

Introduction

Almost all biblical scholars agree that the New Testament documents were all written before the close of the First Century. If Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30., then that means the entire New Testament was completed within 70 years. **This is important because it means there were plenty of people around when the New Testament documents were penned--people who could have contested the writings.** In other words, those who wrote the documents knew that if they were inaccurate, plenty of people would have pointed it out. But, we have absolutely no ancient documents contemporary with the First Century that contest the New Testament texts.¹

Recently discovered -- a fragment of the gospel of Mark that dates to about the year 80. [roughly 50 years from the crucifixion]²

Circumstances surrounding the NT writings

John [an eyewitness] wrote so that people would believe that Jesus is the Messiah

- Joh 20:31 NIV But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- 1Jn 1:1-3 NIV That which was from the beginning, which **we have heard**, which **we have seen with our eyes**, which **we have looked at and our hands have touched**--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. (2) The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. (3) We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Luke wrote so that so that his friend, 'Theophilus' would know the certainty of the things he had been taught

- Luk 1:1-4 NIV Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, (2) just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. (3) With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, (4) so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

¹ <https://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>

² <http://conservativetribune.com/biblical-discovery-atheists-not-happy-mark/>

Luke continued his story by writing the book of Acts

- Act 1:1-2 NIV In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach (2) until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Paul wrote to bring instruction to the church

- 1Co 5:9-10 NIV **I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--** (10) not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

Peter considered Paul's letters as scripture

- 2Pe 3:15-16 NIV Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, **just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.** (16) He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which **ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

John considered his writing of The Revelation as prophecy

- Rev 1:3 NIV **Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,** and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Paul consider the book of Luke as scripture

- 1Ti 5:18 NIV For **Scripture says,** "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain [Deut 25:4]," and "The worker deserves his wages [**Luke 10:7**]."

Jude wrote to contend for the faith and to preserve them from false doctrine

- Jud 1:3-4 NIV Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and **urge you to contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. (4) For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Churches were encouraged to exchange apostolic letters and read them publicly

- Col 4:16 NIV After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also **read in the church of the Laodiceans** and that **you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.**
- 1Th 5:26-27 NIV Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. (27) I charge you before the Lord to **have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.**

There were other letters going around to deceive the people of God

- 2Th 2:1-3 NIV Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, (2) **not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the**

teaching allegedly from us--whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter--asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (3) Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

Mark of validation possibly to counter false letters

- 2Th 3:16-17 NIV Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. (17) **I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters.** This is how I write.

The letters carried authority toward obedience

- 2Th 2:14-16 NIV He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15) So then, brothers and sisters, **stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.** (16) May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

Peter wrote to encourage the saints

- 2Pe 3:1 NIV Dear friends, **this is now my second letter to you.** I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

The church accepted Paul's teaching as the word of God

- 1Th 2:13 NIV And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Summary of the writings

So we are beginning to see an outline of how the NT books came about. Men were moved upon by the Holy Spirit to write to **individuals** (Luke & Philemon, Timothy & Titus) or to **churches** (Ephesians & Colossians) or to **groups** of people (Peter wrote to those who had been scattered) to address unique circumstances; This body of writings is what ultimately became the NT Canon.

- To communicate an accurate history of the life of Jesus
- To lead people to belief and eternal life
- To encourage the people of God
- To give instruction for daily life
- Some of the writings were considered as Scripture (even at the time of their writing)
- The writings contained teaching that should be shared in all the churches
- There were public readings of the writings
- There were also false teachings that were spreading
- There was a need to validate truth from error

God has spoken by His Spirit in the OT as well as the NT

This is somewhat repetitious from earlier sections; but if you remember we have over 24,000 manuscripts, fragments and copies of New Testaments, compared to relatively few for the Old Testament. The reason is -- The "rules" used by the Jews in copying and proofreading the Old Testament were, for the most part, not used in copying the New Testament.⁷

Having such a great number of manuscripts makes the process of Textual Criticism work so well for discovering the original text of the NT. That coupled with the accuracy between the relatively few OT manuscripts [especially the Masoretic text, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Septuagint], leave no doubt that we hold the inspired, inerrant and authoritative word of God in our hands when we open the Bible, both Old and New Testaments.

- 1Pe 1:10-12 NIV Concerning this salvation, **the prophets, who spoke of the grace** that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, (11) trying to find out the time and circumstances to which **the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah** and the glories that would follow. (12) It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things **that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**. Even angels long to look into these things.

Factors leading to a need to recognize a NT Canon

2Th 2:1-2 NIV Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, (2) not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching **allegedly from us**--whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter--asserting that the day of the Lord has already come.

- From the earliest days of the church, there were false letters and books circulated in the names of apostles
- The NT writings were being recognized as scripture - so they naturally began to be collected
- Letters from the apostles were used in public worship - so there was a need to determine which were canonical (Note: - not all of Paul's letters are canon)
 - 1Co 5:9 NIV I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--
 - Col 4:16 NIV After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.
- Emperor Diocletian in A.D. 303, demanded that all sacred books be burned - this made a collection of the NT an urgent matter

Gradually, the church identified which books were acceptable by a stringent set of criteria, including content, apostolic authorship, and acceptance by the church as a whole. **All the councils did was rubber-stamp what the laity had already recognized by the witness of the Spirit.**³

³ <https://bible.org/seriespage/3-thy-word-truth-inspiration-inerrancy-and-authority-bible>

Criteria

1) Apostolic authorship

That is, they must have been written either by the apostles themselves, who were eyewitnesses to what they wrote about, or by associates of the apostles. Mark wrote the gospel of Mark, but he did so under Peter's endorsement. Luke, as a close associate of the Apostle Paul, wrote under the endorsement of his authority.

Prophets / OT, Apostles / NT

- Eph 3:4-5 ESV When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as **it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.**

Church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets

- Eph 2:19-21 NIV Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, (20) **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (21) In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

The church devoted itself to the apostles' teaching

- Act 2:42 NIV They devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

It is probably why such care was taken in choosing Judas' successor

- Act 1:21-23 NIV Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have **been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us**, (22) beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become **a witness with us of his resurrection.**" (23) So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

It is probably why Paul went to great lengths to establish his apostleship

- 1Co 15:3-10 NIV For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (5) and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. (6) After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. (7) Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, (8) and **last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.** (9) For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

The apostles were promised the Holy Spirit would remind them and teach them

- Joh 14:26 NIV But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and **will remind you of everything I have said to you.**
- Joh 16:13 NIV But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, **he will guide you into all the truth.** He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and **he will tell you what is yet to come.**

Can you see the emphasis Jesus placed on the message of these men?

- Joh 17:20 NIV "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also **for those who will believe in me through their message,**

This is not pride, rather it is a recognition that God has used them to speak His words

- 1Jn 4:6 NIV We are from God, and **whoever knows God listens to us;** but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.
- 1Th 2:13 NIV And we also thank God continually because, **when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God,** which is indeed at work in you who believe.
- 1Th 4:1-2 NIV As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2 **For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.**
- 2Th 2:15 NIV So then, brothers and sisters, **stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you,** whether by word of mouth or by letter.

Paul often mentioned that he wrote in his own hand - to identify his letter vs a counterfeit

- 2Th 3:17 NIV I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.
- (see also 1Co 16:21, Gal 6:11, Col 4:18, Phm 1:19)

2) Generally accepted by the church as from God

There was the reading the books in the assembly

- *And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and **the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits;***

then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. ...Justin Martyr Chapter LXVII.—Weekly worship of the Christians.

While a specific book is not mentioned, here is an example of how the apostles accepted Paul's gospel to the Gentiles

- Gal 2:1-10 NIV Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. (2) I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, **I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles.** I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain. (3) Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. (4) **This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.** (5) We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. (6) As for those who were held in high esteem--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism--they added nothing to my message. (7) **On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised.** (8) For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. (9) **James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.** (10) All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

3) Content = Consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching

- Gal 1:6-9 NIV I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- (7) which is really no gospel at all. **Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion** and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! (9) As we have already said, so now I say again: **If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!**

Gospel of Thomas - An example of book that did not meet the criteria for canonicity

1. The gospel of Thomas is not included in the Canon of the New Testament for the following reasons.
 1. The gospel of Thomas fails the test of **Apostolic authority**. None of the early church fathers from Clement to Irenaeus ever quoted from the gospel of Thomas. This indicates that they either did not know of it or that they rejected it as spurious. In either case, the early church fathers fail to support the gospel of Thomas' claim to have been written by the apostle. It was believed to be written around 140 A.D. There is no evidence to support its purported claim to be written by the Apostle Thomas himself.
 2. The gospel of Thomas fails **to conform to the rule of faith**. It purports to contain 114 "secret sayings" of Jesus. Some of these are very similar to the sayings of Jesus

recorded in the Four Gospels. For example the gospel of Thomas quotes Jesus as saying, "A city built on a high hill cannot be hidden." This reads the same as Matthew's Gospel except that **high** is added. But Thomas claims that Jesus said, "Split wood; I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there." That concept is **pantheistic**. Thomas ends with the following saying that denies women salvation unless they are somehow changed into being a man. "Let Mary go away from us, because women are not worthy of life." Jesus is quoted as saying, "Lo, I shall lead her in order to make her *male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males*. For every woman who makes herself male will enter into the *kingdom of heaven*."

3. The gospel of Thomas fails the test of **continuous usage and acceptance**. The lack of manuscript evidence plus the failure of the early church fathers to quote from it or recognize it shows that it was not used or accepted in the early Church. Only two manuscripts are known of this "gospel." Until 1945 only a single fifth-century copy translation in Coptic had been found. Then in 1945 a Greek manuscript of the Gospel of Thomas was found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. This compares very poorly to the thousands of manuscripts that authenticate the **Four Gospels**.⁴

Early indications that certain books were being accepted as authoritative - before the canon was officially adopted

While the composition of the New Testament was officially settled at the Council of Carthage in AD 397, we have seen above some scriptures that show the writings of the New Testament were considered inspired scripture at the time of their writing...Here are some other examples from early church fathers showing that acknowledgement of a canon was recognized much earlier than AD 397.

- Clement (30-100 A.D.) wrote an epistle to the Corinthian Church around 97 A.D. He reminded them to heed the epistle that Paul had written to them years before. Recall that **Clement had labored with Paul** (Philippians 4:3). He quoted from the following New Testament books: Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter, Hebrews, and James.
- The apostolic fathers Ignatius (30-107 A.D.), Polycarp (65-155 A.D.), and Papias (70-155 A.D.) cite verses from every New Testament book except 2 and 3 John. They thereby authenticated nearly the entire New Testament. **Both Ignatius and Polycarp were disciples of the apostle John**.
- Justin Martyr, (110-165 A.D.), cited verses from the following 13 books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, and Revelation.
- Irenaeus, (120-202 A.D.), wrote a five volume work **Against Heresies** in which,
 - He quoted from every book of the New Testament but 3 John.

⁴ <http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/bibleorigin.html>

- He quoted from the New Testament books over 1,200 times.
- Here's what Origen seems to have written in **the mid-third century** in one of his homilies on the book of Joshua: *When our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing "trumpets hammered thin," the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles [and Revelation], and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, "I think God displays us apostles last," and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations.*⁵

Marcion

The first collection of New Testament books was proposed by a man named Marcion in A.D. 140. Marcion was a docetist (docetism is a system of belief that says all spirit is good and all material matter is bad), and so **Marcion excluded any book that spoke of Jesus being both divine and human**, and **he also edited Paul's letters** to match his own philosophy.

Muratorian Canon

The next proposed collection of New Testament books on record was the Muratorian Canon, dated A.D. 170. It included all four gospels, Acts, 13 of Paul's letters, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

Early church fathers quotations indicate which books they esteemed as inspired

Quotations exist from the early church fathers that allow the near reconstruction of the entire New Testament as it is found today. For example, Clement (c. A.D. 95) quotes from 11 New Testament books, Ignatius (c. A.D. 107) quotes from nearly every New Testament book, and Polycarp (a disciple of John, c. A.D. 110) quotes from 17 New Testament books. Working with early church fathers' quotes, the entire New Testament can be pieced together with the exception of some 20-27 verses, most of them from 3 John. *[John Burgon has catalogued more than 86,000 citations by the early church fathers who cite different parts of the New Testament. Thus we observe that there is so much more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text than any other comparable writings in the ancient world.]* Such evidence provides witness to the fact that the New Testament was recognized far before the Council of Carthage in A. D. 397 and that the New Testament reflects today what was written 2,000 years ago.⁶

In the fourth century there was also prominent recognition of a New Testament canon. When Athanasius wrote in A.D. 367 he cited the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as being the only true books. In A.D. 363 the Council of Laodicea stated that only the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were to be read in the churches. The Council of Hippo

⁵ <http://michaeljkruger.com/what-is-the-earliest-complete-list-of-the-canon-of-the-new-testament/>

⁶ <https://www.gotquestions.org/original-Bible.html>

(A.D. 393) recognized the twenty-seven books, and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) affirmed that only those canonical books were to be read in the churches.

So Now What?

Psa 19:7-11 NIV The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. 11 By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Psa 19:7 NIV The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

- **Perfect** - *entire* (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) *integrity, truth*: - without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright (-ly), whole.
 - Same word is used --- Exo 12:5 NIV The animals you choose must be year-old males without **defect**, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.
 - The idea is as a lamb without blemish

- **Refreshing** [*restoring*] the soul - KJV **Converting** the soul - to turn back (hence, away) transitively or intransitively, literally or figuratively (not necessarily with the idea of return to the starting point); generally to *retreat*; often adverbially *again*:
 - Same word is used here --- Psa 23:3 NIV he **refreshes** my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
 - Psa 51:12 NIV **Restore** to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
 - Psa 51:13 NIV Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will **turn back** to you.
 - Psa 80:3 KJV **Turn us again**, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

- **Trustworthy** - God is faithful and to be believed
 - A primitive root; properly to *build* up or *support*; to foster as a parent or nurse; figuratively to render (or be) firm or *faithful*, to *trust* or *believe*, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain
 - Gen 15:6 NIV Abram **believed** the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
 - Isa 49:7 NIV This is what the LORD says-- the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel-- to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of **the LORD, who is faithful**, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

- Isa 43:10 NIV "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and **believe** me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

- **Making wise the simple**

- The simple are --- *silly* (that is, *seducible*)
- Psa 119:130 NIV The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Psa 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are **right**, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving **light** to the eyes.

- **Right**

- straight (literally or figuratively)
- Psa 25:8 NIV Good and **upright** is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
- Psa 33:4 NIV For the word of the LORD is **right** and true; he is faithful in all he does.

- **Joy to the heart**

- to brighten up, that is, (figuratively) be (causatively make) blithe or gleesome: - cheer up, be (make) glad, (have make) joy (-ful), be (make) merry, (cause to, make to) rejoice, X very
- Psa 92:4 NIV For you make me **glad** by your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what your hands have done.

- **Light**

- Psa 119:105 NIV Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Psa 19:9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

- **Pure** - From H2891; pure (in a physical, chemical, ceremonial or moral sense): - clean, fair, pure (-ness).

- Psa 12:6 NIV And the words of the LORD are **flawless**, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.
- Psa 51:10 NIV Create in me a **pure** heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

- **Enduring forever**

- Isa 40:8 NIV The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."
- Psa 119:89 NIV Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.
- Mat 24:35 NIV Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

- **Judgements or decrees are firm and righteous**

- stability; figuratively certainty, truth, trustworthiness

- Gen 18:25 NIV Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! **Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"**