

Entrance Examination
Life and Literature of the New Testament

Name: _____
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“Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward.”
– *Vernon Law, pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates*

This exam is open book, open note, open mouth, open mind. Before you answer these questions, discuss them with those around you. Have fun. Debate, agree, disagree, and make a new friend.

A. Answer “true” or “false.” If possible, justify your answer in one or two sentences.

1. ___ The Bibles we use are translations of translations of translations.
2. ___ The Bible was rarely used in theology, preaching, or worship before the Reformation.
3. ___ The Church agreed on which books were in the New Testament only centuries after they were written.
4. ___ The Church never fully agreed on which books were in the New Testament.
5. ___ Some of the writers of the gospels took other gospels and changed the words.
6. ___ Jesus overturned the tables in the Jerusalem Temple only a few days before his death.
7. ___ Christian belief in the resurrection developed only years after Jesus’ death.
8. ___ First-century standards of accuracy in history writing were different from standards today.
9. ___ The Bible forbids women to lead in churches.
10. ___ We are not sure of the exact words of the New Testament writings.
11. ___ The Bible is like a compendium of timeless truths collected in letters and books.
12. ___ The inspired words of the New Testament are still like ordinary words in other ways.

13. ___ The Catholic Church excluded scriptures from the New Testament to make it consistent and supportive of its own teachings.
14. ___ The partial accounts of Jesus' life in the four gospels could be combined to produce a more complete account.
15. ___ The books of the New Testament were written only decades after Jesus' death.
16. ___ The four gospels tell who wrote them.
17. ___ The first Christians had no scriptures to rely on, but only oral traditions.
18. ___ The gospels differ mainly in the ways that different eyewitnesses commonly differ about events that each of them witnessed.
19. ___ The point of a sermon should be to communicate the original meaning of a biblical passage.
20. ___ The New Testament writings "translate" Jesus into Greco-Roman ways of thinking because the first-century church was no longer culturally Jewish.
21. ___ The New Testament does not portray Jesus as God; that idea only came centuries later.
22. ___ Jesus' words are infallible, but Paul's letters are fallible.
23. ___ To write Scripture is to become something like a secretary who merely transcribes for the Holy Spirit.
24. ___ To write Scripture is nonetheless to write one's own words from one's personal perspective.
25. ___ Only some of the words of the New Testament are true.
26. ___ No one knows who really wrote some of the letters of the New Testament.

27. ___ Just because a letter claims to be from Paul or Peter does not mean Paul or Peter is really the writer.
28. ___ Since every verse in the Bible is a true statement, its literary and historical contexts are not very important.
29. ___ Since the literary or historical contexts of some biblical passages are now unknown, those passages are no longer meaningful.
30. ___ Because the Bible is God's Word to everyone, it does not take special training to understand it.
31. ___ Most of the events portrayed in Revelation took place in the first century.
32. ___ Because the Bible is God's Word to the church, individual readers need the church to help them interpret it correctly.
33. ___ The Church went fundamentally wrong shortly after the apostles died, and only recovered many centuries later with the Reformation.
34. ___ The Bible is used more heavily in "Bible church" services than in Catholic worship.
35. ___ It would have been better if the writers of the gospels had been more interested in historical accuracy.
36. ___ Because God can create personal faith in any way God likes, strictly speaking it is not necessary for Christians to hear or read the Bible to be healthy believers.
37. ___ Conservative Christians value the Bible more than liberal Christians.
38. ___ Christians with different books in their Bibles still share a common faith and belong to one church.
39. ___ Christians with *the same* books in their Bibles *must* share a common faith and belong to one church.

40. ___ Because the precise meaning of Scripture is so important, Bible translations that vary indicate a lot of theological confusion, ignorance, and division.
41. ___ To be meaningful, biblical texts depend not only upon themselves but also on the imagination and creativity of their readers.
42. ___ James contradicts Paul when he claims that we are justified by works.
43. ___ God would not have let something as important as the Bible become corrupted over the ages.
44. ___ There was dramatic and irreconcilable diversity among Christians in the first century, not one unified and homogenous movement.
45. ___ The Church in Bible times was faithful and healthy; only later did Christianity depart from the truth and experience serious problems.

B. Answer the following questions.

46. Which writings of the New Testament are most important?
47. Which writings of the New Testament are least important?
48. Name a way the Bible is used in Christian tradition (in history, or in your church) that you consider wrong, and explain why.
49. Name a way the Bible is used in Christian tradition that you consider indispensable or at least very important, and explain why.
50. If you had to describe the word “biblical” in only two or three sentences to someone who was not familiar with it, what would you say?