early
 1. Jesus died AD 33
 2. Paul wrote AD 50-67
 3. Mark wrote AD 65-70
 4. Matthew, Mark, Luke wrote AD 70-80
 5. John wrote AD 90
 - ii. How do we know?
 1. A number of historical cues, including:
 - a. The death of Herod the Great (4 BC)
 - b. The death of Nero (68 AD)
 2. The use of the NT by the Church Fathers
 3. The John-Rylands fragment, and other fragments (125 AD)
 - iii. The *sources* were even earlier
 1. Philippians (AD 62)

- a. Philippians 2:1-11 (dates to AD 50 or so)
 - 2. 1 Corinthians (AD 53-53)
 - a. 1 Cor. 15:3-11 (As early as AD 40)
 - b. 1 Cor. 16:22
- iv. Often, sources highlight the *divinity* of Christ
 - 1. In Q, Jesus will return to judge the world (Mark 13:26)
 - 2. In Philippians 2, Jesus is “very nature God” before His incarnation
 - 3. In I Cor. 15:3-11, Jesus:
 - a. Died for our sins, according to scriptures
 - b. Was buried, rose again
 - c. Appeared to many people
 - 4. In 1 Cor. 16:22, an Aramaic slogan is used, which means “Come, Lord Jesus,” indicating that the very earliest followers of Jesus expected His return and called Him Lord
- v. These sources should be used more effectively to defend the divinity of Christ, as William Lane Craig does: but many evangelicals feel they ought not to use them.**
- vi. That being said, we *do* need to remember that many of these sources (such as Q) are hypothetical documents. Even Philippians 2 may have been written on the spot. It is very hard to know what sources may have gone into the book, and especially how they may have been modified by the authors.

C. The Reception of the New Testament

1) Introduction

- a. Here again, there is an older, common argument and a better, contemporary one

2) (Typical argument) The Early Church did careful analysis and accepted the books of the New Testament based on the following criteria:

- a. Authorship, by an established apostle (or approved by an apostle)

- b. Agreement, with the Old Testament and established New Testament texts
- c. Usage, by all established churches
- d. *A clear hindrance of this argument is:* the critique of a "conspiracy theory," or else of the deficiency of the later church to make this judgment
 - i. The canon was not finalized until 692, the Council of Trullan
 - ii. This is even later than what the Da Vinci code claims (Council of Nicea, 325)
 - iii. *Didn't the church suppress the other Gospels?!*

3) The Gnostic Gospels

- a. These were known to history, since some Church fathers mentioned them (in lists of books by heretics)
- b. They were never considered for the Canon (this is different from being rejected)
- c. They failed all of the tests of orthodoxy
- d. They recently caused a great stir when they were re-discovered
 - i. The Nag Hammadi collection was the most important collection discovered
 - ii. The Gospel of Thomas is the most important of the Gnostic Gospels
- e. They tend to follow a predictable format
 - i. They are not typical gospels
 - 1. They contain little or no biographical info
 - 2. They tend to be collections of sayings
 - 3. Some are quite short, and exist only in fragments
 - ii. They assume the existence of Christianity, and the New Testament
 - iii. They claim that there is some "secret knowledge" not known in either the NT or by the mainline church
 - iv. They claim that Jesus entrusted this information to a special disciple
 - 1. They tend to be named after the special disciples
 - 2. Disciples include Thomas, Mary, Judas, etc.
 - v. This secret information is the content of the "Gospel"

- vi. This knowledge is almost always “Gnostic” in content
 - 1. It is Platonic, rather than Jewish in origin
 - 2. It focuses on “ascencion” through special knowledge
 - 3. That special knowledge usually focuses on self-awareness, self-deification, and ideas not dissimilar to contemporary “New Age” ideas
 - f. Upon further study, they reveal:
 - i. Interesting information on ancient Gnosticism, which was a major movement in the early church
 - ii. No new information on Jesus
 - iii. **Due to their late dating**, they really contribute very little to Jesus studies, and push us back to the Gospels and New Testament as the best sources for information on Jesus
 - iv. Note: Some *will* try to push them back even into the first century, theorizing that the *faith community that wrote the gospels* may have been contemporary with the writing of the actual Gospels
- 4) Pseudepigrapha (or “falsely inscribed,” or “falsely attributed”)
- a. Some Christian documents were also written during this time
 - b. They were attempts to add to the Gospels, to settle theological disputes, or to provide evidence for Christianity
 - c. The most famous is the Gospel of Peter, which retells the Gospel narrative with numerous, fanciful editorial additions
 - d. The Pseudophogrypha were rejected by the Early Church, and contemporary scholarship agrees, although they use them as windows into the early church
- 5) (Note): The Koran
- a. Written in the seventh century
 - b. Universally rejected by Liberal scholars
 - i. Completely derivative
 - ii. Offers no new information about the Historical Jesus
 - iii. Disagrees with the best established fact of Jesus’ life: His crucifixion
 - 1. Attested in all gospels, in Paul
 - 2. Attested by external sources
 - 3. Key of Christian religion

4. Embarrassing: impossible it could have been invented
5. This is a significantly embarrassing point for informed Muslims

6) Best Answer:

- a. The Early Church followed the Jews in creating a Canon
 - i. Work began in the second century, virtually finished by fourth
 - ii. They used good methods, including:
 1. Agreement
 2. Authorship
 3. Catholicity
 - iii. **They virtually always had Paul and the Gospels:** the issue was what *else* should be added?
 - iv. Their work has been ratified by contemporary scholars
 1. (Note: but some Liberals would try to *subtract* from the New Testament, there is no serious attempt to add to it)
 2. Note: as *higher criticism*, and based on speculative theories, I do not find the arguments for discounting the NT books convincing. At worst, we may accept these writings as *part of the community of the Apostolic church*. Even if authorship is in dispute, dating is not: they are very early, and have been accepted for centuries.
 - v. The definitive issue is dating
 1. The New Testament was written in the first century
 2. The Gnostic Gospels and other Pseudepigrapha were not

SECTION FOUR: Summary

We have covered a lot of material! Let's try to draw it together...

- 1) There are two ways of looking at Christianity:
 - a. Liberalism & conservatism
 - b. From the outside-in, from the inside-out

- c. From “science” and from “faith”
- d. We can use “methodological naturalism” to get scientific results, which are significant for our faith (...and what have we found about the Bible?)

2) Archaeology

- a. The basic facts of the Christian religion are established
- b. The basic facts of the life of Jesus are established
- c. Many of the supposed conflicts can be dealt with
 - i. Arguments from silence
 - ii. Archaeology in process
 - iii. Room for “typos” within inerrancy

3) New Testament

- a. Transmission
 - i. Through “Lower Criticism,” we can reconstruct the New Testament to an extremely high degree of certainty
 - ii. None of the variants affect doctrine, or the meaning of the documents
 - iii. Date:
 - 1. The New Testament documents were written *extremely early*
 - a. Within the first one or two generations of Christians
 - b. Far before any other “gospels”
 - c. Some sources date to within seven years of the death of Christ: all are less than
- b. Dating
 - i. All written extremely early
 - ii. Sources even earlier
- c. Acceptance
 - i. The Gnostic gospels were never accepted: never will, due to date
 - ii. The Gospels and Paul virtually always accepted
 - iii. Liberal scholars wouldn’t *add* anything to the New Testament: they may *take*, but still part of Christian tradition (historically reliable documents)