

Responses to Miscellaneous Questions

University Church 2018 Spring Apologetics Class

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During the course of the class I received several questions both during the actual classes as well as afterwards. Time did not permit me to cover these questions in class so I have briefly addressed them in this document. I have generally avoided restating in detail the points from class or from Moyer and Duncan's material for conciseness.

Book of Enoch

Does the Book of Jude indicate the Epistle of Enoch is inspired? If so, why isn't the Epistle of Enoch in the Canon?

- One should draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence. To go further, is to abuse the evidence.
- What do we know from Jude 14-15?
 - Epistle warns Christians of the dangers of false teachers, of falling away and of judgment.
 - Jude quotes Enoch
 - Enoch is the 7th generation from Adam
 - Enoch prophesied
 - Enoch prophesies about a judgment of the ungodly
 - That's it!
- What does Jude not tell us?
 - Does not reference the Book of Enoch
 - Does not approve or disprove of any given written work of Enoch
 - Does not even say "it is written by Enoch"
 - Does not provide the source of the prophecy
- Enoch could have quoted Enoch as divinely inspired directly by the Holy Spirit
- By the way, Paul provided a quote from Christ that doesn't appear in the Gospels so this is not the only place where this idea comes up. (Acts 20:35 – "It is more blessed to give than to receive")
- No one can prove that Jude's text was taken from the "Book of Enoch"
- In conclusion: We do not know the immediate source of Jude's quotation. Jude's quote therefore cannot be used to establish inspiration of the so-called "Book of Enoch", a book that is not even specifically mentioned in the passage.
- Additional Notes:
 - Book Enoch (Enoch 1) is a collection of works that was not written until between 300 B.C. and 100 A.D (parts were written at different times).
 - Enoch was not included in Hebrew Canon

- Historically was not considered inspired work.
- Quote is similar to a quote from Deut. 33:1-2
- Quoting other writers does not by itself establish inspiration see Epimenides (Titus 1:12)
- The quotes are part of the inspired word of God, but that doesn't mean the original work was inspired.

Book of Jasher/Jashar and other "Lost Books"

The book of Jasher and about 20 other "lost books" (Book of Wars, The Chronicles of Nathan the Prophet, etc.) are referenced in the bible that are not part of the canon (the books that form our bible). Does this fact indicate that our canon is not complete?

- Note: This does not refer to apocryphal books (that appear in the Catholic Bible), which were addressed in class. Please see Neil Lightfoot's *How we got the Bible* for a discussion on this topic.
- Remember key guidelines for canonicity of a book:
 - Does the book have apostolic/prophetic authority?
 - Is it authentic? Is there evidence it came from who it said, from where it claims, etc.
 - Is it from antiquity? Is it from the correct time?
 - Does it have evidence of inspiration? Does it contradict itself or contain obvious historical errors?
 - Was it received, accepted collected, read and used as scripture (not just as supplementary material the way we would use a lesson book)?
 - Orthodoxy. Is the book consistent with other scripture that has been recognized as divinely inspired parts of the word of God.
 - Does it have the authority of Christ?
- General Points for the 'lost books':
 - These books are sometimes called 'lost' because we do not have the actual book being quoted.
 - If we do not have the actual text we cannot apply the preceding questions to them. It is not enough for a book to be quoted in the Bible.
 - In other classes we went through a progressive procedure where we provided evidence for the evidence of God and creation, evidence of the inspiration of the bible (in general) from multiple aspects, and discussed particular books. So before we got to this point we had already shown an abundance of evidence for the inspiration of scripture and how the bible being inspired by God is the only reasonable explanation for all the evidence.
 - We have extremely early manuscripts as well as separate lists of books and the 'lost books' do not appear in them.
 - Some of these books may be figurative.
 - Historical evidence we do have for some books indicate they were meant to be purely historical instead of having a spiritual use.

- In some cases, people have claimed to find some of these books (see below) but they were later found to be forgeries when they were studied closely.
- Notes specific to Book of Jasher
 - This one was specifically called out in class so it is addressed here, but there are some commonalities between this one and others so it is a good example of details related to several 'lost books'.
 - Referenced several times in old testament (Joshua 10:12-13 and 2nd Samuel 1:18-27 among others).
 - Probably a collection or compilation of ancient Hebrew songs and poems.
 - It appears the purpose of the quote in Joshua 10 is to basically say "If you don't believe what I'm saying, go read it in the book of Jasher. Even that book has a record of this event."
 - One "The Book of Jasher" you can find is not the same book mentioned in the Old Testament. It is an 18th century forgery by Alcuin, an eighth century English scholar. It alleges to be a translation of the 'lost' book of Jasher.
 - "The Book of Jasher" by Benjamin Rosenbaum is a work of fiction (he's a science fiction and fantasy writer primarily).
 - Another "Book of Jasher" called by many "Pseudo-Jasher" is also not the book quoted in the bible. It was written in Hebrew but did not exist until A.D. 1625. It is a book of Jewish legends.
 - There are other Hebrew works with the same or similar names but none claim to be the original Book of Jasher.
- Summary
 - In inspiring the word of God, He had the authors use various sources at times. It doesn't mean the sources were inspired, it means they wrote something useful that was used by the writers. This strengthens, not weakens, the historical evidence for the canon.
 - We have shown the canon was established very early on and these books were not included.
 - We also have shown that the bible was transmitted accurately and with great care over time to make sure God's word was preserved.
 - These books cannot be tested to see if they are canonical since they don't exist so they cannot be included in the canon.
 - If they were part of the canon, at a minimum they would have been preserved in some form.
 - There are works that use the name of some of these lost books, and some have even claimed to be those books, but the actual books do not indicate they are the ones referenced, or it has been proven they are forgeries.

Alleged Discrepancies in the Scriptures

- In class we addressed several of the ones that can be explained quickly. We also discussed a couple of the more difficult ones.
- Remember the questions we discussed that we should ask when presented with a difficulty reconciling two passages:
 - What is the context of the passage, the book, the testament and the bible as a whole.
 - Who wrote/spoke the passage and to whom was it addressed?
 - What does the passage actually say?
 - Are there any words or phrases that are hard to understand or could be used multiple ways?
 - What are the related verses to the passage's subject and how do they affect the understanding of the passage?
 - What is the historical and cultural background?
 - Is the passage literal or figurative?
 - Do my conclusions agree or disagree with related areas of scripture for which I have reached a more certain conclusion?
 - Are my conclusions improperly affected by presumptions and prejudices?
 - What is the context of the passage? Yes, I realized this is the second time mentioning it in the list – it's that important.
- I've been asked about several of these and there are dozens. I've tried to address some in class but instead of restating the work of others, I would direct you to Eric Lyon's *The Anvil Rings (Answers to Alleged Bible Discrepancies)* Volumes 1 and 2 which is available on Amazon and apologeticspress.org. Apologetics Press (AP) is one of the better sources of articles on apologetics (in my own opinion) as much of the material on their website has been written by members of the church although you should be pay close attention to any teaching you read.