

“Is it possible that the Bible \_\_\_\_\_?”

“History can only reveal the *outworkings* of something divine in nature and intention. Historical inquiry can tell us, fragmentarily, *what* took place in particular areas, but it cannot make known *why* things happened as they did. For this, we must consider the only source that *can* tell us about Scripture’s purpose and intention: Scripture itself.” (*Scripture Alone*, James White, 99-100.)

If the Bible came from God, then the only way to truly understand it and explain it is going to be \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Apostles and Authority**

“God established the apostolic office to be the guardian, preserver, and transmitter of the message of redemption.... These ‘agents’ form the critical connection between the redemptive work of God and God’s subsequent announcement of that redemption.... In sum, the New Testament documents can be understood as the written expression of the authoritative, foundational, and eyewitness tradition delivered by the apostles of Jesus Christ.” (*Canon Revisited*, Michael J. Kruger, 174-175, 181.)

“The church’s concept of canon, derived first of all from the reverence given the Old Testament Scriptures, rested in the conviction that the apostles were uniquely authorized to speak in the name of the One who possessed all authority – the Lord Jesus Christ.... [They] knew that Jesus authorized his apostles to speak in his name, both during and (more significantly) after his earthly ministry. Both the spoken word of an apostle and the letter of an apostle constituted the word of Christ.... The second and third generation of Christians looked back to apostolic words (writings) as the very words of Christ. This is what is really meant by canonization - recognition of the divinely authenticated word. Hence the believers (the church) did not establish the canon but simply bore witness to its extent by recognizing the authority of the word of Christ.” (“The Canon of the New Testament,” Milton Fisher, 76-77, in *The Origin of the Bible*, ed. Philip Wesley Comfort.)

“The Canon of the New Testament was completed [though not yet universally accepted] when the last authoritative book was given to any church by the apostles.” (*The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Benjamin B. Warfield, 415.)

### **Was this what the early Christians themselves believed?**

1 Clement (scholars estimate AD 80-140), “The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus the Christ was sent from God. The Christ therefore is from God and the Apostles from the Christ.”

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), “For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them [i.e., what they were directed to do by Jesus].” (cited in Kruger, 183)

Irenaeus (AD 130-202), “We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.”

### **What about books not written by apostles?**

“If the Christians believed that a book was written by an apostle, they received it, without further argument, as canon. But of course, they also received books that were not written by apostles, such as Mark, Luke-Acts, Hebrews, James, and Jude. The criterion of apostolicity was relevant to these as well, of course. These books were thought to have come from the apostolic circle, to have somehow been certified by the apostles.” (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, John M. Frame, 137.)

“The criterion of apostolicity does not mean that every book was written by an apostle ... but rather that they were written during the apostolic age, before the last of the Twelve (most likely John) had died.” (*Can We Still Believe the Bible?* Craig L. Blomberg, 58.)

“No book is more than one person removed from an apostle or an authoritative eyewitness of the life of Jesus.” (Blomberg, 58)

Canonical books are “writings that bear the authoritative message of the apostles and derive from the foundational apostolic era (even if not directly from their hands).” The question was “whether its content embodies the foundational apostolic tradition, not whether it was written by the hand of the apostle.” (Kruger 109, 182)

“Not only did the apostles themselves write many of these New Testament documents, but, in a broader sense, they presided over the transmission of the apostolic deposit and labored to make sure that the message of Christ was firmly and accurately preserved for future generations, through the help of the Holy Spirit.” (Kruger, 109)

“The apostles were quite willing to employ the help of key followers ‘with the skills and gifts necessary for preserving the tradition.’” (Kruger, 182)

### **Conclusion**