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HOW DID WE GET THE BIBLE?

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ First off, isn't it interesting that we are even asking this question? I mean how many people do you know who make a habit of studying an ancient document written on the other side of the world on a daily basis?
- ▶ The fact that we have the Bible in the form that we have it is in itself a miracle

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

- ▶ Before we go any farther it's important to ask ourselves, "What is the Bible?"
- ▶ It's not a rule book for living (although it contains many rules and laws to follow)
- ▶ It's not a love letter from God (although it does tell us that we are loved by God)
- ▶ It is first and foremost a story of how God has rescued and formed a people and invited all of us into a covenant relationship with himself.

EPIC NARRATIVE

- ▶ It's more than just one book it is a library of 66 books all telling one huge story.
- ▶ It is a divine and human work. (Think incarnation)
 - ▶ Fully inspired by God
 - ▶ Using normal men with their own stories, history, language, and personality
- ▶ It's meditation literature designed for lifelong reading.

WHAT'S IN THIS LIBRARY?

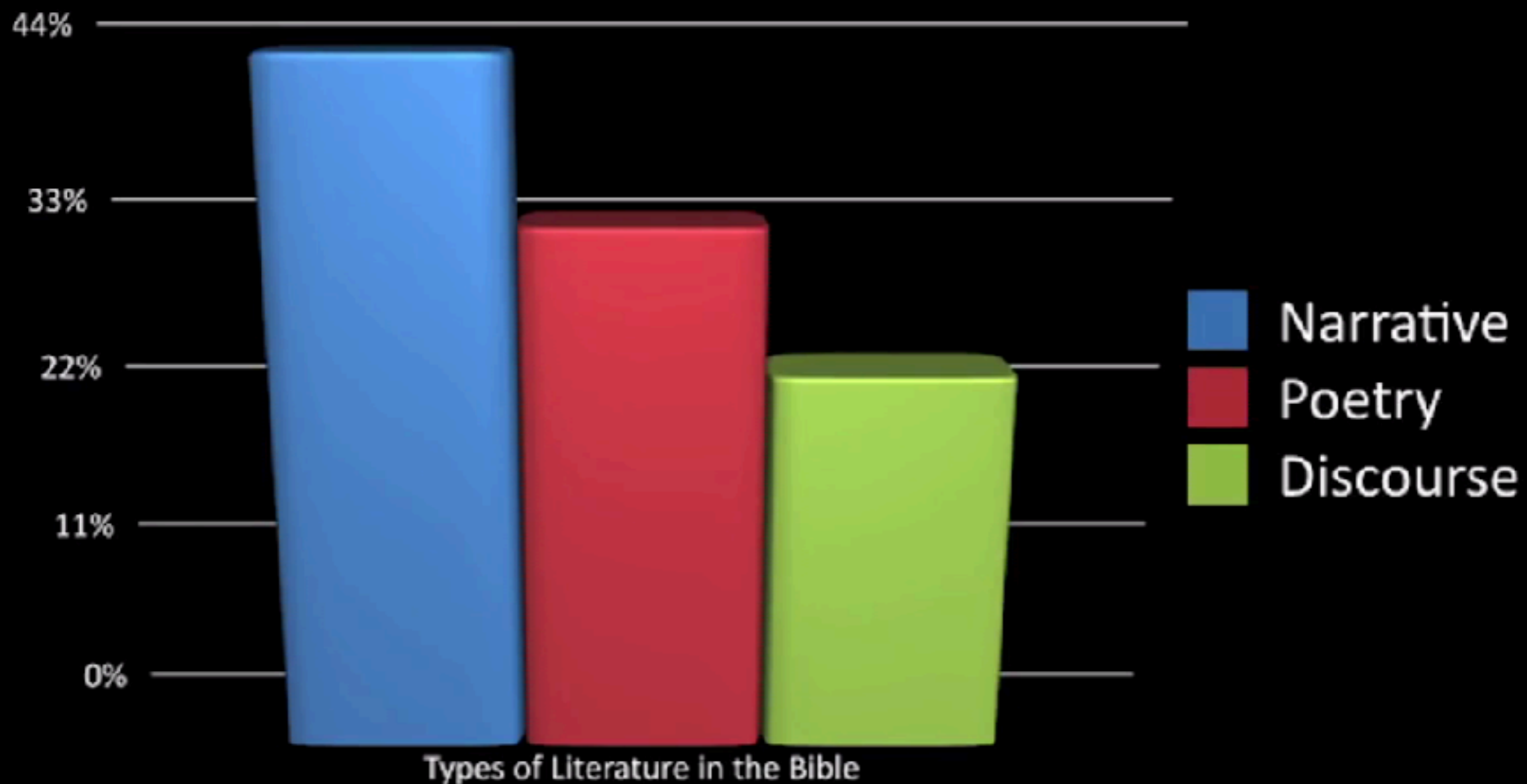
- ▶ 66 books
 - ▶ 39 in the Old Testament
 - ▶ 27 in the New Testament
- ▶ Written by 40+ authors in 3 languages on 3 continents (but still telling one unified story)
- ▶ "The Bible is an epic unified story consisting of hundreds of smaller stories, poems, and letters that leads to Jesus and has wisdom to offer the whole world." Tim Mackie

LUKE 24:25-27

- ▶ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
- ▶ All of the Bible is about Jesus (Moses and all the prophets is shortcut for the whole Old Testament)

DIFFERENT STYLES

- ▶ Narrative 43%
- ▶ Poetry 33%
- ▶ Discourse (preaching and letters) 24%



Narrative = 502 chapters = 43%

Poetry = 387 chapters = 33%

Discourse = 300 chapters = 24%

POETRY

- ▶ “Poetry is a creative type of literature that condenses language in a way to engage your imagination and emotion. A third of the Bible is not trying to give you information, it’s trying to give you an experience and feel something deeply. Dictionaries and rule books don’t read like this.” - Tim Mackie

GOD-BREATHED

- ▶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17

HOW DID WE GET IT?

- ▶ 2 Peter 1:16-20 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

IT'S NOT LIKE

- ▶ The authors fell into a trance where their hand unconsciously penned the Bible
- ▶ The Bible fell from heaven in the form we have it

BUT IT IS

- ▶ God used human writers with their own vocabulary, personalities, back stories, and life situations to write what He wanted to say.
- ▶ A miraculous event occurring by pretty natural processes.
- ▶ Men wrote as carried along by the Holy Spirit
- ▶ God was involved with the whole process

BUT HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

- ▶ God told men to write and they wrote
- ▶ The first time the Bible mentions the writing of the Bible
 - ▶ Exodus 17:8-9, 14 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

THE SECOND MENTION OF THE BIBLE BEING RECORDED

- ▶ Exodus 24:3-8 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

PRETTY NATURAL

- ▶ God is telling Moses to record His story
 - ▶ Ex 17 God rescuing His people
 - ▶ Ex 24 The invitation to covenant relationship

NATURAL PROCESS

- ▶ Eyewitness accounts
- ▶ Recording their people's story for the following generations ("informal controlled oral tradition")
- ▶ Compiling evidences
 - ▶ Luke 1
 - ▶ Citing sources
 - ▶ Editing
 - ▶ Dictation

THIS IS THE WAY GOD CHOSE TO DO IT

- ▶ This is not the way that our western thinking minds want this to be. We want the Scriptures to fall from the sky to us in a perfect form.
- ▶ The fact is that God used human beings doing things in a human way to record His Word to us.
- ▶ The real miracle is that we have 40 authors writing 60 books telling one unified story.

CAN WE TRUST IT?

- ▶ To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.
- ▶ John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity*

We know of no councils or debates about the contents of the Hebrew Bible from the period of Second Temple Judaism.

It is very striking that, over a period ranging from the second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., so many writers, of so many divergent groups (Palestinian, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Essene, Christian) show such agreement about the canon of the Hebrew Bible... None of these witnesses are concerned with asserting the authority of the books they mention, rather they all assume the Scripture's authority, and go on to debate about their interpretation.

R.T. Beckwith, "The Formation of the Hebrew Bible."

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH IT?

- ▶ This ancient, foreign book from the Middle East still applies to every aspect of our lives today, because it is the very Word of God.
- ▶ Read a lot
- ▶ Study a little
- ▶ Ask God to change you through it.

