**Podcast 2 episode**

**The bible** is unique one of a kind. It is the word of God. **It is a divine revelation that revelation is divinely inspired.** God has revealed His will to us in the Bible. In the Bible, God speaks to us. He does so through letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs. We can understand if we can read. God's will is expressed through human words. How can words describe God's will? The answer is through inspiration. Humans were "carried along" in 2 Peter 1:20-21. The Bible is not more specific than that, however. It does not tell us how the Holy Spirit moved these writers so that their writings express God's will. There are some unanswered questions, and as far as we know, God did not dictate the words of the Bible to the writers, but neither did he merely give them suggestions on what to write, leaving the choice of words to them. There is no description of how God inspires a specific person to write scripture. What we do have, however, is a clear statement that the written words, as we now have them in the Bible, are "God-breathed" 2 Timothy 3:16.

When we speak of the Bible as inspired, we are referring to the fact that God divinely influenced the human authors of the Scriptures in such a way that what they wrote was the very Word of God. In the context of the Scriptures, the word “inspiration” simply means “God-breathed.” Inspiration means the Bible truly is the Word of God and makes the Bible unique among all other books.

**Canon- (Gk Kanon- Measuring stick)** The word "canon" is derived from the rule of law that was used to determine if a book was up to standard. It is important to realize that the writings of Scripture were canonical at the time they were written. Scripture was Scripture when the pen first touched the parchment. Christianity does not begin by defining God, Jesus Christ, or salvation as a starting point. Christianity is founded on the authority of Scripture. It is impossible to properly distinguish between theological truth and error if we cannot define what Scripture is.

The difficulty in determining the biblical canon is that the Bible does not give us a list of the books that belong in the Bible. Determining the canon was a process conducted first by Jewish rabbis and scholars and later by early Christians. Ultimately, it was God who decided what books belonged in the biblical canon. A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing. It was simply a matter of God’s convincing His human followers which books should be included in the Bible.

**Old Testament/ The Soferim (also the Zugoth, the Tannaim, and the Masoretes**)  
Beginning around 500 BC, a specialized class of scholars called Soferim were responsible for the laborious task of hand-copying the holy manuscripts. These ancient scribes recognized the Scriptures as God’s authoritative Word and are known to have reverentially approached the work of copying the Scriptures with meticulous, painstaking care. Because the scribes held the sacred writings in such high regard, we can be assured of the Old Testament’s trustworthiness.  
  
Dedicated to the integrity and preservation of the Scriptures, the Soferim began the process of officially identifying the Old Testament canon. These esteemed scribes were considered experts in the Mosaic Law and taught methods of applying the principles of Judaism to everyday life. Over time, the traditional duties of the Soferim were taken over by a group of conservative Jewish scholars known as the Pharisees. Unlike the Sadducees, a sect that discounted the validity of much of the Hebrew Bible, the Pharisees adhered to the infallibility of Scripture.

**New Testament**- It is important to note that church leadership did not decide which books to include in the canon as much as they attempted to discover which books God had given to the church and should therefore be included. When attempting to determine which books were inspired and authoritative (books that should be included in the canon), the early church had three primary requirements: **Apostolic Authority:** Christ gave His Apostles the task of preserving His teaching and taking it to all the world.

**Orthodox Doctrine:** There were many early documents that claimed to teach Christian doctrine but were in error. Much of the New Testament was written to combat these errors. Any document that contradicted the accepted teaching of the apostles was rejected.

**Broad-Based Acceptance:** To be considered canonical, a book had to have broad-based acceptance and recognition of its authoritative nature across the Christian world. Letters written by Paul to churches in Asia Minor were saved, copied, and circulated all over the civilized world, and Christians all over the world recognized their authoritative nature.

We accept by faith that the canon is correct; however, it is not blind faith. The early church had very specific ideas about what type of book should be included in the canon, and modern Christians can affirm their decisions. They were certainly in a better position than we are to make this determination.

**A closed canon**- The canon of Scripture was determined by God, not men. Making this distinction is important. The accepted books were not considered inspired because humans determined that they should be part of the canon; they were included in the canon because God inspired them at the time they were written. God’s people were only responsible for discovering or recognizing the canon. The Process of discovery started with Jewish scholars and rabbis and was finalized by the early Christian church by the end of the fourth century.

As the early church tested and discerned what was truly the divinely inspired Word of God, a complete or closed canon developed. Despite the imperfections of human nature, God's purpose ultimately prevailed.

As of today, Protestants include 66 books from the Old and New Testaments in their canon. Several Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches accept additional writings, known as the Apocrypha, which are not considered authoritative or divinely inspired by Judaism or Protestantism.

The most significant implication of a closed canon is that new books cannot be added, and no books can be removed from the Bible. God has spoken.

A closed canon also implies that there are no apostles or prophets today who are receiving new messages from God. The church is gifted with teachers and preachers of the Word today, but anyone who claims a new revelation from God, proffers his or her message as divinely inspired, or assumes authority on par with the Bible is leading people astray. Sadly, many in the church give heed to dreams and visions shared from the pulpit and to those who falsely claim that “God spoke to me.” Examples of new revelations are cults that have mislead and even murdered thousands of people.

A closed canon means that God has already revealed everything His children need to know. This means that everything He has revealed in the Scriptures is divinely inspired. No additions should be made, and nothing should be removed or ignored.

Having a closed canon doesn't mean that God has ceased to reveal Himself to people today, but rather that there will be no new revelation of truth beyond what He has already revealed in the Bible. The closed canon of Scripture contains everything we need to know about Himself, about us, and about what the future holds (see 2 Peter 1:3).