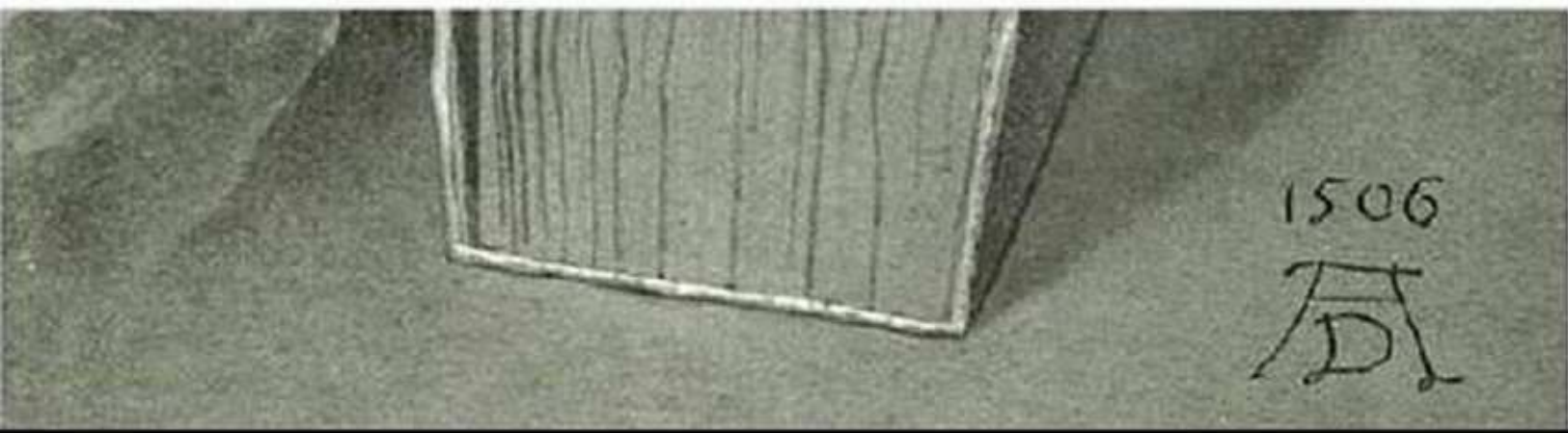




THE BOOK GOD “BREATHED”

KEITH A. MOSHER, SR.



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The Book God “Breathed”
Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

This book is dedicated to Dorothy Carol Cox Mosher



who has been my faithful, long-suffering
companion for forty-six years.

She has endured financial shortage, movings, my
absences, complainings on my part,
and my general ineptnesses,
but has cleaved to me
as God instructed her to do (Gen. 2:18).

No preacher's wife has tried harder
to encourage her husband and his work
than Dorothy has.

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The student will want to read the material and the Bible references before attempting to answer the questions at the end of each lesson. The text used is the King James Version unless otherwise stated.

This study is designed to let the Bible speak for itself and to discover logical proof, concerning the claim that the holy book came from God's mind through man by a propositional process understandable by man.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture came not of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).

PREFACE

The material for the three volumes in this collection was compiled from classroom lectures at the Memphis School of Preaching. I started teaching the subject of General Biblical Introduction in 1984 and realized, after a short period, that not much material had been printed for personal or congregational study among churches of Christ. It is interesting to note that after twenty-five years of classes that my approach to this study has not changed. I still first instruct the students concerning biblical inspiration. Then I teach the classes as to which books belong in the Bible (canonicity) and last of all, textual criticism (how the manuscripts of the Bible were passed from generation to generation) is reviewed.

The first two volumes in these studies were published separately, but my beloved brother in Christ, Paul Sain of Sain Publications, encouraged me to put those two volumes and the last one on textual criticism in one volume. This book is the result. To put my thoughts into writing, of course, is risky for I am now open to criticism or, maybe, even applause from those who use this volume.

These volumes have been difficult to write and most time consuming. Hopefully those who are interested in these subjects will derive spiritual benefit from the material and will be enlightened as to how to defend the Bible as being directly from the mind of God. The following pages of the study have questions at the end of each chapter which inquiries are designed to help the student better understand the subjects discussed.

The encouragement I have received from my students, fellow alumni of the School of Preaching, fellow faculty, and friends, to complete this work, has been overwhelming. My greatest support has come, however, from the love of my life, Dorothy. She has been my soul-mate for more than forty-six years and has always been there to encourage me in my small endeavors to preach and teach God's Word. I also want to thank all, who in any way, read manuscripts or typed material or made suggestions concerning this effort. Most of all, I thank my God and my Lord for providentially allowing me to teach and preach His Word and for giving the world the greatest Book ever—the Bible. I defend it in these volumes with no doubt about the inerrant, verbally inspired nature of the text.

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

**SECTION ONE: THE BOOK GOD “BREATHED” -
- THIRTEEN LESSON STUDY OF VERBAL,
PLENARY INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE**

Section One Introduction

by Curtis Cates

The three greatest questions ever to be asked in the history of the world (and, they have been asked universally throughout the millenniums since creation) are these: Where did I originate? Why am I here? and Where am I going? Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, enables man to answer these vital matters and thus to have hope of eternal existence with the Creator and Father of all mankind; He has gone to prepare a place in heaven for those who know and obey the truth (John 14:1-6; 8:32; 17:17; Heb. 5:8-9). However, that hope depends upon "The Book God 'Breathed.'" Is the Bible the very Word of God?

This book by Keith A. Mosher, Sr., is a definitive work in which he very capably affirms and defends the fact that the Scriptures are the plenary, infallible, verbally inspired Word of God. He is greatly qualified to produce such a document, for he is a faithful and able evangelist, a thorough Bible scholar, and one who loves the Lord. He is the Dean of Academics of the Memphis School of Preaching, where he has taught courses in Bible for more than fifteen years (including the course in General Bible Introduction). He graduated with a Master of Theology Degree from Southern Christian University and with a Doctor of Ministry Degree from the Harding University Graduate School of Religion.

A Critically Vital Subject

The very foundation of Christianity is the fact that Jesus Christ is the "only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16). But, what assurance exists that He is deity, except that the Holy Scriptures are proven to be the infallible message from God? Since the Bible was written by human beings for human beings, man's very hope rests upon the question, "Could the Scriptures be the very Word of God, though penned by men?" Brother Mosher will affirm the answer to be "yes!"

God urges human beings to investigate, for faith is based upon evidence, the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). He challenges mankind, "Come now and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18), and "Produce your cause, saith Jehovah; bring forth your strong reasons" (Isa. 44:21). Paul describes Christianity as a life "belonging to the reason" (Rom. 12:1, ASV margin), from *logikos* (logic). Thus, one is to "give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you" (1Peter3:15). The Lord would have us make a reasoned, logical response to the evidence (see 1 Sam. 12:7; Acts 18:4; 24:25; 1 Cor. 2:2-5). The evidence is presented in this book.

Modernism Versus Supernaturalism

The Scriptures' infallibility necessitates the existence of an omnipotent, non-contingent, all-wise, omnibenevolent Creator, who has all authority and exercises that authority over mankind through His divine revelation. Christianity is a revealed religion; though the Lord spoke/ speaks as one having authority, most of His offspring have refused to have God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:18ff).

Christianity is by necessity a supernatural religion; it reveals and describes the Creator of the universe, Who miraculously and extraordinarily intervened in the history of the world to bring about the scheme of redemption, to confirm the Word, and to accomplish His purpose in the world. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15), their close and intimate relationship with the Creator was broken; they were separated by their transgression from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Far from being uninterested in His offspring (Acts 17:25-29; Heb. 12:9; Gen. 1:26-27), God began immediately to move toward Calvary and toward man's redemption through the God-man, Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:15). The movement of history was inexorably toward the death upon the cross of the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Thereby, and only thereby, could/ can man's sins be forgiven and man redeemed, reconciled to God (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Heb. 10:5-10; 1John2:1-3).

That is the story of the Bible, dear reader. Only through the inspired Word can a person correctly deal with the verities of life; to abandon revelation and inspiration is always to end in vain speculation and vain imagination, as well as in perverted religion (Rom. 1:18-28).

O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23; Rom. 10:1-3).

Every false religion results from seeking God apart from divine inspiration, the Scriptures. However, the story and purpose of the Word of God seeking man. Only by the revelation of God to mankind does man receive true wisdom (Job 28). After Adam and Eve sinned, God was seeking them (Gen. 3:8-10); they were hiding. Who

sought whom at the burning bush (Exod. 3:1-6)? Moses hid his face. Why did Christ come to earth? "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Whatever the excuse for rejecting divine revelation, man does it at the cost of his eternal soul!

The Situation

Christianity is a way of life (ethically, morally, spiritually); it has great and precious promises to be enjoyed here-and in eternity. However, it has its foundation in Holy Writ. If the Bible is not God's Word, Christianity, with its marvelous hope, collapses like a house of cards. But, "There is a God of heaven" (Dan. 2:28), in whom we all live," move, and have our being" (Acts 17:24-28), the eternal Creator. Jesus Christ, also God, took on flesh, died, rose from the dead, and ascended back to heaven, where He now reigns (Phil. 2:5-11; Rom. 1 :4; Eph. 4:8-11). The Holy Spirit, also God, revealed the Word of Truth (John 16: 13; 14:26). The blood of the resurrected Savior cleanses us from sin (Eph. 1:7; Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5), and the Christian's citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), which is the eternal destiny awaiting and prepared for the faithful (Rev. 2:10). The situation is this-remove the inerrant, supernatural Book, and there is absolutely no substance to the claims of Christianity; it is but another world religion without portfolio, without credentials. Reject the infallible, inspired Word, and mankind's attempt to answer the most critically important questions of the ages is but futile; he is very much to be pitied. The truth, though, was powerfully affirmed by the Lord Himself, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Keith A. Mosher, Sr., has written a powerful affirmation of the Bible's inspiration. The faith of those who study it objectively will be strengthened in the Bible, and they will be fortified in the determination to defend the truth and to contend for the faith (Phil. 1:17; Jude 3). This volume is worthy of wide distribution and study.

--Curtis A. Cates

Chapter One: INSPIRATION – A DEFINITION: 2 Tim.3:16-17; 2 Peter1:20-21, 1 Cor. 2:10-13

The basic problem for students as to inspiration and revelation and in understanding the worth of the Bible is one of approach. Is the text just a human product of the ancient Near East, especially Mesopotamia and Canaan (known today as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia) or is the Bible directly from the mind of a Supreme Being (God) through the minds of especially selected writers? There is some value in realizing that the Bible was completed by real people living in a real world thousands of years ago, and there is worth in comparing the Bible with literature of that ancient period.

But, the disadvantage to treating the Bible as merely a human product is that such an approach denies what the text says about itself. This does not mean that one ignores ancient Near Eastern history, the geography of the region, the ancient pagan religions and culture, for the Bible does **not** ignore these subjects. But, approaching the Bible as from God incorporates the concept that God desires to communicate with His people and that there are significant differences between God's people and the ancient pagan peoples.

Only the biblical religion has survived from that ancient period-all other religions of that area died out and those in existence today, especially Islam, are from the period after the Bible was completed. Those who deny that the Bible came from a higher source than man's mind need to account for the latter fact. Why did (and do) human religions and writings eventually fade away, yet the Bible continues?

Again, one's view of the Bible is crucial to the way one approaches it. Are its teachings just good ideas and did the writer's personal opinions affect the messages? Or, is the Bible an absolute standard without fault and human ideas? The Psalmist claimed:

For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD (Psa. 117:2).

Note that the truth of God, according to the Bible, is "for ever" or "to all generations" as the Hebrew language has it. History is a convincing witness to that ancient pronouncement for the Bible has endured until this present hour.

Some try to find God in the universe or **cosmos**, but the heavens at best can only testify to a power or will guided by some intelligence pervading the universe. (This is called "general" revelation.) The will of that power toward rational creatures had to be revealed. (This is called "special" revelation.)

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple (Psalm 19:7).

In the natural realm there is that which supplies and gratifies every need and desire of the physical man, but if man is not a spiritual being, how can one account for love, intellect, morality, etcetera-what will satisfy man's spiritual hunger?

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

Only the Bible can satiate the spiritual nature of man.

The Bible teaches that "all scripture is inspired of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). The word translated "inspired" is from the Greek word *theopneustos*. (The New Testament was mainly written in koine or common Greek.) *Theopneustos* literally means "God-breathed." The human pen-man of 2 Timothy was a man named Paul. For him to use this adjective – *theopneustos* -- shows that Paul had received his message from God for the term has a polemical meaning; Human writings are not from God and therefore do not carry the authority of "scripture." The Bible, Paul

writes, can therefore satisfy every spiritual need of man.

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:17).

In other words, the best test of a writing's being inspired is its **proved** serviceableness for the moral and spiritual needs of man. The same Paul wrote,

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

Paul's fellow-apostle, Peter, concurred by writing:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake (as they were) moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).

But, what else does this term, "God-breathed" imply? It implies that the essence of the Bible is from deity and not from man. In fact, the Bible teaches that man himself is a product of God's "breath" (Gen. 2:7). The ancient prophet of God, Jeremiah, wrote:

Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth (Jer. 1:9).

Peter, mentioned above, insisted that the Bible never did originate in the mind of man (2 Peter 1:20). Man did not "privately" interpret nor arrive at the will of God. But, the men who did write scripture had to be "borne along" or "moved" by the "Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). One ancient prophet, Ezekiel, is a good illustration of what **inspiration** means biblically:

And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious (Ezek.2:7).

And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house (Ezek. 3:26-27).

The careful Bible student will note from this passage that God did the "talking" and **used** Ezekiel's mouth to do it. This is inspiration; this is a verbal message from God through Ezekiel.

Paul, who wrote many New Testament books and letters, insisted that:

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

Paul claimed that the Holy Spirit "knew" the "deep things of God" and communicated those same things to Paul in "words" (1 Cor. 2:13). Again, this is **verbal** inspiration. God used Paul's vocabulary to communicate God's message.

How much of the Bible is "God breathed?" Note that all scripture is inspired (1 Tim. 3:16). The idea that every word of the Bible was authorized by God is called **plenary** inspiration. The Bible is thus said to be plenary, verbally inspired. A working definition of inspiration is thus arrived at as God's influence on the mind of man to enable him to speak or write God's word.

Other Terms

The word, Bible, comes from *biblos*, a name given to the outer coat of the papyrus reed of Egypt around the eleventh century before Christ. The plural of **biblos** is **biblia** which term Christians began to apply to their sacred writings during the second century after Christ.

The word, testament, means "agreement." There is an old "testament" (Genesis through Malachi), and there is a new "testament" (Matthew through Revelation). Both the ancient Hebrew word (the Old Testament was mainly written in Hebrew with some Aramaic) and the Greek word translated **testament** would be better rendered as **covenant**. Moses labeled the agreement with those who would follow him a **covenant** (Deut 5:1ff). The Old covenant is now fulfilled by the New covenant;

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more (Heb. 8:6-12).

The Hebrew people divided their Bible into three parts: Torah (instruction); Nebhim (prophets); and Kethubhim (writings). It seems Jesus knew of this division for He said:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44).

Five books made up the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Twenty books (as in our English versions) made up the Nebhim, but the Hebrew scrolls amounted to **eight**: The Former Prophets - Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings; The Latter Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve (i.e. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). The Kethubhim consisted of **eleven** scrolls: Psalms, Job, Proverbs (poetry), Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther (the five scrolls), Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles (history).

The Hebrew Bible was translated for the first time around two hundred fifty years before Christ-into the Greek language. This version is called the Septuagint or LXX (the seventy) for legend has said that seventy scholars produced it. Jesus apparently knew this version, for the quotes attributed to Him by the gospel writers follow the text of the Septuagint (cf. Luke 4:18-29). Jesus' usage of a translation shows that when the original is correctly translated, the reader **has** the Word of God; that is, the Bible user is studying an **inspired** message.

The New Testament books are arranged **topically** as are the Old Testament. Matthew and Mark have as their purpose the inducement of **faith** that Jesus is King and Messiah. Luke encourages everyone to **repentance**. John defends the Deity of Jesus which one must **confess** to be a Christian;

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

The book of Acts emphasizes **baptism** or **conversion**. There are twenty-one books and epistles that follow, teaching the Christian how to remain **faithful**-Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John and Jude. One book, Revelation, emphasizes the victory for Christians.

The above New Testament arrangement hardly seems coincidental. One must have faith, repentance, confession, baptism, and a faithful life to gain heaven (Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 2:10). God's providence in the topical gathering of the New Testament parallels exactly the plan that man must follow in being a Christian. Since there are twenty-one books designed to teach one how to remain faithful and just five books instructing one on how to

become a Christian, one should get the idea that much effort is required in remaining faithful.

Jesus said to the Jews of His day:

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they that testify of me (John 5:39).

Redemption of man's soul and the message (revelation) that brings man to redemption center about Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; Heb. 10:7). Christ is the theme of both testaments and each section refers to Him in a special way:

1. The law of Moses or Torah lays a **foundation** for the coming of Christ (Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Exodus 12; Lev. 16; Nub. 20; Deut. 18; etc.).
2. The history books of the Old Testament are to be viewed as necessary to show how God's **preparation** of Israel for the Messiah's advent unfolded. (Messiah means "anointed one.")
3. The poetic books of the Old Testament set forth the **aspiration** of man for Messiah. (See Job 19:25 or Psalm 22 for example.)
4. The Old Testament prophets wrote of the **expectation** for messiah. (See, for example, Isaiah 9:6-7, 53; Jer. 31:31-33; etc.).
5. The gospel accounts of the New Testament contain the **manifestation** of Messiah's (Christ's) life (Matthew-Jude).
6. The Acts is a history of the **propagation** of the church of Christ and His message.
7. The Epistles (21) are an **interpretation** of the life of Christ and an **application** to His people (Christians).
8. The revelation pictures the **consummation** Christians anticipate in Christ.

The Bible writers were "inspired" not just in some intuitive way, but in a way that insured that what they penned would be God's message. The message was "God-breathed." The Holy Spirit "moved" those ancients to write, and the writers submitted their minds and wills to the Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer's normal cognitive functions, however, were not abandoned as if they were mere dictation machines, for their styles and thought processes were maintained as they wrote. This is "verbal" inspiration but not "dictation." God can and did use the words that the writer would already know, but the writer would not pen his own message but God's.

The product of the inspiration process is **revelation** that is completely free from error (inerrancy). Inspiration (God's act) uncovered (revealed) truth for man. This is sometimes called "divine disclosure."

Some think that God gave the writers the "thoughts" and allowed them to arrange the message. The Bible denies this:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13).

As the living Word of God (Christ) became flesh so the written message became "flesh" (John 1:14; 1 Cor. 2:15). God inspired, and man wrote. The result of this process is the **verbal** (words), **plenary** (every word), **inerrant** (errorless writings), **authoritative** (the words are from God) Bible.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your concept of the Bible? Why should the Bible be all authoritative? What Bible verses would suggest authority?
2. What are some of the basic approaches made in Bible study?
3. What are the advantages (values) in the above approaches and/ or the disadvantages?
4. What impact on one's faith does the fact that only the biblical religion survives from the ancient Near East have?
5. Discuss the difference (from Psalm 19) between "general" revelation and "special" revelation.
6. What is the "best" test for inspiration of the Bible and why?
7. What is plenary, verbal, inerrant inspiration?
8. What do the terms Bible, Testament, Torah, Nebhim, Kethubhim, former prophets and Septuagint mean?
9. Outline the New Testament according to the plan of salvation. What does this outline seem to imply concerning God's providence?
10. What is the difference between verbal inspiration and dictation?

Chapter Two: INSPIRATION – GOD SPOKE: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2 Samuel 23:1-2

The Bible teaches that at certain times God spoke in various ways in order to communicate his will for man.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high (Heb. 1:1-3).

The statement "God spoke" implies the existence of a Being who both loves His created ones and intends to give them whatever they need to enter His fellowship.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full (1 John 1:1-4).

Two questions arise from insisting that God has spoken: (1) Is there a God? (2) Why has He communicated with man?

Is there a God? Several things exist in one's mind that tend to resist truth when it is imparted. One's habits, prior beliefs, ideas, goals, and attitudes may combine to cause one not to desire to believe in the supernatural. This resistance is called "cognitive dissonance" and is the discord between what one knows and what one hears.

All persons also engage in "selective exposure" as they listen to the Bible message (or any message). They accept **only** what their background allows them to accept. Since there exists "selective exposure" (only parts of truth are received at any given moment), there also exists "selective perceptance." One cannot understand that which one is unable to accept. Therefore, to "prove" the existence of God requires involving the intellect, will, **and** emotion of man in the learning process. It is not biblical faith to accept blindly the existence of God, for every one must be willing to show interest in and to ask questions about the message from God **before** that one is going to be able to accept truth. God wants man to validate what is taught.

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matt. 13:13-15).

One of the disciples of Jesus Christ, Thomas, was told that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead (John 20:25a). Thomas' reply was:

Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe (John 20:25b).

Thomas was not rebuked for seeking proper evidence for the claim of the resurrection. In fact, the very next time he saw Jesus, Thomas was told,

Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing (John 20:27).

Thomas' reaction was to believe in the deity of the Christ (John 20:28). Faith that there is a God **must** be based on reliable, valid evidence, not on some "blind," emotional response (cf. Heb. 11:1-32).

The Bible, while not setting forth a formal argument (as a syllogism, for example) for the existence of God, does make reference to evidence for God's existence. The glory of Deity can be seen in the beauty and design of the universe (Psa. 19:1-6). The world and its events reveal a supernatural intelligence (Rom. 1:18-22). Paul and Barnabas noted that even though many nations had been permitted to "walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16),

Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:17).

The most fundamental of all biblical assertions is that "God is," and all else is secondary.

Man's origination of the idea of God is also a source fact for believing in His existence. There are multiple ideas about God" among earth's peoples. These concepts range from the hazy and imperfect of pagan notions to the biblical view of an absolute, infinite personality who is the primary cause of all that exists. Where did people get the idea of "God?" Some argue that man's concept of a higher-power stems from resident **forces** in the universe. (Some worship the sun, for example.) But, all discussions of the "first" cause ultimately lead to asking-who or **what** caused the resident forces? In other words, which was first-mind or matter?

If the idea of God as a pure Spirit, infinite in all His attributes and perfections, arose from a pure non-spirit, finite, no-God source, then something arose out of nothing, which occurrence would be contrary to all scientific fact! Again, from whence has come man's concept of an infinite being who has a will for man? The only alternative to man's having developed the Bible's concept of God from forces resident in the world and in man is-revelation!

In logic there must be a beginning point and an ending-an "A" to "Z." The Christian begins and ends with God. The non-believer must begin and end with something else, but what? It is an unvarying law of logic that one begin with a fact and reason from that fact (or facts) to a conclusion. If it is fact that the universe began from senseless matter, then according to science only mindless matter could be produced, for something can not come from nothing. There is an ordered world or "cosmos." Since there is a cosmos, then there must be a "cosmos-causer." The cosmos has design and order which factors are not present in mindless, organic material nor would such material be able to produce such order. If one desired to know what factors or combination of factors were present in the universe and so demanded an intelligent source, one could look to arithmetic (nine numerals and a naught), or literature (twenty-six letters), or even matter (one-hundred twelve or more elements). From combinations of the foregoing come mathematical solutions, all English literature, and all of the cosmos! How are such combinations **found**? Does one find a mathematical solution by accident? Does a novel produce itself? Did the universe come together from the chance merging of the elements? Someone has said that, "The chance that the universe happened is as remote as an explosion in a print shop producing a dictionary!"

Is nature a blind force? Or, is nature a force directed by intelligence? The former two questions help the student return to the basic problem. If there is sufficient evidence in the cosmos to make it more reasonable to believe that an intelligent will directs than to believe that blind force controls, then one **must** believe that such a being as God exists. If intelligence does direct the combination of the elements, then those combinations should appeal to one's intelligence. They do so appeal, for man has been intrigued by their study through all of man's existence. Therefore, if intelligence directs the combination of elements making up the cosmos, (and science insists on intelligent combinations) then one **must** admit the being of Deity. For, intelligence posits personality, and personality means being, and being implies God.

The question then follows as to why God communicated with and to man. Some may feel that such an inquiry stems from doubt, but the biblical writers themselves were concerned about God's interest in man. David, the "sweet singer" of ancient Israel (2 Sam. 23:1-2) asked, "What is man that thou art mindful of him" (Psa. 8:4)? Why did an all-powerful, self-sufficient Being deign to reveal His will to one dependent and created?

God Spoke; Why?

1. God spoke to man because God loves the world.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

God's love (sacrificial love) is seen in His Son's offering.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8).

Human beings might die for someone for whom they had some care or respect, but not **for** enemies. God's love is seen in the death of God's Son for those who murdered Him!

Also God's providential love extends to all men who are provided with sunshine, air to breathe, food to eat, and rain to grow their crops.

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matt. 5:45).

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe (1 Tim. 4:10).

Some can not **understand** why an all-powerful God would need man. Evidently God desired beings to love him who were creative and self-willed for no other kind of being could voluntarily love (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). But, a being who could choose to love could also choose not to love. In making man, God "took a chance" on man's rebelling. Man **did** reject God (Gen. 3:1-15), but God's love even provided for rejection .

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1:19-21).

The Old Testament book of Hosea pictures God's love in a unique fashion. The prophet Hosea is instructed to marry a woman whose mother was a harlot (Hosea 1:1-2). Hosea's wife, Gomer, herself becomes a harlot and deserts her husband (Hosea 2:1-5). During the period that Gomer follows "after her lovers," she thinks she is on her own, but Hosea has been supplying her needs especially as she becomes old and "used" (Hosea 2:6-8). The analogy pictures God and Israel. Israel practiced spiritual harlotry and worshipped idols, but all the while God protected her (Hosea 2:9ff). God loved her and pleaded for her return; His love superseded Israel's abominations (Hosea 3:1).

2. God spoke to man because God recognized the dignity of man.

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour (Psa. 8:5).

Man was made just a "**little lower**" than angels. (Hebrew *ma-av*, **little** as to space, condition, number, and time; plus *kamer*, **lower** or diminished-that is, as to man's condition, man is lower than heavenly powers.) But man was "crowned ... with glory and honour." (Hebrew: crowned is *ahmar*, **ornament** or **dignity**; glory is *kabod*, which term signifies anything respectable or esteemed; honor is *hadar*, or noble.)

Man, that is, Adam before his sin (Gen. 3), was created to live below the heaven of God but as a dignified, esteemed, noble individual. Man was sinless but man lost that state. God spoke to man in order to restore man to his original condition.

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24).

Christ Jesus lived as sinless man ("crowned with glory and honor," Heb. 2:9) in order to satisfy God's justice. Adam, the original sinless one, lost his honor, but Christ can restore such to those willing to obey Him.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).

All men would be much uplifted if they would recognize how God had always intended His created one to wear the ornament of dignity. Possibly all men might also treat one another better if they would recognize this nobility in each other (cf. John 13:34).

3. God spoke to man because man needs to know himself.

0 LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

As dignified as man is through creation, man still needs an independent directive in terms of knowing his origin, his purpose, and his destiny. Without revelation from God, what direction could man possibly have for life? Many settle for an existence that begins in the trauma of birth, endures through trouble, and ends in annihilation! How insane such a life would be. God does not want man to live without hope and purpose. Therefore God has spoken to man.

Thou art worthy, 0 Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Rev. 4:11).

It gives God great pleasure to have created and the creation glorifies God.

Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him (Isa. 43:7).

Common sense should tell each one that the godless life is hollow and has led to war, misery, and chaos. Is it not better that God has spoken to guide us? "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa.119:105).

4. God spoke to man because man needs to know God's will.

By the which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10).

Without knowledge of God's will there could be no entrance into heaven for no one would be "sanctified" (set apart) to God. Being sanctified requires knowing God's will.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

Sanctify them through thy truth: the word is truth (John 17:17).

There is a God in heaven who has spoken to man. He revealed His will so that man could relate to and be reconciled to God.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the Bible say about the various ways God has spoken to man?
2. What three things about the human mind tend to resist new truth or a new fact? (The term "selective" will help the student here.)
3. Why did Jesus' parables **hide** the truth from some? (See Matthew 13:13-15.)
4. What are some of the evidences for God's existence set forth in the universe?
5. What are some of the evidences for God's existence set forth in the Bible?
6. The ontological argument for God recognizes that man got his idea about this Being from somewhere. Discuss this argument.
7. What four reasons are given in this lesson for God's speaking to man? Are there more?
8. How was man crowned with glory and honor, and who came to take man's place in order to restore the crown?
9. How does knowing about one's destiny help to shape life?
10. How are men sanctified?

Chapter Three: INSPIRATION – AND REVELATION: AMOS 3:7; PSALM 19

Jeremiah, the seventh century B.C. prophet of Judah, claimed that when God called that ancient spokesman to his task:

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched his mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth (Jer. 1:9).

God "moved," and the prophet "mouthed;" God **revealed**, and the prophet **recorded**. Jeremiah was also told:

Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in my mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them (Jer. 5:14).

And if the people were to reject Jeremiah's counsel, he was to tell them:

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these (Jer. 7:4).

Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return (Jer. 8:5).

How was God able to hold an entire nation (Judah) responsible for rejecting God's law? Because what God inspired the prophets to speak had also been written:

How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain (Jer. 8:8).

In fact, the rebellion of Judah was "... written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond" (Jer. 17:1a). The iron pen and graving with a diamond, in the aforementioned verse, emphasize how deeply Judah's sin was "engraved" in her heart. But, the reference to writing implements is important for another reason—for what God inspired was often "inscripturated." That is, revelation was often committed to writing. **Inspiration is the process which produces revelation.**

Not all that God did has been recorded.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen (John 1:25).

But what man needs for salvation has been written as revelation. In fact, anyone who thinks himself to be spiritual must acknowledge that the Bible's message is a revealed one:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

Since Jeremiah knew of pens of iron and diamond, then writing the message **was** possible in his day. The iron "stylus" was used even in Job's day (about 1500 B.C.) for writing on hard material. "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" (Job 19:24). And, when the ancients wrote on tablets, it was for the purpose of impressing the writing very deeply so that one could not easily erase it. The prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah also wrote of writing implements:

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezek. 2:9-10).

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits (Zech. 5:1-2).

Judah could be held accountable because she had a written record of God's revealed will.

What God inspired or revealed often was inscripturated or written. The process was to use the mind of the prophet and the style of the prophet or inspired writer.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Sometimes God would directly write a thing, although such an event was rare:

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God (Exod. 31:18).

And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly (Deut. 9:10).

Most often God used the culture, personality, social setting, interests, and words of a specially prepared human being to reveal. Yet, the personality of the human speaker or penman was never altered nor diminished by the process. The resulting writing, however, was **scripture** and **authority**:

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? if he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:34-36).

Revelation: "Act And Word"

An eighth-century B.C. prophet from Judah who was called to preach "up north" to Judah's sister-kingdom, Israel, wrote:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

God does not keep His activities to Himself when those actions will affect people. God wants men to know how to obey and what to obey:

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. 12:25).

Revelation from God has come to man in **act** and **word**. God revealed Himself in the ancient world through activity.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will not turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, from the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason

of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptian oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 3:2-10).

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt (Exod. 12:12-13).

A large number of other Bible passages could also be gathered to illustrate the above point, but note from the former passages that God explained His actions to the people involved. The charge to keep passover (Exod. 13:2-10) explained God's freeing the children of Israel from Egyptian captivity. Here is an example of act **revelation** and **word revelation** in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament there is a record of the "last supper:"

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you (Luke 22:15-20).

This **action** of deity revealed His memorial. The revealed **word** of the inspired apostles of Christ explained how that memorial was to be put into practice:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup (1 Cor. 11:23-28).

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20:6-7).

It is very sad to note that even though God's **action** freed the ancient Israelites from Egypt and that Christ's action has freed those from sin who obeyed, God's own people have constantly failed to keep the Lord in their hearts:

Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number (Jer. 2:32).

The ancient Jews failed miserably in remembering the Lord. Some must have forgotten passover! And today, many who claim to follow Christ reject the **word** or revelation which word insists that the **action** instituted by Christ be performed every first day of the week (Acts 20:6-7).

Revelation: "To Lay Bare"

The Hebrew word often translated "revealed" in the Old Testament is *galah*.

The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deut. 29:29).

This word is also used in reference to "uncovering" or "making naked" the human body (Lev. 18:8). For God to "reveal" means, then, that God has "uncovered" something that He knew but which had not yet been made known to man. (Note from Deuteronomy 29:29 that God's revelation is complete only in the sense that God reveals what is necessary to direct man in faith. No man has "seen" God at any time-John 1:18.) The Old Testament *galah* is used both of human and divine events.

However, in the New Testament the term translated **revealed** is *apokalypto* and this word is used only of divine events.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:17-18).

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:5).

Other examples of this usage may be seen in Luke 12:2; Galatians 3:23; 1 Peter 1:12; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 14:6, 26; 2 Corinthians 12:1, 7; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3; and Revelation 1:1.

The necessity of revelation is twofold: (1) God transcends the space-time system in which human beings exist. Man cannot know God's specific will from man's limited viewpoint. (2) Man cannot claim any "internal" knowledge of the will of God separate from a revealed will (Jer. 10:23).

Revelation: "General And Specific"

God reveals Himself in two ways: generally and specifically. What is meant by "general revelation" is that which man knows of God from the created world. What is meant by "specific revelation" is that which man knows of God from the Bible. Psalm 19 sets forth both aspects of revelation.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults (Psa. 19:1-12).

God the creator (Psa. 19:1-6) and God the lawgiver (Psa. 19:7-12) are praised.

The majesty of stars and sky and the vastness of it all declare a Creator's glory. "For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4). Science notes that a star in the "alpha" class that has been named, Hercules, is 2 billion, 400 million miles across its surface! The nearest alpha star to earth (Alpha Centauri) is so far away that if one could travel at 25,000 miles per hour, one would need "just" 115,000 years to arrive! Photographic abilities today provide the information that there are more than 30 billion stars and yet the Bible records that these marvelous creations are just "parts of God's ways" (Job 26:14).

Note from Psalm 19:2-4 that the evidence of God's "handiwork" is seen every day and night (verse 2), and all the people of the earth have access to this general revelation (verses 3-4). The discourse of general revelation is not uttered from a silent corner. Such knowledge is everywhere audible in "words" understood by all.

The scriptures, on the other hand, are special revelation. Only the "law" of God can convert the soul (Psa. 19:7) The word of nature declares God's glory, but the Word of God declares His counsel and will.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The law of Moses was given on Sinai, which law Christ fulfilled (Rom. 10:4; 7:4-7). The law of Christ was given beginning on Pentecost, A.D. 33 and is in force now (1 Cor. 9:21; John 12:48). These revealed messages were (and are) complete for their purposes in converting the soul. As the ancient Psalmist exalted the law of Moses (Psa. 19:7) and its special revelation, so the Christ exalted His special message (Matt. 24:35). God speaks now, in special revelation, through Christ (Heb. 1:1-3) not through Moses as far as man's salvation is concerned. The Old Testament is necessary, however, for understanding the New Testament and for learning God's ways with man (Rom. 15:4). One must not bind the Mosaic code on New Testament Christians, however (Acts 15:10).

Revelation: Propositional

The means of special revelation through the prophets and the Christ outlined above are sometimes labelled "propositional revelation." This means that God communicated by ordinary words in statements that could be understood by ordinary people. "And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37b).

God did not reveal Himself or His purposes to man in a single moment of time. The Bible student realizes that there is an Old Testament and a New Testament. God's final, complete revelation or New Testament came with Christ in the "fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4). However, in purpose, the special revelation found in the Old Testament was perfect as to its quality. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom.7:12). The Old Testament remains the Word of God but is fulfilled in the New Testament.

Further, God revealed Himself for a redemptive reason, not merely to satisfy human curiosity. Such revelation being propositional contained a demand for trust and obedience from its adherents. For example, for the revelation from God to ancient Abraham to achieve its redemptive purpose, Abraham must understand and obey (Gen. 12:1-3; cf. Rom. 4:3). The same can be said of revelation at any point of redemptive history. Man can understand and obey the law God gives him (Eph.3:5).

Revelation: "Illumination"

Some seem to think that one needs to be enlightened or "illuminated" by God's Spirit in order to understand revelation. The Bible record indicates, however, that one who studies **can** know the truth.

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now reveled unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:3-5).

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

God surely can make Himself understood to man! God inspired men to write the Bible or revelation. Without this revelation man would know of some "force" behind creation, but man would be without benefit of God's will.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of "inscripturated," and what does the knowledge of the fact of a written will mean in terms of God's holding men responsible for obeying God?
2. What process produces revelation, and what is the end-product of this process?
3. Prove that men of the Ancient Near East could write.
4. Describe **how** revelation from God has come to man.
5. What two words, one from Hebrew and one from Greek, are translated "revelation?"
6. Discuss some things that God may **not** have revealed to man (Deuteronomy 29:29). For example, "Do babies grow in heaven?"
7. Why are not all the "details" of life and death discussed in the Bible? Does the Bible have a certain purpose?
8. Define general and special revelation.
9. What is the proper usage for the Old Testament?
10. What is propositional revelation?

CHAPTER FOUR: INSPIRATION – VARIOUS THEORIES: JOHN 6:44-45

The persons who wrote scriptures were under God's control or inspiration (2 Peter 1:20-21). The original writings of such prophets or apostles are known as "autographs." The Old Testament autographs were written on papyrus (reed-paper) scrolls or later vellum (sheepskin), and the languages were Hebrew, Aramaic, and some few Chaldean words. The New Testament scrolls were mostly parchment, and the languages used were common Greek, classical Greek (Luke 1:1-4), and a few Aramaic and Latin Terms.

Few persons can read Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek so that most Bible students must rely on a translation from the original. As long as the translation is faithfully rendered that translation may be referred to as inspiration.

The Bible confirms the latter assertion. The ancient Jews, upon returning from Babylonian captivity (around 435 B.C.) spoke Aramaic. Their Bible was written in Hebrew so that the ancient teachers had to translate for the people (Neh. 8:1-8). Even though the people were listening to translation, they were still hearing God's Word (Neh. 8:9, 14).

Jesus was familiar with a Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint (seventy) or LXX. He quoted from it, according to Luke, and called the translated version "scripture" (Luke 4:1-20 and 4:21). Thus Jesus gave His approval to using a faithfully rendered translation.

Those who compare the ancient manuscripts and versions of the Bible in order to reproduce as nearly as possible the autographs or original writings are called textual critics. Their work is recognized as an objective science rather than a subjective guess so that Bible students can have confidence that a faithful translation is scripture. However, many who deny that God ever supernaturally intervened in men's affairs have adopted any number of theories of how man "developed" these scriptures or autographs.

The Bible: "A Uniquely Inspired Book"

The Bible is uniquely inspired, and faithful Bible students have always approached its study in a manner that recognizes so-called discrepancies as merely alleged and not real. Further examinations, historical discoveries, and archaeological findings have, over the centuries, proved the Bible to be true. There are other evidences as to the supernatural nature of this Holy Book.

First, there is the incredible unity of purpose of the sixty-six books. What makes this fact so unusual is that the text was written over a period of about fifteen hundred years by nearly forty authors who used several languages and covered hundreds of topics.

Second, the Bible is logically defensible. All other religious books are hopelessly contradictory. No one has ever found, nor ever will find, a logical contradiction in God's Word.

Third, the Bible evidences a superior wisdom over all other religious writings. The *Book of Mormon* and the *Koran*, for examples, both contain historical inconsistencies and changing viewpoints of the authors.

Fourth, there is evidence from the historicity of the Bible. The historical context (authenticity) of the Bible is open to investigation by anyone, and especially has the field of archaeology confirmed the text. Not one historical nor archaeological find has ever controverted the Bible.

A fifth evidence is the external testimony of the fact of fulfilled prophecy. If one prophecy of the Bible were to be proved false, it would be necessary to reject the whole (see Deut. 18:20-22). There are over three-hundred prophecies concerning Jesus Christ that are contained in the Old Testament including those of His birth. All were fulfilled exactly as predicted. It is very important to note that books like the *Koran*, *Book of Mormon* and even the *Veda* contain no predictive prophecy. Such an element is easily examined for supernatural guidance and is missing from books merely penned by men.

The Bible's influence is world-wide affecting art, politics, and even the course of history. The holy writings have been viciously attacked even to the point of trying to exterminate them (cf. Diocletian, A.O. 302-305). Yet, the hand of God has protected His Book and preserved His Word. After all, God promised that His Word would endure forever (1 Peter 1:25). Despite the above and other evidences for the Bible's unique, supernatural inspiration, many have devised theories of "inspiration" in order to enhance their particular opinions about Holy Writ.

Protestant Views Of Inspiration

A corollary of inspiration is inerrancy. The Bible, if from the mind of God, must be free from error. Up until the sixteenth century since Christ, the biblical writers were considered to be possessed by God who was the Bible's proper author. The reformers, Martin Luther (1483-1546), Ulrich Zwengli (1494-1551), John Calvin (1509-64), et al all held that the Bible alone is sufficient for matters of faith. However, the **Reformation** spawned many creeds and confessions of faith which tended to become ends in themselves.

Anabaptists (John Wycliffe, John Hus, Menno Simons, et al) as well as Baptists compare their creeds to an infallible Bible as do the Lutherans, Evangelical Reformed, Westminster Presbyterians (Puritans), and many other Protestant groups. But, these groups allow in religion what is not **explicitly** forbidden in the Bible. Adherents to these faiths are fond of saying, "Well, the Bible doesn't say we can't do this!" Such an approach denies the logical law of exclusion which teaches that a positive command **excludes** all other activity. For example, if one were to tell one's children to "play in the yard," and one's children were to enter the street; would the children be considered disobedient? Just so, when God gives a command (to sing, for example, as Eph. 5:19), only that which is commanded is authorized.

In the twentieth century, several Protestant groups (especially Methodism) have moved away from verbal, plenary, inspiration to a subjective, secular approach to Scripture. The methodology of science applied to theology is the root cause of this shift. Surely the Bible, according to this scientific method, **evolved** as all other things, and so say many modern Protestants.

Roman Catholic - Eastern Orthodox -Russian Orthodox - Views Of Inspiration

Catholic and Orthodox scholars have long insisted that if there be no infallible interpreter there can be no infallible scripture. To Catholics, then, scripture and tradition, guided by the church, are the dual bases of religious authority, and only the "mother" Church can judge the true sense and interpretation of the Bible. Today, Catholic scholars, as their liberal Protestant contemporaries, have adopted an evolutionary view toward the text.

The Eastern Orthodox (Greek) Church largely followed the Roman Catholic tradition as did the Russian Orthodox. However, the revolution in Russia of 1917 caused that tradition largely to be continued by scholars who emigrated. Perhaps nostalgia has thus caused the latter tradition to be little different from its medieval past as the Eastern and Russian Orthodoxies remain largely patristic.

Modern Views Of Inspiration

Modern views of inspiration, defined biblically as verbal and plenary resulting in a Bible free from error, are traceable to evolutionary teachings in the secular world. If man is merely the product of natural forces, the Bible, written by man, is also a human effort. As noted above, changing attitudes toward verbal inspiration began after the Reformation and can be traced to (See Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, for further study of the foregoing.):

1. **PIETISM:** This doctrine of subjective, personal experience which arose from reaction against so-called "Protestant intellectualism" originated in Germany around 1675. Human "experience" became as authoritative as the Bible.
2. **DEISM:** This doctrine of "natural theology" originated with Herbert of Cherbury (England) around the same time that Rene Descartes, Benedict Spinoza, and Sir Isaac Newton were influencing world thinking (c.a. 1625-1800). To these teachers, God is an "absentee owner" who "imprinted" ideas on man's mind and then left man to fend for self.
3. **MATERIALISM:** Frances Bacon (1561-1626) set the stage for this doctrine by insisting that man's power to control his life rested in man's own hands. Thomas Hobbs (1588-1672) further expanded the philosophy by teaching that whatever man can **imagine** must be **finite**, and therefore the Bible is wholly a product of human reason.
4. The consequence of deistic and materialistic philosophies is called naturalism and teaches that God has only been **providentially** involved in the world. Naturalism led to **skepticism** and **agnosticism**, and spawned **Romanticism** (emotionalism as religious authority). The progenitor of modern Romanticism was Freidrich Schliermacher who argued that religion must be based on "feeling;" therefore, inspiration is wholly a human activity.

Subbiblical (Neo-Orthodox) Views Of Inspiration

Out of the plethora of philosophical views noted so far arose the concept that when one approaches the Bible, as far as inspiration and authority are concerned, one should use the "mind of Christ" method. These "romanticists" or "neo-orthodoxists" assume that Jesus was **all** love and meekness and anything that the Bible might teach contrary to the foregoing qualities of Christ is to be rejected. However, Jesus is Judge as well as Savior. "For

the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). Jesus condemns sin and sinners.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (Matt. 23:37-38).

Another neo-Orthodox view of inspiration that really overlaps the first one above, is that the Bible is merely a "witness" to the "word" of God. People who follow this idea are often heard to say that God "laid" a message on their hearts and that there is a Bible passage that conforms.

These people use the Bible as a witness to their supposed experience, and such a view is diametrically opposed to the Bible's being propositional truth designed to make God's man **complete** (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

Perhaps the leading exponent of the Bible as a witness to one's experience in the twentieth century was Karl Barth (1884-1963). To Barth, a romantic-naturalist, the living God could never be identified with any human form or institution, not even the Bible. The Bible is merely a history of how God "revealed" Himself to those writers and that one must "listen" for God to speak to one today. Everyone, then, is his own authority—a thing rebuked by the Bible (Judges 21:25).

Liberal Views Of Inspiration

From the repository of philosophical rationalism came the "right-wing" liberal view of inspiration labelled **illumination**. Since God, per their ideas, can work only providentially, some pious men were "granted" an intuitive entrance into certain truths and historical events, thus attaining some insights about God. These scholars believe that the Bible contains God's word just as history **contains** some hints about God's activities.

The "left-wing" of the liberal camp, allows that the writer's (of the Bible) **natural insight** was at times deepened, and he was able to **discover** divine truths. Today's liberal theologians are suggesting that since there is a recognized canon (the books that "belong" in the Bible) one should just use the Bible "as if" it is God's word for this is what the communities did who originally had the books. Such theologians speak of the Bible as "sacred literature" and speak of the student's purpose as assuming the same view of the Bible as those of the ancient communities of Hebrews and Christians.

Summary

The careful student will note that rationalism and liberalism both deny that which the Bible says about itself. Such philosophies even lead to the strange "demythologizing" view of Rudolph Bultmann, who as his teacher, Karl Barth, before him, argued that the Bible accounts are mere legends and myths, not history. This "form-critical view" insists that the historical Jesus cannot be found in the Bible nor can one prove the historicity of the gospel accounts, for such an effort would be like saving oneself by works instead of faith. Bultmann added that most who saw Jesus did not believe, so why would historical records cause belief today?

Bultmann's problem is as all who deny supernatural revelation. He rejects the very message that he knows others before him rejected and then decides it is the fault of the message! All who want to be God's children need to heed,

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in the book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

Discussion Questions

1. What are the original writings of the Bible called, and why does one need translation?
2. Show how the Bible in translation can still be God's Word.
3. What are some reasons to believe that the Bible is a uniquely inspired Book?
4. What is a necessary corollary to inspiration, and what does it mean?
5. What is the "law of exclusion," and how do/do not Protestant groups use it?
6. What position **did** Roman Catholicism take on inspiration, and what is their position today?
7. What is the continuing position of Eastern-Russian Orthodox theologians concerning inspiration?
8. What are pietism, deism, materialism, skepticism, and romanticism as pertaining to inspiration?
9. What are the two nee-orthodox views of inspiration? Are there ones you know who think this way?
10. What are two liberal views of inspiration?

CHAPTER FIVE: INSPIRATION – OLD TESTAMENT CLAIMS: 2 PETER 2:20-21

God's Word, the Bible, is supernaturally inspired, as seen in its inerrancy, infallibility, and indestructibility. The Bible has been preserved, as God promised, even though men have tried to destroy it. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). The Bible has been reproduced in over eleven-hundred languages, and the American Bible Society, alone, distributes one-million copies annually. But, what claim does this ancient, divine writing make for itself in terms of inspiration? The Old Testament statements are here examined in answer.

Each Book's Claim

According to the ancient text of **Genesis**, God spoke directly to the family-heads of the day: "And God said unto Noah ... " (Gen. 6:13); "Now the Lord had said unto Abram ... " (Gen. 12:1); "And the Lord appeared unto him (Isaac, K.M.) ... " (Gen. 26:2); "And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said (to Jacob, K.M.) ... " (Gen. 28:13). Joseph, also heard God speak, especially in the interpretation of dreams (Gen. 41:17).

In the book of **Exodus** one reads that God "spake all these words" (Exod. 20:1; 35:1; 32:16). One reads in **Leviticus** that God "called" to Moses and "spake" to Moses (Lev. 1:1; 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8). **Numbers** is filled with statements about God's speaking (cf. 1:1; 20:12; etc.), and **Deuteronomy** contains the command not to take from nor add to the words (Deut. 4:2; 18:22; etc.).

Joshua heard the Lord speak (1:1; 3:7) as did the **Judges** (1:2; 6:25). The writers of **Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings** and **1 & 2 Chronicles** also claim inspiration (Ruth 4:21; 1 Sam. 3:11; 4:1; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Kings 9:2; 2 Kings 1:4; 1 Chron. 11:3; 2 Chron. 36:21). **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** both record the deeds and sayings of God in bringing the Israelites home from captivity (cf. Ezra 1:1; Neh. 8). **Esther** has no explicit claim of inspiration, but God's providential hand is clearly seen in His protecting the Jews from the Persians.

Job claims direct knowledge of God's activities and record an actual conversation with God (1:2, 42; 38:1-11). Also note the specific statements regarding the psalms and proverbs of David (2 Sam. 23:1-2; 1 Kings 3:9ff). The writer of **Ecclesiastes** also claims direct knowledge from God (Eccl. 11:19; 12:1, 12-13). By implication the **Song of Solomon** is said to be from God although some have objected to its sensual nature. But, this book clearly sets forth God's views on proper, chaste, married love.

The prophets from **Isaiah** to **Malachi** are replete with explicit "thus saith the Lord" statements; such sayings are usually in the first verse of each book.

Explanations About Books Without Explicit Claims Of Inspiration

Given the above information on each of the Old Testament books and their claims concerning verbal inspiration, what of the books, especially the poetical ones, which have no explicit claim? Several considerations help one to determine that these books were, indeed, from God.

First: The books, such as **Esther**, are in a section of the Old Testament which claims inspiration. For example, **Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers** and **Deuteronomy** have overt statements (Exod. 32:16; Lev. 1:1; Num. 1:1; Deut. 31:26).

These latter books are universally known as part of the Pentateuch or "books of Moses." Genesis, which has no clear statement of inspiration is, however, said to be a part of the "book of Moses" (Neh. 13:1; 2 Chron. 35:12). One can link many of the historical books to the "book of Moses" (cf. Joshua 1:8; Judges 3:4; 1 Sam. 12:6-9; 2 Chron. 34:14; Dan. 9:11-12; Ezra 6:18; Neh. 13:1).

Second: The reason that the historical books and poetical books normally lack a "thus saith the Lord" is that these texts were written or addressed from man to God or the message is about man. However, such books are still Scripture.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms,

concerning me (Luke 24:44).

Third: The ancient Jews, who would be more nearly certain of the facts, accepted the books as from prophets or men of God. In fact, the Jews would not consider a book's being from God unless they understood that the writer was a prophet. In the actual prophetic passages, one can find the phrase "thus saith the Lord" 3,808 times!

Who was a prophet? He was a "man of God" (1 Kings 12:22); a "servant of the Lord" (1 Kings 14:18); a "messenger of the Lord" (Isa. 42:19); a "seer" (*ro-eh*) or "beholder" (*hozeh*) in terms of future prophecies (Isa. 30:9-10); a "man of the spirit" (Hosea 9:7; Micah 3:8); and a "watchman" (Ezek. 3:17).

The prophet was a teacher in terms of his general work, and he was to teach the Word of God faithfully: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8). [The Hebrew root word, *navah*, from which their word for **prophet** evolved, meant "to cause to bubble up" and hence, "to pour forth words" as one would who spoke from divine ardor or divine emotion of mind. The form of the word which meant to "speak as a prophet" is **passive** because the Hebrews believed that the prophet was moved by another (see Jer. 1:9).]

One form of the Hebrew word for prophet means "to prophesy absolutely," and this form is used to show that the prophet was infallible since he was inspired.

And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease (Num.11:24-25).

Note that the **same** spirit that rested on the seventy men had caused Moses to speak the "words of the Lord." The prophet was God's "mouthpiece" (Deut. 18:18).

Fourth: The entire Old Testament is considered to be a "prophetic utterance;"

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel (Exod. 34:27).

Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned Jer. 36:28).

Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isa. 8:1).

The prophets not only were told what to speak but what to write! This is the reason one found adding to the Bible or subtracting from the text is a "liar" (Prov. 30:6)!

New Testament References

To Old Testament Inspiration

The term **Scripture** is used in the New Testament in a technical sense to refer to the Old Testament and in a few instances to the new writings. For example, Paul calls Luke's gospel account "scripture" (1 Tim. 5:18) and Peter, by implication, refers to Paul's writings as "scripture" (2 Peter 3:16-18). Primarily, though, references to **scripture** in the New Testament are to the text of the old canon.

New Testament writers referred to the 39 Old Testament books as "sacred" or "holy" (2 Tim. 3:15). "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom. 1:2). Not only were those ancient texts considered sacred, but they were also inspired of God and to be used in determining the faith and practice of Christians (2 Tim. 3:17). Their "law" was not in force, but their "precepts" were eternal:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

There are, in fact, explicit references to the old law:

1. Jesus challenged the Pharisees of that day with the need to "read the scriptures" in order to discover the

- reason for their rejecting Him (Matt. 21:42). This verse indicates that Jesus believed the Psalms to be inspired for he quotes from Psalm 118:22-23.
2. In a discussion with the Jewish priests of His day, Jesus blamed their error about the doctrine of the resurrection on not having read the "scriptures." Jesus quotes from Exodus 3:6 to prove his point that God is the God of the living not the dead and, therefore, it should not have been difficult for the Sadducees to understand that those who "die" are not annihilated but are simply in another place waiting a resurrected body (Matt. 22; see also 1 Cor. 15:50-57).
 3. After His resurrection and during a discussion with two men who had been His followers but had doubts upon seeing Christ die on the cross, Jesus referred to the Old Testament as scripture (Luke 24:27) and included all in the "law of Moses" (the first five books); the prophets (the history books too) and the "psalms" (or writings) as **scripture** (Luke 24:44). Jesus believed that the 39 books are God's Word!
 4. The disciples, after the resurrection of Christ, are recorded as **equating** the **words** of Jesus and Old Testament **scripture** (John 2:22).
 5. Jesus explicitly, clearly, and succinctly labelled the Old Testament text as scripture.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

6. The Old Testament Psalms, part of "the law" of the Jews was used by Jesus to defend His declaration that He was God's Son (John 10:34-35). Note that Jesus insisted that those **scriptures** could not be "broken" (that is, changed). Why? They are God's Word!
7. John, the beloved apostle of the Christ, **was** inspired to write that the fact that Jesus' bones were not broken on the Cross was the fulfillment of "scripture" (John 19:36). The "scripture" to which John referred was Exodus 12:46; Numbers 19:12; and Psalm 34:20.
8. Matthew, also an apostle of Jesus, wrote that Isaiah 7:14 was written by a prophet and fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 1:21-23).
9. Many of the early Christians used the Old Testament **scriptures**, and those disciples of Christ taught that ancient world about Jesus (Acts 8:26-39; 17:2, 11; 18:28; Rom. 1:2; 15:4).
10. Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the Old Testament law, prophecy, and writing (Matt. 5:17-18). He insisted that the creation account was God's Word (Matt. 19:4-5) and that Jonah actually was in a great fish's belly (Mat. 12:39-41).
11. Paul wrote that the ancient writings were the "oracles" of God, a fact that was used by the apostle to indicate how fortunate and blessed the Jews had been to receive those writings from the Lord (Rom. 3:2).
12. Perhaps the best known Bible verse, besides John 3:16, by millions who are not familiar with the text is Matthew 7:12.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Note that this "Golden Rule" is a summation of all that the Old Testament taught!

Old Testament Books Authorized By The New Testament

Nearly every Old Testament book is referenced in the New Testament as authoritative. The expression often used by New Testament writers is, "it is written." This phrase occurs ninety-two times in direct reference to the Old Testament (cf. Mark 14:21; Luke 18:31; John 1:45; etc.) Such references specifically indicate that the 39 books are an inspired, authoritative collection.

For example, Paul refers to **Genesis** by "what saith the scripture" (Rom. 4:3). **Exodus** is referenced in 1 Corinthians 5:7; Leviticus in Mark 7:10; **Numbers** in 1 Corinthians 10:1-14; and **Deuteronomy** in Matthew 4:1-10.

Joshua is referred to in Hebrews 4 and **Judges (Ruth)** in Hebrews 11:32. Matthew quotes from **1 & 2 Samuel** (Matt. 12:3-4) which passage also references **1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra** and **Nehemiah** are authorized by Romans 11:4 and John 6:31.

Esther, a book often maligned by Bible critics because there is no specific mention of God, is authorized by

Mark 6:23; Revelation 11:10; and John 5:1. **Job** is used as authoritative by Paul (1 Cor. 3:19) and James (James 5:11). Matthew often quotes from **Psalms** (Matt. 21:42) as does the Hebrew writer (Heb. 1:1-14). James and Luke both use Proverbs (James 4:6; Luke 14:24). **Ecclesiastes** is referred to in Galatians 6:7 and **Song of Solomon** in John 4:10.

All the prophets, by implication and direct reference, are used authoritatively by New Testament writers. See Matthew 3:1-2; Acts 28:25; Luke 4:18-19; Romans 10; Hebrews 8, 10; John 7:38-39; Matthew 24:15, 21, 30; Romans 1:17; etcetera.

Summary

Every Old Testament text was considered as authoritative scripture from God as claimed in the books themselves and by the New Testament writers. If such men were simply just "good" men and not inspired, then lied about being directed by God, they were not good! The Bible writers in most cases, died for their faith, a fact not conversant with one who lies.

Discussion Questions

1. Prove that the Pentateuch is God's Word.
2. Prove that the prophetic writings are God's Word.
3. Prove that the books of poetry and wisdom are God's Word.
4. What ways can one show that **Esther** is inspired?
5. How would one prove that **Genesis** is **scripture**?
6. Why do not the historical, poetical, and wisdom books contain the explicit phrase, "thus saith the Lord?"
7. What was a "prophet?"
8. Discuss several of Jesus' claims about the Old Testament.
9. What New Testament expression is used in reference to the Old Testament, and what does the expression imply?
10. Find the expression, "that it may be fulfilled" in Matthew 1. What does such a phrase imply about the Old Testament writings?

CHAPTER SIX: INSPIRATION – NEW TESTAMENT CLAIMS: 2 PETER 2:3

In order to show that the whole Bible claims to be God's authoritative Word, an examination of the New Testament similar to the one done in the last chapter for the Old Testament is needed. The key to the inspiration (and canonization) of Scripture is Christ, who confirmed the books from Genesis to Malachi as being from God (Luke 24:44) and who promised that His teachings, the New Testament, would also be inspired of Deity. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

It needs to be recognized by the diligent Bible student that Jesus did **not** commit His teaching to writing, but He did promise His ambassadors" or "apostles" that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit in the promulgation of Christianity.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

The reason that the message of salvation was entrusted to men is given by the apostle Paul who wrote:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Cor. 4:7).

The promise of inspiration is recorded in a large number of Bible verses.

1. There was the promise of guidance even while Jesus was still on earth: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7).

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you (Matt. 10:19-20).

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, and take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say (Luke 12:11-12).

This promise also extended to seventy special disciples who were chosen to preach just to the Jews during a limited time of Jesus' ministry on earth.

And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you (Luke 10:9).

He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me (Luke 10:16).

2. There was the promise of guidance for the apostles and inspired writers to preach and write the New Testament message after Jesus went back to heaven.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:25-26).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come, He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16:7-14).

The apostles **confirmed** that they had been given **all** the truth of God:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13).

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him and hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

New Testament Writer's Claims

Since Jesus promised inspired guidance in remembering and teaching the New Testament message (John 14:26) to His apostles and writers, it is not incredible that there are numerous statements in the text claiming inspiration from God.

1. The **Hebrews** writer states:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Heb. 1:1-2).

Note that this New Testament penman insists that his writings are to be compared to and to supersede Old Testament prophetic writings! The **Hebrews** writer claims inspired insight into God's scheme of redemption and in fact calls his message "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:1-4).

Note that the "word spoken through angels" is a reference to the Mosaic code or Ten-Commandment law (see Heb. 10:25-31). That law is no longer in effect (Rom. 7:4-7).

2. The apostle Peter also remarks that his words and those of the other holy apostles are to be compared to the ancient prophetic utterances-

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (2 Peter 3:1-2).

Peter, in fact, is absolutely certain that what he taught was from God (2 Peter 1:16-21). Peter did not devise a fable (2 Peter 1:16a); Peter did claim to be an eyewitness (2 Peter 1:16b); Peter claimed to have heard God's voice (2 Peter 1:18); and, Peter claimed that his readers should give heed to Peter's message (2 Peter 1:19).

3. The apostle Paul, before he travelled to the ancient pagan city of Corinth, determined to prove to his hearers that the message he preached came from God and not from men:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Paul did not try to speak to the sinners in Corinth in the ancient, accepted rhetorical style. Instead, Paul's knees trembled and his voice shook, all of which expressions were intended to demonstrate that there was **no** power

in Paul's person but that **all** the power was from the Holy Spirit through inspiration:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:6-13).

Paul knew well that there is only **one** power of God leading to salvation:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17).

Paul also knew that before the New Testament message was revealed, it was "hidden" or a "mystery;"

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:7-8).

In fact, not one eye, nor one ear, nor one mind had **any** complete knowledge of the gospel message until it was revealed by God.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. 2:9).

And, Paul knew **how** this New Testament plan had been given to him and the other inspired writers-through the **words** of the Holy Spirit who **knew** the very mind of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13).

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10)!

Note that **words** proceeded from the Holy Spirit, which words conveyed a spiritual message. Those who tried to determine God's will through human philosophy were labelled "natural men" who were unable to know God's "things."

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: nether can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14).

Over the years, especially since a theologian named John Calvin penned his *Institutes* in the sixteenth century, many have misused 1 Corinthians 2:1-14 to try to prove that some "direct" operation of the Holy Spirit is needed to enable every sinner to obey God. The discussion in the aforementioned text is about inspiration of New Testament apostles and writers; it is not about salvation. The inspired message, when finally penned for human consumption, is easily understood without external assistance from the Holy Spirit.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given men to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the

mystery of Christ). Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:1-5).

A careful analysis of 1 Corinthians 2 will reveal that the Corinthians faith **could** stand in the power of God or the message they heard (verse 5); the message was then revealed (verse 10); the message was taught in words (verse 13); the message came from inspired men who had "the mind of Christ" (verse 16). Is it any wonder that it is recorded that the Corinthians "hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8)?

4. An ensuing statement by the apostle Paul to those same Corinthians mentioned above emphatically asserts that the writings of an inspired man were from God:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

This latter verse records the dogmatic emphasis upon the authority of the inspired writers who were taught by God and given miraculous abilities in order to confirm and establish the church of Christ on earth (Eph. 1:13-14). This "earnest" (or "down-payment") of the Holy Spirit's power proved that those Christians did, indeed, know truth. (See Mark 16:15-20.) The miraculous gifts were ended by God when the **perfect** method of written revelation superseded the infantile method of the miraculous (1 Cor. 13:8-13). But, to those in the first century who did indeed have direct, miraculous power from God to prophecy, Paul said that His written word was still the authority (1 Cor. 14:37) Even though those New Testament prophets and spiritual ones had some insight into matters of revelation, they were yet subject to the written record of truth and were not allowed to use their powers to say otherwise!

Given the Bible claim of authority for the inspired writings of the New Testament, one can understand better how the apostle Peter, by implication, compares the apostle Paul's writings to scripture:

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter discussed the events surrounding the second coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:10-14) and then added the thought that Paul, too, had written concerning "eschatological" (final things) matters. Many, claims Peter, distort these second-coming messages to "their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15). Who does this-the "unstable" and "unlearned?" (Careful Bible students will note that Peter does not say that he could not understand such matters, for he, himself, had just written about them!)

Peter then compares Paul's writings to the "other scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). When one considers 2 Peter 3:2, with which this discussion on New Testament claims of inspiration began, one finds the record of Peter's comparison of his writings with the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and one is left with the conclusion that Peter's writings are also scripture!

New Testament writers left no doubt that they were directly guided by the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

Formally stated, the argument is:

Whatever the inspired apostles taught was directed by the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament is that which the inspired apostles taught.

Therefore, the New Testament is teaching fully directed by the Holy Spirit.

Summary

So far the idea that the Holy Spirit directed those who taught for the Christ while He was on earth and when He re-entered heaven has been emphasized. The writer of Hebrews, Paul, and Peter all claimed this inspiration.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Jesus teach about the Old Testament? How did Jesus say the New Testament would be produced?
2. Prove from Hebrews, chapters one and two, that the writer insisted that his material was equal to the text of the Ten Commandments themselves.
3. What New Testament writer heard God's voice, and where was the writer when he heard it?
4. What five claims did the apostle Peter make concerning his inspiration?
5. What determination did Paul make prior to entering ancient Corinth, and how and why did Paul carry out his plan?
6. See John 6:63. Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit's words conveyed a spirit message. How does this affect one's attitude toward the Bible? See Romans 10:17.
7. Who are the "natural men" to whom Paul refers? Are there any like this today? What is the difference between Paul's "natural men" and any unsaved person?
8. Discuss the emphasis of 1 Corinthians 14:37 in view of the fact that it was written to those who had miraculous powers.
9. Prove that Paul's writings and Peter's are "scripture."
10. Discuss those known to the student, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, who wrest scriptures about Jesus' second coming.

CHAPTER SEVEN – INSPIRATION – NEW TESTAMENT CLAIMS (2) 1 TIMOTHY 5:8

This study continues a discussion of New Testament passages which reveal that the writings are verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit and penned by men. The "God-breathed" text is **all** that man has been given by God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), yet too many have not and do not respect the Bible as from God. This lack of reverence for God's Word is even evident among the Lord's people during worship services. When a brother leads a prayer nearly everyone is respectful. Those who are late usually do not enter the auditorium; brethren close their eyes; children are kept quiet. But, let the Bible be read or preached, and people seemingly have no qualms about moving about, talking, passing notes, sleeping, etcetera. It seems that when brethren talk **to** God, everyone is to be reverent. But, when God speaks through His Word to brethren a different attitude is shown. Which is more important-when one speaks to God or when He speaks to one?

Perhaps this study on inspiration will encourage Christians to exalt the message and to gain a new and healthy respect for the preached and written Word of God. All New Testament writers knew the source of their message and that only God's Word could save (cf. Rom. 1:16-17).

1. Some New Testament penmen were even aware of false writings extant among the early church.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning we eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seems good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke recognized that there were many "novels" in existence that purported to explain the life of Christ. But, Luke **contrasted** his writings with those others. Luke claimed "perfect understanding" as an "eyewitness" and that his readers could be certain about Luke's teaching. Such a claim of infallibility can only be made by an inspired man.

For Luke, a medical doctor (Col. 4:14), to begin his account of Jesus' life by addressing it to an individual represented the classical style of the period. Greek classical historians, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius, all used that method, and for Luke to use such a style gives the reader a clue as to Luke's educational background. But, Luke relies on inspiration, not education, for his message.

Luke begins "at the very first" (Jesus' birth) and details the greatest life ever lived. Luke seems to be insisting that he wrote to stem the rising tide of error being perpetrated by uninspired materials.

2. Bible writers warned users about tampering with the text and by such warnings implied that the message was not theirs but God's. For example note Revelation 22:18-19:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

The warning in the latter passage is severe and is directed not to textual critics who might have to decide about some manuscript variance while translating but to "every man that heareth." This book, **Revelation**, was originally directed to seven congregations of the church of Christ in Asia (a province in what is today Turkey and then Asia Minor) and was to be read aloud.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne (Rev. 1:3-4).

The warning recorded in verses eighteen and nineteen of chapter twenty-two is against **willful** distortion of the inspired message.

Such warnings are not uncommon in the Bible. Paul warned the Galatians that there is no other gospel and that even an angel has no authority to change the message.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

Moses told Israel:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you (Deut. 4:2).

And the **Proverbs** writer added: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6).

It is interesting that the final passage of Holy Writ contains a threat about losing one's part in the tree of life and the holy city by altering the prophecy in some way. One can **fall from grace** by changing God's holy, inspired message! The words that were given to John as the human penman carried a Divine impress and thus a charge from heaven not to change them.

3. One New Testament writer, Jude, seems to have started an ordinary letter to his brethren only to be interrupted by the Holy Spirit and instructed to write on another subject.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common **salvation**, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3).

Jude, who was most likely the half-brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 13:55), writes that he "gave all diligence" (Greek **spoudeen**, a thorough thought process) to write of the **common** salvation held to by all Christians. But, he found it "needful" (Greek, **anagkeen**, necessity imposed by something or someone) to write another message. Since God inspires all scripture (2 Tim. 3:16), it follows that Jude's change of subjects was compelled by the Holy Spirit. Why?

As seen above from Luke 1:1-4 and Revelation 22:18-19 some had written uninspired accounts early in the first years of Christianity, and near the end of the first century a warning was issued about altering prophecy. Jude instructed Christians to contend "earnestly," that is to fight with all one's might, to defend "**the** faith" or body of truth (the New Testament) that was once (Greek, **hapax**, once for all time) delivered to the saints. Unless this "body of truth" is God's Word, there would have been no reason for such a charge from the Holy Spirit through Jude. Jude would have known he was just writing his own thoughts as would other New Testament writers, but it is obvious that those writers **knew** they were penning Divine messages; they were writing the Bible and they did not want Christians to be lax in defending the Bible against all enemies. The "common faith" carries a "common obligation" for all Christians to defend it.

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace (Phil. 1:7).

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

4. New Testament inspiration was confirmed by the miraculous.

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to

his own will (Heb. 2:2-4).

Miracles were confined to the period of confirmation of the Word of God (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor. 13:8-13) and are recorded in the Bible as evidence that Jesus is Deity and that the writers were God's men.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

The **Hebrews** writer refers to the law of Moses as "word spoken by angels" (Heb. 2:2) indicating Old Testament inspiration, and then he compares the New Testament message and concludes it too is inspired. For, the message had been "spoken by the Lord," confirmed by eyewitnesses, and borne witness by miraculous manifestations from the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:3-4). To neglect such an inspired message, the **Hebrews** writer insists, is to "neglect so great salvation!" Why is the New Testament, gospel message so great? Because it has a great author (Heb. 5:8-9); a great spokesman (Heb. 1:2); a great redemption from sins (Heb. 1:3); a great deliverance (Heb. 2:10-17); a great judgment (Heb. 9:27); and a great salvation from eternal hell!

The **Hebrews** penman does not teach that the miraculous **made** the message God's Word. The words were already God's, but were **confirmed** by the miracles. God added testimony upon testimony and witness upon witness in the confirmation process and even in the confirmation period allowed only those miracles which were "according to his will" (Heb. 2:4b). The absence of such signs today means that the message is already complete and needs no additions and that God no longer wills to allow such signs. Those who seek and/or counterfeit such signs today are an "evil and adulterous generation" (Matt. 12:39). The signs were only given until the faith was once delivered (Eph. 4:8-15).

5. New Testament writers knew that the message they had was "a perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25). Paul called the perfect law the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) and the "law of the spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2). This "law of love" (Rom. 13:10) was also denoted by Paul as "being under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21) and "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27). James, further, called the perfect or complete law of liberty the "royal law" (James 2:12), and since it is "law" it is a **rule of action** and since it is **perfect**, it is without defect (2 Peter 1:3).

The **scriptures** are said to be complete (2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3; 2 John 9-10) and so is the **royal law** indicating, since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, that the scriptures are law or rule of action which law is characterized by liberty from other laws (such as the law of Moses), and liberty from sin. One is not "free" from restraint in matters moral or theological by having "liberty." Such freedom as the latter is license not liberty. All of the aforementioned facts are implications that a Divine mind gave this instruction for no human has ever devised a "perfect law of liberty."

6. The apostle Paul, in one sentence, connected the Old Testament and New Testament and labeled them both as scripture.

For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward (1 Tim. 5:18).

Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," and Luke 10:7,

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

Paul also required of Christians that they obey his epistles.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (2 Thess. 3:14).

What Paul wrote, was scripture and required one to obey such. This need for obedience is, no doubt, the reason that New Testament churches were required to circulate apostolic, inspired writings:

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea (Col. 4:16).

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren (1 Thess. 5:27).

7. New Testament writers claimed authority for their writings and instructed evangelists to proclaim apostolic teaching "with all authority" (1 Tim. 4:11; Titus 2:15). In fact, Paul confidently claimed that he never taught anything that man gave him, but only that teaching received by revelation from Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).
8. Every New Testament book claims inspiration. See Matthew 10:7; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:1-4; John 10:30-31; Acts 1:1, 8; Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3-4; Philippians 1:2; 4:9; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:15; Philemon 1:3, 8; Hebrews 1:2; 13:22; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; 1:19; 3:2; 2 Peter 1:1, 3; 1 John 1:1; 5:12; 2 John 9-11; 3 John 9, 12; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19.
9. Some try to use 1 Corinthians 7:10-12 to deny that all New Testament writings are inspired. Paul seems to write that the Lord gave no command about a situation of marriage so Paul speaks instead from his own opinion which, some say, is hardly authoritative. However, Paul writes in the same context that "he commands," which is the Lord's command (verse 10). Paul indicates that he was already aware of the Lord's teaching while the Lord was on earth (verse 10), but as to another situation Paul must command since Jesus had not spoken explicitly about such a case while Jesus was on earth (verse 12). Paul states that as to the nature of inspiration this is "his" speaking "not the Lord's" (verse 12).

The careful Bible student will note that Paul adds that he has "the spirit of God" (1 Cor. 7:40) and that Paul's writings are the Lord's commands (1 Cor. 14:37). Even if Paul wrote his "opinion," his opinion would also be inspired (cf. 1 Cor. 7:25). There is no greater advice than inspired advice!

Discussion Questions

1. What evidences of a lack of respect for God's Word have been seen by you
2. Prove that Luke wrote an inspired message.
3. What are some of the consequences of tampering with the Word of God?
4. What religions do you know that claim continuing revelations from experiences, angels, etcetera?
5. Prove that one **can** fall from grace from Revelation 22:18-19. See Galatians 5:4.
6. What is Jude's charge to Christians concerning their responsibility toward the faith revealed? In what ways could one neglect this duty?
7. What was the purpose of the "age of miracles?"
8. What is the "law of liberty" and how does the term **law** indicate inspiration?
9. Why is a study of inspiration so needed today? See 2 Peter 1:20-21.
10. Disprove that Paul, or any New Testament or Old Testament writer ever wrote his mere opinion. See 1 Corinthians 7:10-12.

CHAPTER EIGHT: INSPIRATION – THE BIBLE IS RATIONAL MATTHEW 4:1-11

The Bible is a special, Divine revelation as shown from the previous lessons on inspiration. There is a need for such revelation. The natural world, while revealing in a general way some information about deity, does not reveal the character of God nor the will of God. Nature declares a power beyond (Psalm 19:1-6), but only the "law of the Lord" can convert the soul (Psalm 19:7-14). That revealed about the Divine from nature is labelled **general revelation**, and that revealed about God in the Bible is called **special revelation**.

God completed His revelation of His will through God's Son-Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:1-4).

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:14-18).

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6). God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:1-3).

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:15-18).

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (Col. 2:10).

God preserved the completed revelation in a written, inspired book (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The proof of such a special, written, preserved message is cumulative. Each passage and each agreement became a part of the whole and set forth the proposition that special revelation has produced a profound, rational doctrine of God, man, and God's plan to save man.

What Is The Bible Teaching About God?

In the ancient Near East, during the time the Old Testament was written, mankind thought of its gods as like men, arbitrary, sometimes immoral, and often evil. Amazingly, the Old Testament begins with a **good** God (Gen. 1:1ff)! It is not conceivable that if Genesis were produced from mere human effort, that God would be called "good" in that ancient setting.

The God of the Bible is presented, at times, through anthropomorphic (giving God human form) language, but no contradictions can be found in His nature as He loved, hates, is a Person, sees, acts, etcetera. As one reads the Bible, one is constantly aware that God is the Creator and is Sovereign. He is ascribed the attributes of self-existence

(Exod. 3:13-14; John 8:58; Rev. 1:8; 4:8; Isa. 48:12), eternity (John 1:1-4), and omnipresence (Psalm 90:2; Heb. 1:10-12; Psalm 139:7-10; Acts 17:26-28). God is omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in holiness, immutable, and longsuffering (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 4:13, 15; Num. 23:19; 2 Peter 3:19). How could ancient man describe such a Being without inspiration? Secular writings from that period are mythological and superstitious and, by contrast, offer strong evidences that the Bible is different."

What Is The Bible Teaching About Man?

Consistency is the hall-mark of the Bible doctrine of man from the first page to the last. Study of philosophy or science will show that the latter disciples change, contradict, clash in ideas, theories, et al. concerning man over the long ages of science and philosophy. But the Bible **never** contradicts itself about man, his needs, his tendencies, his internal nature, his destiny, and his physical nature. Even though the message required about 1,200 years to complete and forty-plus men to write who were from different eras and geographical settings-the Bible is consistent about man!

Man is "made" in God's image (Gen. 1:27; Eph. 4:24). Man can choose, right or wrong, and is free so to do (Josh. 24:15; Heb. 5:8-9). Man is triune or "body, soul, and spirit" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23). Man cannot find in himself the answers of life (contrary to "New-Agism" and ancient philosophies) but must seek direction from God (Jer. 10:23; John 14:5-6). Sadly, most men choose self or the world rather than God (Gen. 6; Matt. 7:13-14). Only revelation from the mind of the One who created man could so consistently describe the human condition.

A "Special" Text And Bible Rationality -Matthew 4:1-11

That which is involved in accepting the Bible as God's inspired Word extends also to matters of **interpretation**. One who studies a Bible text must be aware that total evidence and the way that evidence supports any conclusions drawn are important matters. That is, one must note what the Bible **means** by what the text "says." In a conversation with Satan, Jesus used His knowledge of what the Scriptures "mean" to defeat the efforts of Satan to lead the Christ into yielding to the temptation to submit to Satan. Jesus believed that Bible evidence was rational and that taken together with all available evidence in the text, the conclusion would be valid, true and rational.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by ever word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt. 4:1-11).

Since the Bible is God's "breathed" Word (2 Tim.3:16), one of the most fundamental questions one should ask is, "When is the Biblical teaching binding on one today?" The account of Jesus' temptation by the Devil is relevant in answering the aforementioned inquiry. The Devil, with some disdain evidently, tried to seduce the Christ with an appeal to His fleshly appetite already driven by forty days of fasting-"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (4:3). One can almost "see" Satan's lips curled in derision as he says it, but Jesus answers with, "It is written ... " (4:4). Satan is not finished. Having heard Jesus use scripture, the Devil decides to use a text and quotes from Psalm 91:11-12, 97

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Probably, the Devil thought he would triumph by quoting the Word of God, but since the text is propositional (written in language easily understood by man) and rational (since it is inspired of God) Satan does

not know how to use it. Jesus defeats this second temptation by pointing out to the "father of lies" (John 8:44) that one must have **all** of the inspired evidence before coming to a conclusion about what the Bible means by various statements. Jesus says, "It is written **again** ... " (4:7). Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:16 and defeats Satan. In so doing, Jesus' answer implies that one must not only analyze the specific Bible statement but also compare said statement to all of the extended context in order to arrive at truth. This very fact shows that the Bible, written over hundreds of years, has come from one mind, and that mind is rational! Otherwise, Jesus might be thought of as **misusing** scripture against Satan who did misuse it!

The Universe And Bible Rationality

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (Psalm 19:1-14).

In the above Psalm, (see also lesson 3), the human penman, David, celebrates the revelation of God both from the universe and the written Word. God is pictured as both Creator and Lawgiver which facts lead to prayers for justification of His servants (verses 11-14). The "heavens" are pictured as declaring God's glory but not God's will (verses 1-6, 7-10) . When God's "daylight" begins the day (verses 4-6) the day's work must be according to God's "law" (instruction, verse 7). Whatever God has done in creating the universe for man's instruction concerning God's glory is not completed without the written word!

An established metaphysical argument for God's existence is that since there is design in the universe there must be a Designer. Science has well established the precise, mathematically provable movements in and of the universe, which movements account for the orbits of suns and planets and the ability of man to travel into space and to know, with great exactness, the angles needed for his rockets to leave the earth and to return.

The Psalmist, David, equates the created glory and the inspired message as to preciseness and exactness (Psalm 19). What God has made in the heavens must be acknowledged by men in every place on earth for every day (Psalm 19:2-3). The glory which God has conferred on the great universe is reflected to Him and acknowledges His creative power. The same can be said of the Bible which is so glorious that its message is finer than gold (Psalm 19:10).

The Psalmist also insisted that the general information that one gains about Deity from viewing the heavens is **understood** by all people (Psalm 19:3). The same is said about the inspired message (here the Old Testament, but the principle applies to the whole Bible, Eph. 3:1-5) which is sure, makes wise, converts, and enlightens (Psalm 19:6-7). The "word" and "speech" of the heavens are equated with the "words" and "speech" of the Bible since both are from God and were supernaturally created.

The Psalmist calls God's law "perfect" (Hebrew, *tumimah*, spotless or harmless) indicating that the message is intended for man's well-being. Only the One who created the universe, man, and the Bible would be able to coordinate the three so that man is inspired by the power of creation and directed by the message so that man can be his best while on earth.

Summary

The Bible's obviously rational teaching is a proof of its inspiration by a Divine mind. The Bible message was written in the ancient Near East which culture was neither rational about its gods nor thought its gods to be

good, which concept is antithetical to the Bible. The Bible is rational about man's nature. Only the One who created man could so describe Him.

Jesus believed the message to be rational and propositional. He used the written word against Satan, which use parallels the Psalmist's idea that the "law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm 19:7).

Discussion Questions

1. What does the amazing contrast between ancient, pagan writings, and the Bible mean for one's faith?
2. How many Bible passages can you find concerning verbal inspiration?
3. What is "anthropomorphic" language, and what are some passages that use such language?
4. How can you account for the Bible's consistent message about man over such a long time span?
5. What are some "changes" of which you can think in science's and philosophy's teaching on man over the centuries?
6. What is the difference in interpreting between what a verse may "say" and what it "means"?
7. How did Jesus understand that one should view the interpretation of the inspired Word?
8. What was wrong with the way Satan used the Bible (Matthew 4 for questions 6, 7, 8)?
9. Discuss how the Psalmist equated creation and inspiration?
10. What is your attitude toward the inspired Word of God? See Psalm 19:10-14.

CHAPTER NINE – INSPIRATION – BIBLICAL UNITY AND INSPIRATION JOHN

10:34-35

The Scripture "cannot be broken."

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (John 10:34-35).

Jesus, while on earth, insisted that God's Word means exactly what it says and says exactly what it means, and that the message is concrete and external. The scripture "cannot be broken." The cosmos can teach man that power and will, guided by intelligence, pervade the universe, but the will of the One who so guides had to be revealed. (See lesson eight in this series on Psalm 19:1-4.)

Nature is insufficient to meet man's spiritual needs and can only supply that which is physical. But, there is that in man which neither food, drink, nor any other physical gratification can satisfy. Man is a soul whose very sense of moral oughtness and "something more" is a constant reminder of a Divine power above. God has revealed in the Bible and in Christ (not nature) that which meets the desires of the soul. Those who believe that a personal God is interested enough in man to reveal the will of Deity for man are termed **theists**. The theist has investigated the Bible and has been impressed by the unity of the message and has obeyed it. Only Divine inspiration can account for such unity, and such unity is a proof of the proposition that the Bible is special, Divine inspiration. A fair and impartial study of the Bible itself can become one of the best arguments for the supernatural origin of the text.

There Is Unity In The Bible's Structure

The text seems to manifest the architect's plan! The two testaments (39 books and 27 books) are each divided into three parts: historical, prophetic, and teaching. (See lesson one in this series.) Each testament message also looks to the past, present, and future, and in each testament there is diversity of literature yet all declaring one theme.

One listening to a great symphony is impressed by how the various "parts" perform together as one harmonious whole. Discord is the result when even one musician misses a note. The Bible, too, would be expected to manifest discord were one of its writers to be out of harmony with those who wrote before and after. There is no discord even though more than twelve centuries were needed to complete the message. One cannot account for unity of structure without considering Divine guidance.

There Is Unity In Bible Doctrine

The overall theme of the Bible is God and human salvation. There are no discordant departures from this theme of God and man. Even the Noahic flood (Genesis 6-7) is to be viewed as teaching some aspect of human redemption and/ or the nature of God and not just a "story" to be told.

Before the universal flood destroyed the ancient world (2 Peter 3:5-6), the record states:

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them (Gen. 6:5-7).

The flood cleansed the earth of:

...all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth (Gen. 7:21-23).

The only persons left after the flood were Noah and seven of his family (Gen. 9:18-19). Since God intended to cleanse the earth one might imagine that the flood corrected the problem of man's imagination being on evil, but, at the end of the flood the very same is iterated by God concerning man:

And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done (Gen. 8:21).

Why did not the flood cleanse man of evil tendencies? The text is a unified whole in explaining that violence, death, or force do not change man's heart. Only loving obedience in response to God's grace can change one (John 14:15). If man's heart had been changed by the flood, unity of teaching could not be claimed for the text. Even the ancient flood is a picture of what really changed man. In order to reinforce this the Bible record contains the facts that Noah proceeded to get drunk, and his son Ham committed some perversion (Gen. 9:20-25)! Accounting for the sameness of doctrine in the Bible from first to last requires giving attention to Divine inspiration.

There Is Unity In Bible Prophecy

Jesus challenged the Jews of His day to "search the scriptures" for those Old Testament writings, He insisted, testified of Him. Of all of the prophecies in the Bible, there is one center-God's kingdom and the King (Christ) of that kingdom. The Old Testament pictures the coming king:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zech. 9:9).

and the New Testament records that arrival:

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (Matt. 21:5).

The New Testament record also contains the announcement of the King's return:

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (1 Cor. 15:24-25).

Four great "two chapters" taken together are an unified pronouncement of the kingdom or church of Christ-Isaiah 2; Daniel 2; Joel 2; Acts 2. The church would begin in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2); the church would begin in the days of Rome (Daniel 2); the church would begin in a miraculous fashion (Joel 2); and in Jerusalem, A.D. 33, the Holy Spirit inspired the beginnings of the church (Acts 2)! The only way to account for such unity of prophecy is by Divine inspiration. Jesus was so aware of the unity of prophecy that He could announce His church's beginning and the exact words surrounding the start. Jesus told some they would see the kingdom or church come with "power."

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1).

Jesus told His apostles to wait for the "power" in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49; which city Isaiah had predicted, see above). Jesus also told the apostles that the "power" would come when the Holy Spirit gave it miraculously (Acts 1:5, 8). This latter prediction parallels Joel 2. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles power on the day of Pentecost; in Jerusalem; in A.D. 33; in the days of the Roman empire (as Daniel had said-Acts 2:1-47)!

There Is Unity Of Bible Ethics

The Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, is united as to moral principles. Murder is always sin and is to be punished (Gen. 9:6; Exod. 20:13; Rom. 13:1-6)). Divorce is hated by God (Mal. 2:16; Matt. 19:6), and only

sexual infidelity to a mate frees the innocent to remarry (Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:9). One is not to covet (unlawful desire), dishonor parents, steal, lie, etc. (Exod. 20:12-17; Col. 3:5; Eph. 6:1-3; 4:25, 28).

History, however, shows that secular society tends to change its morals according to the "times." Twentieth-century American society countenances the murder of innocents (abortion), homosexuality, and even murder if the perpetrators are judged to be accountable for their actions because they were "abused." How would one account for the consistency of the Bible's teaching on ethics, if one believed that man, without Divine guidance, penned the message? Certainly it has to be seen that the Bible message is in contrast to the permissiveness of secular society. What man, by himself, would write such a book, and what group of men would extend the message over the centuries if not guided by a higher Mind? The Bible writers were, in most instances, vilified and even killed for their efforts. Yet, the Bible message calls society to a higher ethic, to a nobler life.

The Old and New Testaments condemn homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) and abortion (Exod. 13:2, 12; James 2:26) mentioned above. Why? Because life is a trust from God. Man is to respect life.

There Is Organic Bible Unity

Organic unity of the Bible is a description that implies three things: (1) All parts of the Bible are necessary to complete the whole; (2) All the parts of the Bible are necessary complements of the others; and (3) All the parts of the Bible are pervaded by one life-principle. [This last statement is comparable to saying, for example, that every part of the human body, no matter its size or location, is heir to the life-principle of the whole body. See 1 Corinthians 12:14-24 where is the record of Paul's appreciation of this principle to the spiritual body, the church.]

Applying the first principle above to the Bible, that all of its parts are necessary for completeness, uncovers a wonderful fact. No book of the Bible could, independently, start or stop without the other except for Genesis and Revelation! Exodus is dependent on Genesis, Matthew on the Old Testament, Acts on the gospel accounts, etcetera.

The second statement above, that all the parts of the Bible are necessary complements, implies that salvation truth is complete and that each book, letter, history, psalm, biography, prophecy, or statute serves an unique purpose in completing the whole (2 Peter 1:3). The Old Testament Decalogue (Exod. 20; Deut. 5) or "Ten Commandments" is completed by the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The Old Testament prophecies demand a New Testament update (Acts 8:30-31). The Mosaic code is incomplete without the ethics of Christ and the New Testament epistles, which latter teachings note the end of the Old Testament law and the introduction of the law of Christ (Col. 2:10-14; Gal. 6:2).

And, third, the "life-principle" is in God's Word throughout the pages of Holy Writ (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God's Word is "life" and "direction" (John 6:63; Heb. 4:12). Such organic unity as denoted by the latter three principles cannot be accounted for except by considering that only one source produced this book called the Bible. The Bible and man are "God-breathed" (Gen. 2:7; 2 Tim. 3:16)!

There Is Unity Of "Soberness" In The Bible

The Bible's calm, rational, dignified, neither coldly intellectual nor hotly fanatical message implies inspiration. Truth is presented whether God's people sin or not, obey God or not, and one gains confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible as one reads.

The apostle Paul was so confident in the power, truthfulness, and soberness of the inspired, God-breathed message that when that venerated disciple entered the ancient city of Corinth he

... came not with ... excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Paul could have, as the oratorical style of the day dictated, used rhetoric, but instead relied on the simple truth to teach honest hearts in Corinth. Such power in a simple message demands that one consider an inspired source.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

There Is Unity Of Expression In The Bible

Human writings tend to over-emphasize some things and under-stress others, thus proving defective. A cursory review of the **Koran** with its emphasis on violence or the **Book of Mormon** with its inaccurate history or the **Talmud** and its man-made laws will exhibit to the reader the problems that arise in human productions. But when one considers the Bible's teaching on nature, the human spirit, the relation to God to the world (neither pantheistic which emphasizes a self-developing universe as god, nor deistic which emphasizes a god based solely on reason), and a myriad of other subjects; one is impressed by the fact that the Book of God gives proper, balanced, unified importance to every subject.

Summary

It is more reasonable to conclude Divine inspiration for the Bible based on the above studies on its unified nature than that the Book is the product of many minds writing without God's guidance over long centuries. One must account for unity of structure, doctrine, prophecy, ethics, life-principle, soberness, and expression in some way. Trying to solve this issue of biblical unity without inspiration will prove to be an impossible task.

Discussion Questions

1. What is a theist?
2. What are some of the "unity in structure" arguments for inspiration?
3. What is the general Bible theme, and how does the knowledge of this theme affect one's view of the Bible?
4. Prove that the kingdom of God is now in existence.
5. How could one try to account for unity of prophecy without inspiration? Some, for example, have tried to say that Jesus read the Old Testament and then "lived" the prophecies. (How would he have "lived" His birth-Micah 5:2?)
6. What are some moral principles that society practices that are not biblical?
7. Why are there 66, and no more, books of the Bible?
8. Why did Paul preach in Corinth the way that he did (1 Cor. 2:1-5)?
9. What humanly written books that claim to be "religious" do you know that over-emphasize and are thus defective?
10. What spiritual need do you have, and how does the Bible meet that need?

CHAPTER TEN – INSPIRATION & RELEVANCY TO MAN’S NEEDS: JEREMIAH 10:23

There is a confession that each man must make in order to begin a proper relationship with God. Jeremiah, around 620 B.C., penned the words that ancient Israel needed to admit to God, but in so writing, Jeremiah also spoke for everyone:

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

That ancient prayer was uttered in the name of Israel, but it applies to all-it is not within man's authority nor is it man's option to go in various ways. Man's steps **must** be directed by God.

The Psalmist, David, well understood the point that the inspired Jeremiah would make when David wrote (around 1000 B.C.):

O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure (Psalm 6:1).

A "chastening in anger" refers to God's punishment of the disobedient, those who walk in their own ways and devise their own moral and spiritual creeds. To be judged by God for the right would mean that one had followed God's plan. The nature of the justice of God is such that He will demand the right which He has revealed through the Bible. The Bible is the **only** revelation from God and the only book that meets man's needs. If the Bible is followed, God's system of justice will direct one to heaven. The fact that the Bible is relevant to human needs is a strong argument for God-breathed inspiration of the text. For who would know man better than the One who created him?

Man: His Nature

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7).

Man is a dual being. He has a physical and spiritual (moral) nature.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16).

The material creation from God is such that every physical need of man is met. There is not a physical appetite which cannot be gratified.

But, there is that about man which is not satisfied by all the material things available. There is a constant longing by man for something beyond the physical as evidenced by history and the personal experiences of the ages. "Gods" have been invented; idols have been manufactured; men have used alcohol, drugs, sex, money, even work trying to discover for themselves that which would fill their longing for happiness.

The Bible claims that through adherence to its teaching man will find joy and satisfaction. Man will discover life.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

Jesus, in fact, made this claim for God's Word:

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matt. 5:6).

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:16-17).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:9-10).

If the Bible does fulfill all such desires of man, then this fact of fulfillment is evidence that both the physical world and the Bible are from a common source. The author of both would have perfect knowledge of the physical and spiritual needs of man. If the Bible does not meet man's innermost needs, the Bible fails of its own claim:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16- 17).

Is the Bible **worth** defending?

The Bible Solves Man's "Unsolvable Problems" The Problem Of Origins And Destinies

Frequent questions from man concern his origin, and destiny. Philosophers, ancient and modern, have offered answers none of which solutions have ever satisfied man's curiosity. Evolution is the popular notion today, but the theory proposes no solid proof for the origin of man despite its claims and offers only the annihilation of man as his destiny. Evolution cannot account for reason's developing from inanimate molecules, nor can evolution explain the inner longings of man to worship. There is no metaphysical system which can solve the vacuum in the evolutionary theory of origins to describe how man became such a complex being. Only the Bible offers a rational, even logical and scientific, explanation of man's origin.

True science insists that something cannot come from nothing. Rationability must arise from a rational source. Spirituality must arrive from a spiritual beginning. The effect must be preceded by an adequate cause. Only the Bible offers the adequate, sensible, plausible answer-God. The universe, man, and man's nature have a common Creator who is good, just, and caring (Genesis 1-2).

As to man's destiny, he is eternal in nature once he is conceived,

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (James 2:26).

Notice that James insists that the **body** without the spirit (a dual nature) is dead, but that James did **not** write that the **spirit** without the body is dead! (Those who promote the abortion of the unborn have to kill that body in the womb. James insists that living human bodies also have souls. One's soul is one's at conception and is given by God-Hebrews 12:9. To slay an unborn infant is murder.)

Since man is eternal in nature, he will live somewhere forever. The Bible describes the place where the unrighteous will live and where the righteous will dwell (Matt. 25:46). The Bible answers the questions of origin and destiny.

The Problems Of Myths And Traditions

Why has mankind suffered? What is the reason for death? Why are there ancient traditions of an universal flood? (cf. *The Gilgamesh Epic*, Babylonian flood accounts, etc.)? Why are there different races and languages? Myths and traditions, folklore, and fairy tales abound in the histories of earth's peoples. Which one of those man-made tales can answer the questions of affliction, flood, famine, and fall of man? Only the Bible sets forth, in detail, the solutions.

Men suffer because of sin, either theirs or others. Death is the consequence of the rebellion of the first couple (Rom. 5:12) and remains that consequence (Rom. 6:23). Rebellious mankind was scattered in race and language by God (Gen. 12). There was a universal flood which changed the physical nature of the earth and limited the life-span of man (2 Peter 3:1-8). Myth offers a world held up by "Atlas" or an earth sitting on a turtle's back! Tradition denies God and offers no answer for suffering and death unless to say that if there is a God, He must be "horrible" for not ending the pains and afflictions of men! Such a theory as the latter ignores the presence of the Son of God in this world who Himself suffered to remove the sting of death caused by the sin of Adam and Eve (Rom. 5:12-20).

Tradition blames "God," while at the same time denying His existence, for every disaster known to man. Such is irrational for man is also able to be warned about disease and impending disaster and is able, by reason, to avoid many hurtful situations. The Bible, calmly, sensibly, without sensationalizing, simply and beautifully explains that man, with Satan's help, brought on man's own problems and that God has ever tried to reclaim man from the catastrophe of sin (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

A myth or a tradition, whether it be of a flood or origins, has to grow out of some actual event. The Bible declares the actual facts out of which human sagas have arisen.

Man's Need To Worship

Anthropological, historical, and archaeological studies show that man will have an object to worship. Man seems to be incurably "religious." Whom shall man worship and pay homage?

The God revealed in the Bible is infallible, allpowerful, and merciful. He is, therefore, a Being with whom man can have fellowship, communion, and whom man can praise. No other being is worthy of man's adoration.

The perfect revelation of the essence of God was given when the second person of the **Godhead** (Father,

Word, Holy Spirit) the Word was "made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Word became the Son of God at birth and was declared to be the Son with all-authority after His resurrection (Luke 2; Rom. 1:4). The Son, Jesus, showed man that God is perfect in wisdom, power, and holiness and worthy of man's adoration (John 14:9).

Some, who had known God, because of a lack of gratitude for the blessings of God, turned to idols.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:18-32).

The above listing of the sins of the ancient Gentiles whom God "gave up" contains the same sins committed by those who do not follow the perfect will of God today. The observable fact of the debauchery, degradation, demoralization, and degeneration of modern society without God is a proof that the only being worthy for man to pay homage is the great God of the Bible (Eph. 4:6). Societies who have not submitted to God's principles and those who do not do so today or will not do so in the future are doomed to failure (Psalm 9:17).

Discussion Questions

1. What must man confess in order to achieve a proper relationship to God, and why must he confess such?
2. What are some examples of which you can think of man's directing his own steps?
3. What other book meets every need of man as does the Bible?
4. What does question number three's answer reveal about Biblical inspiration?
5. What is man's nature?
6. What things have ever satisfied you?
7. What is one reason Jesus came to earth (cf. John 10:10), and what difference has He made in your life?
8. Prove that the physical world and the Bible came from God, and show the implications for inspiration.
9. Since myths and legends have their sources in actual events, what does the Bible record show, and how does that record show inspiration?
10. What are some ways God is "blamed" for the disasters which befall man? What is the Bible's explanation?

CHAPTER ELEVEN: INSPIRATION & RELEVANCY TO HUMAN NEEDS (2): EPHESIANS 2:1-15

Whether or not one is willing to recognize the fact as presented by the Bible, it is still the case that Jesus said that the majority of all who have ever lived will not spend eternity in God's heaven.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matt. 7:13-14).

Too, whether or not one is willing to accept the truth as presented in the holy text, sin is a fact. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The relevancy of the God-inspired Bible to the need of man for release from the bondage of sin can not be overemphasized.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

This chapter contains further discussion of how the Bible solves man's "unsolvable" problems.

The Problem Of Sin

As noted in the last chapter (from Rom. 1:18-32) since man must have an object of worship, when man forsook God in those centuries before Christ came, man created gods. Man's sacrifices in those ages, and through all time, have been attempts to find "peace" or "atonement" with a god or gods. This fact of man's "uneasiness" about his relationship to some higher power is too evident and observable in man and his history to be denied.

Sin, or separation from a god or gods and the consequences of such an experience are, and have been, very large parts of man's existence. The apostle Paul insisted that those who lived, or live, in a world without Christ are dead in sin, without hope, and without God (Eph. 2:1, 12). Paul's reasoning is that man, without Christ, **walks** in disobedience to God and walks in obedience to Satan (Eph. 2:2). This habit of rebellion against God becomes so ingrained, writes Paul, that a life (**conversation** in the King James version) of sin and fulfilling of fleshly lust become a matter of "nature" (Eph. 2:3). It is not that man is born in such a condition, but it is the case that man sins until it becomes **second-nature** to him. (The original word translated **nature** is *phusis* which may mean the nature one acquires from long-standing practice.) Children are, by birth or in-born nature, examples of what one must be to enter God's kingdom and are not to be considered as inheriting some sin-nature (Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Man's need for release from such bondage of sin is, then, an urgent matter.

God solved the problem by providing a plan that Paul labels "faith." In the **Ephesian** letter when Paul is discussing the difference between the ancient law of Moses and the new law of faith he uses the term, faith, to mean the entire gospel system (cf. Gal. 3:23-29), through which system man is saved by grace (Eph. 2:8). However, without the revelation of this plan of God's, no one would ever be released from sin. How relevant the Bible is to man's greatest need!

The Ephesian Christians needed the blood of Christ in order to be released from sin (Eph. 2:13). Only the Bible records how one reaches that blood through God's faith-system. One must hear the good news of Christ (Eph. 2:17). One must believe that God sent the Christ and that Christ is deity (John 8:21, 24; cf. Eph. 2:12). One must repent of a life of sin and even of a life of misunderstanding truth (Acts 17:30-31). One must confess Christ as God's Son (1Tim. 6:12), and one must be immersed in water in order to have one's sins remitted (Acts 2:38; Eph. 4:5). At the time of immersion, and not before, one is said to be in Christ and in His death (Rom. 6:3). The Ephesian brethren had been immersed (or baptized) in just such a manner (Acts 19:1-6) and when contacting Christ's "11 death" were declared to have been made near to God by the blood of God's Son (Eph. 2:13). Inspiration teaches that Christ shed His blood in His death (John 19:32-35). The inescapable conclusion is that at baptism one contacts, spiritually, the saving blood of the Lamb of God! Without inspiration's message not even the "few" would be able to find this narrow gate of salvation (Matt. 7:13-14). How relevant is the Bible to man's greatest need?

The Bible does present God as absolutely righteous, holy, and just; the Bible does present man as in sin and hopeless. But, the theme of God's word is reconciliation and peace with God (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:15). Through

reconciliation or "atonement," man's fellowship and communion with God are assured and man's innermost desires are satisfied (Eph. 2:19-22). Man is ready for good works, which works are also revealed by inspiration (Eph.2:10; and chapters 3-6). Accounting for the relevancy concerning this need of man is impossible without considering inspiration. What man would devise a system which condemned him and then insist that a "visit" from God's Son to earth in order to be executed would be necessary to save man? Admitting that such a scheme originated in a higher mind is the only solution in accounting for salvation's system. Inspiration is from God.

The Problem Of Man's Weaknesses

In this world of sin, suffering, death, and degeneracy man feels alone and weak. The Bible recognizes this problem (Eph. 2:12; Jer. 10:23), and inspiration's message in that regeneration is the answer (John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5). The distinctive characteristic of the Christian system is its emphasis on the correction of man's feelings of being alone, weak and of implanting in man a new emphasis on life (John 10:10).

Inspiration emphasizes that man is not alone once he becomes a Christian (Phil. 4:13). Man becomes a new creation in Christ and is restored spiritually in fellowship with the Creator (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). The Christian does not "stand" without God when the trials and tribulations of life occur (1 Cor. 10:12-13), for such an idea that one is standing alone would be idolatrous and cause one to fall (1 Cor. 10:12, 14).

Loneliness is a devastating fact of life for the multitudes. Some are known to dial telephone answering machines just to hear a friendly voice. Many enter ill advised marriages or seek solace in affairs; while others turn to alcohol or drugs. Any number of religious systems have been devised by man to counter-act the terrible feelings of weakness and loneliness. Only the Bible carries the message whose effect is a permanent change of heart for man. Mysticism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam, and all other human systems have failed man and led him to war and destruction. The gospel system, as revealed by inspiration, when honestly and sincerely followed has led man to peace and to great heights of achievement in art, government, and international relations. How can one account for this phenomenon without considering inspiration from God?

The Problem Of "Needing" God During Trial

It is a fact known to every Christian that during times of sickness and death many, who would otherwise not be interested, turn to the Bible for comfort. Grief, misfortune, and sickness have a way of focusing man's attention on that which is truly important-God's inspired message. What is it about this Book that draws one to its pages for comfort in trial?

The Bible, alone, solves the problem of a troubled heart (John 14:1-6). The Bible, alone, provides the answer of assurance needed during affliction (Rom. 8:28; 15:4).

The Bible, alone, contains the record of the cancellation of the fear of death (Heb. 2:12-14; 1John4:18). The Christian may dread death, but the overwhelming fear is gone (2 Cor. 5:1-4). Without the knowledge that the Bible is inspired by the One who created man, one would find it impossible to understand how this book can meet such a fundamental need of man (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-17; Heb. 12:11). Priscilla J. Owens and E.S. Lorenz wrote:

Give me the Bible star of gladness gleaming: To cheer the wanderer lone and tempest tossed; No storm can hide that radiance peaceful beaming, Since Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Give me the Bible when my heart is broken; When sin and grief have filled my soul with fear; Give me the precious words by Jesus spoken; Hold up faith's lamp to show my Saviour near. Give me the Bible, all my steps enlighten, Teach me the danger of these realms below; That lamp of safety o'er the gloom shall brighten, That light alone the path of peace can show. Give me the Bible, lamp of life immortal, Hold up that splendor by the open grave; Show me the light from heaven's shining portal, Show me the glory gilding Jordan's wave.

The above poem set to music has often filled the hearts of every Christian with joy. The chorus is:

Give me the Bible, Holy message shining; Thy light shall guide me in the narrow way; Precept and promise law and love combining, Til night shall vanish in eternal day.

The Problem Of Man's Complete Psychology

The Bible is fitted to man's intellect. There are facts to be learned and analyzed. The Book has been scrutinized throughout the centuries by some of mankind's greatest scholars. Learned men have attacked, defended,

dissected, and analyzed inspiration's pages and still books roll off the presses concerning the Bible's message. The apostle John once said that the world could not contain the books that might be written about Christ, and certainly men have attempted to fill the world with books about the Bible (John 21:25). Yet no one has ever claimed that the depths of the Bible message have been reached!

The Bible is fitted to man's emotional needs as noted earlier concerning loneliness, grief, trial, etcetera. The Bible is a challenge to man's will and even has teaching that benefits the physical needs of man and the psychological well-being of man. The "whole" of man is fitted by inspiration's message.

The Bible is corrective, instructive and turns the proud to humility, the hateful to love, and the covetous to sacrifice. Such facts are proof that the Bible's author has a complete understanding of the needs of the readers.

Summary

The God-breathed Bible message is attuned to man's nature and solves man's problems concerning his origin and destiny; his understanding of myths and traditions; his need to worship; his bondage to sin; and his battles with loneliness, grief, trial, and affliction. Beside all the foregoing, every facet of man's nature is met by the Bible. Only a Mind higher than man's could write such a Book.

Discussion Questions

1. In your estimation, what is man's greatest, unsolved problem?
2. How does man become a sinner by "nature?"
3. What five "steps" are necessary to have one's sins remitted by the blood of Christ?
4. What is the overall Bible theme, and what does that theme mean to you?
5. Show that the Ephesian brethren had been baptized "for the remission of sins" before being "saved by grace."
6. What is the Bible's answer for man's weaknesses?
7. What feeling does the word "loneliness" invoke" in you?
8. What book do you want read at your funeral, if any?
9. How much study of the Bible have you done personally, and what have you discovered about the intellectual depths of the message?
10. What needs of yours are being met by studying the Bible?

CHAPTER TWELVE –INSPIRATION & HISTORICAL SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY: 2 PETER 1:20-21

Peter, the apostle of Christ, said that the Old Testament writings never originated in men's minds separate and apart from God.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came now in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Peter's fellow-apostle, Paul, further insisted, along with Peter, that **all** scripture originated with God and thus the two were echoing all "holy men of God" who ever sat down to write while under inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; cf. 2 Peter 3:1-2).

Since both testaments of the Holy Bible are replete with claims of being a God-breathed message, and since numerous historical and scientific statements are contained in its message, the Bible cannot be accepted as inspired of God unless it is proven to be accurate in the aforementioned two areas. A book may be historically and scientifically correct and not be inspired of God, but if the Bible is to be accepted as from deity, the Book must be accurate in all such areas. For, if the Bible cannot be trusted in the areas where scientific information and historical statements are given, then the Bible cannot be trusted at any point. Showing the historical and scientific accuracy of the Bible does not prove inspiration, but adds to the testimony that leads to the conclusion that God is the source of the message.

As To Historical Correctness

When one is discussing evidence concerning the historicity of literature, in this case biblical writings, one is concerning oneself with what is called **external** evidence. The most significant contributions to the field of historical investigation arrive from the science of archaeology. Since not every point of history has been investigated by archaeologists, one cannot "test" the Bible in every instance. But, every archaeological find has confirmed the Bible's historicity. Not one point of the Bible has ever been disproved as a result of what the archaeologist's spade has uncovered. Some archaeologists (Albright, Burrows, et al) have noted that more than one archeologist has gained considerable admiration for the Bible from the excavations in Palestine.

Some seemingly "insignificant" points of history confirmed by archaeological evidence are the alliance between Elam and Shinar mentioned in Genesis 14:1; the city of Pithom mentioned in the Exodus narrative and discovered in 1883 (Exod. 1:11); the city has some bricks made with straw and some made without; the capture of Jericho (Josh. 6); the excavation of which shows that the original could have been compassed in an hour and that the walls fell out from some catastrophe; the fact that Belshazzar did reign in Babylon as a co-regent of his father Nabonidus (Dan. 5:1); tablets show that Nabonidus was away much of the time. (For years Bible critics mocked the Bible account of Belshazzar); forty-one of the names mentioned from Abraham (Gen. 12) to the end of the Old Testament have been found in contemporary documents.

The Bible documents are historically accurate as can be seen from those texts with which the external, archaeological digs have crossed paths. Extrapolating the foregoing fact would lead one to assume that no further find could discredit the Bible.

Along with historical correctness, every geographical detail or topographical item mentioned in the Bible has, where discovered, been proven to be precise. Even the nations and their places in history are always correct including the ancient table of nations of Genesis 10. One trying to disprove the Bible by archaeological evidence would be surprised to find that men have been wrong about history, but God's book has not!

The names of cities and provinces, places and peoples (including the ancient Hittites whom historians used to say never existed) as mentioned in the Bible are all accurate. One archaeologist, Sir William Ramsey (Hamilton: *Basis of Christian Faith*) confirmed every historical aspect of **Acts**!

The effort to confirm the Bible's credibility is an indirect confirmation of the inspiration of the Bible, and since archaeology confirms the Bible's credibility, archaeology indirectly confirms inspiration. The fact of historicity makes the Bible's appeal to reason most appealing for sensible men. The Bible teaching is to "prove all things" and

to "reason with God" (1 Thess.5:21; Acts 25:24; Isa. 1:18; etc.). One is required to defend the Christian faith which practice would be impossible without inspiration's having provided a defensible text.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15).

As To Scientific Accuracy

One of the greatest objections to the Bible, today, is that it contradicts scientific truth. Such a position of denial is to be rejected. The Bible, though not a science textbook nor weighed down with scientific terms of the twentieth century, is completely correct in its statements of fact of a scientific nature. A conflict between **true, proven** science and the Bible has **never** been established.

Physical science deals with observable facts, data, and the laws of nature. The Bible message is concerned with morality, spirituality, religiosity, and conscience. True science discovers facts and things already placed in existence by God and, thus, follows after God. The conflict that arises is never between science and the Bible, but between human theories and speculations and the Bible.

For example, the **unproven theory** of evolution is in conflict with the Bible account of creation. Some Christians (?) try to compromise and to merge the Genesis (chapters one and two) account with evolution. These "theistic evolutionists" argue that God "created" through an evolutionary process. These same theorists argue that the "days" of Genesis chapter one are symbolic of long eons of time.

However, one cannot be a Christian and at the same time try to harmonize the Bible and evolution. Jesus, Himself, believed and taught the seven-day creation account.

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh (Matt. 19:4-5).

One cannot claim to follow Christ and evolutionary theory!

The basic flaw of evolutionary thinking is the theory that everything is in a continuum from the beginning; that "all things continue as they were." This latter doctrine of uniformitarianism denies the Bible's account of the flood, and Bible students know that such a theory was predicted by Peter two-thousand years ago.

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Where by the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished (2 Peter 3:3-6).

One bit of verifiable evidence of a changed world is given here since space limitations forbid more. Science now knows that the oxygen content of the atmosphere is today fifty percent less than at ancient times. Tiny air bubbles trapped in amber (hardened resin from pine trees) from what science calls the Cretaceous era (the age of the dinosaurs) shows a richer oxygen. Science had **assumed** that ancient air differed little from today's (New York Times service).

The Bible teaches that the universal flood changed the world and its atmosphere. Only man's theory is in conflict with the Bible. Scientific evidence from "Cretaceous amber" is empirical evidence of a changed world. True science and the Bible do not conflict.

Rimmer (*Harmony of Science and Scripture*) has long suggested four propositions about science and inspiration: (1) The Bible does contain scientific truth even though its facts are stated in non-scientific (twentieth-century) language. (2) The Bible does not contain the errors, fallacies, nor theories of science common to the times when the Bible was written. The Bible writers lived in several successive states of culture and history, but they never were incorrectly influenced to accept the fables of those eras. For example, Moses wrote Genesis through Deuteronomy, and Moses was trained in all of the "wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). But Moses never wrote that the world began from a "flying egg" nor that men originated from the white worms of the Nile river! Moses insisted on a creation out of nothing from the power of God. Daniel's wisdom was sought, but he never adopted Babylonian myths (Daniel 1-13). All the prophets stood opposed to the false wisdom of their times. The errors of the

writer's days never became a part of the biblical record. (3) The Bible is in harmony with modern science in the remarkable fashion in which it disagrees with modern error, exactly as the ancient men of God contradicted the fallacies of their day. The transitional fallacies of evolution will not be adopted by the Bible. (4)The Bible is in harmony with modern science in that it has anticipated many of the discoveries of recent centuries. Sea-lanes were discovered, for example, in 1850, but are mentioned in Psalm 8:8.) The above four propositions raise an interesting question. Did the biblical writers know these things as a matter of wisdom and knowledge of their days, or were they inspired by God?

The scientific accuracy of the Bible marks it as a book distinct from all other writings contemporary with it. The Bible mentions seas in one "bed," which is a fact only recently known to science (Gen. 1:9-10). The Bible teaches that the earth is round or "circular," which fact is also recent (Isa. 40:22; Prov. 8:27; Job 26:7). (By "recent" is meant from the last two centuries.) Science has seen a void or dark "hole" in the north (Job 26:7) and knows, now, why the seas are not "full" (Eccl. 1:7). The ancient Solomon, who wrote Ecclesiastes, would not have known about evaporation. Many Mosaic laws deal with germs (cf. Lev. 13:45), which were not known until the 1800' s. The Bible mentions the differing "flesh" of man and animals (1 Car. 15:39), but also mentions that man has "one blood" which holds "life" (Acts 17:26; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23). These medical facts are of recent discovery!

Modern science, as archaeology, confirms the amazing, inspired and inspiring, message of God's Book. Those who fail to discover its facts, commands, precepts, and promises are doomed to fail in life and death!

Summary

The Bible is historically correct and scientifically accurate. Such facts verify inspiration and confirm that God's hand was upon the writers. No one can, nor ever will, find a contradiction to history nor an inaccuracy in stated scientific fact in the Bible.

Discussion Questions

1. What does knowing that the Bible is historically and scientifically accurate "prove?"
2. Discuss the various Bible histories confirmed by archaeology.
3. From an encyclopedia, what ancient histories are known and are they historical or mythical? For example, look for the "*Gilgamesh Epic*."
4. Why does the Bible record state that men went "down" from Jerusalem to Jericho when Jericho is north of Jerusalem (Luke 10)?
5. Why does the Bible appeal to reason?
6. What area of true science does the Bible contradict?
7. What is a "theistic" evolutionist?
8. What is the doctrine of uniformitarianism; what passage predicted the doctrine; what are some scientific evidences against such a doctrine?
9. What are Rimmer's four propositions?
10. How can one account for the Bible's scientific accuracy considering the times in which it was written?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – INSPIRATION: ETHICS & AUTHORITY: MATTHEW 5:8; 28:18-20

To conclude this series of lessons on the Bible's inspiration of God a study of ethics and authority is included. It seems reasonable that if the Bible is God's Word, then its message is to be lived and obeyed.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).

And since the conclusions reached from internal evidence from the text and external, logical reasoning confirm that the Bible is Divine revelation, all people should be interested in adopting its concepts and obeying its statutes. In obeying God one is showing one's love to God in the only way one can show such love.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

Those who truly love God will love the message God preserved for them. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). It is vital, then, that those who profess love for God learn the Bible, obey it, live by it, and die knowing it!

Divine inspiration believed leads to divine authority obeyed. No one really believes God who shuns the Word of God or adds to or subtracts from its message.

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Prov. 30:6).

Bible-based faith is the **only** saving faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). No other system, except the gospel of Christ, can save.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17).

The ethics of a Christian and the authority a Christian obeys are from the same source-the Bible. Those who follow orthodoxy, traditions of men, humanly devised creeds, human leaders, are subject to God's condemnation. Surely the God of heaven is wise enough to give men a Book which can guide them to heaven and direct their steps on earth. Any approach to Christianity, sincerely professed or not, which denies the authority, inspiration, and Divine sanction of God is unethical. To claim to be a Christian and at the same time to deny plain biblical instruction is illogical, immoral, and mocks the very message of Christ.

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophesy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall takeaway his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Supposed "Christian" groups who do not have biblical authority, especially New Testament authority, for their practices are not approved by God and serve God in vain.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matt.15:9).

What, then, should one understand about ethics and authority and their connection to inspiration?

As To Ethics

The study of ethics is usually subdivided into two classes: (1) General, which is the science of right and wrong in principle, character, and conduct. (2) Christian, is the science of right and wrong in principle, character, and conduct in light of Bible teaching. For example, the abortion (murder) of the unborn is legal in the United States and by some, general standards, ethical. To the Christian, abortion is unethical.

The above expressions, "in principle, character, and conduct" are used to include the actions of an individual **and** the principle involved in that person's actions and thoughts. Ethics, then, deals with the heart of the person from which actions proceed. Jesus taught:

That out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19)

The Bible expression "heart" is definitive of man's will, intellect, and emotion. In the Bible, a man thinks in his "heart" (Prov. 23:7). A man believes with his "heart" (Rom. 10:9-10). A man obeys from his "heart" (Rom. 6:16-18). Outward action is not enough when defining **Christian** ethics. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). A man may conduct himself acceptably according to the general code of ethics of the times, but that man may not yet be ethical in the sight of God.

Inspiration, that is God's divine guidance, has singularly, uniquely, and unerringly kept all ethical guidelines pure. There is no obscuring of the moral message from Genesis to Revelation for God is "just" and man is to "do right." No ethical religion nor human creed has remained unchanged in the ethical sense. Only the Bible can make such a claim! God has always desired to save.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:18).

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not (Matt. 23:37).

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage (Matt. 22:4).

Man's decision to reject God's desire or to obey God's call to come leads to one of only two consequences-hell or heaven, disaster or delight.

But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59:2).

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (Matt. 23:38).

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

Christian or Bible ethics everywhere condemn sin, from the Garden of Eden, through the flood, nations, and even in God's people. The standard of God is set (cf. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and the "Ten Commandments;" and Matthew 5-7 in the New Testament, Christ's "Sermon on the Mount") and man is expected to follow.

Also, the Bible texts which record those situations where God is dealing with man set forth a God who has an unchanging ethic. God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). For example, men are always condemned for wickedness and saved when obeying (cf. Gen. 2:16-17; 6:8, 22; 18:20-32; John 8:31-32; 12:48). Some have questioned God's "ethic" (or justice) in the matter of His destroying the Amorites in Palestine in "favor" of allowing the Jews to settle. The Bible records the reason for the divine sanction. The Amorites had been warned of God that when their "iniquity was full," those ancient people would be punished (Gen. 15:16). According to Leviticus 18:24-

30 and Deuteronomy 30:15-20, the people of Palestine were completely idolatrous, and Israel could justly take the lead. God never is said, in the Bible, to act immorally nor unethically.

Some have also questioned God's justice and the slaughter of the children when Israel took Palestine from the Amorites. Those ancient peoples, since they were wholly pagan and an abomination before God, would never have given their children a chance to know God. However, children who die are not accountable before God, and are ushered into heaven (Matt. 19:14). The Amorite children, headed for hell under paganism, found heaven instead because of a just and ethical God.

Too, the Bible is constant in its ethical demands concerning inner purity and not mere outward, ceremonial morality. When God gave Israel the ritual of animal sacrifice, such an offering was intended to develop a sense, in the Jews, of God's condemnation of sin (Lev. 16; 17:11-14). But, the ritual began to take precedence over repentance and holiness, and even the acts of worship were condemned by Israel's prophets since all such acts had become merely ceremonial (cf. Isa. 1:10ff). Ritual was the order of the day in the ancient Near East, and only insight from a just, ethical God would be the answer as to why those prophets condemned the ritual.

As To Authority

In the midst of temptation by Satan Jesus adduced that the scriptures are the authority (Matt. 4:7-10). When answering His disciple's questions about John the baptizer and the prophecy concerning "Elijah," Jesus referred to scripture (Matt. 11:10). When challenging those who had turned the temple of God into a house of usury, Jesus' indignation was authorized by the scripture (Matt. 21:13). As Jesus sadly said an earthly farewell to His apostles, the Master called on scripture as witness to their attitudes (Matt. 26:31).

When Jesus was asked for authority concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage, the all-wise Son of God turned to the Bible and wondered why His hearers had not "read" (Matt. 19:4-5). In confounding the liberal theologians of His day Jesus asked the Sadducees about scripture's meaning (Matt. 21:42). And in challenging these same ancient rabbis concerning the resurrection of the body, Jesus told them that they erred because they did not "know" and had not "read" the scriptures (Matt. 22:29-31). And when being arrested and being faced with torture and execution, Jesus submitted to the authority of scripture.

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled (Matt. 26:56).

Jesus' disciples were not as willing to heed to divine authority as was He!

Eventually, however, Jesus' followers began to speak of the authority of the holy writings. Mark will remark, "Even as it is written" (Mark 1:2). Paul will preach "according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Philip will begin with scripture in order to preach Christ (Acts 8:35) as did Paul (Acts 17:3). Doctrinal arguments are settled from scripture (e.g. Rom. 1:17; 3:4-10; 4:17; 11:26; 14:11; 1 Cor. 1:19; 2:9; 3:19; 15:45; Gal. 3:10, 13; 4:22, 27). Holiness of life finds its authority in scripture, wrote Peter (1 Peter 1:16), and so does love, wrote James (James 2:8). In fact, those early disciples learned to appeal to scripture to explain the startling events taking place in their lives. A new apostle was needed to replace the betrayer, Judas. Scripture had predicted this (Acts 1:16). False prophets would arise, which even was a scriptural prediction (2 Peter 2:1). The "scripture must be fulfilled" for it is the Holy Spirit's message through a human author (cf. Matt. 1:18-25).

In fact, the idea that scripture, God's Word, the Holy Spirit's inspiration, were all one message from deity became so believed and so ingrained that Paul would write that the "scripture ... preached" (Gal. 3:8) what God actually said! Also, the Holy Spirit "said" scripture and scripture "said" to Pharaoh (Heb. 3:7 from Psalm 95:7 and Rom. 9:17). New Testament writers made no distinction between scriptures and God's Word! Those who claim some direct message from God today must explain why a completed, authoritative, perfect will from God needs addition (2 Peter 1:3). God's Word is authoritative because it is His Word (John 12:48).

Summary

The Old Testament and New Testament are replete with claims of plenary, verbal inspiration (cf. Sam. 23:2; 2 Tim. 3:16). Evidence abounds from history, science, archaeology, unity, prophecy, and reason that the Bible is God's Word. Its ethical purity and singularity of teaching distinguish this Book from all others. Those who submit to its teachings will be eternally blessed (John 5:39; Psalm 19:7; John 8:31-32).

Discussion Questions

1. What is God's revelation concerning the only system that saves? How does one obey this system? (See lesson eleven in this series.)
2. What does the Bible teach about how one truly loves God?
3. What is the difference between general ethics and Christian ethics?
4. Give some examples of differences you know between general ethics and Christian ethics?
5. What two aspects of human nature are involved in a study of Christian ethics?
6. In what ways does the Bible use the expression "heart?"
7. What questions do you have concerning some supposed arbitrary, seemingly "unjust" decision by God? Can you find the Bible answer?
8. What were some of the ways Jesus indicated His submission to the authority of the scripture?
9. In what ways did Jesus' disciples learn to follow the authority of the holy writings?
10. See Romans 15:4. In what ways do the scriptures "comfort" us by being recognized as the final authority?

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**SECTION TWO: THE BOOK GOD “BREATHED”
VOLUME 2 – A THIRTEEN LESSON STUDY OF
THE CANONICITY OF THE BIBLE**

Section Two Introduction

It has been my distinct privilege and deep pleasure to know Keith Mosher, Sr., since he was a student at the Memphis School of Preaching. I have counted him a friend indeed since his formative years as a growing and maturing student of God's Word. It has been personally enriching to me to see him become one of the good and great preachers of our day. He has advanced to high academic excellence while keeping his feet securely on God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and a reliable Bible. He has not changed Bibles nor has he changed what is in the Bible.

He is a man of multiple talents. He is a masterful teacher in the classroom as hundreds of his students across the years can verify. He is an excellent, eloquent preacher of the gospel. He has excelled in local work and is a builder of strong and solid congregations. He is proficient in personal soul winning and teaches others to do the same. He is very effective in gospel meetings. He has preached in meeting work here at Ripley and our people love him dearly and deeply. He is a favorite here. He excels as the able Dean of Academics at the Memphis School of Preaching and wields great influence over the choice young men who come to this fine school to advance in their study of the Bible.

The book you now hold in your hands is a literary idea whose time has come. It reflects a lifetime of diligent study, accuracy of application and scholarly research. It touches a theme-the Sacred Canon of Holy Scripture-about which we have not done much writing and not entirely enough study. I know I have not and perhaps you are similarly disposed. Keith has. He has taught this material to his students across the years. Now he has blessed each of us by committing it to the permanence of writing. He writes like the true scholar he is but in such a way that we all can read with relish and profit as we proffer this valuable volume.

It is arranged into thirteen chapters with thought provoking questions ending each chapter. It is designed for both individual and classroom classes as well as classes for young people. Our teenagers need to be informed and equipped along matters like this.

I have read the manuscript with pleasure and profit. Keith has taught me things I did not know. He will do the same for you if you read it with conscientious care and ardency of affection for the work of God and how it has come to us through Jehovah's providential care and keeping. A journey through these exciting pages will bring spiritual joy to your hearts. It will add to your affection for God's Word; it will fortify your faith; it will hallow your hope.

I recommend this scholarly and well written work without reservation. I predict it will have literary success. Many will buy it, read it with relish, study it with success and then recommend it to others.

Robert Taylor
Ripley, Tennessee
March 16, 2001

CHAPTER ONE—THE “CONCEPT” OF CANON: 2 CORINTHIANS 10:13-16; GALATIANS 6:15-16

Some Bible students are, evidently, not overly concerned about which books belong in the Bible. To such persons it may seem somewhat strange, then, to begin a study of the reasons some ancient volumes are in Holy Writ and others are not. Too, some believe that the King James Version "just dropped from heaven" (as one put it); while others are not aware that there is a way to research the origins of the Bible books.

There are multitudes of ancient religious writings; some of which were produced during the same eras as the sixty-six books of the Bible. Do any of those writings deserve a place in the text and how can one know that the presently accepted books are all that God actually revealed and that no fewer nor no more books should be received? Such questions as the latter two are the purpose of this thirteen week inquiry.

Thus, this study of **canon** will be involved in the faith-building of assuring oneself that the magnificent, incomparable, "Book of books," the Bible, is complete as it is now found in the English versions. The apostle Paul knew such assurance and said:

And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32)

Canon: Introduction Matters

First, one who accepts Jesus' statement that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35) is necessarily involved (whether aware of such or not) in the fact that God did preserve the Bible. The doctrine of preservation has even been formulized by those in denominations (for example the Helvetic Consensus of 1675) and sincere Bible students have long realized the need for a historical investigation into how the Bible was collected and preserved; which inquiry is faith-building and exciting. The ancient Psalmist declared: "Forever O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). A study of canon takes a step of actualizing the historical investigation into preservation and collection of the sixty-six books of the biblical versions.

In the second place, it is assumed in the study of canon that the pupil has accepted the fact that God (the Holy Spirit) did control the penning of the Bible. Peter wrote:

Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).

No prophet, according to the apostle Peter, ever produced the scriptures from his own, "private," mind; but God the Holy Spirit carried the prophets through the process. Paul also insisted that,

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In the third place, while investigating the process of how the ancient manuscripts were produced, collected, preserved, and distributed by the respective communities in which they were written, one is led to ask the question, "Did those ancient writers **know** they were in possession of God's Word?" The study of canon helps answer such an inquiry.

Fourth, the "canon of scripture" is an inquiry by which the list of **accepted** (God-inspired) books of the Bible are designated. Thus, a study of canon should follow a study of inspiration; for one not convinced that God **verbally** (i.e., God gave the message in human vocabulary) inspired the biblical writers would be one hard to convince that Jehovah preserved the writings. (See Revelation 22:18-19 where the record of that book ends with a warning not to tamper with the message. Such a warning is irrelevant if the text has not been preserved.)

The Term: Canon

The term, **canon**, has its historical roots (its etymology) in Semitic (Arabic and Hebrew), Greek, and

Sumerian languages. The ancient Hebrew word, **kaneh**, meant **reed**. Reeds, which grew in abundance along ancient Near-Eastern water sources, were often used as measuring rods. Thus, the etymological evolution from **reed** to **measure** occurred for **kaneh**.

The apostle Paul, writing in Greek, used that language's word **kanon** on two occasions. Each time, the English translators used **rule** to transpose the Greek.

And as many as walk according to this **rule** (emphasis mine, K.M.); let us mind the same thing (Phil. 3:16).

Note that Paul was aware of a pattern or consistent canon (rule) for Christians. If one did not possess all of God's Word, that one would be hard-pressed to follow the **same** rule.

From the ancient language, then, comes the idea of canon. The English term, in fact, has come to mean **rule, concept, index, list, boundary, and church law**. One speaking of a "canon of scripture" is discussing the limits of an accepted list of books known to have been inspired of God. In respect to the individual books of the Bible, **canon** means the standard or norm by which each book is measured as to whether or not the writing is from God. Bible books are thus said to be **canonical** only if the text bears the marks of, and there is **evidence** for, inspiration.

A further concept of canon is obtained from a statement penned by the ancient prophet of God named Ezekiel. He wrote of a vision in which

... there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a **measuring reed** (emphasis mine, K.M.) (Ezek. 40:3).

God intended Ezekiel to see whether the new temple (the church of Christ, Matt. 16:18) "measured up" to divine standards. The use of a measuring reed is the central idea in canon. A study of canon, then, will aid the Bible student to know whether the existing Bible books "measure up" to heaven's standard for the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35b).

Critical Concern

The first man, as far as is now known, to apply the term, **canon**, to Holy Writ was one Amphilochius who lived around AD. 300, and wrote a Treatise called, **Catalogues of the Scriptures**. Since his time, and somewhat before, concerns have arisen among Christians as to why certain writings were included in the Bible while other ancient texts were excluded. Some Bible critics have even gone to the liberal extreme of claiming that the process of producing and recognizing the canon was evolutionary! That is, as people became more "sophisticated" religion they revised and edited the writings. Such liberal critics disavow the Bible claims that the words came from God. But the Bible claim from the apostle Paul is:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:9-13).

Modernistic critics, who opt for a process of evolution in the penning, collecting, and preserving of the Bible books are not only alive and well in the philosophical world; they have infiltrated the church of Christ. Professors of a school owned and operated by members of churches of Christ attempted on more than one occasion to instruct this author and his classmates as to the veracity of the professors' ideas that the Bible was a mere human production resulting from the efforts of men who had a deeper "intuition" into things spiritual than others had from their era. In other words, professed preachers of the gospel, claiming to be members of the body of Christ, are deliberately undermining the faith of future preachers as to the truth of a verbally inspired, God-preserved Bible! The **source** of the radical changes in attitude toward scripture among churches of Christ is "our" graduate schools and the onslaught from so many mis-taught preachers.

The attitude toward canon, expressed by such liberal professors as mentioned above, is best illustrated by the textbook assigned in a class on advanced introduction to the Old Testament. That volume, by Brevard S. Childs, is entitled, **Introduction to the Old Testament** as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). Childs' thesis is that the community in which a book was **completed** "preserved" what the community "thought" was scripture and that God did not intervene in the process. Childs wrote that:

The authoritative Word gave the community its form and content in obedience to the divine imperative (sounds fine so far, K.M.); Yet conversely the reception of the authoritative **tradition** (emphasis mine, K.M.) by its hearers gave shape to the inspired writings, through a historical and theological process of selecting, collecting, and ordering. The formation of canon was not a late extrinsic validation of a corpus of writings, but involved a series of decisions deeply, affecting the shape of the books (p. 16).

First, it should be observed that Childs insisted that the community was **shaped** by the authoritative Word. Had Childs stopped at that statement, Christians could agree. However, Childs further explained that the acceptance of the Word by the community (that is, the way those ancients reacted to what they "thought," not knew, was God's Word) **shaped** the Scriptures as the process of selection continued over time.

Second, the deduction one must make, then, is that Childs' view (taught to so many modern preachers) is that since there is a body of literature that the ancient community decided was God's Word; and since that community treated the text as if it were from God; and since the community then let the text shape it; modern Christianity should also view the Bible "as if" God did reveal and preserve the text! Since one has a Bible, go ahead, then, and let it shape life as if the message were actually from God. Childs' attempts to explain why certain books are in the Bible are attempts called Naturalism. (This latter doctrine, carried into the scientific world, is called evolution.) In other words, there was no actual supernatural activity involved in the formation of canon according to the modernistic view espoused in Childs' book.

Third, Childs' position must be denied and defeated by faithful Christians. The Bible, verbally inspired and supernaturally preserved gave to the world instructions for every age of man.

God, who at sundry times and divers manners spake in times past unto us by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ... (Heb. 1:1-2a).

The community, then, did **not** produce the books; God's Word produced the community. "Now the parable is this; the seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). The biblical view of canon is that the message was revealed by God and only discovered by God's people. The message was preserved by God and must be accepted by men or the latter are eternally condemned.

He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

Students of scripture must ever keep in mind that God has "magnified his word above his name" (Psa. 138:2b). Any evolutionary thinking that emphasizes man's contribution to canon as on a par with or greater than God's working is a false and dangerous view of the process of canon.

Study Questions

1. What are some passages that insist that the Bible was verbally inspired?
2. What questions does a study of canon help the Bible student to answer?
3. Why do you think it may be important to know whether the persons who first wrote and read the scriptures knew such messages were God's word?
4. Define **canon**.
5. Define what it means to say that a Bible book is **canonical**.
6. What is the theory adopted by modernists (Naturalists) as to how the Bible books were selected?
7. What does the Bible record reveal about the source of the community through which the Bible books came? (Start with 2 Samuel 23:2 and see, using a good concordance, what the Bible reveals about the "word of the Lord.")
8. Have you ever heard a preacher explicitly deny that the Bible is verbally (God gave the message) inspired? If not, how could you be able to tell whether the preacher believed the Bible evolved or was God breathed? (Some clues might be when a preacher denies a divine pattern in the Bible or insists that God still directly guides him today.)
9. What has God magnified about His name? How do you feel if one does not "take you at your word?" How must God feel when His Word is attacked or disavowed?
10. Do you think a study of canon is spiritually beneficial? Why or why not?

CHAPTER TWO: THE “CONCEPT” OF CANON (2): CORINTHIANS 10:13-16; JOHN 16:1-4

2

The study of the foundation of canon, especially New Testament canon, is a study of the early church's demand for authority. New Testament Christians had a very strange story to tell. Their God was a peasant Galilean who had been executed by the Roman government at the instigation of Jewish religious leaders! But, that God had been raised to life and had become King of a new Israel. Where was the evidence for such teaching? The evidence was in eyewitness accounts and miraculous confirmation of the testimony of those witnesses:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels (the Mosaic law, K.M.) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will (Heb. 2:1-4).

More particularly defined, the authorities in the early church were the apostles-thirteen of whom were commissioned as eyewitnesses (John 14:25-26; 15:26).

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:25-26).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26).

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:18).

All the apostles had to have seen the Christ, and to have been witness of the resurrected King.

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection (Acts 1:22-23).

The apostles were the pillars of the new covenant:

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20).

The apostles had no successors and their word is still the canon of the New Testament.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20-21).

If one were to ask why a successor was chosen for Judas, the reply would be that Judas lost his "bishopric" or office.

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take (Acts 1:20).

When the apostle James died no successor was chosen for none was necessary since James is still in authority. "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2).

Now note that alongside apostolic oral authority for the New Testament church, an authority was later written by those same New Testament witnesses who also used the Old Testament for **proof** that what they were preaching was true.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 2:16-33).

Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or, of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:29-35).

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Acts 17:2).

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

Each successive writer knew that he was building on the former, sacred texts. Each writer was cognizant of his contributions to sacred history.

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:1-2).

The Apostolic Community

To challenge the apostolic message was the same as doubting the Lord Himself.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

(The "us" in these two, latter verses, is a reference to the apostles.) This doubting of apostolic authority is probably the reason for the miraculous destruction of the lives of the liars, Ananias and Sapphira.

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter said unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carried her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things (Acts 5:1-11).

One can well imagine that if ordinary lying were always punishable by death no one would exist to write or read this book! It seems more plausible that that erring husband and wife were put to death to protect the apostles and their position of authority. Had either Ananias or Sapphira succeeded in deceiving the apostles, their control of the church would have been subverted.

It is correct to conclude, then, that the apostolic community was never without a canon. The first-century church of Christ never knew what it was not to have **authority**. "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16). The first members were devout Jews who had access to the Old Testament.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5).

And he said unto them, These are the words which I have spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44);

and they had access to an apostle

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (1 John 4:6).

On the very birthday of the church, a canon existed. Peter and the eleven preached the New Testament message from an Old Testament context (Acts 2).

Some errorists today are quite fond of saying that early Christians did not have all the truth. These false teachers draw the conclusion that since the early church had access only to fragmentary accounts and stories, that letters written to them can hardly be a pattern for the church today. The conclusion from such erroneous thinking is that only the Gospel accounts, especially the **kerygma** or death, burial, and resurrection are vital and necessary and that the best the twentieth-century church can do is "make-up" its own creed and liturgy as did the early church as "seen" in Acts and the epistles. One verse of the canon will suffice to answer such utter nonsense:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:17).

The apostle Paul, did write New Testament canon and spoke **for** (in the place of) Christ.

Canon Metaphorically

Further insight into the concept of **canon** can be gained from a study of two passages from the New Testament, both of which contain metaphorical usage. (A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a method is employed of directly comparing one object to another by referring to the one **as if** it were the other. An example of this is Luke 13:32 which passage contains Jesus' statement about Herod, "Go tell that fox." Jesus, metaphorically, compared the guile of Herod to the proverbial wile of a fox.) The passages which are to be studied metaphorically here are 2 Corinthians 10:13-16 and Galatians 6:15-16.

While discussing his method of doing missionary work, the apostle Paul insisted that he never boasted beyond **measure** as the judaizing teachers had.

But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you (2 Cor. 10:13).

The standard (canon, measure) by which Paul operated did not allow him to brag about a work that was essentially God's. Paul would not exceed the boundary, rule, limit of Christian ethic which ethic did not include boasting. Paul also admonished the churches of Galatia on their obligations to the New Testament **Canon** of things spiritual:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15-16).

The church was (and is) to walk (exist) according to a divine **rule** (canon). There is a pattern beyond which no one can go and still please God. There is a limit placed on the Christian ethic and walk called **canon** and New Testament writers were unaware of any no-pattern or no-rule theology.

Just as Paul had an ethical canon and just as the church has a divine rule, so the books of the Bible must "measure-up" to a standard, limit, or canon. Early Christians in fact, wrote often of the "Canon of the church," "Canon of truth," and "Canon of faith."

Hebrew Concept

The prophetic writers of the Old Testament always claimed that their messages were from God's mind to their minds: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue (2 Sam. 23:2). The Jews further considered the prophets writings sacred and sufficiently so to be kept near the ark of the covenant:

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee (Deut. 31:24-26).

After Solomon completed the temple, the scrolls were transferred in that building.

And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it (2 Kings 22:8).

The Jews also were assured that the Old Testament writings were authoritative:

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them (Deut. 17:18-19).

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Josh. 1:8).

Josephus (Contra Apion, 1:8) stated the common Jewish attitude toward the sacred scrolls by insisting that all other books (especially the intertestament writings) were never canonical because "the exact succession of the prophets had ceased." The **Talmud** (Seder Olam Rabba 30) consents with Josephus concerning intertestament and later writings:

Up to this point (the time of Alexander the Great about 350 B.C., KM.) the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit; from that time onward, incline thine ear and listen to the sayings of the wise.

A peculiar expression arose among the Jews in reference to sacred scrolls. Those which were not canonical were said not to "make the hands unclean" (**Talmud**, Tosefta Yadaim 3:5). Perhaps that ancient proverb arose from Mosaic ordinances concerning the washing of hands.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in that holy place. But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden shall be broken: and if it be sodden in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured, and rinsed in water. All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy. And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire (Lev. 6:24-30).

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leaven them there: And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people (Lev. 16:23-24).

For example, one who touched a scroll must wash before doing business. It was "taboo" to do anything else. Therefore, holy things such as canonical books, made the hands ceremonially "unclean." This idea may be akin to removing one's shoes at a holy place.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground (Exod. 3:5).

The Jews counted their "Bibles" as holy ground!

Given the above Jewish attitudes toward God's Word, (that sacred things make the hands "unclean") one

might wonder how such reverence could be passed on to the twentieth-century church. Some church-goers are anything but respectful when listening to the Word taught or preached. Perhaps "canon" is a word needing revival?

Another reference to the Jewish attitude toward their canon of scripture concerns old scrolls and non-canonical books. Scrolls which became worn-out (and thus disputed because of difficulty in reading) were labeled **genuzim** by the Rabbis. **Genuzim** means "hidden away" and in Israel today manuscript cemeteries filled with Hebrew scrolls long "hidden away" are being uncovered. The ancient Jews reverently buried their used Bibles. Sometimes several worn manuscripts would be kept in the **genuzim** or trash-chamber of the synagogue until there could be a burial. The Jews also had a special name for non-canonical or heretical scrolls. These latter writings were **sepharim hiconim**- "books that are outside." It was forbidden for such "outside" scrolls to be read in the synagogue or temple. (One might wish that some Christians would learn the difference, as did those Jews, between a true, canonical text and one not fit to be read in churches such as the New International Version which is filled with Calvinistic heresy.)

Conclusion

The study of canon is most unusual for any number of Christians and many never bring such a study to mind. But canon is a vital study for one wishing to determine one's attitude toward Holy Writ. Critics argue that the community shaped the canon, but the Bible reveals the opposite. God has magnified and preserved His Word. Eyewitnesses, most of whom sacrificed their lives for their doctrine, insisted that their prophetic and apostolic messages were from God and that a body of literature had become the norm for Jew and later Christian. That inspired corpus of writings is the canon of Scripture.

Study Questions

1. What study is related to a study of the formation of canon? Why?
2. What evidence is available as **proof** that the Bible came from God?
3. What was Bible authority for the New Testament church?
4. Why do you suppose Ananias and Sapphira died for lying?
5. Examine 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 carefully, especially the **pronouns**. Who were given the **word** and **ministry** of reconciliation and who were Christ's ambassadors?
6. False teachers are fond of the term "kerygma." What do they mean?
7. Prove that the New Testament church has access to **all** truth. (See John 20:30-31. Did the apostles **know** more than they wrote?)
8. Describe canon as it refers to ethics, work, and the Bible.
9. Why did the Jews speak of holy things as making their hands "unclean?"
10. Is there a lot, a little, some irreverence toward the Bible where you worship? What might be done to correct the situation?

CHAPTER THREE – MOSES AND CANON: LUKE 24:44

The prophets explicitly declared their messages to be from God.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep the words of this law and these statutes, to do them (Deut. 17:18-19).

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me (Isa. 1:1-2).

Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth (Jer. 1:9).

The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him (Ezek. 1:3).

But as for me, this secret is nor revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart (Dan. 2:30).

The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerai, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel (Hosea 1:1).

The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel (Joel 1:1).

The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither. Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron (Amos 1:1-3).

The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle (Obadiah 1:1).

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amitai, saying ... (Jonah 1:1).

THE word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem (Micah 1:1).

"The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite" (Nahum 1:1).

Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more (Nahum 1:12).

"The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see" (Hab. 1:1).

O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy (Hab. 3:3).

The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah (Zeph. 1:1).

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying ... (Haggai 1:1).

In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, the LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts (Zech. 1:1-3).

The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob (Mal. 1:1-2).

Perhaps none spoke more clearly upon the subject of the origin of the five books than Joshua:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8).

Diligent Bible students have long observed from the above passages that what Moses **told** the people during the exodus from Egypt was in a **book** and **written** by the time Joshua took Moses' place so that Joshua had a five-book Bible.

The scrolls that Moses produced were kept in the ark of the covenant.

Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee (Deut. 31:26).

Most seem to think from the foregoing passages that only the scroll containing Deuteronomy was placed in the ark, but one might surmise that since that scroll was placed there then why not the other four-Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers? Later Bible writers declared their knowledge of such scrolls. Joshua knew the five books (Josh. 1:8).

Isaiah rebuked the Jews of his day for not following Moses' instructions (Isa. 1-36) and Jeremiah explicitly mentioned the original covenant,

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

Even the Psalmist knew that the law was written on scrolls,

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (Psa. 40:7-8).

The scroll or roll was the standard form in which the scriptures were preserved in Old Testament times. Jeremiah was told:

Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day (Jer. 36:2).

Ezekiel's vision of God's word also came to the prophet as a scroll:

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll (Ezek. 2:9-3:2).

Zechariah was given a vision of a "flying" scroll symbolizing the speed of God's curse on the wicked:

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits (Zech. 5:1-2).

(For those who are suspicious about the ancient's ability to write, records of ancient writings exist from millenniums before Moses lived.)

One desiring to know just what a scroll looked like might find it interesting to view pictures of the Dead Sea scrolls which began to be uncovered from caves, at first accidentally by an Arab boy, in 1947. Some of these scrolls are parchment which is carefully prepared leather sewn together and meticulously scraped. The Isaiah scroll from the caves (labelled IQIsa) consists of seventeen pieces of leather sewn together to make a roll twenty-four feet long. Scribes writing on parchment used a "penknife" taking pains to mark both horizontal and perpendicular lines on the leather as guides to ensure neatness. An ancient king destroyed a parchment using a penknife and fire:

And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth (Jer. 36:23).

However, rather than parchment, Moses and early writers probably penned God's Word on papyrus material. Such material was used as early as 3000 B.C. in Egypt and the process had been exported to Phoenicia by at least 2100 B.C. The material for a papyrus scroll was prepared by splitting the papyrus reeds lengthwise and placing them on top of one another at right angles. The natural gum of the papyrus served as glue for the crossed strips of each section and for the number of sections joined to make a scroll.

Hebrew scribes, like Moses, wrote only on the inside of a scroll using the horizontal stripes as guidelines. There exists a roll known as the Hamris papyrus that is one-hundred and twenty feet in length. However, scrolls longer than about thirty feet were difficult to make and even more awkward to handle. (This latter fact may help to account for the length of the Old Testament books.)

Short messages in Moses' time would be written on wood, wax, wax on wood, and often clay. But the idea of a book (codex) can be traced only to the first century AD.

The instrument used to write on papyrus was a reed pen (especially in Israel). The ink came from the soot of an olive oil lamp and the point of the reed, sharpened and split with a penknife, would be dipped in the lamp black nearly for every letter. The amazing durability of lamp-black papyrus is seen from the Dead Sea scrolls and even earlier from what are called the Lachish letters which date to 1800 B.C.

Progressive Collection

The Old Testament scrolls from Moses to Malachi were collected as they were written. Old Testament peoples knew when a prophet wrote and recognized as canonical only those books written by a prophet. "Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (1 Chron. 16:22).

And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD (Ezek. 13:9).

Joshua, as stated above, knew the five books of Moses:

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:7).

Jeremiah was also well aware of those books of Moses as were Israelite Kings:

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself (1 Kings 2:3).

For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD. And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day (1 Kings 8:53-61).

But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin (2 Kings 14:6).

The prophets used the "colophon" principle in writing; that is, each prophet would connect his account to the last. Ezekiel, who was in Babylonian exile, mentioned a body of literature he called "the writing of the house of Israel" and announced to the Jews that no false prophet had any place in such writings (Ezek. 13:9). Of interest here is the fact of an existing body of prophetic literature which was known in Israel before the exile. Modernists try to date many prophetic books later than the Judaic exile in Babylon (606-536 B.C).

Joshua connected his scroll to "the book of the law of God." And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, "and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD" (Joshua 24:26). Samuel "... told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord ..." (1 Sam. 10:25). (Some of Samuel's written work was mere human history-"Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer" (1 Chron. 29:29)-but his prophetic scroll was laid up before the Lord! (See also 2 Chron. 9:29; 12:15; and 13:22 for other mentions of Jewish historical writings.)

A clear distinction between mere human history and prophetic writing is seen in two important Old

Testament passages both of which mention the scroll of Kings and one the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. They read as follows:

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel (2 Chron. 20:34).

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chron. 32:32).

There was a history book by Jehu, but the inspired prophetic scrolls were different. Mere human history was not God-inspired but the Kings, Isaiah, and all the other canonical books were (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Hebrew Process

A wonderful, God-inspired illustration of how the scrolls were written, collected, and preserved is recorded in the last book of Moses-Deuteronomy. The first sentence of the first chapter reads:

These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab (Deut. 1:1).

The foregoing verse represents the fact that the entire contents of the Deuteronomic scroll had been **orally** delivered to Israel by Moses. Even the **time** of the oration is revealed.

And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them (Deut. 1:3).

As to how long Moses spoke, the Bible is silent. (One might try reading Deuteronomy and see how long it takes.) However, the careful Bible student will note from the Mosaic record what specific details are given to enable the reader to know that the law was first orally delivered.

An explicit statement is then made that,

And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel (Deut. 31:9).

A **command** is then given concerning the **written** law.

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing (Deut. 31:10-11).

The prophet did speak or may have spoken his message prior to inscripturating it. But, the written message, the canon, was to be read to, heard by, and observed by the people, Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law (Deut. 31:12).

Therefore, Moses gave clear instructions that the prophetic word must be preserved.

And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing of the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee (Deut. 31:24-26).

The oral law was later written and preserved. The finished scroll was "canonized."

Study Questions

1. See Psalm 119. Note that every verse speaks of God's Word in some fashion. What does verse 105 really mean, then?
2. Who spoke most clearly on the origin of his writing of scripture and what did he claim?
3. Prove that Joshua and Isaiah knew of Moses' writings.
4. What was the standard form on which ancient scripture was written?
5. Discuss the making of parchment scrolls. 6. Discuss the making of papyrus scrolls.
7. What may account for the length of Old Testament books?
8. With what material did one write on a scroll? Was the material durable?
9. What is the colophon principle?
10. Prove from Deuteronomy how God ordered and preserved a scroll.

CHAPTER FOUR: JESUS AND OLD TESTAMENT CANON: MATTHEW 4:1-11

Jesus' life and attitude are to be imitated by Christians. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Peter 2:21).

What was Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament scriptures which were available while He was on earth? And, how did Jesus perceive that His own words would be preserved? Those who despise the Bible and who deprecate its origin as being from the mind of God accuse Jesus of **lying** about the Bible of His day. Well, such critics do not explicitly call the Savior a liar, but they do say that the Master **accommodated** His teaching for the uneducated simplistic folks to whom He taught. That is, the Jews thought the writings they had were from God and so Jesus just let them keep thinking such, because it was not important to change the Jews' minds about such a "mundane" matter.

Bible students who believe that Jesus is the precious only begotten Son of God are dismayed to think that anyone, especially the Saviour, would "accommodate" (lie) one's teaching. Believers in Holy Writ as from the mind of God will be interested in knowing how the Word made flesh viewed the scriptures.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1-14).

Jesus And The Old Testament

Jesus often cited the Old Testament scriptures as canonical or authoritative. Perhaps the finest illustration of Jesus' usage of the text is found in Matthew 4:1-11.

Jesus had been baptized by John the baptizer just prior to Jesus' confrontation with the Devil.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:13-17).

The Christ had allowed Himself to be immersed to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). The Savior's obedience to God's command was immediately tested. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4:1). (A Christian is often tempted once he obeys God, and Jesus' example shows to all what must be done under such circumstances.) Jesus used the scriptures to defeat Satan (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).

Jesus insisted to the Devil that the holy writings came from the "mouth" of God.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

The Old Testament canon is thus authoritative. Jesus preached to the Devil that true, spiritual strength came from the canonical writings;

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Matt. 4:7).

The Devil was further defeated by hearing from Jesus that the canon contained the only commands for man to obey.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matt. 4:10).

If the Old Testament writings are not from God, how did Jesus use them to defeat Satan? Or, are all men most miserable because they have no weapon to win the battle with evil?

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17).

In fact, on one occasion Jesus labeled the entire thirty nine books as holy.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

Did the Old Testament writings **really** speak of the Christ, or was He "accommodating" His language and, if so, did Jesus **know** that He was not written about but said so anyway? What would He profit from such a lie? Evil men crucified Jesus for His stand for God and especially was He hated for His stand for the truth of God's Word. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

On another occasion Jesus claimed cohesiveness and indestructibility for the Old Testament canon: "... the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). In fact Jesus had just quoted from the "law" (in this case the Psalms) and forever settled the matter of the nature of Old Testament canon; all is authoritative and all is **law** from God. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods" (John 10:34). (Those who try to argue some theological doctrine for instrumental music in worship from the Psalms must understand that they are part of the Old Canon and as such are no longer the "law" for God's people.) The old law is not in force:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet (Rom. 7:4-7).

On yet another occasion Jesus stated the **boundaries** of Old Testament canon. He said to the generations of Jews of His day:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar (Matt. 23:35).

Jesus spoke of events from Genesis through the minor prophets as recorded in the canon. Another passage in which can be found Jesus' understanding of the limits of Old Testament canon is Luke 24:44.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all

things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Remember that Jesus insisted that the scriptures testified of Him (John 5:39). Jesus, in fact, expounded in all the Old Testament scriptures concerning Himself.

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27).

Perhaps some need more compelling biblical evidence about Jesus and the Old Testament canon. If so, recall Luke 4:21, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Expounding upon Isaiah 61:1, Jesus said that at the very moment He was preaching, that ancient text was being fulfilled.

Also, after the last supper, Jesus forewarned the apostles that Zecharias had predicted they would be scattered.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones (Zech. 13:7).

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad (Matt. 26:3).

And Jesus also connected the mission of John the baptizer to the ancient prophecy concerning Elijah.

Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD (Mal. 4:5).

But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him (Mark 9:13).

But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them (Matt. 17:12).

Jesus also used the Old Testament canon to defeat theological error. He rebuked the Sadducees' denial of the after-life.

And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Mark 12:26).

Jesus also presaged His own resurrection by referring to Jonah

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40).

And Jesus referred the Jews to the ancient canon for the two "greatest" laws:

Jesus said unto them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37-40).

Truly, the dynamic of Jesus' use of the Old Testament confirms the canonical nature of those ancient writings.

Jesus And The New Testament

The nature of the authoritative, cohesive, indestructible nature of the Old Testament canon was passed on by Jesus to the New Testament writings. His divine imprimatur undergirds the sacredness of the new law.

First of all, Jesus left His apostles with the explicit revelation that He shed His blood for a **new** covenant. His words at the last passover were:

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28).

(The alert Bible student will note the word for, in the foregoing sentence is in exactly the same position and is the like term used by Peter when he commanded men to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" [Acts 2:38] Jesus died **in order to** remission of sins and one must be baptized for the same reason. Jesus did not die **because of** sins already remitted. Many religionists try to make "for," **eis** in the Greek, mean **because of** in Acts 2:38. Such a reading is impossible.)

As an aside notation one needs to be aware that the American Standard Version omits the word, new, from Matthew 26:28. However, the literature of the New Testament is replete with references to a **new** covenant in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, especially Jeremiah 31:31-34, which passage is used by the Hebrew writer as being fulfilled in the **new** Testament (Heb. 8:1-12). The American Standard omission is based on just two early uncial (large-letter) manuscripts, but the vast majority of the manuscripts have the term, **new**.

Second, the Great Commission of the Christ connects the idea of God's authority as seen in the Old Testament to the authority inherent in the new:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (exousia, authority KM.) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:18-19).

Jesus' new covenant commands were to be followed.

Where can one locate the commands of the Christ? His ordinances are the New Testament canon. A body of literature that is **all** truth:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16:13).

A corpus of writings now exists that needs no additions.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

The canon was delivered to the early church orally at first.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Cor. 4:7).

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13).

Then, those commandments necessary to life and godliness were inscripturated (written) for posterity,

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea (Col. 4:16).

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3:16-18).

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:3).

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren (1 Thess. 5:27).

The canon of the New Testament church was, at first, the Old Testament writings plus an inspired man (Acts 8:29-35; 17:2; et al). Note in the passage in Acts 8, especially verse 30, that the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah was fully understood by the eunuch because the latter had an Old Testament scroll and a New Testament prophet (Philip) in the same chariot. The eunuch thus had a canon or boundary by which he could know the truth. The ancient Isaiah (Old Testament canon) had referred only to the Christ (Acts 8:35; New Testament canon) and the inspired Philip was able to instruct the eunuch correctly. Bible students, today, have the same inspired message the eunuch heard, only in written form.

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of effort is called for by the New Testament in order to be a follower of Christ?
2. What is the "accommodation theory" concerning Jesus and the Old Testament?
3. Explain how Jesus defeated Satan's temptations using the canon of the Old Testament.
4. Does the Word of God need "extra" help to keep one from temptation? See Psalm 19:11. (Some insist that the Holy Spirit must exert "supraliterary" [above the Word] influence so that one does not sin. Discuss this latter idea in light of how Jesus defeated Satan and in light of Ephesians 6:17, John 6:63, and Hebrews 4:12.)
5. From what source did Jesus say the Word of God originated? See Matthew 4:4 and compare it to 2 Timothy 3:16.
6. True, spiritual strength comes from not tempting (testing) God (Matthew 4:7). How had the Devil suggested that Jesus do such an evil thing? What is your attitude toward God's canon of literature?
7. Can you prove that the Psalms are a part of the Old Testament canon?
8. Show from several verses that the Old Testament canon did predict the New Testament events.
9. Connect the nature of the ancient canon to the new.
10. How much revelation should one expect today?

CHAPTER FIVE -- INSUFFICIENT VIEWS: JOSHUA 10:13; NUMBERS 21:14

Books from the prophetic period were the only ones that the ancient Jews deemed canonical. Josiah, the boy-king of Judea, upon discovering an ancient scroll of the "book of the law" (2 Kings 22:8) said:

Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us (2 Kings 22:13).

Why was Josiah so dismayed upon reading the scroll? Because Josiah **knew**, from the prophet Helkiah's mouth, that the text was from God.

But to the king of Judah which was sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD (2 Kings 22:18-19).

How did God's ancient peoples discover canon, if no prophet were available to instruct the nation? Some insufficient views to explain the Jews' knowledge of scripture have been proposed by modern theologians. Before beginning a discussion of these views, note some of the names given to the Old Testament canon: (From Roger Beckwith, **The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism**, p. 105).

1. "The Law and the Prophets and the others that have followed in their steps."
2. "The Law and the Prophets and the Other Ancestral Books."
3. "The Law and the Prophets and the Rest of the Books."
4. "The Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms." (Compare Luke 24:44 here.)
5. "The Law and Oracles given by inspiration through the prophets, and the Psalms."
6. "The (Most) Holy Scriptures."
7. "The Scriptures laid up in the temple."
8. "The Laws and the Accompanying Records."
9. "The Divine Oracles;" "the Inspired Oracles;" "the Most Holy Oracles;" "the Oracles of God." (Compare Romans 3:2 here.)
10. "Moses and the Prophets."

There are many other titles, but all indicate one attitude toward the Old Testament canon. The Jews knew that their text had come directly from God and taught their descendants the same. Every Jewish boy, including Jesus, knew the Old Testament canon as the law (Torah or instruction) the prophets (Nebhim), and the writings (Kethubim). Every Jewish boy learned the acronym, TNK, and linked each letter to its appropriate section of the text. This is the reason Jesus referred to the canon as the "law, the prophets, and the psalms" (Luke 24:44).

In fact, Jesus was intent, during His public ministry, on altering the prevailing Jewish dependence on the authority of tradition and was insistent on a "thus saith the Lord" for His teaching. Jesus turned to the ancient text countless times in His discussions with the religious leaders of His day. For example, see Matthew 22:41-46:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Jesus believed in the authority of the canonized writings of the Old Testament.

Further emphasis by Jesus as to His belief in canon is seen in His references to His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39, et al).

Jesus also claimed an authority on a par with the canon and certainly taught the significance of the law of Moses.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Matt. 6:28-29).

Further, Jesus implemented the new covenant by promising that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into **all** truth:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16:13).

The very authority behind the Old Testament canon, God, inaugurated the penning of the entire biblical canon and the apostles accomplished the task knowing they had all the teaching necessary to the completion.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

Finally, at the **same** time Jesus was committing Himself to His apostles and their work of completing the canon, He was identifying Himself with the relational authority of Moses and the prophets. Jesus insisted that even the ancient canon was sacred, authoritative, and valid. There is a sense in which there is "authority" in the Old Testament for that canon is the foundation of the new covenant.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

In every sense, Jesus the Christ is the key to the inspiration and canonization of the Bible. He confirmed the Old Testament canon and inaugurated the new.

Insufficient Views Of O.T. Canon

For this portion of the study some views **never** expressed by Jesus the Christ, nor by any prophetic Old Testament writer, nor by any apostle of the Christ will be discussed so that the reader will have a clearer, sharper understanding of just what is meant by an insufficient view concerning the criteria for Old Testament canonicity.

There have been suggestions made over the centuries that certain ancient volumes should be in the Bible. But these latter writings do not bear the marks of inspiration (freedom from error whether historical, moral, or scientific) and were never included in the canon. What caused some to think that such books did belong?

In the first place, the fact that a book is **ancient** has been offered as a **reason** for inclusion in the canon, but age is **no** argument for canonicity. Many books pre-date the writing of the biblical text. For example there is the "book of the wars of the Lord" (Num. 21:14) and the "book of Jasher" (Josh. 10:13). But those books though old, were never included by Moses nor Joshua, except to mention them, in the Old Testament. Evidently the book of "Jasher" and the volume on the "wars of the Lord" were kinds of historical records known to the ancient Jews; but known as **uninspired** texts.

Too, all the Bible books, except Job, were written **after** Moses penned the five books of the law (the Pentateuch). Moses' writings were placed in the ark while he was still living.

And it came to pass, while Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee (Deut. 31:24-26).

Daniel accepted Jeremiah's text before Daniel wrote his.

In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:2).

Then Ezekiel mentioned Daniel's canonical writings.

Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee (Ezek. 28:3).

Since each book was "younger" than its predecessor, age cannot be a sufficient criteria for insisting that a certain volume belongs in the canon.

In the second place, because a scroll was in Hebrew is not a fact sufficient of itself to earn the text a place in the canon. (The Old Testament languages, for the most part, were Hebrew-ancient and "modern" -and Aramaic; all of the former tongues are Semitic in origin. Hebrew is also a relative of the Canaanite language. See Isaiah 19:18 where the record of the prophet is that Israel spoke the "language [or 'lip'] of Canaan").

Modern understanding of the Hebrew language has been greatly aided by the archaeologist's discoveries at Ras Shamra. The Moabite Stone and the "Ugaritic" tablets have shown Bible researchers that perhaps the most ancient Hebrew was a kind of Phoenician alphabet, which Hebrew seems to have given way to a nearly square style of writing around A.D. 200. However, the ancient style is found on some of the Dead Sea scrolls from the first century B.C. But, just because a book is in Hebrew (for example Ecclesiasticus, some of the Dead Sea scrolls, and the Apocrypha) does not mean it is inspired. In fact, it has already been stated, above, that some portions of the Old Testament are not in Hebrew, but are in Aramaic (Dan. 2:46-7:28; Ezra 4:28-6:18; 7:12-26).

In the third place, many Jews have asserted that a text that agrees with the law of Moses (Torah) should be included in the canon. In fact, the latter argument is the ultimate criterion for many Jewish scholars' insistence on a book's inclusion in canon. It should be noticed by serious Bible students that if a text did contradict the law of Moses, that text obviously does not belong in the Bible. But, what this particular assertion of Mosaic agreement does not take into account are the books, mentioned in the canon, which do agree with the law of Moses, but were not a part of the Bible.

For example, the Chronicler wrote,

And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou shalt have great

sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day (2 Chron. 21:12-15).

Now, Elijah's whole letter is canonical and agrees with Torah. But, what of the "records" kept by the prophet Shemaiah?

Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? ... (2 Chron. 12:15).

No doubt, Shemaiah's writings as a prophet (as was Elijah above) would **agree** with the law of Moses. However, there is no canonical recording of any of Shemaiah's writings (nor of Iddo the seer's for that matter). Shemaiah and Iddo wrote **genealogies**. These latter must agree with Torah, but are **not** included in the canon. So, just because a writing is in agreement with the law of Moses, is a fact, insufficient of itself, to meet the criteria for canonicity. (The New Testament has similar, non-included, writings. See 1 Corinthians 5:9.)

In the fourth place, the fact that a book may have religious "value" is not in and of itself a sufficient reason to insert that book or writing in the canon. Of course a book would be rejected were it void of religious worth, but many Old (and New) Testament era writings have **not** been placed in the canon. The question of canonicity must be directed at the **source** of a writing, not at its intrinsic religious value. The Apocrypha have value, but a cursory reading suffices for one to know that those intertestament books are not canonical.

In the fifth place, there have been assertions made that if a certain religious community accepted the book then that volume must be canonical. This view is backwards as it pertains to canonicity. A book is not the Word of God because a community accepted it. A book is accepted by the community because it is the Word of God. Man only recognized Divine authority; but man does not create that authority. This view would make man "boss" over the Scripture and allow man to determine his own authority. (This, incidentally, is the major flaw in human creed books.) The final "acceptance" by the Jews of a canon did not come about until A.D. 90; centuries **after** the canon was completed.

In the sixth place, the flaw in all of the above reasoning is that man fails to distinguish, properly, between the **determination** of the canon and the acceptance (recognition) of canon. Canonicity is **determined** by God who either did or did not inspire the book. Canonicity is only **recognized** by man. J. I. Packer in **God Speaks To Man** wrote:

The church no more gave us the New Testament canon (or Old, K.M.) than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity (p. 8).

Conclusion

Jesus' attitude toward Old Testament canon emphasized the sole Divine authority of the thirty-nine books. He, nor His apostles, nor any Old Testament prophet knew of no larger canon. Those who agree that age, language, agreement with the law, community acceptance, and religious value are sufficient causes of themselves to include a book in the canon have failed to recognize that God determines canon not man.

Study Questions

1. What are some titles given to the Old Testament canon and what is the significance of those titles?
2. How were Jewish children taught to remember the Old Testament canon?
3. What was Jesus' intent on doing while here on earth as concerns the prevalent Jewish attitude toward the canon?
4. What do Jesus' references to prophecy and fulfillment show one about Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament canon?
5. Did Jesus claim authority on a par with canon? How?
6. How did Jesus intend that the entire canon (Old Testament and New Testament) be completed?
7. Why, if a book is ancient, is it not necessarily canonical?
8. Is Hebrew language a sufficient criterion for including a book in the canon? Why or why not?
9. What are some Old Testament era writings not included in the canon?
10. What is the most common mistake made about the determination of canon? Why is this error so often committed?

CHAPTER SIX -- OLD TESTAMENT CANON: CRITICAL QUESTIONS: NEHEMIAH 8:1-10

The idea of sacredness is inherent in the concept of canon.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes (Matt. 21:42)?

Jesus believed that all the prophecies of Scripture pointed to Him; to the Divine, only-begotten, Son of the Living God!

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

There is no greater illustration of sacredness than to use the term, **scriptures**, for the text of God.

The Bible student will be aware that the apostle Peter linked his **and** the apostle Paul's writings to the **scriptures**:

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things, before lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3:1-2, 16-18).

The sacredness of Holy Writ is inherent, not only in the Old Testament materials, but also in the new. It is a sad reflection on some, however, that they can listen to the scriptures being read or preached in public and use such moments to sleep, move about, talk, pass notes, etcetera. Yet, if one is leading prayer those same folks will be respectfully quiet. Is it more important to be reverent when one speaks to God or when He speaks **to** us in scriptures?

Ancient Jews held the scriptures in such reverence that they even buried the worn out scrolls. Special cupboards were made in which to store the public scrolls in the synagogues. But reverencing the scrolls is not the issue. Being in awe of God's inspired, inerrant Word of God is.

The Hebrew Description

An interesting discovery concerning the Old Testament canon for English-speaking students is that the ancient scrolls of the Jews contained the same materials as found in the modern text. (See especially Merrill Unger, **Unger's Bible Dictionary**, Chicago, Moody Press, 1971, pp. 174-178.) God has not allowed His Word to be diluted nor enlarged. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

However, a student of the English Bible will also find, upon seeing a Hebrew Bible for the first time, that the Jews arranged the books differently. The English system is topical, but the Jewish system is according to emphasis.

The Hebrew Canon

As alluded to above and in chapter five, the Jews divided the canon into the law of Moses which they termed **Torah** or **instruction**. (Some think Torah means law; the Jewish word for law, however, is mitzveh, not torah.); **Nebhim** or prophets; and **Kethubhim** or writings. The first letters, TNK, of the foregoing Jewish terms formed the acronym by which Jewish children learned the authority of the Old Testament canon. From an early

age a Hebrew child learned "TNK."

The **Torah** consisted of five books or scrolls: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five are often referenced as the law of Moses and at other times as the Pentateuch.

The **Nebhim** filled eight scrolls. The "former prophets" were Joshua (one scroll); Judges (one scroll); 1 and 2 Samuel (one scroll); 1 and 2 Kings (one scroll); a total of four scrolls. The "latter prophets" were Isaiah (one scroll); Jeremiah (one scroll); and Ezekiel (one scroll); a total of three scrolls. The twelve prophets (known today as the minor prophets because their books were shorter than Isaiah's, Jeremiah's, and Ezekiel's) were Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; all on one scroll; a total of four "latter prophet" scrolls.

The **Kethubhim** consisted of eleven scrolls. Job, Psalms, and Proverbs filled one scroll each for a total of three scrolls. The Song of Solomon (one scroll); Ruth (one scroll); Lamentations (one scroll); Ecclesiastes (one scroll); and Esther (one scroll) were given the special title megilloth (rolls) because of their usage on feast days. Daniel (relegated to the writings because he, being a Jew, prophesied to Gentiles!), Ezra, and Nehemiah (one scroll each) were the remaining texts. In all there were usually twenty-four books in the Hebrew canon, although some Hebrew Bibles contain (contained) only twenty-two books, for Ruth would often be combined with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah. The latter arrangement was done to affect correspondence to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. (Compare Psalm 119 where there are twenty two sections matching the Hebrew alphabet.) The oldest known, non-biblical witness to the Hebrew canon, Fourth Esdras, list twenty-four scrolls as the number. All of the material is the same, however, as in the English text.

Some Critical Questions

Why was the Old Testament divided into three parts and when did such a division occur? The answer to the first part of the question involves investigation of how the canon came to be. Since the books were "put together" over a period of time, did the Jews consider the finished part of the canon "closed" and then the books written later as "added?"

However, if the books were divided into three sections only after completion were they so arranged because (as is obvious) of some differences? Too, if the books were not divided until completion, why is Daniel not among the Major prophets and why are 1 and 2 Chronicles connected to the Kings?

Medieval Jews tried to answer the above questions by saying that the prophets' inspiration was "greater" than that of the writings. What of Daniel then? And, what of the fact that inspiration has but one level.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20- 21)

Modern Protestants have attempted to distinguish between the **work** or **office** of a prophet and the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:10; a gift available during the miraculous age of confirmation of a now complete Word of God-1 Cor. 13:8-10). Protestant scholars, having made a distinction not known in scripture, then surmise that Daniel had the "gift of prophecy" but had never been divinely appointed to the prophetic office. Thus, his scroll is among the Kethubhim or writings. Such "scholarship" runs afoul of Jesus' own words, for the Christ, Himself, declared Daniel to be a prophet.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, ... (Matt. 24:15a).

As a matter of fact, one who claimed **not** to be a prophet nor the son of a prophet (that is, one who had never attended the school of the prophets) had his writings **included** in the prophetic section (Amos 7:14).

Another theory has arisen that assumes the **Kethubim** are **subjective** but that the **Nebhim** are **objective**. Such a theory cannot account for the historical (objective) sections in the Kethubhim (writings) however. What reason (reasons) can be given for the three-fold (tripartite) division of the Hebrew canon?

Critical Claims

Since the scrolls are known to have been collected in the progression of their writings (see chapter three), some have insisted that this means the canon was "closed" when Moses finished writing his five scrolls. Such critics deduce their theory from late scrolls such as Ezra and Nehemiah in which texts much reverence is paid to the

law of Moses (Torah).

Such a theorist as above finds "proof" for his position in explicit appeals by the prophets to the law of Moses. For example, Malachi writes:

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments (4:4).

And, say such critics, Jesus used the term **law** to refer to the **whole** of the canon.

"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34).

But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause (John 15:25).

The latter assertion by the critics about Jesus' usage of the term law is easily refuted, for one reading John 10:35 will note that Jesus referred to the Psalms as the "law." Jesus was using the term **law** figuratively as the whole for a part. The whole canon, at least, has to include Psalms!

Too, such critics assert that the Samaritan Pentateuch (see chapter seven) is also "proof" of a five-book canon. According to their theory, if the Jews had had a larger canon, the Samaritans would have used it. The Samaritans, however, were a heretical sect which arose from God's enemies

And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me (Neh. 13:28).

The Samaritans refused to use any books other than the first five scrolls because they desired to worship on Mount Gerazim (where the one chased away by Nehemiah had his temple), but Moses insisted worship be in Jerusalem.

Some Bible critics have claimed that the Old Testament canon contained only the law of Moses until 300 to 200 B.C. These "ultra-liberals" and their late dating are really attempts to circumvent the prophecies; but their theory is that since the prophets were not well received by the people, the prophetic scrolls were left out of the canon for centuries. As noted in an earlier chapter, man does not determine canon, God does. Whether "well received" or not, the prophets wrote their scrolls for the people of their times.

Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz (Isa. 8:1).

The Word of God has **intrinsic** power when first preached and is authoritative independent of its popularity. Too, the messages of Haggai and Zechariah were **welcomed** by God's people around 520 B.C.

Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto that Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them (Ezra 5:1).

Another critical (and the final one mentioned in this study) is that canonization of the prophetic writings did not occur until 160 to 105 B.C. and that the third division or Kethubhim was added even later. The latter assumptions are based on two questions concerning the Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel scrolls. If the canon were not **closed** before the latter three books were written, why is Daniel **not** among the prophets and why are Ezra and Nehemiah not in the historical or "former prophets" sections? The answer is that the order in the Hebrew canon is **not** related to **content**, but to **authorship**. Ezra and Nehemiah lived long after the era in which 2 Kings ended (and Ezra likely wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles). Daniel, on the other hand, had the "affrontery" to preach to **Gentile** kings and to live among the Gentiles. Thus, Daniel's writings were historically "tainted" for most Hebrews who found a "lowly" place in the canon for Daniel's message. (One wonders why the Jews left Jonah alone, for he preached to the pagan Ninevites!)

Bible Claims

The Bible is "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16). God, in speaking to Moses about Aaron, said,

And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do (Exod. 4:15).

The law of Moses is God's teaching.

The historical sections (former and latter prophets) also contain like statements of God's presence:

Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying (1 Kings 16:1).

Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria (2 Kings 7:1).

Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water (Jer. 13:1).

Job, in fact, the earliest Hebrew manuscript of them all, is the record of God's **direct** questioning of that ancient patriarch (Job 38 et al).

God formed the Old Testament canon as it was written. The Ten Commandments were written on stone.

And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there thy be, as the LORD commanded me (Deut. 10:4-5).

Copies were made of that law during succeeding generations.

And it shall be, when he (Israel's godly king, K.M.) sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites (Deut. 17:18).

Joshua had either the originals or copies of the five Mosaic scrolls (Josh. 1:7-8). Samuel wrote in a book (scroll):

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house (1 Sam. 10:25).

Moses' scrolls were known to the writer of 1 Kings (probably Jeremiah):

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses (1 Kings 2:3a).

Solomon knew of the entire existing canon (1 Kings 8:53-61) as did king Joash:

But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin (2 Kings 14:6).

Note the following verses:

Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer (1 Chron. 29:29).

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat (2 Chron. 9:29).

Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Semaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually (2 Chron. 12:15);

And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo (2 Chron. 13:22).

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the king of Israel (2 Chron. 20:34).

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chron. 31:32); and,

And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah (2 Chron. 35:27).

The prophets were all conversant with an existing canon of scripture in their days. They also knew of the progressive collection of their scrolls. For example, the Bible record is,

Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words (Jer. 36:32)

Also of Daniel one reads:

In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:2).

Compare the following:

Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words and my statutes which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us (Zech. 1:4-6).

Ezra read publicly the Old Testament canon of his day.

And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law (Neh. 8:3).

Also, Jewish tradition has long been that **Ezra set apart** the Old Testament scrolls. Why, then is there a three-fold categorization? Jewish tradition seems to indicate that there were attempts made to distinguish between **predictive** prophecy and **wisdom** prophecy, plus attempts to differentiate between the topical texts and the festal significance

of others. (**The Five Rolls, Megilloth**, mentioned above were read at the five annual feasts, for example.) The exact reasons for a three-fold division, however, are obscured by history; but the Bible claim is for progressive collection as the books were written.

Study Questions

1. What is the three-fold division of the Hebrew Bible and how many books are in each?
2. In reference to English Old Testament what is the difference in content, if any, with Hebrew Old Testaments? What has God promised about His Word's endurance?
3. Memorize in order and learn to spell all the Old Testament books.
4. Jesus often referred to the Old Testament. How many such references can you find in the Gospel accounts and what do those references indicate about the Old Testament? (Remember that Jesus referred to "scripture" often.)
5. What are some claims as to why there was/is a three-fold (tri-partite) division of the Hebrew Bible?
6. How many "thus saith the Lords" can you find in the Old Testament? A good concordance will be of use here.
7. Note Nehemiah 8. Ezra read to the Aramaic speaking Jews from a Hebrew Bible. Since the people were aware of such a Bible what does this fact mean in reference to a canon? Was Ezra's translation (Nehemiah 8:8) still the Word of God? (See Nehemiah 8:9).
8. What is the oldest known witness to there being twenty-four scrolls in the Hebrew canon?
9. What ancient prophet claimed not to be one nor the son of one? Why?
10. Who was Jeremiah's amanuensis (secretary)? To whom did that secretary read Jeremiah's scroll? What happened to that scroll? Could one just "drop off" a scroll at the temple and expect it would be canonized? Who had to protect all the scrolls and providentially preserve them?

CHAPTER SEVEN – OLD TESTAMENT CANON: CRITERIA: DEUTERONOMY 4:2; REVELATION 21:18-19

The study of the text and canon of the Old Testament has received new life and direction in the last half-century. Manuscript discoveries have even caused liberal Bible critics to revise their views. The new evidence is that early Hebrew Bible commentators were often too loose when interpreting the text. Many of those early students when writing their **midrashes** (Hebrew commentaries, sometimes written on a scroll itself) would reshape a text in light of their needs, but commentaries from later in the same historical period appear to become more standard.

The above seems to mean that Bible critics are really not able to make any statements as to the early form of a Hebrew Bible. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is further strong evidence that the late Hebrew text and the early are the same. One liberal critic admitted that:

One of the reasons few modern scholars since the eighteenth century have been interested in the massora (Masoretic copies from the time after Christ, K.M.) is that it seems to run counter to their own interests, Modern scholarship's great interest in the Urtexts (the earliest manuscripts, K.M.) of the Bible, in what this or that great thinker-contributor of the Bible actually said, has meant that most of us over the past 200 years have been doing what the Massorites themselves feared most; we have been changing the text because of our knowledge of other matters. (James Sanders, "Text and Canon," **Journal of Biblical Literature**, 1979: pp. 18-19).

What does such thinking as above mean for the average Bible student? It means that modern critics are beginning to find what the Bible said all along; that the text has been the same through all the centuries. Even though the available early Hebrew manuscripts (other than the Dead Sea scrolls) are from the tenth century of the modern era, they are **not** different to any great degree from the first scrolls Moses and the prophets wrote!

Independent Witnesses

Not only are there changes in thinking about the universality of the manuscripts and the fact that they are not changed, but there are also some independent witnesses to the canon of the Old Testament. Such witnesses are not to be viewed as confirming the text itself to any great degree, but these witnesses are valuable as evidences of any ancient canon.

First there exists the Samaritan Pentateuch. This ancient text was preserved by a cult, started by the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. According to Nehemiah 13:28, the son-in-law (Manasseh, according to Josephus) was driven from the returning Jews who had been in Babylonian exile. He started a sect or cult whose worship was on Mount Gerazim (John 4:20-24). Evidently, Manasseh (according to Josephus) took only the first five books of the Old Testament with him. (Probably because those books do not mention Jerusalem as the place to worship.) The "Samaritan Pentateuch" is the same canonical literature as the five books of Moses and affirms that part of the canon.

Second, there is the Septuagint or LXX. This Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was inaugurated by the Ptolemaic leader, Philadelphus, around 250 B.C. A legend, perpetrated by Aristeas, an officer in Philadelphus' army, reported that the LXX came about because of Ptolemy's love for books and because he wanted to add a translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) to his collection. As Aristeas' story unfolds, Ptolemy set free 198,000 Jewish captives and sent them with presents to Eleazar the high priest in Jerusalem. Eleazar, in turn, sends six Rabbis from each tribe (72 in all) to Ptolemy. The Rabbis are feasted; they are asked 70 questions to test their textual knowledge; and after 72 days of conference and cooperation they produce the LXX (70)! To Aristeas' legend, "Christian" scholars added the tradition that the 72 Rabbis did their work in 72 different cells on the island of Pharos, yet each produced exactly the same text!

All of the above, of course is fable! Historically, Ptolemy obtained a Greek translation of a prophet and ordered Greek translations of the rest of the texts. (A lack of unity of plan of translation, except for the Mosaic books seems to indicate the latter fact.) The LXX intermingles what are known as the Apocrypha (see chapter eight) with the canonical books. (Since the Jews never recognized the Apocrypha, the Protestant world has rejected

them. Catholic Bibles contain them, following the LXX version since the time **after** Christ. There is **no** evidence that the early septuagint versions of Jesus' time and before, contained the Apocrypha. There is a five-hundred year chasm between the original and extant copies, and in the extant copies the Apocryphal books vary as to sequence and number. The great Vatican manuscript of Jerome from the fourth century, the so-called "truest representative" of the LXX, does not contain one of the Apocrypha called Macabees, but does contain a spurious book called I Esdras.)

The LXX was quoted by Jesus and the apostles and is strong confirmation of the canon as it presently exists. (The word order in the New Testament of Jesus' quotes of the Old Testament, as well as those of the apostles, shows they were quoting from the LXX and not from the Hebrew Bible. Compare Luke 4:17-30. Since Jesus called the LXX **scripture**, Luke 4:21, He showed that when one has a reliable translation, one has God's Word.)

A third independent witness to the Old Testament canon is the **Ecclus** or **Wisdom** (sometimes called the **Sir**) of Jesus ben Sirach, from around 170 B.C. The book was written in Jerusalem and in the Hebrew language. **Wisdom** resembles **Proverbs** and the former is considered by many to be the most important of the Apocrypha because of its high style and content. Sirach mentions the entire canon of the Old Testament in his book.

A fourth independent witness to the Old Testament is the **Prologue to Ecclus** written by the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach around 132 B.C. This text has the earliest known reference to the three-fold Old Testament division. The younger Jesus ben Sirach translated his grandfather's book into Greek and added the preface or prologue. He refers to the Old Testament canon as: "The law itself, and the Prophets, and the rest of the books."

In the fifth place, some of the Apocrypha refer to an existing canon in their time. For example, the intertestament books of I and II Macabees, which were produced around 125 B.C. and 70 B.C. respectively, refer to Daniel, Psalms, and Nehemiah as canonical.

A sixth independent witness to the Old Testament canon is Philo who lived from 20 B.C. to A.D. 50 This Jewish philosopher was a voluminous writer, but was also one who attempted to unite Jewish teaching with Greek philosophy. Because of heretical leanings, the evidence for the Old Testament canon found in Philo's writings is largely negative. Philo did reverence the law of Moses and his canon is essentially ours. It is worth noting that Philo never quotes from the Jewish Apocrypha.

In the seventh place, one can look to Christ and His apostles as witnesses to the Old Testament canon. In **all** New Testament quotes they refer to the Old Testament as scripture (e.g. John 10:35).

An eighth independent witness to the Old Testament canon is a spurious writing (i.e. uninspired) known as 4 Esdras in English and 2 Esdras in the Latin manuscript. This Jewish apocalyptic work was originally written in Greek around 81-96 AD. In 4 Esdras 14:19-48 there is a record of how Ezra was "illumined" to reproduce the law which had been destroyed by fire. Ezra supposedly used five secretaries (amenuenses) to whom he dictated for forty days and nights producing ninety-four books; seventy of which were kept "secret" and twenty-four retained. The latter is the first record, albeit fictionalized, of the canonical number of the Old Testament books.

A ninth independent witness to the ancient canon is Flavius Josephus who was born around AD. 37. In his famous **Contra Apionem (Against Apion)** from around AD. 100, Josephus wrote:

For it is not the case with us (Jews, K.M.) to have vast numbers of books disagreeing and conflicting with one another. We have but twenty-two containing the history of all time, books that are justly believed in and of these, five are the books of Moses, which comprise the laws and the earliest traditions from the creation of mankind down to the time of his death. This period falls short but by a little of three thousand years. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, the successor of Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses wrote history of the events that occurred in their own time; in thirteen books. The remaining four documents contain hymns to God and precepts to men. From the days of Artaxerxes to our own time, every event has been recorded. But these recent records (the Apocrypha, K.M.) have not been deemed worthy of equal credit with those which preceded them, for the exact succession of the prophets ceased. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so great an interval of time has now passed (since completion of the canon, KM.), not a soul has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable.

Josephus was voicing a tradition among the Jews that at that time was universal. The canon of the Old Testament was no new thing in A.D. 100.

Two councils are the ninth witness to the canonicity of the thirty-nine books of the old covenant. Both

Jewish gatherings took place at the town of Jamnia Qust south of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast) in A.D. 90 and A.D. 110. The Jews had become apprehensive about Christian writings and met to confirm Jewish canonical beliefs. Two books, Ecclesiastes because of its so-called skepticism, and Song of Solomon because of its supposed sensuality were discussed as to canonicity. A Rabbi Akiba defended both books and was proved right. The canon was set at the twenty-four books or the thirty-nine of modern English versions.

A tenth independent witness to the Old Testament canon is the **Talmud**. This Jewish production, developed from A.D. 200 to 500, consists of the **Mishna** and **Gemara**. These collections of systematized Jewish Traditions and laws (added to the Bible) are mere Rabbinical speculations and commentary; yet the Talmud is the "Bible" of modern Judaism. One of its tractates (divisions) called "A Baraitha" (an unauthorized gloss on Babha Bathra 14b) relates the "order" of the books and Jewish tradition as to who "wrote" them.

Text Standardization

The ancient translations of the Old Testament and evidence from the Dead Sea scrolls, as noted above, indicate that some freedom existed among earlier copyists of the Bible. The ancient manuscripts were written in a Phoenician square-type alphabet which contained letters that look alike and can be confused. Besides this, the "capital" letters were written one after the other with no punctuation, sentence, or paragraph breaks. The text might have looked like this:

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However, Jewish Bible critics were able to recognize some of the mistakes such scribes made and were able to find the standard text. For example, a copyist might commit the error of homioteleuton; that is, of mistaking words with **similar** endings and omitting them. Other scribes might repeat a word-ditto-graphic error-while others might be copying an edition of a manuscript different from another. Sometimes the explanatory notes of a scribe, as to why he may have copied in a certain way, crept into the text of another copyist.

Rabbi Akiba, mentioned above in connection with the Jewish canonical councils at Jamnia, was the driving force behind efforts to standardize the manuscripts and he insisted that the Hebrew Bible, not the LXX, be used. The Akiba text is the one preserved, in the main, by the Masoretic scribes from A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500 and the onset of the printing press.

Conclusion

Modernists, at least some, are now admitting that they have been trying to find some earlier and better manuscript evidence, that they now know is not a necessary endeavor. The evidence is that the known manuscripts of the Old Testament are not essentially different from the originals.

There are also a large number of independent witnesses to the Old Testament canon which evidence does not disagree with the known list of books in modern Bibles. Too, the text is now standardized and has been for nearly two-thousand years.

Study Questions

1. What one thing concerns you the most about whether your Bible is reliable?
2. What impression did James Sanders' statement about "changing the text" have on you?
3. Is there some reason to be concerned about modern versions of the Bible?
4. From a Bible encyclopedia, find out about the Samaritans. Who were they? Does the sect still exist? What "Bible" did they have?
5. What is the LXX and how is it useful in defining the canon?
6. Who were the Jesus' ben Sirach's and what did they contribute to our knowledge of an existing canon?
7. Who was Philo and what does he tell us about canon?
8. What versions of the Bible did Jesus use? How do we know about this and what lessons can we learn from such knowledge?
9. Discuss Josephus' statement about the canon.
10. Is there a standardized text and how was such accomplished?

CHAPTER EIGHT – O.T. APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA: DEUTERONOMY 31: 2 KINGS 22:8

The Bible was collected as it was being written (Deut. 31). Since the Jews accepted only those books known to have been written by a prophet of God, some debate did ensue as to whether such knowledge was ambiguous. Thirty-four of the thirty-nine Old Testament books have never been questioned as to their canonicity. They are called **homologoumena** (one-word messages) or the books agreed upon by all in all times. The five books not always found in agreement among the Jews are called **antilogoumena**, but were **originally** accepted and only later disputed.

The first "spoken against" book was the Song of Solomon because of its "sensuality." The rabbinical school of one Shammai questioned this text, but the book has not been doubted by traditional Judaism since it was defended by Rabbi Akiba (chapter seven) at the council of Jamnia. Akiba called the Song the "Holy of Holies" of the Old Testament. Selections from the book were kept in the temple prior to A.D. 70, and later the **Mishna** (part of the Talmud) pronounced a curse on anyone's treating the book as secular. Some call the book **Canticles** since it is lyric poetry and parts of it, especially the songs of the lovers, were meant to be chanted. The book is God's great treasure on married love.

Ecclesiastes has been disputed by some because of supposed agnosticism or skepticism. But the disagreement arises because of misunderstandings about the book's purpose. The author, Solomon, is discussing matters "under the sun" and actually comes to a **spiritual** conclusion.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl. 12:13-14).

Beecher wrote of Ecclesiastes:

In the early Christian centuries, as in all the centuries since, there have been disputes concerning the canonicity of Ecclesiastes. It was not questioned that Ecclesiastes belongs to the canon as traditionally handed down. No question of admitting it to the canon was raised. But it was challenged because of the agnostic quality of some of its contents, and every time, on close examination, the challenge was decided in its favor (ISBE, p. 897).

Esther is the third antilogoumena simply because God's name is not mentioned. Some have suggested that since the Jews were in Persian captivity, the covenant name of God was not associated with them. However, God's name is mentioned in other books of the same period. There is an "and" as the first letter of Esther, thus connecting it to the other books of the Bible; which fact is significant. Esther was designed to be part of a series and in the Hebrew Bible was connected to 1 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Extra-canonical Jewish writings suggested that only Esther would survive during the "days of Messiah" and thus a copy of the scroll was kept in the Temple and captured by Vespasian in A.D. 70. The leading attacker on the canonicity of Esther was Martin Luther who attacked all books that did not fit his "faith only" theology.

The fourth spoken against is Ezekiel because Shammai had insisted that Ezekiel's teachings were "anti-Mosaic," assuming that Ezekiel was introducing a difference between Levite and priest contrary to Moses' teaching (Ezek. 40:48). The truth is, Ezekiel was foreshadowing the church of Christ as different from the ancient priesthood and the distinction between Levite and priest had **always** existed.

But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD. And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD. And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to

the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it (2 Kings 12:9-12).

And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes (Lev. 21 :10).

And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession (Num. 35:25-28).

Ezekiel was rebuking Israel for allowing the uncircumcised to serve as priests and prophesying of a new priesthood to come (Ezek. 44).

The fifth and last book disputed is Proverbs. There is an alleged contradiction between 26:4 and 26:5.

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him (Prov. 26:4).

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit (Prov. 26:5)

Such an inference that a discrepancy exists is more proof of a misunderstanding of what a proverb is than of some mistake in the Bible. In some instances a "fool" should be answered, but at other times he should not. One proverb is not a statement that covers every situation. For example, the English proverb insists that one should "look before he leaps." Another proverb says, "He who hesitates is lost." Which proverb is right? Both are, for they cover differing situations. Such is the case with Proverbs 26:4-5.

Other books "spoken against," however, should be. They are not God-inspired texts and some of these spurious writings (fourteen or fifteen) are labeled as the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha

There are fourteen or fifteen Apocrypha books depending on one's source of information, that are usually placed in Catholic Bibles between the testaments indicating the time period in which they were written. Apocrypha means **dark** or **hidden** and the discerning reader will note that the term is capitalized here. Apocrypha, with a capital "A," refers to the intertestament books and apocrypha is the term referring to spurious writings produced after the **New** Testament was completed. The early church fathers used the term, apocrypha, for **all** non-canonical books, but since the Protestant Reformation, the word with a capital letter refers only to the Old Testament productions.

The world which produced the Apocrypha was a combination of Greek, Roman, and Jewish culture. The Grecian literature was changing from the heroic style to the individual and their philosophy was evolving to include everyday, real-world problems. The anti-Greek Jews (especially the Macabees) were seeking national independence from the Seleucid (Grecian) and later Roman dominance, but Greek (Hellenistic) philosophy still affected the multitudes. Even the esthetic Essenes (Jews) were enamored by Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers. Out of this eclectic culture arose the apocryphal writings most of which are also apocalyptic in nature. A brief synopsis of the Apocrypha is given here so that the student will better understand why such books are not in the Bible. The moral, historical, and literary errors in these books are such that a comparison to actual Bible texts easily shows even the uninitiated the vast differences between a true text from God and one written only by men.

1 Esdras is a history, although not entirely authentic, of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine after Babylonian exile. The author drew from 1 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; but added much legendary material. There are a large number of discrepancies between 1 Esdras (3 Esdras in the Latin Vulgate, from about 150 B.C.)

and the historical, canonical accounts especially the legend of the three young Jews in the court of Darius which has no parallel at all in the Bible (3:1-5; 6). The purpose of this uninspired and unknown writer was to emphasize the contribution of Josiah, Zerubbabel, and Ezra to the reform of post-exilic Israelite worship.

2 Esdras is Jewish in composition and apocalyptic (as Revelation or parts of Daniel; a "code" language used by ancient writers; especially the Hebrew, during times of national oppression). The "seer" of the book, supposedly instructed by the angel Uriel, comments on the great dichotomies (mysteries) of the moral world. The author denounced the wickedness of Rome (under the image of "Babylon") by lamenting the miseries that had befallen Jerusalem. His context deals with the great questions of God's power and justice, and wisdom and the problems of evil in the world. The pathetic attempts of the writer to solve the problems are most evident to the reader.

Tobit, from the early second century B.C., is a short novel. It is pharasaic (legalistic) in tone emphasizing the law of Moses, "clean" foods, ceremonial washings, charity, fasting, and prayer. (See Mark 7:7-9.) The text is **totally** unscriptural in insisting that almsgiving atones for sin (chapter three). Tobit, very much like an Arabian Nights romance novel, is one of the most popular of the Apocrypha. Tobit, a "pious Jew," supposedly resided in Nineveh as a captive of Assyria during the eighth century before Christ. Tobit, despite his piousness, becomes poor and blind. (Such themes were not uncommon to the Jews of that era who taught that sin was punished in this life. See John 9:1.) God "hears" Tobit's prayer of grief along with the prayers of a "demon possessed" girl named Sarah who lives in a "faraway" Media. God sends the angel, Raphael, to "save" both Tobit and Sarah. Tobit, meanwhile, sends his son, Tobias, to collect some money owed Tobit from, of course, some people in Media. Raphael reveals to Tobias "magical formulas" which will heal Tobit's blindness and release Sarah from her "demon lover," Asmodeus (chapters 4-6). Tobias completes his mission and marries Sarah (chapters 7-14).

Judith, also a romance novel, is supposedly a text written in the sixth-century during Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Babylon. Actually it was written about the second century before Christ and has little historical value and is filled with situational morality. Judith, the heroine, uses her beauty to gain a place in the tent of an attacking Babylonian general. He falls into a drunken stupor and Judith beheads him and helps to stop the invading army. This text is a good example of ancient Jewish narrative art and has inspired numerous plays, paintings, and sculptures all teaching the immoral idea that the end justifies the means.

The Rest of Esther is a Greek composition (automatically denying its connection to the canonical Esther) consisting of visions, letters and prayers composed about 100 B.C. The writer was attempting to "compensate" for the lack of mention of God's name in Esther. Originally these additions to Esther were interspersed in the inspired book and numbered one-hundred and seven verses. Jerome (fourth-century A.D.) removed the additions while producing his Vulgate and placed them all at the end of Esther. The problem is that at times the additions contradict Esther.

The Wisdom of Solomon is an ethical treatise condemning sin and extolling righteousness. Written about 30 B.C., the book's contents were intended to protect Hellenistic (Greek philosophic) Jews from being influenced by their paganistic surroundings. The lateness of the production and the attempts by the author to impersonate Solomon speak loudly against its inspiration. The book does contain many noble sentiments, however, and is the most moral and useful of the Apocrypha.

Ecclesiasticus (mentioned in chapter seven under Jesus ben Sirach) is a very long, ethical treatise on morality and practical goodness. The book, a Hebrew production from about 180 B.C., is patterned after the wisdom literature of the Old Testament as is the **Wisdom of Solomon** mentioned above. This is the only book in the Apocrypha of which the author's name is known (50:27). The author was a Jewish scribe who conducted an academy for young men (51:23). The book is a compilation of ben Sirach's long years of lecturing on ethics and religion. **Ecclesiasticus** means "the church book" and is the title given by Catholicism which insists on the book's inspiration.

Baruch is the weakest of imitations of Jeremiah's writing style and was probably produced after A.D. 70. The author represents himself as describing Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem (587 B.C.); but the writer exposes his real purpose by telling the Jews to submit to the "emperor" and never to revolt again. The Jews revolted against Rome not Babylon. The "real" Baruch was Jeremiah's secretary and companion (Jer. 32:12; 36:4), but this "Baruch" is a faker and the book is unquestionably non-canonical. The sixth chapter of the uninspired Baruch even contains a "letter of Jeremiah" which is a forgery.

The Epistle of Jeremiah was appended to the apocryphal **Baruch** as a warning to the "Babylonian" captives against idolatry, but was a letter most likely addressed to Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt. The letter is filled with illogical connections between the various statements against idolatry.

The Son of the Three Holy Children is supposed to be the record of what the three boys sang when thrown into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:23). The psalm borrows heavily from Psalm 148 and is antiphonal (as is Psalm 136) having the phrase "Sing praise to him and greatly exalt him forever" thirty-two times. Even the animals are told to "sing" praises to God in this spurious book.

The History of Susanna is another religious romance novel which purports to show how the prophet Daniel delivered Susanna from two immoral men. When they tried to seduce her, she cried out but the two men said they found her in the arms of a young man. Since Susanna was married, and there were at least **two** witnesses, she was brought to trial. She was convicted and sentenced to die for her "immorality." Daniel interrupts the proceedings at this point and begins to cross-examine the two witnesses. He asks each one separately under which tree in the garden they had found Susanna with her young lover and when the witnesses give conflicting answers, they are put to death and Susanna is saved.

Bel and the Dragon is another novel about Daniel who slays the dragon and Bel an idol, the two objects of Babylonian worship. There is also contained a fictional account of Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den. This text was added to Daniel at the same time as **The History of Susanna** and was first called Daniel fourteen. Daniel, as a very clever detective, supposedly uncovers the chicanery of the priests of Bel which statue "ate" huge amounts of food every night to prove himself to be a living god. The second account of the dragon relates Daniel's refusal to worship the monster and how he "slew" it with a rather ridiculous concoction of fat, pitch, and hair! The Babylonians, irate over the death of their god, throw Daniel into the Lion's den where he is fed by Habakkuk (who was to travel from Jerusalem to bring the food) and freed on the seventh day.

The Prayer of Manasseh, supposedly reporting the penitence of that wicked king, is an addition to 2 Chronicles 33:18-19 and was composed in the second century before Christ. Since the prayer of Manasseh is not recorded in the Bible, some scribe decided to make up the difference. The prayer is beautiful Jewish poetry.

First Maccabees is a generally useful and reliable historical novel. Its importance to students of the intertestament period cannot be over estimated. The Jewish struggles for independence by the Macabbean families of Judas, Jonathan, and Simon are the most important source for one's knowledge of the history of this important time in Judaism. The author was probably a Palestinian Jew residing in Jerusalem and he modeled his history on the historical books of the Old Testament. He covers the conquests of Alexander, the division of his empire, and the origin of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires (1:1-10); he recounts the principal events of Judah's history from Antiochus IV (175 B.C.) to the reign of John Hyrcanus I and the semi-successful struggle of the Maccabean-led Jews for independence.

Second Maccabees covers the period from 175 B.C. to 160 B. C., but it is in stark contrast to I Maccabees since the second book deals in fanciful super-naturalness. It is a parallel to I Maccabees not a sequel and expands (in a not so trustworthy manner) the legendary tales of Judas Maccabee.

Protestants have never accepted the Apocrypha as canonical and Catholics reject 1 and 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh from the canon. Some doctrines taught in the Apocrypha are anti-Bible: Suicide is said to be honorable (2 Maccabees 14:41-43). Incense and fish hearts placed on hot coals are said to drive away the Devil (Tobit 6:5-8). One anointed with fish gall will be healed (Tobit 5:15-19; Compare Mark 12:25). One can be saved from sin by almsgiving (Tobit 12:15-19; Compare Roman Catholicism's works doctrine). It is more honorable to be single (Judith 8:5-6; compare Heb. 13:4). Murder is honorable if it advances the cause of the righteous (Judith 9:2). Souls in hell can get out (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-4). One can pray for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:43-46). One can social drink (Tobit 4:15). Saints will intercede for men (2 Maccabees 15:1-16). Immoral behavior is condoned by God, if one has good intentions (Judith 9:9-14).

It is most interesting to note that 1 Maccabees 4:46-9:27 denies that the Apocrypha are God-inspired and that 2 Maccabees 15 and the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus do the same. Some think that since the Apocrypha reflect the thought of the Old Testament; were used by some second and third century worshippers; were accepted by some church councils of the fourth century after Christ; and that they were in some Protestant Bible until the nineteenth century, that these books should be a part of the Bible. All of the foregoing activities were the result of the influence of Greek-gnostic influence on the church and 1Timothy4:1-3 contains a clear warning against such.

Perhaps the strongest argument made for inclusion of the Apocrypha in the canon is their presence in the Septuagint (LXX). Since Jesus quoted from the LXX, should not the Apocrypha be kept? There is a five-hundred year chasm between the original LXX and extant manuscripts and no evidence exists that the Apocrypha were in the original or in the one from which Jesus quoted. Jesus never quoted from the Apocrypha and when such quotes are found (e.g. Jude 14) they are never intimated to be inspired. The Apocrypha, at best, have only historical value.

The Pseudepigraphics

Many myths and legends grew around Moses and other Old Testament characters such as Enoch and the **Assumption of Moses** (cf Jude 14-15). In 2 Timothy 3:18 there is a reference to **The Penitence of Jannes and Jambres**. Such writings are known to be non-canonical and did not find a place even in the Apocrypha.

Apocalyptic

It is worth repeating that a great number of the Apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literary endeavors are apocalyptic. The term from **apokalupsis** (Greek, revelation) was applied to a kind of writing produced by one called a seer or visionary. The seer was like, yet unlike, a prophet. A seer might believe in direct revelation from God, but instead of forth telling (speaking for God as a prophet most often did) the seer only sought future predictions much like a fortune-teller. The seer always wrote in allegory, clothing his message in gorgeous, coded robes which writing was well-known and understood by Oriental minds of the time. When true prophecy and true apocalyptic ceased, apocalyptists arose with fanciful visions and strange dreams that left the reader hard put to find the meaning. Most of the uninspired apoclyptists longed for a military messiah who would return Israel to her historical glory and they would often attach the name to their writings of some well-known Biblical figure such as Enoch hoping that such a name would draw greater interest to their books (cf. Jude 14-15).

Conclusion

The Apocrypha (capital "A") are the fourteen or fifteen books **actually** added to some Bibles. Other writings are apocryphal and false but are not placed with the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha are inter-testament productions but there are apocrypha from the time after the New Testament was completed.

The Apocrypha and many pseudepigrapha are apocalyptic in nature. This allegorical code language was used during times the Jews were politically oppressed and had its source in prophetic usage.

The spurious books were written in Hebrew and Greek and the teachings were unbiblical, extra-biblical (fanciful), subbiblical (immoral), post-biblical (after revelation actually ended), and non-biblical. Such books have no place in the inspired canon.

Study Questions

1. What five books of the Old Testament were "spoken against" and why?
2. What defense can be made for the above five books as to their right to be in the canon?
3. What are the two terms, introduced in the first part of chapter eight, that are used to refer to the books all accepted and the five not always received?
4. What are the Apocrypha? 5. What are the apocrypha? Pseudepigraphic?
6. What is apocalyptic?
7. Discuss some of the false doctrines formulated from the Apocrypha by Roman Catholicism.
8. What books of the Apocrypha are the most important, historically speaking, and why?
9. What book or books of the Apocrypha would interest you so that you would take the time to read it? Why?
10. What is the major value of knowing about the Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha in terms of the canon? The term **comparison** should help answer this question.

CHAPTER NINE – N.T. CANON: DEVELOPMENT: 2 COR. 10:13; 14-16; GAL. 6:16; PHIL 3:16

The development of the canon or recognized books of the New Testament bears a remarkable analogy to the circumstances from which grew the canon or list of recognized, God-inspired books of the Old Testament. The major difference is that when "Christendom" split east from west around the eleventh century of the modern era, the eastern group did not accept the Apocrypha (nor any apocryphal writings) as belonging in the Old Testament. **All** of Christendom did receive both the thirty-nine Hebrew texts and twenty-seven Greek texts known in modern English Bibles.

Studying the rise of the New Testament also requires the knowledge that the **concept** of a New Testament canon is **older** than the application of the actual term, canon, to the books themselves. For example, there exists the record of one Paul of Samasota who was denounced by a church council in A.D. 266 in Antioch, Syria for teaching some things that were "foreign to the ecclesiastical canon." The council of Nicea (church councils, foreign to New Testament teaching, were, and are very popular with apostate students of Christ) in A.D. 325 had put on the record that only orthodox doctrine was "the canon." Origen (A.D. 185-253) who headed a liberal-leaning school in Alexandria, Egypt did write of the "canonized scriptures." Also, Athanasius in his **Festal Letter** wrote (fourth century) of the "books which have been canonized." Finally, at the ninth synod of Laodicea the term, **canon**, was "officially" applied to the nomenclature describing Holy Writ.

Legends, tales, and rumors have followed the history of the New Testament canon. For example, McClintock and Strong (**Canon**, p. 81) record a tradition that the New Testament church had assigned the beloved apostle John the task of collecting and sanctioning the writings which were "worthy" of a place in the canon. However, legends such as the former run contrary to the following facts:

1. Some New Testament books (discussed later) were **doubted** as canonical by some churches of the early centuries.
2. The list of New Testament books of the early second century appeared in differing arrangements in the various catalogues of the era. Had one apostle arranged them, it seems plausible that all lists would be arranged the same. Bible students must always keep in mind that God determined canon; men simply discovered it.
3. The tradition about John (and others that have arisen) is too late, historically, to be attributed to John. In fact, Paul predicted such apostate events (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Studying the strange traditions and sometimes obscure historical records concerning the New Testament canon leads to two important questions: (1) How were the New Testament books collected? (2) What motivated the collection? The foregoing inquiries provide the impetus for beginning a study of New Testament canon.

Demand For Authority

The story of New Testament canon, along with bearing a remarkable analogy to the circumstances surrounding the Old Testament accounts, is also the saga of a need for the demand for **authority** in matters of Christian faith. The source of canon is God:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16:13).

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3).

However, several historical stimuli were present through which Providence worked to ensure the collecting of the New Testament books and epistles.

There also existed, prominently so, the **prophetic** value of the New Testament writings. The apostle Peter, in fact, associated the New Testament writings as being on a par with the prophetic, inspired nature of the Old Testament when he wrote:

That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, **and** (emphasis mine, K.M.) of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour (2 Peter 3:2).

The discerning reader will note an exact equivalence in Peter's estimation of the Old and New writings.
text:

Peter also connected Paul's writings to the sacred text:

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures (emphasis mine, K.M.) unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter, concluding a discussion of the second coming, informed his readers that Paul wrote the same things and that such records were comparable to the "other scriptures" which many unlearned folks misused. The passage thus teaches that Peter's and Paul's writings were canon.

Paul indicated that all the inspired letters were equally needful by writing to Colosse:

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea (Col. 4:16).

(The letter "from Laodicea" is probably the one known as "Ephesians" since Paul wrote to the Colossians from the same Roman prison.) The point here is that the New Testament writers and readers were aware of, and being made aware of, the God-inspired, prophetic New Testament canon.

A second stimulus in the providential collection of the New Testament was the need for a **standard authority** for the church of Christ.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47).

Of course, multitudes have ignored such a standard, but the early church was commanded that the epistles of Paul especially, and by inference all the inspired writings, were to "be read unto all the holy brethren" (1 Thess. 5:27). Paul also insisted that:

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

According to Paul, the apostolic authority for the New Testament church was being committed to writing and **all** the holy brethren needed to read and follow those records.

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (cf. Acts 2:42).

In the third place as **heresy** arose, faithful Christians needed written, complete standards. For example, the second century heretic Marcion, taught that only Paul's letters were worthy of canonicity. Early Christians needed to be sure that they had access to **all** the salvation truth available (2 Peter 1:3). Strange as it seems, heresy often is the impetus for the faithful's taking a stand.

A fourth circumstance that provoked the collection of the canonical writings was the need for various translations for **missionary** efforts. "Which materials should be translated?" became an important question for the early church. (Such a need also shows that the miraculous confirmation of the oral message did end and that "speaking in tongues" or in languages not known to the speaker ceased. 1 Cor. 13:8-10).

A fifth stimulus was the need to know for which teachings one should **sacrifice** one's life. With martyrdom and cruel persecution, especially toward the end of the first century after Christ under the emperor Domitian, came the pressing need to know which books and letters were orthodox (cf. Luke 1:1-4). The early Christian community had a great impact on its world. The early church looked to the apostles and the Old Testament for its "canon" (2 Cor. 5:18-20; Acts 2:7-8). To challenge the apostolic authority was tantamount to challenging God (Acts 5:1-11; 1John4:6). By the time that the inspired men had died, the early community had been supplied with written records—a canon. The authenticity of Christianity was then founded on the credibility of those writings and the assurance that such records were "all truth" (John 16:13).

Progressive Collections

Since there existed eight or nine different writers of the New Testament (which number depends on one's view of who wrote Hebrews) and the **autographs** (original manuscripts) were being sent to varying destinations, no doubt some time was needed to collect all the books and letters from around the Roman empire. Some have opined that each church of Christ with enough size and ability probably collected a whole set, eventually, for itself. Comparisons of early, extant manuscripts have provided evidence to modern, textual critics that several early churches were in possession of the canon and that those congregations had the **same** books as are found in the modern canon (McClintock and Strong, p. 81).

How did those early churches know which books to keep? What determining factors were applied so that uninspired men knew they were collecting inspired texts?

A first criteria was **apostolicity**. Was the book or letter written by an apostle? Or, did the writer of the text claim revelation? The Bible student will want to stop here and read the following verses:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt. 28:18-20).

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:1-13).

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (2 Thess. 3:6).

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto

you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:8-12).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

A writer who could claim association with an apostle also had credibility with the early church. Luke, Mark, James, and Jude were intimately associated with the apostles.

A second criteria considered by early Christians in discovering (God determined) canonicity for a text was its **contents**. God did **not** preserve all of the writings of an apostle or inspired penmen (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9). But, inspired writings must be **inerrant** in all matters to which a text spoke; be they historical, scientific, or moral. Any error in any subject would eliminate a book or letter as not canonical. The Apocryphal books of the Old Testament and all the false-writings of the Mosaic and Christian eras failed because of this test of inerrancy.

A third test for canonicity, and not necessarily as fundamentally important as apostolicity and inerrancy, was **universal acceptance**. Certainly, if a book or letter were known, by all the churches, as from an inspired writer, such a test for canonicity bore some weight. This test caused some letters to be questioned as to canonicity by some in the early second century.

The fourth criteria, and perhaps the ultimate test, was **inspiration**. Did the books and epistles give evidence of being "God-breathed" (Greek, **theopneustos**, 2 Tim. 3:16; translated "given by inspiration")? For example, the text must be genuine; that is, it must have been written by the one bearing its name. Too, the author's work must be free of any errors or glitches, consistent in doctrine, and pure in teaching. Since God used many churches of Christ to gather the books, inspiration's marks would be the greatest reasons the twenty-seven texts came to be absolutely known as canonical. (It seems that only God could get so many churches to agree on a thing!)

As the collecting of the books and epistles progressed, false reports arose of what Jesus actually had said:

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true (John 21:23-24).

Such false reporting exists even today among modernists who do not trust the received canon, but think that Jesus "actually said" has to be found **behind** the written text. But, New Testament writers **knew** they were penning Jesus' **actual** sayings and that the penmen were being led by God to quote the Lord (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 11:20ff; 2:1-13; 14:37; 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; Luke 1:1-4; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 11:2; et al). The apostles, most of whom were martyred for the faith, **knew** they were not filing false reports.

Because the writers knew that they were penning scripture, they could **order** that their books be read (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16; Eph. 3:3-5; Rev. 1:3) and that the texts be read in all the churches (Rev. 1:11; Col. 4:16). The authority of the New Testament writings, indeed, went beyond just one congregation. The church knew and collected the letters and books and as early as A.D. 66 Paul's and Peter's writings were in the "canon" (2 Peter 3:15-16). Also, such messages as Jude's and Luke's were already being quoted as "scripture" (Jude 17-18; 1 Tim. 5:18; Luke 10:7).

In an anonymous **Epistle to Diognetus**, which is purportedly the earliest uninspired of Christian writings, the author speaks of the "Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Apostles." An early "church father" named Ignatius (A.D. 125) wrote of "betaking himself to the Gospel as the flesh of Jesus and to the apostles as the

presbytery of the church." Ignatius then adds: "and to the prophets whom we love" to show that he was referring to scriptures (Ep, ad. Philadelphonas). The New Testament written canon, although it began about fifteen years after the church had begun, quickly came into existence as the miraculous age of revelation ended and the demand and need for written authority surfaced.

Illustrating The Process

During the very early years of the New Testament church, its only "Bible" was the Old Testament and the apostles (Acts 2, 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Then the letters and books began to be written to supply specific needs. Rex A. Turner, Sr. wrote:

The process of writing down what needed to be presented and/ or writing down that which could not, because of circumstances, be communicated by speech in person was a natural and simple process which led in time to the production of the New Testament (**Sound Doctrine**, Oct. 1979, p. 13).

To illustrate the gradual and progressive rise of all the New Testament books or epistles is best illustrated by the manner in which the four accounts of the gospel—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John arose. (1) Matthew wrote to meet the specific needs of those Jews who had or might obey the Christ. Such Jews had been or would be isolated from their people and needed assurance that their Messiah, their King, had certainly come. Because such a need was so pressing, Matthew's account became the first written. (2) Luke penned his account to meet the needs of the world of everyone. Luke's emphasis on Jesus' humility and that the prophets had said that the Christ would be a light to the Gentiles were meant to meet specific needs in the Gentile world. Luke's tracing of Jesus' genealogy to Adam further emphasized the inclusion of the Gentile in God's plan of salvation (Luke 3). Luke wrote about AD. 58 or about eight years after Matthew had penned his gospel account. (A recent discovery in the British Museum is a fragment of Matthew's account which dates to A.D. 50. Modernists have long argued that Mark wrote first from a Qelle [Q] or "source" of oral sayings and that Matthew and Luke copied Mark. The museum discovery disputes such a theory.) (3) Mark wrote to meet the needs of the Roman mindset which thinking rejoiced in one who could conquer suffering and death. Mark, therefore, pictures Jesus more as a servant than as a king and Mark passes over Jesus' early life, even the virgin birth, and concentrates on Jesus' suffering and deeds. Mark's account is later, being written around A.D. 62-66. (4) John, writing around A.D. 90, faced the doctrine of gnosticism and wrote against that heretical background. He also covered some historical matters not found in the first three gospel accounts but, chronologically, John only covers about thirty days of the Lord's life. The Greeks had developed a philosophy of the problem of evil that insisted that a Supreme Being (whom they called the "Demi-Urge) could not create evil, but certain "aeons" remotely akin to the Supreme Being did create flesh or evil. Two of these "aeons" were Jehovah and Jesus. Paul dealt with the beginnings of this philosophy in writing to the Thessalonians and Timothy, but especially to the Colossians.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming (2 Thess. 2:1-8).

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speakings lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

In fact, the gospel according to John is a later writing covering the developing error of Gnosticism. John, thus, insisted that the God did become flesh and dwelt among us.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only

begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full (1 John 1:1-4).

The above four accounts show how the books were written as the needs of the church grew gradually and progressively. There is need to elaborate on this procedure of collecting the writings.

Procedure

The apostle John implied that the apostles themselves were inspired to select those materials necessary to salvation.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are **not** (emphasis mine, KM.) written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

Sometimes those who would denigrate a pattern concept for the New Testament argue that the early Christians did not have all the truth and so how could any New Testament church be "restored" or be used as a "pattern" for today. First of all, one tries to restore New Testament Christianity following the pattern laid down in the text by the writers (1Cor.11:1). No one church serves as such a pattern. Second, according to the apostle John, the writers of the New Testament knew more than they wrote (John 20:30-31 above). One trying to write every detail about Jesus, according to John, would over fill the world with books (John 21:25). The canon, then, was just that needed for salvation. Any **less** is not enough; anymore is too much.

There were even some records of Christ's life in existence in the first century that were, at best, not accurate (Luke 1:1-4). Inspired men, therefore, had to report just those things that were necessary and truthful to protect the church as far as possible from apostasy. The canon of the New Testament **had** to be formed.

Conclusion

The New Testament books and letters were collected as written and the writers knew that their productions were inspired. New Testament Christians can be assured that their Bibles are God's Word!

Study Questions

1. What two facts must be known as one begins a study of New Testament canonicity?
2. What three facts disprove the legends that have arisen about the collecting of the books?
3. Discuss the following historical stimuli to the collecting of the New Testament canon:
 - a. Prophetic value?
 - b. Standard authority?
 - c. Heresy?
 - d. Missions?
 - e. Martyrdom?
4. Discuss the four leading criteria used to discover a book's canonicity.
 - a. Apostolicity?
 - b. Contents?
 - c. Universal Acceptance?
 - d. Inspiration?
5. What confidence are you gaining about your Bible from this study of canon?

CHAPTER TEN – N.T. CANON: RECOGNITION: LUKE 4:16-32

The Christian community adopted the **codex** form for its written materials. **Caudex**, a Latin term, originally was the name for a tree stump, but later the word evolved to mean a slab of wood; hence a wooden tablet used for writing. Wax was often applied to the wooden surface and such a tablet would be used for note taking. Caudex then evolved to mean the flat, rectangular piles of folded paper that constitute a **book**. Some early codices or books were made from piles of parchment, but many had learned how to make a crude kind of paper.

The Greek term, **biblion**, from which comes **bible** or **book** (and capitalized, Bible) is a term derived from the name of a papyrus reed's outer coating. That coating was the source of the papyrus used for scrolls. Strips would be laid on top of each other in a checker board fashion; the top row running perpendicular to the row below and the sticky inner surface holding the strips together. Bible students can find the word, **biblios**, in Matthew 1:1 where the English translation is **book** and the reference is to the genealogy that follows.

The Greek for a **codex**, however, is generally **membrane**; and the **codex** or **folio** was the form Christians knew for their books and epistles. One can read from Paul some instructions to Timothy concerning some personal effects:

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments (2 Tim. 4:13).

The word, **books** or **biblia** is thought by Bible scholars to refer to Old Testament scrolls. The word parchments from **membranae** is thought to be a reference to the extant New Testament codices or books in folio form. Was Paul asking Timothy to bring the Old Testament scrolls and existing New Testament? (If so, there is a powerful suggestion to Christians about Bible study contained in Paul's request. If the apostle needed his "Bible" how much more do uninspired Christians need one?) Further, could those early Christians read such documents?

Literacy?

Some have been emboldened to argue that early Christians, generally, were illiterate. The verse often used to "prove" such a position is Acts 4:13 which reads:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Discerning Bible students are fully aware that the Jewish council, from which the foregoing statement came, was not accusing Peter and John of illiteracy but of not attending the higher schooling necessary to their being religious leaders—just as Jesus had not.

The Jews wondered about Jesus: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned" (John 7:15b)? It was not that Jesus was illiterate, but that He had not attended the ecclesiastical schools of His day; yet Jesus was smarter than all the rabbis.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:28-29).

Jesus, as any Jewish boy of His day, could read, for all Jewish children had, at least, their training from the local synagogue school. Luke writes of Jesus:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read (Luke 4:16).

As Jesus, Peter and John were not "lettered," but they certainly could read and would have been **used** to reading the scriptures, if not in Hebrew, at least in translation.

Further, Paul commanded the converted Jews and Gentiles in Thessalonica to have his epistle **read** to them:

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren (1 Thess. 5:27).

Paul also ordered all churches (members) to read the Colossians and Laodicean epistles.

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea (Col. 4:16).

It seems more obvious that if early Christians were generally illiterate, inspired men would not have chosen to propagate the scheme of redemption through writing! Too, not only could early Christians read, but later church "fathers" could know which books were the inspired canon.

Recognition: Catalogue of New Testament Papyri & Codices 2nd-10th Centuries



The following material implies that the second century church knew a complete and recognizable canon.

Catalogue Of New Testament Papyri & Codices 2nd-10th Centuries				
P. Duk.inv.811 R				
Matthew 1: 1 in Sahidic Coptic (5 th cent.) (From the Duke Papyrus Archive)				
(Adapted from Metzger 1968:247-56 and Aland, et al. 1986:684-716)				
Papyrus No. & Papyrus Collection	Approx. Date	Contents (books & Chapters only)	Text Family	City, Museum, & Inventory No.
p ¹ P.Oxy.2	3 rd cent.	Matt 1	Alexandrian	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Univ. of Penn. Museum #E2746
p ²	6 th cent.	John 12	Mixed	Florence, Italy Museo Archeologico #7134
p ³	6 th -7 th cent.	Luke 7, 10	Alexandrian	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek #G2323
p ⁴	3 rd cent.	Luke 1-6	Alexandrian	Paris, France Bbibliothèque de Nationale #Gr.1120
p ⁵ P.Oxy.208	3 rd cent.	John 1, 16,20	Western	London, England British Museum Pap. 782 + Pap 2484

p ⁶	4 th cent.	John 10-11	Agrees with B & O	Strasbourg, France Bibliothèque de la Université PP.COPT.351',335',379 381, 383, 384
p ⁷	5 th cent.	Luke 4		Lost formerly in Kiev, Ukraine; Library of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Petrov 553
p ⁸	4 th cent.	Acts 4:4-6	Mixed: Alexandrian & Western	LOST Formerly in Berlin, Germany: Staatliche Museen P. 8683
p ⁹ P.Oxy. 402	3 rd cent.	I John 4		Cambridge, Massachusetts Harvard Semitic Mus. #3736
p ¹⁰ P.Oxy. 209	4 th cent.	Rom 1	Alexandrian	Cambridge, Massachusetts Harvard Semitic Mus. #2218
p ¹¹	7 th cent.	I Cor 1-7	Alexandrian	Leningrad, Russia State Public Library Gr. 258 A
p ¹² P.Amh.3b	Late 3 rd cent.	Heb 1		New York, New York Pierpont Morgan Library #G.3
p ¹³ P.Oxy. 657	3 rd -4 th cent.	Heb 2-5, 10-12	Alexandrian	London, England British Museum P.1532 verso

p ¹⁴	5 th cent?	I Cor. 1-3	Alexandrian	Mt. Sinai St. Catherine's Monastery Library #14
p ¹⁵ P.Oxy. 1008	3 rd cent.	I Cor 7-8	Alexandrian	Cairo, Egypt Egyptian Museum JE 47423
p ¹⁶ P.Oxy. 1009	3 rd -4 th cent.	Phil 3-4	Alexandrian	Cairo, Egypt Museum of Antiquities JE 47424
p ¹⁷ P.Oxy. 1078	4 th cent.	Heb 9	mixed	Cambridge, England University Library Add. 5893
p ¹⁸ P.Oxy. 1079	3 rd -4 th cent.	Rev 1	agrees with: <u>Σ</u> , B, and C	London, England British Museum P. 2053 verso
p ¹⁹ P.Oxy. 1170	4 th -5 th cent.	Matt 10- 11	mixed	Oxford, England Bodleian Library Gr. Bibl.d. 6 [P.]
p ²⁰ P.Oxy. 1171	3 rd cent.	Jas 2-3	Alexandrian	Princeton, New Jersey University Library Am 4117
p ²¹ P.Oxy. 1227	4 th -5 th cent.	Matt 12	agrees with: <u>Σ</u> ^{corr} , and D	Allentown, Pennsylvania Muhlenburg College Theol. Pap.3

p ²² P.Oxy. 1228	3 rd cent.	John 15-16	agrees with: <u>Σ</u> ^{corr} , and D	Glasgow, Scotland University Library MS 2—X.1
p ²³ P.Oxy. 1229	Early 3 rd cent.	Jas 1	Alexandrian	Urbana, Illinois Univ. of Illinois Classical Arch. And Art Museum G.P.1229
p ²⁴ P.Oxy. 1230	4 th cent.	Rev 5-6	agrees with: <u>Σ</u>	Newton Center, Massachusetts Andover Newton Theol. Sch. Op 1230
p ²⁵	Late 4 th cent.	Matt 18- 19	Western	LOST formerly in Berlin, Germany Staatliche Museen P.16388
p ²⁶ P.Oxy. 1354	c.600	Rom 1	agrees with: A & <u>Σ</u>	Dallas, Texas So. Methodist Univ. Bridewell Library
p ²⁷ P.Oxy. 1355	3 rd cent.	Rom 8-9	Alexandrian (& Western)	Cambridge, England University Library Add.7211
p ²⁸ P.Oxy. 1596	3 rd cent.	John 6	Alexandrian	Berkeley, California Pacific Sch. Of Religion Pap.2

p ²⁹ P.Oxy. 1597	3 rd Cent.	Acts 26	Western (?)	Oxford, England Bodleian Library Gr. Bibl.g.4 (P)
p ³⁰ P.Oxy. 1598	3 rd cent.	I Thess 4-5	mixed	Ghent, Belgium University Library U.Lib.P.61
p ³¹ P.Ryl. 4	7 th cent.	Rom 12	agrees with: 	Manchester, England John Rylands Library Gr. P.4
p ³² P.Ryl.5	c.200	Titus 1-2	agrees with: 	Manchester, England John Rylands Library Gr. P.5
p ³³ [+p ⁵⁸]	6 th cent.	Acts 7,15	Alexandrian	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek No.190 Pap. G. 17973, 26133, 35831, 39783
p ³⁴	7 th cent.	I Cor. 16 II Cor 5, 10-11	Alexandrian	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek No.191 Pap. G. 39784
p ³⁵	4 th cent. (?)	Matt 25	Mixed	Florence, Italy Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana PSI 1

p ¹⁶	6 th cent.	John 3	mixed	Florence, Italy Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana PSI 3
p ¹⁷ P. Mich. 137	3 rd –4 th cent.	Matt 26	Caesarean	Ann Arbor, Michigan Univ. of Michigan no. 1570
p ¹⁸ P. Mich. 138	c.300	Acts 18-19	Western	Ann Arbor, Michigan Univ. of Michigan no. 1571
p ¹⁹ P. Oxy. 1780	3 rd cent.	John 8	Alexandrian	Rochester, New York The Divinity School no. 1780
p ⁴⁰ P. Bad. 57	3 rd cent.	Rom 1-2, 3,6,9	Alexandrian	Heidelberg, Germany Universitätsbibliothek Inv. Pap. graec.45
p ⁴¹	8 th cent.	Acts 17- 22	Western	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Pap. K.7541-48
p ⁴²	7 th -8 th cent.	Luke 1-2	agrees with: A	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Pap. K. 8706
p ⁴³	6 th -7 th Cent.	Rev 2, 15-16	mainly Alexandrian	London, England British Museum Pap. 2241
p ⁴⁵	3 rd cent.	Matt 20- 21,25 Mark 4-8, 11-12 Luke 6, 9- 14 John 10 Acts 4-17	Mixed	Dublin, Ireland Chester Beatty Museum; and Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. 31974
p ⁴⁶	c. 200	Rom 5-6 8-11, 15- 16	Alexandrian	Dublin, Ireland Chester Beatty Museum; and Ann Arbor, Michigan University of Michigan Invent. No. 6238
p ⁴⁷ P. Chester Beatty III	3 rd cent.	Rev 9-17	Agrees with: A, C, & S	Dublin, Ireland Chester Beatty Museum
p ⁴⁸	3 rd cent.	Acts 23	Western	Florence, Italy Museo Medicea Laurenziana PSI 1165
p ⁴⁹	3 rd cent.	Eph. 4-5	Alexandrian	New Haven, Connecticut Yale University Library P.415
p ⁵⁰	4 th -5 th cent.	Acts 8, 10	agrees mainly with: B	New Haven, Connecticut Yale University Library P. 1543

p ⁵¹ P.Oxy. 2157	c. 400	Gal 1	partly Alexandrian	Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum P. Oxy. 2157
p ⁵² P.Ryl. 457	2 nd cent.	John 18	Alexandrian	Manchester, England John Rylands Library P. Ryl. 457
p ⁵³	3 rd cent.	Matt 26 Acts 9-10	mixed	Ann Arbor, Michigan, Univ. of Michigan Library Inv. No. 6652
p ⁵⁴ P.Princ. 15	5 th -6 th cent.	James 2- 3	agrees with: A, B, and C	Princeton, New Jersey University Library Garrett Depository 7742
p ⁵⁵	6 th -7 th cent.	John 1	Alexandrian	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Pap. G. 26214
p ⁵⁷	4 th -5 th cent.	Acts 4-5	Alexandrian	Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Pap. G. 26020
p ⁵⁸	Now classified as a fragment of p ³³			
p ⁵⁹ P.Colt 3	7 th cent.	John 1-2, 11-12, 17-18, 21	(?)	New York, New York New York University Washington Square College of Arts & Sciences
p ⁶⁰ P.Colt 4	7 th cent.	John 16- 19	Alexandrian	New York, New York Pierpont Morgan Library

p ⁶¹ P.Colt 5	c.700	Rom 16 I Cor 1,5 Phil 3 Col 1,4 I Thess 1 Titus 3 Philemon	Probably Egyptian	New York, New York Pierpont Morgan Library
p ⁶²	4 th cent.	Matt 11	Alexandrian	Oslo, Norway University Library Inv. No 1661
p ⁶³	c.500	John 3-4	(?)	Berlin, Germany Staatliche Museen Inv. No. 11914
p ⁶⁴	c.200	Matt 3,5, 26	(?)	Oxford, England Magdalen College Gr. 18
p ⁶⁵	3 rd cent.	I Thess 1- 2	Alexandrian	Florence, Italy Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana PSI 1373
p ⁶⁶ P.Bod, II	c.200	John 1- 21	Mixed	Cologne, Switzerland Bibliothèque Bodmer
p ⁶⁷	Now classed as fragment of p ⁶⁴			Barcelona, Spain Fundación San Lukas Evangelista P.Barc 1
p ⁶⁸	7 th cent. (?)	I Cor 4	Agrees with Textus Receptus	Linengrad Russia State Public Library Gr.258
p ⁶⁹ P. Oxy. 2383	3 rd cent.	Luke 22	Mixed	Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum

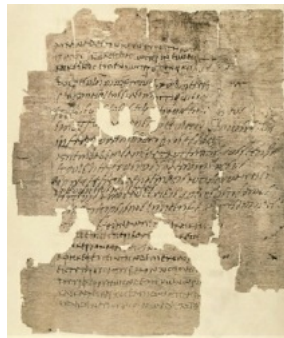
p ⁷⁰ P. Oxy. 2384	3 rd cent.	Matt 2-3, 11-12, 24	(?)	Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum
p ⁷¹ P. Oxy. 2385	4 th cent.	Matt 19	Agrees with B	Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum
p ⁷² P.Bod. VII, VIII	3 rd – 4 th cent.	I Pet 1-5 II Pet 1-3 Jude	Mixed	Cologne, Switzerland Bibliothèque Bodmer
p ⁷³ P.Bod.	?	Matt 25- 26	?	Cologne, Switzerland Bibliothèque Bodmer
p ⁷⁴ P.Bod. XVII	7 th cent.	Acts 1-2, 4-27	Agrees frequently with A	Cologne, Switzerland Bibliothèque Bodmer
p ⁷⁵ P.Bod. XIV, XV	3 rd cent.	Luke 3- 7,9, 17- 18, 22-24 John 1- 15	Agrees with B	Cologne, Switzerland Bibliothèque Bodmer
p ⁷⁶	6 th cent.	John 4		Vienna, Austria Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Pap G. 36102
p ⁷⁷ P.Oxy. 2683	2 nd -3 rd cent.	Matt 23		Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum
p ⁷⁸ P. Oxy. 2684	3 rd -4 th cent.	Jude		Oxford, England Ashmolean Museum
p ⁷⁹	7 th cent.	Heb 10- 12		Berlin, Germany Staatliche Museum Inv. No. 6774

p ⁸¹	4 th cent.	I Pet 2-3		Trieste, Italy S. Daris Inv. No. 20
p ⁸²	4 th -5 th cent.	Luke 7		Strasbourg, France Bibliothèque de la Université Gr. 2667
p ⁸³	6 th cent.	Matt 20, 23-24		Louvain, Belgium Bibliothèque de l'Université P.A.M.Kh. Mird. 16.29
p ⁸⁴	6 th cent.	Mark 2,6 John 5		Louvain, Belgium Bibliothèque de l'Université P.A.M.Kh. Mird. 4.11
p ⁸⁵	4 th -5 th cent.	Rev. 9-10		Strasbourg, France Bibliothèque de la Université Gr.1028
p ⁸⁶	4 th cent.	Matt 5		Cologne, Germany Institut für Altertumskunde Theol. 5516
p ⁸⁷	3 rd cent.	Philemon		Cologne, Germany Institut für Altertumskunde Inv. No.12
p ⁸⁸	4 th cent.	Mark 2		Milan, Italy Università Cattolica Inv.no. 69.24
p ⁸⁹	4 th cent.	Philemon		Florence, Italy Biblioteca Meicea Laurenziana

p ⁹⁰				
p ⁹¹				
p ⁹²	3 rd -4 th cent.	Eph 1 II Thes 1		Cairo, Egypt Egyptian Museum PNarmuthis, 69.39a/219a
p ⁹³				
p ⁹⁴				
p ⁹⁵				
p ⁹⁶				
p.Oxy. 4401	3 rd . cent.	Matt 3-4		
P. Oxy. 4402	3 rd -4 th cent.	Matt 4		
P.Oxy.4403	2 nd -3 rd cent.	Matt 13- 14		
P.Oxy. 4404	Late 2 nd cent.	Matt 21		
P.Oxy. 4405	2 nd -3 rd cent.	Matt 23		
P.Oxy. 4406	5 th -6 th cent.	Matt 27- 28		

Collections of Papyri

Collections of Papyri		
COLLECTION NAME	ABBREV.	DESCRIPTION
Amherst Papyri	P.Amb.	This is a collection of an Englishman: the Right Hon. Lord Amherst of Hackney. It includes "The Ascension of Isaiah" and other biblical and early church fragments, as well as other classical documents from the Ptolemaic, Roman, and Byzantine eras. The collection was edited by Grenfell and Hunt in 1900-1901



(An Example of Amherst Papyrus: Babrius)

Bad. Papyri	P.Bad.	
Bodmer Papyri	P.Bod.	M. Martin Bodmer of Switzerland purchased this collection of approximately fifty manuscripts in 1955-56. The Collection is located in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Cologny (near Geneva). The exception is Pap. VIII (including 1 & 2 Peter), which was given as a gift to Pope Paul VI in 1960; It is in the Vatican Library. These Greek and Coptic documents were discovered in Egypt, probably at Pabau, near a Pachomian monastery. They are from both codices and scrolls; most are papyri, but three are on parchment (Papa. XVI, XIX, and XXII). In terms of content, they include classical texts (e.g. <i>Iliad</i> , <i>Odyssey</i> , and <i>Thucydides</i>), biblical documents (both OT and NT), and writings of the early churches. (See also: Pietersma 1992:766-67)



(An Example of Bodmer Papyrus: Papyrus 66)

Chester Beatty Papyri	P. Chester Beatty	This collection of eleven codices was acquired by Alfred Chester Beatty, an American in 1930-3 and 1935. It is housed near Dublin, Ireland, in the Chester Beatty Library and Gallery of Oriental Art. The collection was edited by Frederic G. Kenyon. The manuscripts date from the 2 nd to the 4 th centuries. Parts of these codices were later acquired by several other U.S. and European libraries and universities. (See also Pietersma, 1992:901-3)
Colt Papyri	P.Colt	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
Michigan Papyri	P. Mich.	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Oxyrhynchus Papyri	P.Oxy.	These papyri fragments were discovered in and around Oxyrhynchus (Modern Behnesa), Egypt, located about 125 miles south of Cairo. They were discovered by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, beginning in 1897. The publication of these is still in progress. Papyri from this site are not in one location, but are owned by a variety of libraries, universities, and museums. The website of Oxyrhynchus Papyri Project (POXY, Oxyrhynchus Papyri Online!) is located at: www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/
Princeton Papyri	P.Princ.	Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
Rylands Papyri	P. Ryl.	John Rylands Library, Manchester, England



(An Example of Oxyrhynchus Papyrus)

Greek Codices of the Bible

Greek Codices of the Bible		
		
NAME, ABBREVIATION & CODEX No.	APPROX. DATE	CITY, LIBRARY, INVENTORY No.
Sinaiticus  01	4 th cent.	London British Museum Add. 43725
Alexandrianus A 02	5 th cent.	London British Museum Royal I D. VIII
Vaticanus B 03	4 th cent.	Rome Vatican Library Gr.1209
Ephraemi C 04	5 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale Gr.9
Bezae (Cantabrigiensis) D 05	5 th cent.	Cambridge, England University Library No. II 41
Claromontanus D ^o 06	6 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale Gr. 107

Basiliensis E 07	8 th cent.	Basel, Switzerland Universität Bibliothek An III 12
Laudianus E ^a 08	6 th -7 th cent.	Oxford, England Bodleian Library Gr. 35
Sangermanensis E ^p	9 th -10 th cent.	Leningrad, Russia
Boreelianus F 09	9 th cent.	Utrecht, Netherlands University Library Ms.1
Augiensis F ^p 010	9 th cent.	Cambridge, England Trinity College
Wolfü A G 011	10 th cent.	London, England British Museum Harley 5684
Boernerianus G ^p 012	9 th cent.	Dresden, Germany
Wolfü B H 013	9 th -10 th cent.	Hamburg, Germany Codex 91
Mutinensis H ^a 014	9 th cent.	Modena Grand Ducal Library G. 196
Coislinianus H ^p 015	6 th cent.	Mt. Athos, Greece Monastery of the Laura (leaves in various libraries)

Washington I 016	5 th cent.	Washington, DC Smithsonian Institution Freer Museum 06. 275
Cyprius K 017	9 th -10 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale Gr. 63
Mosquensis K ^{pp} 018	9 th -10 th cent.	Moscow, Russia History Museum V.93, S. 97
Regius L 019	8 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale Gr. 62
Angelicus L ^{pp} 020	9 th cent.	Rome, Italy Angelican Library 39
Campianus M 021	9 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale Gr.48
Purpureus Petropolitanus N 022	6 th cent.	Leningrad, Russia Imperial Library (and numerous other museums)
Sinopensis O 023	6 th cent.	Paris, France Bibliothèque Nationale
P 024	6 th cent.	Wolfenbüttel, Germany Herzog-August- Bibliothek Weissenburg 64
Porphyrianus P ^{pp} 025	9 th cent.	Leningrad, Russia Public Library Gr. 225

Q 026	5 th cent.	Wolfenbüttel, Germany Herzog-August- Bibliothek Weissenburg 64
Nitriensis R 027	6 th cent.	London, England British Museum Add. 17211
S 028	AD 949	Rome, Italy Vatican Library Gr.354
Borgianus T 029	5 th cent.	Rome, Italy Collegium de Proppaganda Fide Borg. Copt. 109
U 030	9 th cent.	Venice, Italy Library of San Marco 1397
Mosquensis V 031	9 th cent.	Moscow, Russia History Museum V.9. S. 399
Freer W 032	4 th -5 th cent.	Washington, DC Smithsonian Institution Freer Museum 06.274
Monacensis X 033	10 th cent.	Munich, Germany University Library Fol. 30
Y 034	9 th cent.	Cambridge, England Univeristy Library Add. 6594
Dublinensis Z 035	6 th cent.	Dublin, Ireland Trinity College K.3.4

Γ 036	10 th cent.	Oxford, England Bodleian Library Auct. T. infr. 2.2
Sangallensis Δ 037	9 th cent.	St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 48
Koridethi Θ	9 th cent.	Tbilisi, Georgia Inst. Rukop. Gr.28
Tischendorfianus III Λ 039	9 th cent.	Oxford, England Bodleian Library Auct. T. infr. 1.1
Zacynthius Ξ 040	6 th cent.	London, England British and Foreign Bible Society 24
II 041	9 th cent.	State Public Library Gr.34
Rossaneasus Σ 042	6 th cent.	Rossano, Italy Curia arcivescovile
Athous Laurae Ψ 044	7 th -8 th cent.	Mr. Athos, Greece Laura Monastery 55
Athous Dionysiou Ω 045	9 th cent.	Mt. Athos, Greece Dionysius Monastery 55
Vaticanus 2066 046	10 th cent.	Rome, Italy Vatican Library Gr. 2066

047	8 th cent.	Princeton, New Jersey Princeton Univ. Library Medieval and Ren. Mss. Garret 1
048	5 th cent.	Rome, Italy Vatican Library Gr. 2061
049	9 th cent.	Mt. Athos, Greece Laura Monastery λ'88
050	9 th cent.	Athens, Greece National Library 1371 (and pieces in other libraries)
051	10 th cent.	Mt. Athos, Greece Pantokratoros monastery λ'88
052	10 th cent.	Mt. Athos, Greece Pantokratoros monastery λ'88
053	9 th cent.	Munich, Germany Rayerische Staatsbibliothek Gr. 208
054	8 th cent.	Rome, Italy Vatican Library Barb. Gr. 521
057	4 th -5 th cent.	Berlin, Germany Staatliche Museen P.9808

058	4 th -5 th cent.	Vienna, Austria Österreiches National Bibliothek Pap. G.39782
059	4 th -5 th cent.	Vienna, Austria Österreiches National Bibliothek Pap. G.39779 +36112
060	6 th cent.	Berlin, Germany Staatliche Museen P. 5877
These Numbers go to 0276		

Discussion Questions

1. What is the codex form?
2. What materials were used to form such "books?"
3. The term, **biblion** or **book** has its source from what?
4. To what does the term, **book**, refer in Matthew 1:1?
5. What, probably, did Paul request Timothy to bring the apostle (2 Tim. 4:13)?
6. How would one go about proving that first century Christians could read?
7. Discuss the external evidence which quotes from the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.
8. Is there any evidence that false writers did pen some books and the early church members knew it?
9. Discuss the works of Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius as those works pertain to canon.
10. What are the three "periods" of canon and what does each indicate?

CHAPTER ELEVEN – N.T. BOOKS: ACKNOWLEDGED: I PETER 3:15; 2 TIM.2:15; 4:13

As with Old Testament canonicity, New Testament canon is involved with homologoumena (**one-word**; those writings upon which all have agreed as inspired by God are called "one-words" books) and antilogoumena (**against-word**; that is the books that some early Christians disputed as canonical but which books have proven to be inspired.) The fourth-century historian (diarist) Eusebius, in fact, actually labelled New Testament books as "acknowledged" and "disputed."

Mosheim wrote:

It must suffice us to know, that before the middle of the second century had passed most of the books composing the New Testament were in every Christian church throughout the known world; and they were read and were regarded as the divine rule of faith and practice. And hence it may be concluded, that it was while some of the apostles were still living, and certainly while their disciples and immediate successors were everywhere to be met with, that these books were separated and distinguished from all human compositions (**Institutes of Ecclesiastical History Ancient and Modern**, Vol. 1, pp. 72-73).

The student will remember that there existed ample evidence from the church fathers (see chapter ten) as to the existence and recognition of all twenty-seven books of the New Testament even prior to the middle of the second century. Nevertheless some books or epistles were universally accepted while others tended to be controversial.

Books Accepted

The homologoumena of the New Testament, or those books universally accepted as canonical, appear in nearly every ancient Bible version or **catalogue**. Church "fathers" also quoted extensively from such writings. But the foregoing facts do not, constitute solid reasons for excluding New Testament books not so listed or quoted. Some ancient catalogues are mere fragments and perhaps the church father who was quoting only from some books was doing so for a singular purpose. Nevertheless, there have been disputes.

It can be deduced from studying the second-century material that twenty New Testament books were never challenged. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 Peter, and 1 John are the homologoumena. (Some suggest that it would be better to call the other seven "omitted" books rather than "disputed," for even Philemon, 1 Peter, and 1 John are "omitted" from some of the fragmentary evidence available.)

One manifestly glaring error of the second century, gnosticism, caused faithful brethren to treasure all of the truly apostolic, inspired books. One reason for the **omitted** books could be that gnostics (especially one Marcion) tended to champion one book over the other and to leave the other out of their versions and catalogues. Moule insisted that "it is a docetic (gnostic, K.M.) tendency to conflate into one, or to choose one against the rest; it is a genuinely historical insight to recognize a plurality in human witness" (**The Birth of the New Testament**, p. 196). In other words, it is better to accept **all** the evidence, not just known heretical lists from second-century gnostics. Those who produced what is called the **Muratorian** canon or catalogue (c.a. A.D. 150), which fragment was named after its discoverer wrote:

Though various ideas are taught in the several books of the Gospels, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one Sovereign Spirit all things are declared in all of them.

Second century brethren, unlike the gnostics, did not exclude inspired books.

Book Disputed

It is interesting to note that those New Testament writings omitted from some ancient versions and canon

lists were the later books. Too, the seven antilogoumena were rarely thought of as non-canonical but sort of "semicanonical" or as Geisler and Nix put it, the texts had their "canonical 'ups' and 'downs'" (**A General Introduction to the Bible**, p. 298).

The text known as **Hebrews** has been controversial for the singular reason that Christians do not know who wrote it. Since apostolicity is one test for canonicity; and since apostolicity requires genuineness (authenticity concerning its author); some early Christians questioned the canonicity of **Hebrews**. The eastern church considered that Paul wrote the text and readily accepted it. The western (North African-Roman) church disputed the text because their leaders insisted on apostolic **authorship** rather than apostolic **authority** and were thus ignoring the fact of Mark's and Luke's productions.

Another reason the book of Hebrews became controversial was the usage made of it by the premillennial Montanists. Their influence led some to think that Hebrews must be error-filled. Proper research as to genuineness and precise exegesis helps Bible students know that Hebrews is not only canonical but is the **only** New Testament source for the knowledge of **how** Jesus fulfilled the types pictured by the ancient tabernacle of Judaism (Heb. 8-9).

The book of **James** was omitted by some second century Bible students, especially the gnostics. Marcion, especially, found the text not to be to his liking. The reason seems simple. Gnostics believed flesh to be evil and, thus, human works could have no part in salvation. James was omitted, by some, not because it was noncanonical but because James insisted that, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

Even in the middle ages some, such as Martin Luther, disputed **James** and insisted that the latter contradicted Paul's teaching, especially in **Romans**. Paul wrote:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

However, the harmony of Paul's and James' teaching is seen in their usages of the term, faith. Paul, when he is writing of law and faith together (or grace and works together) is **always** discussing the gospel system of faith as opposed to the law of Moses; James, however, is **always** discussing **personal** faith and works.

For example, note Galatians 3:23-24 for a Bible illustration of Paul's usage of the terms **faith** and **law**. Paul writes,

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed (Gal. 3:23).

Paul insisted that those before **faith** came were under the law. Moses lived under the law. Did not Moses have **personal faith** in God? Yes! Therefore, Paul uses the term, faith, to mean the **faith** or **gospel system**.

James, on the other hand, uses the term, faith, to refer to one's own belief and that kind of faith demands that it be shown by personal works (James 2:20-21). Paul would insist that **the faith** taught **obedience** (Rom. 1:5) and James would insist that personal faith demands **works**. There is perfect harmony in their teachings.

2 Peter has been controversial, as **Hebrews**, because of arguments over its genuineness. Who wrote the text? In fact, **2 Peter** is the book questioned the most as to its right to be in the canon. Some mis-taught Bible students think the book was written to "cure" the early Christians' misunderstandings about the second coming of Jesus and the supposed "delay" of His arrival. Since New Testament writers **never** taught an immediate coming, such assertions against **2 Peter** are groundless.

Arguments against Peter's authorship are based on supposed dissimilarity of style in writing with 1 Peter. Jerome (fourth century) claimed that Peter used a different secretary (amanuensis), but it seems that Peter just had a different subject! And, the careful Bible student finds more similarity in style than dissimilarity! (Note: The Bodmer manuscript, p. 72, which contains the earliest known copy of **2 Peter** is a third century Egyptian version showing that the text was in use and respected by those ancient Coptic Christians.)

Again, **2** and **3 John** have been questioned as to authorship or genuineness. The author refers to himself simply as the elder (2 John 1; 3 John 1). Since the letters were private they took some time to circulate widely enough to gain early, universal acceptance among the churches. However, they are listed in the very early Muratorian fragment (from about A.D. 150). And, their style is unquestionably John's as shown from 1 John and the Gospel according to John. Also, Peter called himself an elder which title is no argument against one's being

inspired (1 Peter 5:1-5).

Jude was omitted or disputed by some early disciples over the question of **authenticity** or **contents**. Jude may have (under inspiration anyway) quoted from the Old Testament pseudepigraphal book, **Enoch** and wrote:

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14-15).

Some also think that Jude 9 comes from the spurious **assumption of Moses**. However, the inspired Jude does **not** commend the whole of **Enoch** but only the truthful part Jude used. Paul quoted pagan poets, but not all they said (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; Titus 1:12). Further, Jude's influence is seen in a very early church council production known as the Didache and is contained in Iranaeus' work from A.D. 170.

Revelation, the seventh "disputed" text has had some opponents question its authenticity. Millennialists who misread and mistaught the text caused the controversy. The most amazing historical **fact** is, however, that **Revelation** was one of the first books recognized in the existing writings of early church fathers. In fact the late first-century **Shepherd of Hermas** mentions the Revelation which was only written a decade earlier!

The fact that **Revelation** was very early accepted as canonical can be traced to its having been written to seven congregations in Asia of Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3). Certainly those churches of Christ would have desired to preserve the text. However, when the second century Chialistic (pre-millennial) Montanists began to teach their error, others began to react and insist that the Revelation (Apocalypse) should be omitted from the canon. Early Christians over reacted, especially Dionysius of Alexandria and Revelation was under dispute until A.D. 397 and the Council of Cathage when the New Testament canon was "officially" sealed. That a book could be omitted by some because of interpretation is a warning to modern Christians not to listen to man's fantasies and rantings about some premillennial one-thousand year earthly reign supposedly taught in **Revelation**.

When the questions about genuineness and contents were settled all came to realize just which books were canonical. However, the influences on biblical interpretation of the books have interesting sources.

Two Schools Of Thought

In Alexandria, Egypt a school of theology and homiletics was begun by one Clement whose famous student, Origen, later directed the school. Their approach to Bible study still influences modern thinking.

Greek-Jewish learning had infiltrated the thinking of those in the Alexandrian area and had led to a peculiar science of interpretation of the Bible. According to "Origen" (et al) access to the "highest secrets" about God is possible only by passing through various "anterooms" designated by the differing Greek philosophies on the one hand and on the other by special divine revelation. Thus, according to Origen, the Old Testament was on a par with Greek philosophy and the New Testament was actually revelation from God (ISBE, p. 124). Origen, in fact, praised, Christian gnosticism which doctrine does not teach a historical Christ nor "God in the flesh" (John 1:14).

Origen would insist on **three** levels in Bible study. Each level corresponded to the make-up of man-body, soul, and spirit (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23). The body-level of Bible study, per Origen, would be for the untaught or common man as pictured in the Old Testament. The soul-level would require education (no doubt under Origen) and the spirit-level would be left to those gnostics who could see unto the "mysteries" that supposedly lay behind the actual words of the Bible.

At Antioch in Syria, however, a different school of thought arose that treated the Bible as God's Word both practically and apologetically. John Chrysostom (A.D. 345-407) is one example of this genre whose life reads of much persecution by the apostate bishops, gnostics, and other heretics of the day (Schaff-Herzog, 73-75). Those who were disciples of the school at Antioch, as John Chrysostom, distinguished themselves as sober exegetes of the Holy Scriptures and occupied themselves with determining the literal meaning of the text. (However, the Nicene council-AD. 375-was the creedal authority even for Chrysostom.) Some have speculated that had the teaching of the school at Antioch led the way instead of the gnostic heresy at Alexandria, Roman Catholicism would not have developed.

The study of canonicity must include these references to gnostic influence for many heretical texts were penned and many gnostics tried to change Bible manuscripts in their day. (This is one reason some very early manuscripts from Egypt or Coptic Christianity may not be the best ones available.) These two "schools of thought" are also responsible for some of the disputes about actual Bible books as mentioned above.

Conclusion

Some have always attacked God's Word. From the second century of the modern era until now men have argued the canon of the New Testament. The fact remains that twenty-seven books (and only twenty-seven) survive as undisputedly the Word of God and this latter fact was predicted by the Christ. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Study Questions

1. What do the terms, homologoumena and antilogoumena mean?
2. What evidence is available to prove recognition of the twenty-seven New Testament books as canonical?
3. Which of the twenty-seven books have never been challenged as belonging in the canon?
4. What second-century error caused questions to be raised about which books belong?
5. What is the error mentioned in question four?
6. What books were disputed?
7. Why were the above books disputed?
8. Who determines canon? (See chapter one.)
9. What two schools of thought clashed in the early years and is there a similar clash today in the church (conservative - liberal)?
10. Discuss the fact that there are multitudes (as Origen and his school) who want more than God's Word in religion.

CHAPTER TWELVE – NEW TESTAMENT II APOCRYPHA: 1 TIM. 4:1-3; JOHN 21:25; 2 THESS. 2:2

The astute Bible student will remember from earlier chapters in this study of canonicity that false writings appeared after the completion of the Old Testament. Those **intertestament** productions were called Apocrypha (spelled with a capital "A") and pseudepigrapha. The Apocrypha were often included in the Old Testament, but most knew the productions were spurious. One might expect them, and be right, that manuscripts claiming to be inspired were being produced in New Testament times. Some such books were even being penned **prior** to the New Testament's completion. (See Luke 1:1-4).

The fourth century church historian, Eusebius, said of the false New Testament writings that they were "totally absurd and impious" (Geisler and Nix, p. 301). The church of Christ has always considered that such material was only of historical value and no early church leader nor early church council ever considered such writings as canonical. The sources for such heretical writings vary, but three emerge as the leading candidates for blameworthy, docetism, and asceticism. (A ninth-century historian listed 280 such spurious productions but more are being discovered.)

Why should Bible students be aware of such material? In the first place such knowledge arms one against the claims for canonicity for the heretical writings. (See the chapter on Old Testament Apocrypha in this study book.)

In the second place, one studying the spurious writings becomes acutely aware of the ridiculous, profane nature of these ancient heretical productions when one compares them to the inspired biblical text. For example, in the Mandaeen Gnostic text known as **Creation of the World and the Alien Man** (Mandaeen Gnostics as a sect survive even today in Iran and southern Iraq) the writers (writers?) insist that men and women in this world are estranged from the True **World**, exiled from **Life**, and subject to the evil (!) biblical God! (**The Other Bible**, p. 124). Life to such Gnostics is mere drunken stupor from which they hope to awake. Jesus said He was life and could give abundant life (John 14:6; 10:10).

In the third place, since claims are still being made today that these ancient heresies belong in the Bible, the Bible student needs proper information to combat the claims. (An example of the modern defense of such heresies is **The Other Bible**, edited by Willis Barnstone, 1984). The leading modern champion for the heretical texts was the Englishman, William Blake whose writings have often been labeled as "rebellious scriptures." Blake's works are a combination of canonical scripture and pseudepigrapha. Blake's amalgamations are not new nor unusual for the false writings from the New Testament era are a merger of Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, and Pagan theologies. For this chapter's study, since there are so many heretical productions, only some Gnostic texts and some major heretical texts can be considered.

[Since the student of this study book on canonicity may not be familiar with Gnostic theology, a brief explanation is inserted to give a foundation to this chapter's study. Early Gnostic heresies arose from a combination of pagan (especially Phrygian occult) thought, Jewish ritual, Greek philosophy, and some Christian teaching. (See Colossians 2:8-13.) The leading tenet of Gnostic thought was/is that flesh is inherently evil and since the Jehovah of the Bible created flesh, He, too, is "evil!" Ergo, if Jehovah is evil so is the Christ and neither could be the true Power. Docetic Gnostics even insisted that Jesus (flesh) and Christ (spirit) were two separate beings. To the Gnostic the only way to know truth was by meditation, such "truth" thus being subjective. (Compare John 8:31-32. John's gospel account is an antignostic text designed to prove the deity of Christ-John 1:14)]

Gnostic Finds

Since Gnostic writings were anathema to the church and were destroyed or left uncopied, the heretical texts, for the most part, disappeared. Information about such writings derived mostly from the early church leaders (especially Iranaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine). But, in 1945 extensive Gnostic literature was uncovered from earthenware jars found at the Nag Hammadi archaeological dig in Egypt. Fifty-two of the texts were Coptic (Egyptian) which had been translated from the Greek. Almost every text is from the third century B.C. to the fifth-century A.D.; that is there were Old Testament and New Testament apocryphal writings found.

A brief excerpt from one spurious writing, **The Book of the Secrets of Enoch** will aid the Bible student in evaluating the worldly nature of such material by comparing the apocrypha to a truly inspired biblical account. The

"author, Enoch" claims concerning the creation that:

I know all things and have written them into books concerning the heavens and their end, their plenitude, their armies, and their marching. I have measured and described the stars, their great and countless multitude. What man has seen their revolutions and entrances? Not even the angels see their number, yet I have recorded all their names.

The above author claims that he "knows all things" without benefit of inspiration nor vision, then makes the common mistake of his day that somehow the stars "enter" the sky. Inspired of God writers never make such unscientific claims!

Modern Gnostic Claims

Modern fans of the Gnostic texts (and other heretical writings of the early centuries of the Christian era) try to make the claim that Gnostic "tendencies" are found in the Bible. The most often repeated claim is that John used a Gnostic term, **logos**, when he wrote that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Barnstone, for example, writes:

The Word or logos in the Fourth Gospel comes from Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.-A.D. 40) who linked the stoic logos with the Platonic world of ideas, making logos the means of knowing the transcendent God. So in one famous Christian passage we see currents of Greek Platonism through the intermediary of a Hellenized Alexandrian Jew who, among other contributions, invented allegorical exegesis of the Bible, which Christian apologists soon adopted (**The Other Bible**, p. XX6).

In the first place, the Greeks used **logos** to refer to a "world of ideas" or things in the universe that caused the "flux" or movements of life. (For example, Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, once stood straddling a small stream and began to cry. Why? He realized that because of **movement** or **logos**, he could not see the same stream twice.) **But**, John, inspired of God, did not use logos to refer to an idea of movement but to a Person, Jesus the Christ (John 1:18). Such usage of **logos** was totally contrary to common Greek philosophy and such usage had absolutely no "current" of Gnostic tendency. Hebrew writer further claims that a person not an idea "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3).

In the second place, the holy scriptures are not recensions from Gnostic sources. Gnosticism is a runaway child of the Christian community and not the other way around (Col. 2:2-3). Christ is the only source of true wisdom (1 Cor. 1:31). Christian apologists may have adopted some allegorical method of Bible study (as claimed in the quote above) but the Bible writers knew no such method of mystifying the Scriptures. Paul wrote:

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Note that Paul claimed that the only **mystery** concerning God's plan to save man was revealed and that said revelation could be fully understood simply by reading what Paul wrote. No one needed to allegorize, fictionalize, nor compromise the given text in order to perpetrate some Gnostic heresy. If some Christian apologists adopted some allegorical method, certainly Paul predicted such would happen:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;

Gnostics taught that flesh was evil. Those who would adopt any heresies of refusing marriage and eating flesh, according to Paul, had departed from the faith and were heeding demons.

A Revealing Admission

Barnstones' introduction to his edited **The Other Bible** champions Gnostic and pseudepigraphic materials. But, Barnstone reveals too much and lets Bible students know without doubt just how heretical New Testament era apocrypha are. In the first place, many of the apocrypha from the Christian era are actually Jewish with a "Christian" veneer or overlay. The term, Son of man, which Jesus used of Himself, for example, is often found in such texts. One such Jewish production also shows the Gnostic tendencies or Gnostic dimensions of these Jewish works.

In 1909 a Syriac version of **The Odes of Solomon** was discovered and proved to be a Jewish hymnbook, edited by early Syriac Christians and given Gnostic interpolations. Ode 19 will shock the true Christian and give the faithful further insight into how profane such writings are. Gnostics viewed God as androgynous and Ode 19 blatantly states that: "The Holy Ghost opened the Father's raiment and mingled the milk from the Father's two breasts." Such absurd teaching and theology is part and parcel of the false literature and should comfort true Christians when the proved, beautiful, virtuous Bible text is read and compared to the spurious material. With the psalmist faithful Christians can claim that God's law is "better to me than thousands of gold and silver" and that Christian's tongues can "speak of thy work, for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:72, 172).

Second, Barnstone admits that his edited production, **The Other Bible** "reveals the great diversity of ancient thought. Each view it seems is contradicted by a second and third. The reader has several perspectives to consider in interpretations and judgments" (p. xxii).

The latter admission is amazingly revealing. Barnstone admits that the false texts contradict one another and that any readers will be left hunting for some elusive, subjective truth never attainable. (Compare 2 Tim. 3:7.) Jesus said that a student of His Word could **know** the truth (John 8:31-32). Obviously, then, by admitting contradiction in the heretical literature, Barnstone must conclude that such writings do not contain truth and, therefore, are not Jesus' words. The logical "law of contradiction" states precisely that a thing can not both be and not be. Heretical writings can not both be truth and not be truth. Truth, by definition, can not contradict truth.

The literature of Gnostic, pagan, and Jewish thought contains many obvious contradictions when compared to the Bible text. For example, Jesus said that sinners would depart from Him at judgment (Matt. 25:46). Gnostics claimed that Jesus descended into hell to torture sinners. The Bible says that Jesus died on the cross (Luke 23:46). A Gnostic writing called **The Second Treatise of the Great Setie and the Apocalypse of Peter** (even the title is ridiculous, K.M.) pictures Jesus as standing above the cross and laughing at the ignorant men who thought they could kill God. Why would the Christ offer forgiveness to His executioners and laugh at them at the same time (Luke 23:34)? (Remember the Gnostics thought God and Jesus were distinct and, therefore, Jesus only simulated death.)

The apocryphal **Felicity and Perpetua** condemns martyrdom as cowardice, but Jesus said,

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

The Gnostic, **On the Origin of the World**, insists that Adam and Eve were innocent of wrong-doing and that the great error occurred when the creator god (Jehovah) as opposed to the alien god or demi-urge (a supposed supreme being) fell into sin himself by creating flesh and thus "trapping" divine sparks in the material prison of the human body. The Bible clearly pictures Adam and Eve as fallen and God as their Savior (Gen. 3). However, it is not unusual to hear from Christians today of a "war" between their flesh and their spirit. Such do not realize they are espousing gnosticism and not Bible. Flesh is not inherently evil, but man's use of it can be (Rom. 6:12).

Discussion Questions

1. What does the distinguishing capital "A" on the word **apocrypha** indicate?
2. From Luke 1:1-4 can you tell what Luke claimed was necessary to writing the inspired Bible? What had others been doing in Luke's day?
3. Why should Bible students be aware of such false writings?
4. What is the basic tenet of gnosticism?
5. Study Colossians 2:8-23. Can you find the Jewish, Greek, and pagan (Phrygian) influences listed?
6. Study the statement from the **Secrets of Enoch**. What tell-tale discrepancies can you find when compared to Bible information?
7. How did John use the term **word** or **logos** (Greek) in his gospel account? How does John's usage differ from Gnostic use?
8. Prove that Christianity superseded gnosticism.
9. What are some major contradictions found in Gnostic literature when compared to the Bible?
10. Is flesh inherently evil? Have you heard preachers speak of the "war" between spirit and flesh (especially when teaching from Romans 7 and 8)? Can one control his fleshly appetites or is God to be blamed for "making us this way?"

Chapter Thirteen – BIBLE DISCREPANCIES: 2 TIM. 3:16-17; JOHN 10:35; MATTHEW 24:35

When one wishes to question Bible authority, inspiration, and canonicity the usual effort is to refer to the "contradictions" in the Bible. Such "1 proof" seems to satisfy the proclaimer and, evidently, the rationalization removes from the mind of the one making the claim any further need to investigate the Bible. There are some variations in Bible verses, but close inspection will always reveal that there is no contradiction. A contradiction, even in logic, is not a contrary but a situation in which a thing or statement can not both be and not be at the same time.

To prove a contradiction does not mean proving that one said a thing one way and another said the same thing in different words. A contradiction is proven only when **both** statements cannot, at the same time, be true when all the facts have been considered. In logic, for example, the universal affirmation "all men are mortal" and the universal negative "No men are non-mortal" is not contradictory but contrary. Both statements mean the **same** thing. A study of some **supposed** contradictions in the Bible should fortify the faith of all.

Mark 15:25 And John 19:14

Mark notes concerning the crucifixion of the precious Son of God that "it was the third hour, and they crucified him" (Mark 15:25). However, when the Bible readers open to John 19:14 they read: "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" Bible critics simply proclaim that one cannot have been crucified at the third hour (9 A.M.) if one's trial is still proceeding at the sixth hour (12 noon).

The critics commit a fallacy known as "begging the question" by omitting certain known evidence from their reasoning, thus reaching false conclusions. There was a Roman method of keeping time (used by John to indicate 6 A.M.) and there was a Jewish method (used by Mark to indicate "about" 9 A.M.). John is right to record that Jesus' trial was proceeding at 6 A.M. Roman time and Mark is correct to note that the actual crucifixion took place close to nine in the morning. Not only is there no contradiction, but there is complete harmony between John and Mark.

Discrepancy Or Contradiction?

A brief aside is necessary here to inform Bible students on the differing emphasis Bible critics place on the terms **contradiction** and **discrepancy**. Usually, critics use the term, contradiction, to describe alleged conflicts between statements about the same events made by different authors. However, those same critics of the Bible will generally use the term, discrepancy, in a broader sense.

Bible critics have grown fond of using the word, discrepancy, not only to refer to self-contradictions supposedly occurring in the Bible; but also to problems created by a **clash** between their critical, liberal theology and the alleged "atrocities" those critics feel are inconsistent with their own views of the nature of an all-loving God. (How could God allow whole nations, tribes, and families to be annihilated, for example? One should consider the nature of those nations, however, not God's character. Every child in those pagan, sinful nations went to Paradise. Had they reached adulthood, they would have undoubtedly been lost.) Critics also apply the term, discrepancy, to alleged conflicts between the Bible and secular history and the Bible and science. Critical allegations, however, have never been proven. The archaeologist confirms, again and again, the accuracy of the biblical accounts of history and true science and the Bible are ever harmonious.

When faced with some challenge of contradiction or discrepancy, Bible students remember: (1) If there is a possible or plausible explanation of harmony, the critic has not **proven** his case. (2) If the believer does not happen to know the answer, such a fact does not mean there is not an answer. (A student once asked the late and lamented Gus Nichols how to **make** two verses harmonize. Brother Nichols replied, in essence, that the two verses were already in harmony and one just needed to **find** it.) (3) When one claims to have found a contradiction or discrepancy, the burden or proof is not on the Bible defender but is on the one who made the allegation. (One is innocent, and so is the Bible, **until** proven guilty.) (4) The latter attitude is a key factor in showing an alleged problem of contradiction. (Such is true even when folks evaluate the statements of others. If one does not like another to begin with, it seems no matter what is said will be wrong.) If one knows the Bible to be God's Word, that one will find the harmony. Unbelievers will seek a contradiction. Note the following discussion on whether

Judas actually kissed Jesus.

Luke 22:48; Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; John 18:5

A Bible critic, whose attitude of hatred toward Holy Writ is self-evident wrote:

Ask yourself, did Judas kiss Jesus to betray him or not? Mark-Matthew say that Judas kissed Jesus. But Luke says that Judas tried to kiss Jesus and did not make it. From John there was no betrayal kiss at all. And John underlines his point of view by adding that Judas kept standing with the crowd.

The Matthew text reads:

And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said Hail Master, and kissed him (Matt. 26:49).

Mark's record is that,

as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him (Mark 14:45).

John writes of Judas only that he "stood with them" (John 18:5). Luke's inspired statement is:

But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss (Luke 22:48)?

The one who knows the Bible is harmonious will quickly note on careful reading of Luke's record that he **never** says that Judas "tried to kiss Jesus and did not make it." The above critic was so enamored of finding a contradiction that he tried putting words in Luke's mouth! Luke, simply either quotes what Jesus said after the actual kiss or **before** it and the truth is, Luke does not record the kiss as does not John. One needs **all** four accounts for the complete record, but the critic would misrepresent both Luke and John to "prove" the critic's alleged contradiction. Because one writer omits an item does not prove a contradiction with another. Did John record the Sermon on the Mount? No. Matthew did. Would some critic argue for a discrepancy and deny that the Sermon on the Mount was ever delivered? Attitude plays a part in critical claims of discrepancy and contradiction.

Eons Of Attacks

Those who attend graduate schools of Bible will probably take a subject called **Advanced Introduction to the Bible**. Sometimes, even often, there are two such introductory courses; one for the Old Testament and one for the New Testament. Such students will read about a third-century Bible critic named Malchus Porphyry (poor-fer-ee) who attempted to gather in one volume all the alleged contradictions he thought he had found in the Bible. Why report such a fact to modern Bible students? To allay any fears that recent attacks on the Bible are strange, new phenomena. God's Word has been under siege from the beginning.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:1-5).

From the dawn of time, God's Word has been abused, attacked, misquoted, and misunderstood. Satan convinced Eve that God really did not mean what He said; Eve believed Satan, and the great fall of man occurred (Gen. 3:6-12). God said one thing, Satan's attitude was hateful and he convinced Eve that God was hypocritical and contradictory. How many "satans" today have convinced themselves and others that the Bible cannot be God's Word because it is just one big discrepancy or contradiction. Such cannot be found. The Bible has been scrutinized more than any other literature. The Bible stands. The critics are gone.

Why The Allegations:

It is to be noted first of all that many critics fail to note the differences in the chronologies of certain events

mentioned in the various Bible passages. Many, for example, have "found" a contradiction between John 20:17 and Matthew 28:9. John writes of Mary that Jesus told her "Touch me not" while Matthew records that Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary (Matt. 28:1) held Jesus' feet. When Jesus told Mary not to **touch** Him He used the words that mean **do not try to keep Me here** for Jesus had to go back to heaven. **Later**, the two women simply adored Jesus and held His feet. One will remember, also, that Thomas was offered the chance to "touch" Jesus at a later meeting, but had Thomas made some attempt to restrain the Lord from ascending to the Father, Thomas, too, would have been told, "Touch me not" (John 21:24-29).

It should be noted in the second place that many Bible critics see discrepancies when failure is made in noting **who** made the statement. (Problems in theology arise from this failure also. Some teach a false view on the "gift of the Spirit" from Acts 2:38 because they fail to note that an **apostle** made the statement and that an apostle was able to give such a gift; Acts 8:17-18). Did God make the statement; did Satan; or did someone? One must make sure of the differences between what God, Satan, and men say. The book of Job, for example, had seven different speakers-God, Satan, Job, and his four friends. The speeches of Satan, Job, and Job's four friends are recorded by God's inspiration, but Satan, Job and the four are **not** inspired when they make the statements. The Bible accurately records the beliefs and opinions of Satan and Job's friends. But, God says that not one of Job's friends said one thing correctly (Job 42:8). And, Satan always lies and deceives (John 8:44).

It should be noted in the third place that multitudes of Bible critics commit the error of failing to recognize the difference in the viewpoints of the authors. Bible critics without number have argued that John 1:18 and Exodus 33:23 contradict one another. John writes that "No man hath seen God at any time;" but Moses wrote that he saw the "back parts" of God. Well, if one sees the back of another has that one **seen** the other? There are occasions when folks will walk up behind someone, slap the person on the back in joyous greeting, only to be embarrassed to discover upon the person's turning that a stranger was just slapped. Moses never even "saw" God on the mountain for their angels **represented** God (Heb. 2:1-4). And, Isaiah's vision "of the Lord" was of the Second Person of the Godhead not of the Father (Isa. 6:1; John 12:40-41). John is right. No one has seen the Father yet. (Compare 1 Tim. 6:16.)

It should be noted in the fourth place that oftentimes critics fail to notice how Bible material is arranged. For example, the Old Testament is **not** arranged chronologically but topically. Chronological arrangement would place Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, 1 and 2 Chronicles with Haggai and Zechariah. It should be noted in the fifth place that time measurements were different in the Bible times and culture and critics very often (as seen above on Mark's third hour and John's sixth) fail to account for such changes. The Jews, for example, counted parts of days, months, and years as whole days, months, and years and many disputes over Old Testament chronology are easily solved when such knowledge of Hebrew method is recognized. An example from secular history is helpful here. Was George Washington born on February 11 or 22? History books give **both** dates. Well, during Washington's lifetime an adjustment of the calendar was made to bring it in line with the sun. Eleven days were eliminated and Washington went to bed on February 10 and arose on February 22! Both history books are correct when one knows how time was adjusted in the 1700's.

It should be noted in the sixth place that Bible critics often impose English idioms on the Hebrew and Greek languages. Failure to note the peculiar redundancy of Hebrew or the tenses of Greek terms is a source of erroneous criticism of the Bible. Hebrew names and the plurality of them applied to various individuals have caused much confusion for those not prepared to deal with the various Simons and Simon Peter for example.

In the seventh place it should be noted that too many Bible critics fail to realize that context, and only context, gives **meaning** to words. Dictionaries and Lexicons give **usage** not meaning. What does the term **dog** mean? Well, are you a dirty dog or the big dog around here? Context gives meaning.

In the eighth place it should be noted that Bible critics have long failed to note the **differences** in the dispensations of God's dealings with men. There is even the failure to recognize the new covenant from the old (Heb. 9:15).

In the ninth place it should be noted that a Bible speaker may teach the same lesson in different words at different times as often did Jesus. Jesus also spoke in Aramaic but His words were translated into Greek. The sincere Bible student will immediately recognize that men often say the same things in slightly different words when speaking on a variety of occasions.

In the tenth place it should be noted that some **apparent** mistakes were not in the original manuscripts. Copyist errors could creep into the text and may account for some alleged "discrepancy" especially with Old Testament numbers. However, textual **critics** have aided greatly in sorting out even these alleged difficulties.

Conclusion

Since Bible students know that there are no contradictions nor discrepancies in God's Holy Word, they find the harmony and not the contradiction. But, there does exist human misunderstanding about the accuracy of the Bible. However, the sixty-six books that make up the Bible are the **complete, harmonious, inherent** record of God's revelation to man. The canon was settled in the first century of the modern era and needs no additions (2 Peter 1:3). A loving God desired to commune with man. Man needs to get busy and study (2 Tim. 2:15).

Study Questions

1. What is a logical contradiction? When are statements only contrary?
2. What is the harmony between Mark 15:25 and John 19:14? (Bible students need a study help such as a Bible dictionary and/ or Bible encyclopedia to enable them to search the historical backgrounds of time usage and other facts concerning ancient cultures.)
3. What is the technical difference between a contradiction and a discrepancy in critical usage? How is this difference applied in Bible criticism?
4. What four facts need to be remembered when faced with a charge of contradiction in Bible passages?
5. Did Judas betray Jesus with a kiss? See John 21. Did Thomas **actually** touch Jesus? What does the text really say?
6. Who was the first to challenge God's Word as contradictory? How did he make the charge against God?
7. Name one actual Bible discrepancy or contradiction. (If one has a modern version such as the New American Standard or Revised Standard, those English versions, because of mis-translation, **do** have contradictory statements! See Ephesians 2:15 and Matthew 5:17 in the aforementioned versions. Bible students today need to be careful about versions.)
8. What are some things critics fail to recognize when daring to accuse Bible writers of contradiction?
9. How many examples, especially in the gospel accounts, can you find where the author said the same things in different words (contrarily)? How can the Bible student account for such differences?
10. Did this study of canonicity help in strengthening your faith? Most assuredly!

SECTION THREE INTRODUCTION

This book, **How We Got The Bible** by brother Keith Mosher contains a wealth of information on this subject for us. It is well written, and well researched. I am pleased to commend it unto all. I predict that it will enjoy a wide distribution and accomplish much good.

A WORD ABOUT KEITH MOSHER

I have known brother Mosher for more than thirty years, and for the last seventeen years we have served as fellow instructors in the Memphis School of Preaching. He was a part-time instructor in the school for six years, and he has been a full-time instructor for 24 years, making a total of 30 years on the faculty of the Memphis School of Preaching.

Brother Mosher is qualified to write this book by way of intellectual capacity, knowledge of the Bible and scholarship.

Brother Mosher is qualified to write this book by way of integrity, and dedication to the Word of God.

--Garland Elkins

CHAPTER ONE – TEXTUAL CRITICISM AN INTRODUCTION: 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

How the Bible was preserved and handed down to succeeding generations are complex issues. Hopefully, this material will be fair, historically accurate, yet nontechnical enough for easy reference and study. Those who spend their lives studying the **transmission** of Bible manuscripts and related materials are **textual critics** and the **science** of textual criticism involves examining those ancient writings in order to determine the **authentic** text of the Bible. One of the leading authors in biblical introduction has written: "There has been much confusion and controversy over the matter of 'higher' and 'lower' criticism of the Bible. Much of this misunderstanding is a result of the semantic difficulty involved. 'Criticism' in its grammatical sense, means merely the exercise of judgment. When criticism is applied to the Bible, it is used in the sense of exercising judgment about the Bible itself. There are two basic kinds of criticism and two basic attitudes about each kind" (Geisler, 433).

"Higher" criticism is the exercise of judgment pertaining to the **genuineness** of the biblical text and is often called "historical" criticism. Historic-critical analysis is often viewed as **destructive** criticism by conservative Bible scholars for the "higher" critics generally refuse to accept any supernatural inspiration of the text. Bible students must be aware that the study of **genuineness** (authorship, date, style) of the biblical text is part of **Special Introduction** and not part of the study here.

However, when scholarly judgment is applied to the **authenticity** (the history of the transmission of the text) of the Bible, that exercise is **textual** or **lower** criticism. Generally, textual critics **assume** that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God and seek to ensure that the original writings are known. (However, some textual critics are also higher critics.) There are six main branches of biblical criticism which definitions follow.

Biblical Criticism

First, **textual** or **lower** criticism is concerned with the discovery (and recovery) of the original text of a written document. Textual criticism deals with the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and, because of the wealth of materials involved and the problems languages present, is one of the most difficult sciences for Bible students to master. There are, literally, thousands of documents (manuscripts, early versions, etcetera) available to lower critics **and** more materials are being discovered. Students of textual criticism are often overwhelmed by this vast field.

Second, **historical (destructive)** criticism can be limited to three areas. Studied are the techniques of dating early writings, historical verification of events in the materials, and the writing of the history of a document. The "father" of modern historic-critical studies is said to be Richard Simon, a French priest (1670's) who first applied the historical method to the Bible in a series of books. Simon, as most higher critics, did not believe that the Bible actually proceeded from the mind of God (Geisler, 435).

Third, higher critics, who seek to discover the materials the supposed non-inspired Bible writers used to write their books and letters are called **source** or **literary** critics. The one benefit derived from **source criticism** is that Bible students have been made keenly aware that there is a historical context for the biblical text and such knowledge usually prevents mistranslation (Guthrie, 1979). (Source criticism of the New Testament is involved with a special problem that is discussed in a little more detail under point five below.)

Fourth, higher critics who study the literary forms of the Bible (essays, history, poetry, etcetera) are known as **form** critics. **Form critics** of the Old Testament in its classic sense follow the **documentary hypothesis** or the evolutionary concept that the Old Testament was developed by at least four different authors or groups of authors and eventually edited. Modern scholars have tended to downplay the documentary theories and have adopted the idea that since the ancient community treated the Bible as God's Word one today can **assume** the canon even though it **evolved** (Childs). This theory, of course, denies such passages as 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Fifth, form criticism applied to the New Testament is called **Formgeschichte** or **form-history**. Rationalistic German scholars applied their evolutionary ideas to the gospel accounts. They **assumed** Mark wrote first (from sources or Q, Qelle being the German word for source) and the other writers copied from Mark and other sources. These critics decided, without any more real evidence than their own theories, that the approximately twenty year period between the beginning of the church and the writing of the first gospel account was a time filled with oral tradition about Jesus. Form critics classify such **imaginary** traditions into **forms** and then attempt to discover the situation in the church that gave rise to the tradition. The technical terms for the supposed tradition is **sitz in leben**

or **situation in life**. The form critic, in other words, is examining his own assumption in order to "discover" the assumptions of the early church, which church is accused, by the form critic, of "making up" new words and deeds of Jesus as the situation demanded.

An offshoot of form criticism is **tradition** criticism. Since the form critic believes that all Bible stories were passed on by word of mouth, he believes that traditions developed in all such tales. The tradition critic seems to find what changes were made over the years in the oral transmissions. Again, the tradition critic is studying his own historical assumptions. The Bible still reports: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Another by-product of higher (destructive) criticism is **redaction** criticism. These critics seek to discover how the supposed Bible redactors (editors) used the sources available to "assemble" the Bible. Since the alleged sources are **not** available to modern critics, at best redaction criticism is speculative and, of course, denying of the verbal, plenary inspiration of God's Word. Redaction critics, when pressed as to why a prophet's name is attached to a book argue that the editor did so to give himself prestige! The sixth branch of biblical criticism is discussed in the next section.

New Testament Form Criticism

Few, if any, modern form critics (including conservative evangelicals) believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the gospel accounts (**U.S. News and World Report**, December 10, 1990). It is the case that the writers do not specifically identify themselves nor do they claim to have travelled with Jesus. Modern critics rely heavily on Luke 1:1-4 as the basis for their assumptions that the gospel accounts were compiled from a variety of oral and written sources that were collected over a period of time after the crucifixion of Christ. Luke wrote: "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they ... delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4).

Careful Bible students will note that Luke insisted that he had **perfect understanding** of gospel history which statement **implies** verbal inspiration (cf. John 16:12-13). It is also the case that Luke informed Theophilus that he could now be **certain** of the things he had been taught by others concerning the **eyewitness** accounts about Jesus' life. Again, Luke implies that he was **verbally** inspired. No hint nor suggestion nor the hint of suggestion can be discovered in Luke 1:1-4 that Luke copied from earlier accounts but rather that he was **correcting** such accounts.

However, in order to circumvent what Luke actually wrote, a modern translation has Luke saying that he had "investigated carefully from the beginning." Such a perversion of the text denies inspiration. "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seems good to me to write an orderly account for you most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainly of the things you have been taught" (**New International Version**, Luke 1:1-4).

Outside Witnesses

Form critics and modern translators may question apostolic, inspired authorship of the New Testament but from very early church history there is a reliable and impressive record of witnesses to a God-inspired document. For example, Justin the Martyr, who wrote around AD. 140, referred to the gospel accounts as "memoirs of the apostles." Papias, bishop of Hieropolis (and known primarily through Eusebeus' writings) in AD. 95 wrote that Mark was Peter's interpreter. Papias also mentioned Matthew as having composed "the sayings of the Lord." In AD. 180, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, wrote that Luke wrote the gospel account bearing his name. One "problem" concerning the gospel accounts that continues to draw critics' attention is the so-called **Synoptic Problem**. The paradoxical and supposed differences between the accounts, which suppositions ignore the various purposes of each author, have been attributed by form critics to two documents mentioned above - Mark and Q and the supposed use of such sources by Matthew and Luke. Since no such "Q" sources have ever been discovered, those who believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God are quite amused by such fanciful speculations about non-existent sources. Some form critics even imagine a "secret Markean gospel account" that existed before the known

Mark. Their suppositions are based on a fragment of a letter found in a monastery south of Jerusalem. Such "secret" accounts are gnostic not Christian and are second-century documents.

Biblical Inerrancy

The battle for Bible authority has arrived in churches of Christ. The revolution against Bible inspiration and inerrancy that began in the 1920's in America has its advocates, **now**, among God's own people.

The seeds for such a revolution were planted by higher critics as early as the seventeenth century and when a later modernist disciple of higher criticism, Harry Emerson Fosdick, wrote his **The Modern Use of the Bible**, he would say: "Obviously any idea of inspiration which implies equal value in the teachings of Scripture, or inerrancy in its statements, or conclusive infallibility in its ideas, is irreconcilable with such facts as this book presents" (1938, p. xiv). Fosdick's book was published in 1924 and set the stage for the liberal movement that has devastated Protestantism.

In 1949, Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that, "The Christian Truth is presented as a 'dated' bit of religious fantasy which is credible only to the credulous and which may be easily dismissed by modern man" (**A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History**, p. 34). Some have opposed the modernistic view of Bible authority as fantasy, but for the most part - have lost the battle! The Lutheran editor, Herman J. Otten (**Baal or God**, 1965) wrote against modernism as has the Baptist, Harold Lindsell (**The Battle for the Bible**, 1976). But in both the Baptist and Lutheran denominations "seeds of dissent have been planted, and are sprouting in many places" (Lindsell, p. 90).

And now, among churches of Christ it is being suggested that "we have erred in accepting the New Testament as God's law to be used as His pattern for our lives" (Thompson, **Reason and Revelation**, vol. 12, no. 10, p. 39). There are those at work among churches of Christ trying to cast off biblical inerrancy and authority and to replace such with a "new hermeneutic." (For example, see Carroll Osborne, **The Peaceable Kingdom**.) Warren Lewis wrote in **Mission** in January 1972 that: "Each of the Gospel writers paints a picture of Jesus which cannot be forced to agree with the other three pictures. (Lewis is thus a form-critic, KAM). The clashes in their stories ... are just a few of the large number of other such clashes which a wide awake reader could find for himself in the Gospels. We finally must say there is a 'Matthew Jesus', a 'Mark Jesus', a 'Luke Jesus', and a 'John Jesus.' One is left in the dark as to who the 'real Jesus' might be, what he did, and what his thoughts and feelings were. Yes, they all point to Jesus, but one wonders which Jesus to believe in" (pp. 4-5).

Lewis' statements are attacks on verbal inspiration and are representative of the attitudes among many professors and preachers in the church of Christ. The battle for the Bible is raging. Can Christians trust their English texts and how did such come to be? Such is the emphasis of the study here. Faithful Bible students will keep in mind the Bible is the very sharp instrument of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17) and not a mere production.

Study Questions

1. Define textual criticism.
2. Define higher criticism.
3. What is the difference between Special and General Biblical introduction?
4. Define genuineness. Which criticism is involved in this study and what is such a study attempting to accomplish?
5. Define authenticity. Which criticism is involved in this study and what is such a study attempting to accomplish?
6. Define form criticism as it relates to the Old Testament.
7. Define form criticism as it relates to the New Testament.
8. What is tradition criticism?
9. What is redaction criticism?
10. What is the synoptic problem?

CHAPTER TWO – BIBLICAL PRESERVATION(1): PSALM 119:89

For the last 2,000 years the church of Christ has faced two overwhelmingly important issues: (1) The preservation of the pure, written Word of God; (2) the application of the latter **truth** to man. Jesus said, " .. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).¹ The implications of the foregoing statements from Christ are obvious. If **truth** were to be lost, no one could become a disciple of Christ and all accountable persons would have no hope for an eternal life- in fact, no one would know one thing about God nor about an after-life. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spiritual and they are life" (John 6:63).

Further, it seems odd that in several books available to the author on General Biblical Introduction, which subject treats of issues of how the Bible came to its present condition, that very few of these tomes have a section on biblical preservation. It seems that this doctrine is assumed by such writers. Geisler and Nix, whose large work on general introduction is a textbook at Memphis School of Preaching, do say that: "There are four links in the chain 'from God to us:' inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation. In the first, God gave the message to the prophets who received and recorded it. Canonization, the second link, dealt with the recognition and collection of the prophetic writings. In effect, the objective disclosure was complete when the sixty-six books of the Bible were written, and then recognized by their original readers. However, in order for succeeding generations to share in this revelation the Scriptures had to be copied, translated, recopied, and retranslated. This process not only provided the Scriptures for other nations, but for the other generations as well. The third link is known as transmission of the Bible" (Geisler, p. 321). Bible students need to be aware, then, that in seeking to study **preservation** one might need to look for materials under the heading, **transmission**, concerning the text.

The Principles Of Bible Preservation

Persons who believe that "the original writings of the scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity ... must believe they have been providentially preserved through the ages" (Burgon, 1892). Does God preserve His inspired Word **and** to what extent? Are just the concepts kept intact **or** did God preserve the words themselves?

Biblically, the following passages imply that God would preserve His very words. "Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord" (2 Kings 10:10). The latter statement concerns the **precise** prophecies concerning the evil Ahab and his household. The psalmists also often insisted that God's very words would be eternally kept. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6-7). "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; the thought of his heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11; cf. Psalm 19:7 and 100:5). Note also that God's Word is touched by eternity: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

The prophets, too, implied a preserved Word. "The grass withereth, the flower faileth, but the word of God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:8; cf. Isa. 55:11). In fact, the greatest prophet of all, and more than a prophet, said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Jesus also insisted that the Old Testament was verbally preserved: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17).

It is passingly strange that some Christians, claiming to believe in a "verbally inspired" Bible, fail to believe what the above passages, and many others, say about **preservation**. Why else would some brethren be willing to accept the translation theories and errors evident in many modern Bible versions except that such brothers and sisters have failed to grasp the meaning of full inspiration? **A failure to grasp the doctrine of preservation of the words of Scripture is the starting point for all other kinds of apostasy.** Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). If Jesus' actual words have not been faithfully preserved, then John 12:48 is meaningless. **The first principle of the preservation of Holy Writ is that without God's intervention to keep His Word pure there is no Christianity.**

In the second place, the preservation of the Scriptures originates in the eternal counsels of God. "Forever, O Lord, the word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). Why would the all powerful One speak and then not aid man

in some way to remember what was **eternally** important? The written Word is the **perfect** system for preserving truth (1 Cor. 13:10).

In the third place, the Scriptures have been preserved by God's faithful ones. The Old Testament was preserved by the Aaronic priests and the scribes unto whom were committed the "oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). The New Testament text has been preserved in nearly 6,000 manuscripts so that the Word cannot be manipulated (Geisler, pp. 386-408).

In the fourth place note that there is **no** difference, according to the preserved text, between God's "speaking" and the scriptures "speaking." First of all, the very fact that the term "Scripture" is used to refer to the **copies** available to the ancient peoples and not the original manuscripts implies that the Old Testament text was faithfully preserved, for the first-century audience "searched the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). But the "scriptures" available in ancient Berea were certainly not the autographs or originals (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15). Second, if the copies are called Scripture, then the very **quality** of the originals has been preserved by God. The copies are holy (2 Tim. 3:15), **true** (Dan. 10:21), and can **not** be broken (John 10:35). In fact, such faithful copies deserve faith (John 2:22), for the **faithful** copies are the very voice of God. Third, note a comparison of the following two verses: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him. Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Exod. 9:13-16). Note also the following verse: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Rom. 9:17). What God said to Pharaoh through Moses was exactly equivalent to what the Scriptures said. Would God preserve His statements? (See also Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:8; Genesis 21:10 and Galatians 4:30.)

A fifth principle of biblical preservation that is popular among evangelicals will **not** be tolerated here. That is that God lays on the heart of every generation which copies of the Bible are the true readings. This latter doctrine of **illumination** applies John 16:13 to all Christians rather than to the first-century apostles who received **miraculous** guidance in learning, teaching, and writing God's Word. However, the question thus arises concerning whether or not a copy or translation of the original can actually be said to be Scripture. Note the following passage:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Namaan the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way, And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power (Luke 4:16-32).

The discerning reader of the above passage who knows of **two** Old Testament Bibles available to the Jews of Jesus' day will recognize from the **word order** of Luke 4:18 that Jesus was reading from the LXX (Septuagint)

and not from the Hebraic (Hebrew language) Biblica. The text from which the Master read was a Greek translation first made in Alexandria, Egypt about 250 B.C. (Geisler, p. 41). But **note** very carefully that what Jesus read in that ancient translation, He called scripture (Luke 4:21). A faithfully preserved text then, can be said to be God's Word. Christians, in order to be assured that the translation they are using is faithful enough to the originals to be called Holy Writ will **have** to know some of the facts about textual transmission (technically textual criticism or the science of text transmission) in order to make intelligent choices as to which modern Bible to use. But, when one has a faithfully preserved text and knows that one does, great comfort in studying is discovered. How were the manuscripts, originally written on very fragile materials preserved? The next chapter covers the answer to this question.

Conclusion

All do not believe in the Providential preservation of the Bible text. The Bible writers, however insist on such and quote Jesus as saying that His Word would never pass away (Matt. 24:35). There is a direct link between accepting the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration and the doctrine of preservation.

Study Questions

1. What two questions have confronted Christians for at least 2,000 years?
2. What is implied if the Bible is not truth?
3. What are the four "links of the chain" from God to man? What "link" is the basis of this book?
4. What must be believed concerning preservation of the Bible, if one accepts that the original writings were verbally inspired? Why?
5. How many Bible verses can you find that imply that God intended to preserve His Word?
6. What is the primary principle of the preservation of the Bible?
7. Where did the doctrine of preservation originate? What Bible verse teaches this point?
8. Who were charged with preserving the Word?
9. Show that when the Scriptures "speak" God is speaking.
10. Can you prove that translation is still "God's Word"? (Some brethren deny this.)

CHAPTER THREE – BIBLICAL PRESERVATION (2): JER.36:23; REV. 21:5

Introduction

This chapter continues the study of biblical preservation. The transmission principles of the Old and New Testaments are also discussed here.

Preservation

The first recorded statement of the doctrine of preservation is in the **Westminster Confession of Faith** (1646). That creed insists that the Bible was " ... immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages." **The Helvetic Consensus Formula** (1675) reads thus:

God saw to it that His word ... was entrusted to writing not only through Moses, the prophets and apostles but also He has stood guard and watched over it with a fatherly concern to the present time that it not be destroyed by the cunning of Satan or by any other human deceit.

This doctrine of preservation did not seek to guarantee that the autographs still existed, nor that copies were without transcriptional difficulties, but did intend to maintain that the complete body of Scripture has been preserved within the manuscript tradition.

The importance of the idea that God preserved His Word is seen in the emphasis of Jesus on accepting His teaching and only His teaching. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words has one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Paul emphasized the importance of preservation in his use of the Old Testament. For Paul even to have an argument that Christ had superseded the law of Moses, the singular term **seed** must be preserved (Gal. 3:16, 29).

The character of God is a further basis for believing this doctrine of preservation. If God gave the Scriptures (and He did-2 Tim. 3:16), and if God expects man to do God's bidding (and He does-Isa. 55:11), then a **just** God will preserve His Word.

Written Manuscripts

Writing developed early in man's sojourn on earth. Archaeologists have discovered many cuneiform tablets of Sumer dating to 4000 B.C., nearly 2500 years before Moses wrote the Law (Geisler, p. 331). The Bible references several kinds of writing. There were genealogical records (Gen. 5:1; these records are found twelve other times in Genesis); historical records (Exod. 17:14); torah (Exod. 24:4); the stone tablets (Exod. 34:27-28); words on Aaron's robe (Num. 17:2-3); and, again, the **completed** torah (Deut. 31:9). The prophets indicate that written records existed long before the Moabite Stone was made (c. a. 850 B.C.). See Joshua 8:30-34; 18:4-9; 24:26; Judges 8:14; 1 Samuel 10:25; and 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-27.

Writing instruments were known and used. There was the three-sided **stylus** for marking in clay (Jer. 17:1 where the English has "pen") and a **chisel** for stone inscriptions (Joshua 8:31-32). In fact Job, who lived about the time of Abraham, wished that Job's words might be engraved with an "iron stylus" in rock forever (Job 19:24). The ancients used pens to write on papyrus, vellum, leather, and parchment and cut the nib of the feather or quill pen with the "pen knife" (Jer. 36:23; cf. 2 John 12). The pens were of ten made from quills and the ink from the lampblack or residue of an olive oil lamp (Geisler, p. 336). How accurate those ancient scribes were is the crux of the credibility issue concerning the Old Testament (Geisler, p. 330).

"Until about fifty years ago, very little was known about the Hebrew text" prior to AD. 100 (Wegner, p. 166). It is known that the Hebrew scribal tradition can be historically divided into three periods: (1) Ezra (to 300 B.C.) (2) Talmudic (300 B.C. to AD. 500). (3) Masoretic (AD. 500 to the time of the printing press, AD. 1500; masorah means "handed down" in Hebrew). The Masoretic scribes added vowel pointing to aid in the reading of the Hebrew. Modern students of the Hebrew language learn Hebrew grammar from the **Masorah**. However:

There is much disagreement as to the origin or the text that the scribes maintained. Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891, professor of Old Testament at Gottingen) argued that all the Hebrew texts revert to one original manuscript (a single copy). He reasoned that all Masoretic manuscripts have some specific

characteristics in common ... By the time of Paul Kahle (1815-1964, an Old Testament professor from Oxford) several divergent types had been identified. Kahle argued that there were many vulgar texts ... that were then standardized into an official text (by the Masoretes, K.M.) In the mid 1950's, two other scholars, William F. Albright from Johns Hopkins University and Frank M. Cross from Harvard University, began to develop a third view, arguing for the possibility of local recensions /text types/ families. This theory reduced the textual witnesses to three types from different areas: Palestine (Samaritan Pentateuch, Masoretic text of Chronicles, several Qumran texts); Babylon (Masoretic text); Egypt (Septuagint). (The Masoretic text is Hebrew; the Septuagint is Greek, K.M.) (Wegner, pp. 161-170).

Note from the above quote that the scribe "maintained" the text and that even if there are three "families" or "text types" they are either Masoretic (Hebrew) or Greek (LXX). How accurate the scribes were is an amazing story, for during a period from A.D. 20 to A.D. 200 a tradition developed (**tanna-im**) during which time **meticulous** rules for copying the Old Testament were established; especially for preserving the synagogue scrolls (Wegner, p. 171). The rules were (Wegner, p. 172): (1) Only parchment made from **clean** animals could be used and the pieces had to be joined together with thread from clean (ceremonially) animals. (2) Each written column of the scroll was to have no fewer than fortyeight and no more than sixty lines whose breadth then must consist of thirty letters. (3) The page was first to be lined (with a penknife), from which lines the letters were **suspended**. (On papyrus scrolls of the Ezra period, one letter per square was written. Papyrus is sticky and the layers together made something that resembled a checker board.) (4) The ink was black and prepared according to a strict recipe. (5) There was to be the space of a hair between each consonant (there are no vowels in the ancient Hebrew, just sounds, K.M.) and the space of a small consonant between each word. **Also, each book had to end at exactly the right space or it was to be done over.** (6) No word or letter could be written from memory.

Preservation Of The Autographs

Why the originals were not preserved is often discussed. Geisler indicates that the:

... tendency to worship religious relics is certainly a possible determining factor (2 Kings 334 18:4). Others have noted that God could have avoided the worship of the originals by simply preserving a perfect copy. But, He has not seen fit to do even this. It seems more likely that God did not preserve the originals so no one could tamper with them. It is practically impossible for anyone to make changes in thousands of existing copies. The net result, however, has proved to be profitable insofar as it has occasioned the very worthwhile study of textual criticism. Another valuable side effect of not preserving the originals is that it (the non-preservation, K.M.) serves as a warning to biblical scholars not to esteem paleographic, numeric, or other trivia over the essential message of the scriptures (Geisler, pp. 43-44).

There are nearly 6,000 manuscripts and fragments of the New Testament available from the second century onward (Wegner, p. 208). (The second-century fragments and partial manuscripts **refute** the view of the error-prone naturalistic critics that some New Testament books were falsified in the second century, Wegner, p. 208.) From the third century onward New Testament scrolls written on vellum or parchment were preferred, but codices (books) were seemingly also known in the apostle Paul's time (2 Tim. 4:13) (Wegner, p. 208). New Testament manuscripts or books eventually became very elaborate using red ink or colored vellum and silver letters.

In A.D. 303 Diocletian ordered all Bibles to be burned, but in A.D. 313 Constantine (Edict of Milan) announced:

When we, Constantine Augustus, and Licinius Augustus, had happily met at Milan, and were conferring about all things which concern the advantage and security of the state, we thought that amongst other things which seemed likely to profit men generally, the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first and chief attention. Our purpose is to grant both to the Christians and to all others full authority to follow whatever worship each man has desired; whereby whatever Divinity dwells in heaven may be benevolent and propitious to us, and to all who are placed under our authority Wherefore your Dignity should know that it is our pleasure to abolish all conditions whatever which were embodied in former orders directed to your office about the Christians; that what appeared utterly inauspicious and foreign to our Clemency should be done away and that everyone of those who have a common wish to follow the religion of the Christians may from this moment freely and unconditionally proceed to

observe the same without any annoyance or disquiet (Wegner, p. 209-210).

The above historical event seemingly points out once again God's providence in preserving Christianity and the Bible.

Geisler and Nix (pp. 391-402) list 274 New Testament **uncials** (all large letter, printed Greek manuscripts) from the second through the tenth centuries after Christ and 245 uncial lectionaries (something akin to a responsive reading list; a collection of scripture texts grouped together for reading in public worship, p. 402). The rest of the New Testament manuscripts (eighty-nine percent) are minuscule or cursive dating from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries (Geisler, p. 385). (Manuscripts are hand-written. When Geisler and Nix put out their 1986 **expanded** introduction, they listed 5,366 uncial, minuscule, and lectionary manuscripts. Today (2006) nearly 6,000 is the number (Geisler, p. 387).

Of what importance are all these manuscripts in terms of preservation? When there are variant readings in New Testament copies, textual critics can, by comparison and correlation of the manuscripts, determine what is the true and original reading. How did these variants occur? The copyist made a mistake by omitting a word or letter; by repeating a word or letter; by transposing a word or letter; by other confusions of insertions (some deliberate; e.g. John 5:4 and 1 John 5:7). The textual critic can correct such mistakes and since the invention of the printing press no such copyist's errors are a problem.

A textual critic, when comparing ancient manuscripts, will always look for the more difficult reading, if it is sensible, for scribes tended (if they made a mistake) to simplify. And, a textual critic will tend to adopt a shorter reading, because if the scribe erred he would generally add to the text. If there is already a **known** reading, the textual critic, when examining a newly discovered manuscript can compare its readings to what is an absolute text. As a last resort, the textual critic may have to resort to "intrinsic probability" which is relying on the subjective as to what the scribe is likely to have done. Because of the scientific approach of textual criticism, one scholar was able to say that the real work of the modern textual approach has to be concerned with only "a thousandth part of the text" (Stevenson, pp. 284-285).

If one compares the accuracy of the preservation of the New Testament with the transmissional accuracy of other ancient texts, the integrity of the New Testament text is even more fully appreciated. For example, the extant copies of Homer's **Iliad** number 643 (Robertson, p. 22). (Both the Iliad and the New Testament have undergone textual criticism. The Iliad has 15,600 lines and the New Testament had 20,000.) (Robertson, p. 22). Only **40** words in the New Testament are still questioned, but **764 lines** of the Iliad are questioned (Robertson, p. 22). The Iliad is corrupt in 5% of its text but the New Testament text has less than one-half of 1 % needing emending (Robertson, p. 22). Who questions the Iliad? Yet multitudes try to argue that the New Testament has "many errors." Wegner notes that:

It is important... to note that the verbal agreement between various New Testament manuscripts is closer than between many English translations of the New Testament and that the actual number of variants in the (Greek, K.M.) New Testament is small ... none of which call into question any major doctrine (p. 215).

Theological Ramifications

There are always, of course, challenges to those who defend, or attempt to defend, the Bible's accuracy. The modernist conceives that: "If the New Testament writings arose in the course of a particular history and are witnesses and documents of that history, then a question presents itself to us: why would our science ... deal with these writings? The answer is, because they alone belong to the canon ... But when once we strike out of the doctrine of inspiration, the dogmatic conception of the canon can no longer be maintained" (Wrede, pp. 576-577). The modernist must overthrow the doctrine of inspiration in order to classify New Testament writings in the **same** category as all other ancient materials. Wrede further insisted that the New Testament writings "must not be considered as "canonical" but "only that appertaining to primitive Christianity" (p. 577). Christians can challenge the modernist using a knowledge of preservation and questioning as to why other ancient documents are not nearly so accurately transmitted. Hastings wrote:

It is true that no book either of the New Testament or of the Old was born with the predicate, 'canonical.' But ... (the books) were born with the qualities which **caused** (emphasis mine, K.M.) them to be labeled 'canonical' (Hastings, p. 579).

A second theological discussion surrounding preservation is that "progress in knowledge is progress in accuracy of description and definition" (Hastings, p. 579). This latter-day arrogance among scholars is that "science" today outlaws God, the Bible, and faith in general. When applied to the Bible, the evolutionary dogma is that the Old Testament was **crude, vague, and mythical** and the writers were instinctive not inspired. [Why, then, did those ancient communities **know** to preserve the scrolls in such meticulous ways (cf. Exod. 25:21)?] The by-product of an evolutionary approach to scripture is that the Bible must be made "relevant" and its teachings "restricted" to ethics, but even then differences must be allowed because of the times in which one lives. But, a **preserved** Word of God claims authority (John 12:48) and, a-priori, why is there a preserved text that was written for the first century and for no other age?

In the third place some modernists are now trying to say that the true text is not found in the mass of manuscripts for no one ever quotes a Bible verse that says so. Such advocates note that, "Although they accuse other textual critics of rationalism, their argument for preservation via the majority has only a rational basis not a biblical one" (Ibid). The argument for preservation, however, does involve a bibliological basis (Matt. 24:35). God's Word will **never** pass away and, historically, scribal accuracy and a huge number of manuscript witnesses have been the means by which the Bible has been preserved. May one, then, logically conclude that God did such?

A fourth challenge to the doctrine of preservation is that it is wrong-headed to think that "the exact words of the text" must be preserved at all. Such a view as the latter makes a major mistake. On one occasion Jesus used the **preserved** tense of a verb to make an argument with the Sadducees.

The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine (Matt. 22:23-33).

Note carefully that Jesus insisted that God said, "I **am** (emphasis mine, KM.) the God of Abraham" (Matt. 22:32). When God said that "I am" Abraham's God, that patriarch had been dead for a millennium (Exod. 3:6, 16). But, God did not say He **was** Abraham's God nor He **would** be, but "I am." Therefore, Abraham was **still living** and if God could keep Abraham's soul alive, it would be no problem for Deity to resurrect that ancient one. If the ancient text had not the words "I am" faithfully preserved, Jesus could have made no argument. In fact, many of the New Testament writers made arguments and drew conclusions based on the preserved wording of the Old Testament (e.g. Matt. 1:22-23; Gal. 3:16; et. al).

Some, in the fifth place, challenge the doctrine of preservation by arguing that "it was not a doctrine of the ancient church, and that in fact it was not stated in any creed until the seventeenth century (in the Westminster confession of 1646)." But, the Bible teaches the doctrine of preservation (Isa. 40:6; 1 Peter 1:23-25) and because no creed mentioned the teaching until 1700 years later may very well show how little attention was being paid to God's Word by denominational persons.

Conclusion

The biblical text contains hundreds of verses concerning the fact that God's Word is **forever** settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). When the ancient scribes sat down to copy the Old Testament scrolls, they held in high esteem, yes reverence, the text they were writing. They followed strict rules and those manuscripts available are amazing witnesses to their accuracy so much so that scientific criticism can study those manuscripts and find the original.

The New Testament evidence is vast counting nearly 6,000 Greek manuscripts. (Not included are nearly 36,000 biblical quotes from the early church "fathers" that aid in establishing the text.) Textual critics are not in doubt about 99% of the text of the Gospel, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation.

Although modernists challenge the doctrine of preservation, they seem to have a problem they never consider. For, they are challenging the best preserved Book on the planet and they never seem able to realize the

peculiarity of their positions. God's Word shall never pass away (Matt. 24:35). The critics of the Bible, however, have died out in every generation.

Study Questions

1. Why do you suppose God chose human **language** to transmit His message (See Mark 12:37). What are the Bible languages?
2. What writing instruments are mentioned in the Bible?
3. What is learned from the fact that the Old Testament scribes had to follow **meticulous** rules in copying the text.
4. On what evidence is the credibility of the Old Testament text proved?
5. On what evidence is the credibility of the New Testament maintained?
6. What is an **uncial**?
7. What is a **minuscule**?
8. How does the textual critic go about to correct a scribal mistake?
9. How can the Christian answer the modern critic's charge that the ancients were primitive and crude, and therefore to believe the Bible is factual is not possible?
10. Show from a New Testament passage that Jesus used a preserved term and would not have been able to make an argument if the text had not been preserved.

CHAPTER FOUR – OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT CREDIBILITY: JEREMIAH 36:4, 28

Introduction

After the foregoing brief examinations of a definition of textual criticism and the doctrine of preservation, one needs to turn one's attention to a history of the Old Testament text and its transmission. Two definitions should be kept in mind at this point: (1) An **autograph** is a writing produced under the direction of an Old Testament prophet or a New Testament apostle (1 Peter 3:2; Jer. 36:27; Rom. 16:22). Only verbally inspired men produced the autographs, none of which exist today. There can be two "editions" of an autograph if necessary (Jer. 36:28). (2) **Credibility** is the term textual critics use when describing a manuscript's right to be believed. Today, over 99.5% of the biblical text is credible. In fact, when J.W. McGarvey wrote his great book **on Evidence of Christianity**, over one hundred years ago, he could say even then (quoting Westcott and Hort) that: "... the number of words admitted on all hands to be above doubt, at no less than seven-eighths of the whole. When, of the remaining one-eighth, we leave out mere differences of spelling, the number still left in doubt is about one sixteenth of the whole; and when we select from this one-sixteenth of those which in any sense can be called substantial variations, their number ... can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the text" (p. 13). What are some of the facts of the transmission and credibility of the Hebrew or Old Testament text?

Meticulous Rules For New Copies

The synagogue scrolls had to be written on the skin of clean animals, prepared by a faithful Jew. A certain number of lines and columns were allowed. (See chapter three.) Copies must first be lined and there must not be more than three words on each line. A space of **nine** consonants must separate paragraphs (**parashah**) and there must be **three** lines between each book, if there were more than one on a scroll. The fifth book of Moses had to terminate exactly at the end of a certain line, or be re-done! Scribes counted the words and letters which numbers **must** match the previous scroll. The **Mishnah** (codified Rabbinic rules and one-half of the Talmud) gives the rules even for the number of lines a Jew must read before he could translate text into some other language from Hebrew. (See Nehemiah 8:8)

In Palestinian synagogues the law was read through every three years, but in Babylonian synagogues the law was read every year. In Maccabean (Intertestament) times 54 passages from the prophets were selected also for annual synagogue readings. Jesus knew, then, what day Isaiah would be read in His hometown synagogue (Luke 4:17).

Private or common scrolls were not so meticulously copied as were the synagogue scrolls. But, that writing and reading were common is a known historical fact (Job 19:23; Num. 21:14; Judges 5:14; 8:14[~]; 11:14).

A "Book" Religion

Judaism has always been a "book" religion. In fact, Judaism stood or fell with the Old Testament (John 5:39; Luke 24:44). Therefore, the Old Testament scrolls had faithfully to be preserved.

During the Talmudic scribal period (300 B.C. to A.D. 500), careful, "official" copies of the scrolls for synagogue usage were made. By 169 B.C. and the revolt of the Maccabees against Rome, the Syrians (Seleucids) were able to destroy most existing Hebrew manuscripts. However, the hidden Dead Sea scrolls (discovered, beginning in 1945) helped the textual critic, since they pre-date Maccabean times. The Dead Sea material **confirms** the known texts of the post-Talmudic period or Masoretic era.

Because of the Syrian oppressions, until the Dead Sea scrolls were found only later Hebrew manuscripts were known. They are:

1. The **Cairo Codex** (A.D. 895). This scroll was copied by Moses ben Asher in Tiberia, Palestine and, as the name implies, is in a museum in Cairo, Egypt. The remains of the scroll contain the former (historical) prophets and the latter (major and minor) prophets.
2. The **Leningrad Codex of the Prophets** (A.D. 1016). This scroll contains only Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets and was copied by a Babylonian Masorete.
3. The **Aleppo (Syria) Codex** (A.D. 930). This is an incomplete parchment of the entire Old Testament. This document was rescued from a burning synagogue in Aleppo, Syria in 1948 and smuggled to Israel. Aber ben Asher was the scribe in A.D. 930 and this scroll is the basis for the **New Jerusalem Bible**.
4. There is a scroll fragment in the British Museum containing Genesis 39:20 through Deuteronomy 1:33.

It dates to A.D. 950 and originated somewhere in the Orient.

5. The most important Hebrew Bible is the **Leningrad Codex**. (A codex is a document in book form and is not a scroll.) This Bible dates to A.D. 1008 and was part of a collection belonging to the Firkowitsch family. The codex was brought from the Crimea to the Royal Library of Leningrad. This codex is a copy of one corrected by Aaron ben Moses before A.D. 1000 and is on vellum. It looks very much like all Masoretic (Babylonian) Hebrew Bibles but has just twenty-one lines to each page.

6. The **Reuchlin Codex of the Prophets** (A.D. 1105) and several Old Testament fragments (some dating to the sixth century and discovered near Cairo, Egypt) make up the other important Hebrew materials extant. The latter fragments are scattered throughout libraries of the world.

Why are there so few Hebrew manuscripts? As noted above, oppression of the Jews accounted for much of the loss. But the materials were fragile **and** the Masoretic scribes **buried** worn out scrolls and codices.

The Masoretic Text

Since the vowel-pointed Masoretic texts of the ancient Hebrew Bibles are **all** descendents of one that existed in the first century after Christ; and since the scribes were so meticulous in copying; there are few variants in these documents. **Old Testament fidelity is based on this scribal accuracy**. Similar Old Testament passages, when compared, show just how accurate those scribes were. (For example, Psalm 14 and 53 and Isaiah 36-39 and 2 Kings 18-20, when examined indicate word for word faithfulness in transposition from scroll to scroll as the older scroll was copied.)

The Hebrew Bible, then, that contains vowel-points (to aid pronunciation, especially among non-Jews) and accents is Masoretic. The **masorah** or better, **massoreth** (pronounced with a long o) is a term derived from a Hebrew root that means "to hand down" (cf. Num. 31:5). The tradition of "handing down" God's Word began very early among the Jews and Rabbi Akiba (c.a. A.D. 90) called the practice a "hedge about the law."

The Masoretic scribes placed a number in the margins (the Masoretic **parva**) which was a count of the times an expression occurred in the text so that a later scribe could check his copying accuracy. Later scribes placed notes in the margins to aid the next scribe in his work and/ or to explain some reason for emending a text. If the notes were too long, the scribe wrote the longer message at the end of the scroll or codex (Masoretic **finalis**). Students of General Biblical Introduction know that the King James (1611) and the 1901 American Standard Bibles relied heavily on the Masoretic text for the Old Testament. (The oldest known fragment of a Hebrew Bible comes from the Talmudic period and is called the **Nash Papyrus** because of its discoverer. The document contains the decalogue and **shema** [Deut. 6:4] or morning prayer.) Then, an amazing discovery helped textual critics to push back their knowledge of the Hebrew text more than one thousand years removed from the time of the above mentioned manuscripts.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

An Arab shepherd (Muhammad adh-Dhib), by accident, found the first scrolls in a cave in 1947. It was not until 1949, however, that archaeologists were able to identify and authenticate the find. (For in-depth looks at these discoveries, see Geza Vermes, **The Dead Sea Scrolls in English** and J.A. Sanders, **Discoveries in the Judean Desert**, especially volumes 3, 4 and 5.)

Between February, 1952 and January, 1956 ten more caves were found, but archaeologists were only responsible for caves 3 and 5. The caves, located in the Qumran area (desert) on the northwestern side of the Dead Sea, for the most part were found by workers in the area and those finds include caves 2, 4, 6 and 11. Caves 4 and 11 were exceedingly rich in manuscripts, and a host of these scrolls found their way onto the black market.

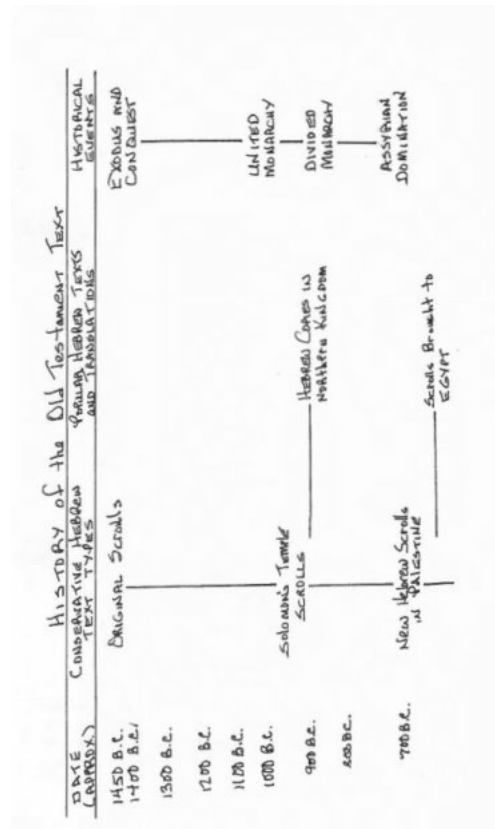
Archaeologists had been working on the Qumran community and Ain Fesh ka, two miles away, and at first failed to make any connection between those communities and the caves. (Some scientists still insist that there is no connection between what seems to have been communities of aesthetic Jews, perhaps Essenes, and the scrolls.) It is interesting that from 1956 when the Israeli-government began to round up these treasures until 1991, most Bible researchers were denied access to the nearly 3000 photographic evidences of the finds. Geza Vermes called the handling of the scrolls, "the academic scandal, par excellence, of the twentieth century" (**Memphis Commercial Appeal**, 1991).

The six hundred plus texts of the Dead Sea scrolls include **all** of the Old Testament except for Esther and the Song of Solomon. Many of the texts provide historical and cultural information about the tribe of desert scholars who carefully copied the materials between 2 B.C. and A.D. 3. The sect, fearful of the Romans, abandoned their village in about A.D. 66 and "hid their literature in a very remote place in the mountains in very deep caves" (Yehoshua Gitay, professor of Bible, Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee, 1991). The dry, desert weather preserved the scrolls which had been placed in covered, clay jars. The copied scrolls are from earlier ones dating to 100 B.C. (According to William Foxwell Albright of Johns Hopkins University, now deceased.)

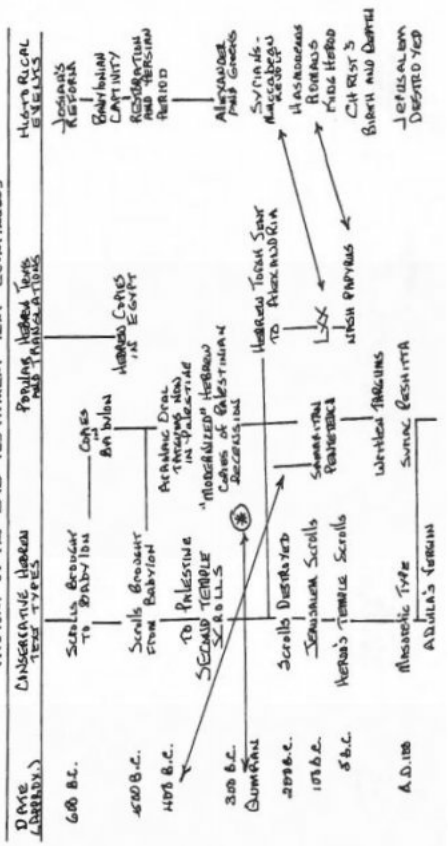
There are ten complete Dead Sea Scrolls and from the Old Testament materials **textual critics can now prove that the Hebrew Bible has remained unchanged for the last 2,200 years!** The scrolls were dated by carbon 14 and the average age range was from 235 B.C. to 168 B.C., especially for the vast number of fragments available. Paleographic (ancient writing) studies and orthographic (ancient spelling) examination also indicated an earlier date than 100 B.C. for the foregoing materials. All of the ancient materials of the Old Testament are very much akin to the Masoretic texts and are valuable aids for textual critics who are able to see the minor differences between the Septuagint (250 B.C., Greek Old Testament) and the Hebrew Bibles of the scribes. Thus, the look of the autograph is nearly certain today.

Study Questions

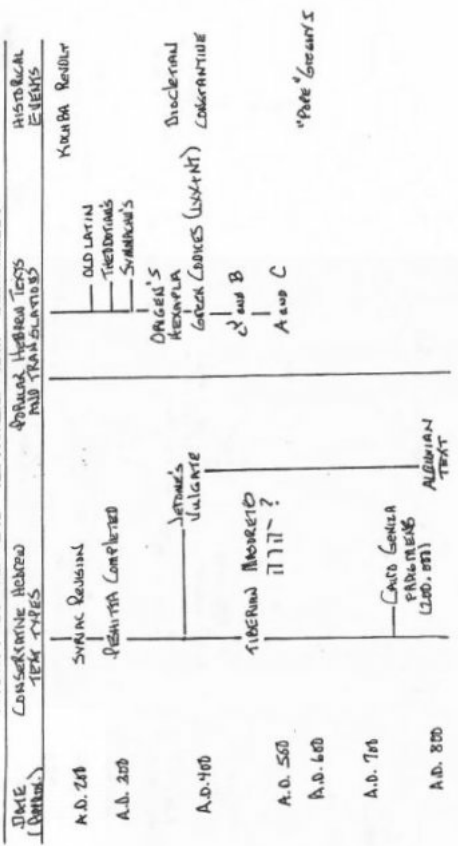
1. What is an autograph? Credibility as the term applies to ancient manuscripts means what?
2. What were some of the rules for the production of synagogue scrolls?
3. Find some Bible verses that show that the ancients could read and write.
4. Why were the earliest Hebrew manuscripts from AD. 1000? That is, what happened to all the earlier ones?
5. What discoveries helped reestablish what the Hebrew Bible looked like prior to Christ?
6. What is the most important Hebrew manuscript and who has possession of it?
7. On what fact is Old Testament credibility based?
8. What is the Hebrew Bible called that has vowel points and pronunciation aids?
9. Masoretic means what? Describe the work of a Masoretic scribe.
10. Why are the Dead Sea scrolls important?
11. Note to the reader: A time-line chart of Old Testament manuscripts follows.



History of the Old Testament Text (continued)



History of the Old Testament Text (Continued)



History of the Old Testament Text (Continued)

DATE (APPROX.)	CONSERVATIVE HEBREW TEXT TYPES	GRAECO HEBREW TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS	HISTORICAL EVENTS
A.D. 900	BEK ASHER CAUCES CARD-LEUNGARD (PROPHETS) ALEXANDRIA		
A.D. 1070	LEUNGARD B ^{19A}		
A.D. 1100			CRUSADES
A.D. 1200		PARIS TEXT	
A.D. 1500		STAMBUUL PREFECTURE SCROLL	

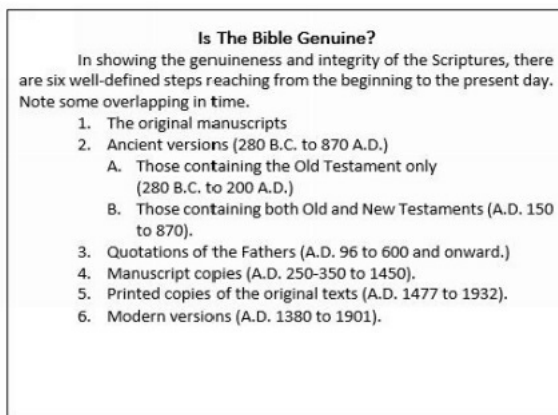
PRINTING PRESS INVENTED

CHAPTER FIVE – NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT CREDIBILITY (UNCIALS) ROM. 16:22; 1 COR. 14:37

New Testament credibility is firmly established by the voluminous amount of the manuscripts available. However, the evidence from the first two and one-half centuries after Christ, because of the persecution of the church, is mostly fragmentary. Yet, even the fragments, when pieced together, give the unique impression of a unified text as early as the second century of the Christian era.

The evidence from those early centuries includes papyri, lectionaries, inscriptions, writings, and pieces of codices that are usable by textual critics. (Most good Greek testaments list this kind of material.) Then, when Constantine legalized Christianity (A.D. 313), the manuscripts were better preserved and **now** available to the textual critic are nearly 6,000 Greek texts. And, by the sixth century after Christ, monks were collecting, copying, and caring for massive amounts of evidence for the accuracy of the Greek New Testament.

Inserted at this point is a chart that may help Bible students to grasp what is being said in this book about Old and New Testament accuracy:



Concern?

Those who would be concerned about the paucity of very early manuscripts evidence should recall that all of the Greek classics have far fewer sources. The manuscripts available to study, the Iliad, for example, number only 643; the Peloponnesian Wars of Thucydides have 8; and Tacitus' works only 2. There are, remember, 6000 Greek manuscripts.

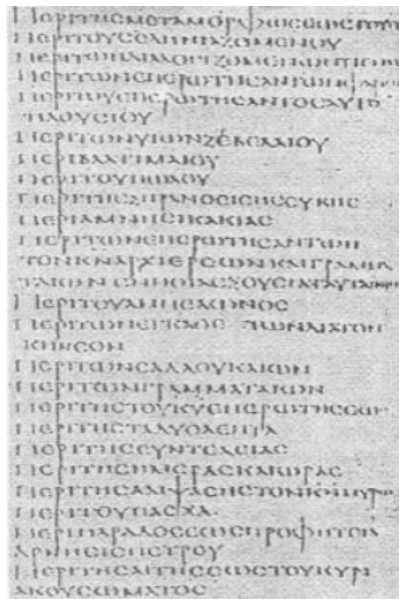
Not only was persecution a reason for early manuscript destruction, but the earliest New Testaments were penned on weak materials and thus were very fragile; although the New Testament was very likely put together as a codex or book with folio pages (see chapter three). Three famous fragmentary papyri have survived: (1) John Ryland's (A.D. 117-138). (2) Chester Beatty's (A.D. 200). (3) The Bodmer Codex (A.D. 200). The Chester Beatty "fragment" contains most of the New Testament (in Greek) and collators (those who characterize new discoveries) usually list 98 other papyri whose value pertains to their earliness. The evidence from A.D. 313 to approximately A.D. 800 comes from **uncial**, Greek manuscripts which texts were on parchment and vellum. The more important ones are listed here.

1. The CODEX (book form) Vaticanus or "B" is usually regarded as the most important uncial. (There are about 274 known uncial manuscripts, and some scholars prefer the aleph or Sinaiticus next mentioned as most

important.) The uncials were complete Greek Bibles both of the Old and New Testaments and the Vaticanus, as its name implies is kept in the Vatican Library in Rome. The text starts at Genesis 46:28, has missing Psalm 106-138 and Hebrews 9:14 through Revelation. As in all the early uncials, the general epistles follow Acts not Hebrews. This vellum book has 759 leaves, each about ten inches square with three columns per leaf. The scribe did not include Mark 16:9-20 in this Bible, but he did leave a space for it suggesting he knew the passage existed.

2. The SINAITICUS **aleph** uncial was discovered by Constantine Tischendorf in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. ("Aleph" is the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet.) The monks at St. Catherine's were using the leaves for their cook fires and Tischendorf found a basket full of these vellum leaves, destined for the flames. Tischendorf became so excited about these finds that he aroused the ire of the monks who refused to allow him to return for the next fifteen years.

Tischendorf made friends with the emperor of Russia and since St. Catherine's was a Greek Orthodox Monastery, the Russian Czar backed Tischendorf's return to the Monastery where he could find nothing until on the day before he was to leave. The steward of the monastery gave Tischendorf the steward's copy. The manuscript contained part of the Greek Old Testament and all of the twenty-seven New Testament books. Tischendorf finally succeeded in bargaining for the parchment codex and gave it to the British for about 250,000.00 and the manuscript reposes today in the British Museum. The Sinaiticus dates from A.D. 340 and contains 346-1/2 leaves. (The original 43 leaves Tischendorf found in a basket on his first visit made their way to Leipsig, Germany and remain in the University Library under the title: Codex Frederico-Augustanus.) The pages of the Sinaiticus are about 13-1/2 inches wide by 14-7/8 inches high. Each page contains four columns about 2-1/2 inches wide. (The Old Testament poetical books have two wide columns on each page. A picture is inserted here to give the reader an idea of what an uncial looks like.)



3. The ALEXANDRIAN Codex or A dates to about A.D. 450 and contains the Septuagint Old Testament with parts of Genesis, 1 Kings, and the Psalms missing. The uncial also is without parts of Matthew, John and 2 Corinthians. There are 733 leaves and each is 10-1/4 inches wide and 12-3/4 inches high with 2 columns and 50 or 51 lines. The vellum material is very thin and the letters are very large and very square.

Some think that "A" is from the fourth century, but it did originate in Alexandria, Egypt. However, its name came from its being presented to the Patriarch of Alexandria in 1078. When Cyril transferred to Constantinople in 1621, that patriarch or city-bishop (an unknown office in Bible times) took the manuscript there. Cyril desired to give the Codex to James I of England (King James Version fame), but James died before he could receive it and so Charles I had it presented to him in 1627. (The manuscript arrived too late for the King James translators to use.) Charles placed the Alexandrianus in the Royal Library and then that king later gave it to Britain and the British Museum. In 1879-83 the complete manuscript was issued to the public through facsimile photographs; thus this was the first uncial to be used by Bible scholars.

4. The EPHRAIM or "C" is a **rescriptus**. That is, this uncial is written on a scraped off vellum. Vellum was

expensive and often used again by rubbing away the original (that left is called a palimpsest) and then rewritten or re-scripted; thus a rescriptus. Sometimes in that ancient ignorant society valuable vellums were covered by valueless ones; and in the 12th century the "original" rescriptus was erased (again) in parts and the writings of the Syrian Ephraim (299-378) interspersed. Thus the name Ephraim Rescriptus. Left were only 64 leaves of the Old Testament and 145 of the New Testament. Parts of all the New Testament are left except for 2 Thessalonians and 2 John. Each page or leaf is 9-1/2 by 12-1/4 inches with one wide column on each leaf. There are no text divisions except in the gospel accounts.

The Ephraim seems to have originated in Alexandria, Egypt for it was brought from there to Italy by a John Lascaris around A.D. 1500. Lascaris' library was purchased after his death by Peter Stuzzi and then in 1533 the manuscript came into the possession of the evil Catherine de Medici. Although Catherine was Italian she is the mother of subsequent French kings and when she died the manuscript was placed in the Library of Paris where the vellum rescriptus still remains.

The underlying, palimpsest was discovered to be a Greek New Testament in 1834, but the chemicals used stained the parchment. Tischendorf (the finder of the Sinaiticus) was able to read the stained version and published an edited copy in 1843.

5. The BEZA CODEX or "D" is a sixth century uncial and has omissions in Matthew through John, 3 John 11-15, and Acts. The language is Greek **and** Latin. It is presently in the University of Cambridge library in England. There are 406 leaves each 8 by 10 inches with one column of 33 lines per page. The Greek text is on the left leaf and the corresponding Latin on the right or next leaf. Thus the D Codex is the oldest known, two language uncial. The letters are unusually large and the vellum is a poor quality.

This manuscript seems to be from southern France where the church had been established by Greek-speaking missionaries from Asia Minor and the text was found in the monastery of St. Iranaeus in the city of Lyons, France by Theodore Beza in 1562, a French biblical scholar who migrated to Switzerland to assist John Calvin and later succeeded him in Geneva. The Beza Codex is now in the library, University of Cambridge, England.

6. The CLAROMONTANUS CODEX or D2 is from A.D. 550 and supplements D. It too is written in Latin and Greek having 533 leaves each 7-3/4 by 9-3/4 inches. Each page has one column of 21 lines with the Greek on the left and Latin on the right as with D. Beza found this uncial at Clermont, France (thus the name of the manuscript) and it is kept in the national library in Paris, France. Beza used D2 when he worked on his second edition Greek New Testament, published in 1582.

7. The Washingtoniensis Codex or "W" is a fourth century uncial (maybe fifth) and contains portions of the Old and New Testaments. It is kept in the National Library, Washington D.C. as property of the United States government. There are 187 leaves, 5-5/8 by 8-1/4 inches each. Each leaf has a single column of 30 lines and is an unusually fine example of these hand-written manuscripts. The scribe used a sloping style unlike any other.

There is an apocryphal addition after Mark 16:14 not previously known and the part containing portions of Deuteronomy and Joshua is larger vellum (10-1/4 by 12-1/2 inches). The Washingtonensis was purchased as a group of four manuscripts in Cairo, Egypt in 1906 by Mrs. C.L. Freer; thus the manuscripts are sometimes named the "Freer Manuscripts."

8. The Koudethi Gospelo or theta is in a Russian library in Tiflis, Georgia and was only recently discovered in the early twentieth century. It is an unattractive uncial from about A.D. 750 to 800 and contains only a part of the New Testament. But, it indicates how widely known such Greek New Testaments were.

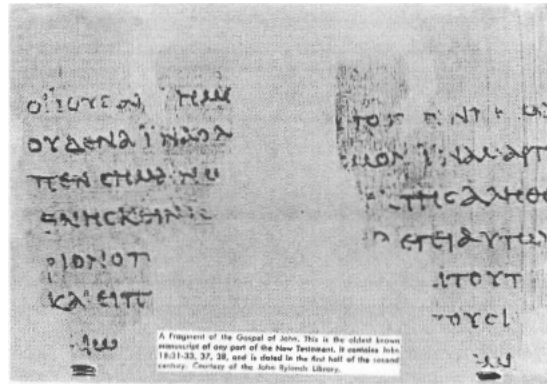
The large-letter or uncial manuscripts are early and thus important. The eighteenth century scholars Westcott and Hort theorized that such manuscripts were more important than all other evidence and thus the autograph should be established only from the two earliest-Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Modern versions of the Bible since 1881 have been affected by Westcott and Hort's theories. The "fly in the ointment" of the Westcott-Hort theory is that such uncials still remained somewhere to be discovered. Worn-out scrolls, often used, were discarded. Perhaps the ancients knew that certain uncials were not as accurate as others might be.

Study Questions

1. How is New Testament credibility established?
2. Why are there fewer manuscripts from the first three centuries? (Give at least two reasons.)
3. What are three famous papyri and which is the most important? (Searching a good General Biblical Introduction book would be useful in studying these papyri.)
4. How many known uncials are there?
5. Discuss the uncials as to their importance. Are the earliest the most important?

CHAPTER SIX – NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT CREDIBILITY: MINISCULES (CURSIVES) 2 PETER 3:2

Introduction



A "cursive" manuscript is shown above.

The above picture illustrates what cursives are. Some are miniscules, which are smaller cursive manuscripts that are all later productions than the uncials. The uncial manuscripts extend from the third to the tenth centuries A.D., however there are overlappings as some miniscules were created as early as the eighth century.

The number of miniscule manuscripts is not easily calculated, since no catalogue lists them all and new ones are often discovered. Geisler lists 2,745, but Kenneth Lake (a collator) listed over 3,000. Forty-six known miniscules contain the entire New Testament and in critical Greek Testaments are listed as numbers (the uncials as letters). Miniscules are magnificent to observe because of the elaborate, artistic decoration on the covers and throughout. Codex 33, a miniscule similar to the Vaticanus uncial, is a complete, beautiful New Testament which codex has often been labeled as the "Queen of the Cursives."

Codex 33 is Alexandrian in style, and generally cursives were of just three styles or genres; the other two are Byzantine (or western) and Caesarean. The families or genres are recognized according to the scribal corrections made and in a critical Greek New Testament will be recognized as sea or scb, etcetera. About 90% of these cursives are Byzantine.

The value of the cursives, as far as critical scholarship is concerned, is considered to be less than the value of the uncials because the cursives are later Bibles and thus further removed from the autograph. But, there are exceptions to such a rule. A thirteenth century miniscule may be a copy of a Greek text from the third century and of more value than a fourth century uncial. **The number of years a manuscript is removed from the original is not as critical a problem, for variations come not from time but from scribal accuracy and consistency.** Some of the miniscules agree more fully with older uncials than do some of the later uncials. (Note here that those who date manuscripts are always involved in asking questions about the size of the letters and the scribal corrections.)

Other Evidences For The Greek New Testament

Since nearly 3,000 Greek manuscripts of various kinds exist besides uncials and miniscules, the others are mentioned here. Remember that the oldest Greek texts were papyri and only about 98 still exist in fragments and date from AD. 300 having originated in Alexandria, Egypt. The majuscules or uncials were usually written on sheep skin parchment and were around until the A.D. 900's. There are about 274 of these uncials and about 80% are Byzantine. (Miniscules, remember, account for another 2,795 early Greek New Testaments.)

When non-biblical papyri and ostraca (pottery pieces) were discovered at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt about 1896, those finds helped Biblical textual critics to establish that Greek manuscripts are representative of the type of the Greek language of the first century. Moulton (England), Robertson (America), and Deissman (Germany) have

shown from such archaeological discoveries that New Testament Greek is **koine** or common, everyday language of the period. The medieval Latin "fathers" had assumed a "perfect" or heavenly Greek had been used.

Biblical ostraca, papyri, and inscriptions on catacombs, buildings, and monuments also aid textual critics in understanding the original writing. There are about 1,625 specimens of ostraca and other such materials now known.

Lectionaries play a particularly important role in confirming the original New Testament text. These lists of passages designed to be read in worship number nearly 2,210 and are quotations from uncials and miniscules (245 and 196 respectively). The vast majority of the lectionary quotations are Byzantine. Since the lectionaries were designed for worship they were very carefully copied even more so than some manuscripts.

Patristic Quotations

Some believe that the entire New Testament could be recovered from the Bible quotations of second and third century writers. The early church "fathers" or patriarchs quoted great amounts of Bible in their teachings either verbatim, paraphrastically, or by allusion. There are about 36,000 quotations and they are a huge aid in dating the genres of the texts from the second through the fourth centuries.

The early church "fathers" writing patterns varied as the families of manuscripts did, but by the fifth century nearly everyone was quoting from a text similar to the one used by the King James translators-the Textus Receptus. The most important of the early "fathers" were Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebeus and Jerome.

Versions

Some definitions are needed here as a background to the ancient translations from the Greek. First of all, a translation is a rendering from one language to another. (Therefore, an English translation **cannot** be considered the **only** standard. Erasmus published his critical, Greek New Testament in 1516, but he had to translate Revelation from a Latin version.)

In the second place, a literal translation expresses **as far as possible** the exact meaning of the original. Such a translation, of necessity, will reveal many of the idioms of the donor language since the receptor language is a translation of words not ideas. Some equivalency is necessary in all translation work. (For example how would one translate the American idiom "a can of worms" into another language?) However, dynamic equivalent translators strive for "more than a word for word translation" (New International Version, preface, p. vii). Serious Bible students prefer a more literal translation so that they can decide what the text means.

Further, to describe a Bible as a **version** means that it is a translation **from** the original language. The American Standard of 1801 is a version, then, but technically the King James is a revision of Tyndale's Bible which was a revision of the Vulgate. A "Revised" version can be a title given to Bibles translated from the original or from another language. In this latter sense, the King James is also a revision since it came from the language known as old English to a newer form.

A **recension** is what a Bible is called when it is a product of the critical and systematic revising of the original Greek based on all new discoveries. The English Revised (1881, 1885), the American Standard (1901), the Revised Standard (1945, 1952), The New English Bible and two Catholic Bibles (Challoner, Contraternity-NT) are all recensions even though the translators took liberties in the latter four.

A paraphrase is not a Bible, but is a commentary. The two most famous paraphrases are J.B. Phillip's **New Testament** and Kenneth Taylor's **Living Bible Paraphrased**.

Early New Testament Versions

Some think that the first translation of the New Testament from the Greek was probably into the Old Latin around A.O. 150 (<http://members.aol.com/rbiblech>). Jerome later translated the **Latin Vulgate** but it is nearly Byzantine while the Old Latin versions tended to be more western.

The Sinaitic Syriac may also be from the second century and was discovered by Mrs. Agnes Lewis and her sister Mrs. Margaret Gibson at the same St. Catherine monastery where Tischendorf discovered the Greek Sinaiticus uncial. This **Syriac Peshitta** (common) may also be a fifth century revision but scholarship is divided on this point at the present time. One other Syriac or Aramaic New Testament that is known is Polycarp's containing the **entire** text (now known as the Philoxenian Syriac).

Also discovered are ancient **Coptic** or Egyptian New Testaments from as early as the fourth century of the modern era. The Bodmer papyrus is a type of the Buhairic or Alexandrian Coptic and this dialect is from northern Egypt. The southern or Sahidic Coptic closely resembles Codex D or Beza (Old Testament also) and the Thebic or middle Egyptian Coptic is actually made up of five differing dialects. (The Old Testament in all the Coptic Bibles follows the LXX.)

Another early version is Ethiopian (A.D. 350) or Abyssinian. When the Bible was translated into Abyssinian and the people discovered "Ethiopia" mentioned several times they applied that name to their country. The language is similar to many Arabic tongues.

There are also known Georgian (Armenian) versions from the seventh century; Gothic Bibles (minus the books of kings because the translators felt Germans were already too war-like) from the seventh century; Slavonic versions by Cyril from A.D. 850; Persian versions by Nestorius from A.D. 450; Arabic versions from A.D. 940 and some Nubian (African), Anglo-Saxon, Old Persian and Frankish versions not even analyzed yet by scholars.

Conclusion

As with Old Testament textual criticism all variations of New Testament manuscripts, versions, and extrabiblical materials are considered in the search for the pure autograph. The **majority witness** scholars argue that the Byzantine genres contain the true text which is the one underlying the King James and New King James. The **neutral witness** scholars basically uphold the infallibility of the Alexandrian manuscripts which theory underlies the Westcott-Hort view and the American Standard. This "neutral" view says that when the papyri and uncials agree, the true text is known.

The **eclectic witness** school is predominant among scholars today. Its position is that no genre of manuscripts should be viewed as more nearly infallible, although the Alexandrian is the best. But a reading from two or three other families that is against the Alexandrian should outweigh it. This eclectic method is involved in the idea that text families are all descendants of an earlier, authentic text. This theory underlies the New American Standard, the New International Version and the Revised Standard Version. Providential protection of the text outweighs all of the above theories (Matt. 24:15; Rev. 22:18-19). True textual criticism must take into account that God's hand is in all transmission of the text.

Study Questions

1. In critical Greek New Testaments how are the cursives and miniscules listed?
2. What is the number of the finest of the cursives or "Queen" of the cursives?
3. What three "styles" make up the cursive evidence?
4. Why is their disagreement over the value of the cursives to textual critics?
5. What was discovered at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt that has aided Bible scholarship?
6. What is a lectionary? How is it useful to textual critics?
7. What do some think could be done from the large number of "church father" quotations?
8. What is a **version? Revision? Recension? Paraphrase?**
9. What is the difference between literal translation and dynamic equivalent translation? (Is it possible to have a 100% literal translation?)
10. List the various early New Testament versions starting with the earliest.

CHAPTER SEVEN –RESTORATION OF THE TEXT: JOHN 5:4

A Review

Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts dated mostly from the ninth century of the modern era. Those existing Masoretic Bibles have few variants and are, for the most part identical to the Septuagint (LXX-Greek Old Testament). The reason for the foregoing lack of differences is the strictness of scribal copying rules. An illustration about the **Samaritan Pentateuch** is helpful here. "The Samaritan Pentateuch, which was used by the sect of the Samaritans on Mount Gerazim in Palestine, is available to scholars in copies. According to Josephus, Manasseh, the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 13:28) started the sect after Manasseh was driven away by Nehemiah. A temple was built on Mount Gerazim (John 4:20) and only the first five books of Moses were used. (The prophets spoke of worship in Jerusalem and Manasseh did not want his followers to know this.) Available to textual critics are 100 paleo-Hebrew codices of this text and its marginal Targums (commentaries in Aramaic). There are some differences with the Masoretic Pentateuch, **but even these are minor.**" The New Testament manuscripts are numerous with nearly 6,000 full texts and fragments known. There are also 36,000 quotations of Bible verses that can be used for comparison to the Greek texts. As far as Bible versions available from as early as the second 371 THE BOOK Goo BREATHED (VOL 3) century (Syriac, Latin, and Coptic or Egyptian), these number nearly 10,000 according to 2001 statistics.

Variants

The number of variants increases as new fragments or complete manuscripts are discovered. Today, nearly 200,000 plus are recognized. In the New Testament Greek manuscripts available, variants are said to exist at 10,000 different places, but if a single word is misspelled in 3000 different manuscripts, textual critics count that one word as 3000 variants! When one eliminates mechanical variants, true manuscript differences are rare. And no doctrinal problems are caused by variants. What are considered **mechanical** variants?

Some variants are errors of the eye. A scribe might divide a word incorrectly (especially in the uncials for those letters all ran together across the scroll). Or the copyist might omit a letter, repeat letters, reverse letters, or confuse spellings. Variants also occur from errors of the ears. When a manuscript was copied by a secretary hearing dictation, the copyist might forget the last word he heard and omit it or change it. A third problem arose from errors of memory, especially when the scroll was dictated. A scribe might forget and substitute a synonym. There were also a few errors of judgment. Marginal notes might accidentally be placed in the text or the next scribe had trouble reading the last scribe's notes; some scribes forgot a number at 1 Samuel 13:1 and textual critics have discovered that a few scribes added some things because of their particular theologies.

The scribal variants arising from changes made to manuscripts because of some copyist's theology were accomplished by linguistically changing the grammar to harmonize or "correct" a manuscript. Some scribes conflated (combined) variants on occasion to suit the theory of that particular group of copyists.

How significant are the variants? Westcott and Hort opt for one-eighth of the text as corrupted, but about 95% of the variants are just different readings and never different meanings. Westcott and Hort were modernists and thus inclined to see corruption where there exists only a few differences. (A.T. Robertson, the Greek scholar says that only 1/1000 of the text is of any concern to textual critics.)

Text Identity

When textual critics examine a manuscript and then locate a variant, antiquity or primitiveness of the find is noted. If there is **no** attestation for the variant before the middle ages, the variant is **not** considered to be genuine. However, agreement among later manuscripts all originating from an earlier, common source is said to be a genuine variant.

However, if **all** the manuscripts do not compare, for a given reading to be considered as a serious candidate for the original, the majority of the witnesses must agree. The fewer the witnesses, the less likely is it that a reading is genuine. Subjective analysis of variants or genuine readings uses only the above two rules.

Examples Of Textual Criticism

The American Standard Version (1901) and most later versions omit 1 John 5:7, which verse is contained in the 1611 King James. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." No ancient Greek manuscript has the reading. Erasmus left the passage out of his Greek recensions of 1516 and 1519. But, Erasmus included the verse in his 1522 edition when a miniscule, copied by a

Franciscan monk, was discovered. This single manuscript addition found its way into the King James, but to accept the verse as genuine breaks the rule of the majority of witnesses as necessary for attestation.

The phrase "which art in heaven" at Luke 11:2 in the King James is omitted in the American Standard (1901) and later Bibles. The oldest uncials (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) omit the phrase, and since critics tend to think the shorter phraseology is genuine it probably does not belong. The shorter reading, without the phrase, is found in all of the purer manuscripts.

The passage containing the account of the woman caught in adultery (KJV, John 7:53-8:11) is placed in brackets in the American Standard (1901) and the margin explains that "some ancient authorities" place the passage after Luke 21:38. The passage is located in John's account in the oldest Greek manuscripts and no Greek writer referred to the problem until the twelfth century. The passage is where it belongs in John.

Mark 16:9-20 is missing in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and another shorter ending occurs in some other uncials, but the longer ending is in others. Interestingly, the Vaticanus has an exact space where it belongs. The majority of the Greek cursive manuscripts include Mark 16:9-20.

Zechariah 12:10 reads: "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; **and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced** (emphasis mine, K.M.), and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." The Masoretic text (Hebrew Bible) is followed by the King James and American Standard and is correct here. The 1945 Revised Standard altered the reading, but was following a later version rather than the majority of the witnesses.

At Exodus 1:5 one reads of seventy souls of Jacob's family who emigrated to Egypt. Seventy is the number in the Masoretic text. Stephen's speech, however, reads as follows: "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred **three score and fifteen souls**" (Acts 7:14, KJV; emphasis added, K.M.). The ancient Septuagint or Greek Old Testament has seventy-five as the number in Exodus 1:5. The Qumran scroll reads seventy-five and is a Hebrew manuscript. The evidence seems to be that Exodus 1:5 contains a scribal error in the Masoretic text. (The same can be said for Genesis 46:27 which has seventy instead of seventy-five.)

The King James Version and American Standard Version of Deuteronomy 32:8 reads: "When the most high divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people **according to the number of the children of Israel**" (emphasis added, K.M.). The Revised Standard, however, has "according to the number of the sons (or angels) of God," as do later versions. The Revised Standard is following the Septuagint not the Masoretic text and the Qumran fragment (in Hebrew) supports the Septuagint's reading. Which is right is subject to further analysis.

The American Standard version of Matthew 19:16-17 reads: "Why askest thou me concerning the good" but the King James Version reads, "why callest thou me good?" The ASV, then, contradicts Luke's and Mark's accounts as recorded in that version. The mass of early manuscripts agree with the King James' reading as do quotations from the church fathers.

The King James Version has at John 5:4 a verse that is omitted in the American Standard version. There is a record of the verse, especially in Tertullian's quotation (second century), but from the mass of Greek manuscript evidence there seems to be the very strong probability that this particular passage is a later addition from some overly zealous, rationalistic scribes.

The American Standard Version omits the conclusion of the model prayer (Matt. 6:13; cf. the King James), but all but **ten** Greek manuscripts contain the King James' longer ending. Ancient church fathers also knew the longer ending. "For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen."

Facts Of New Testament Textual Criticism

The leading experts, today, in the field of textual criticism are Kurt Aland, who currently assigns official numbers to newly discovered documents, and Bruce Metzger, author of numerous books and articles concerning the New Testament text. Aland indicates that the majority of the nearly 6,000 Greek manuscripts are on vellum and this includes 274 uncials, 2209 lectionaries, and the Greek manuscripts.

The first task of a textual critic is to discover and catalogue the manuscripts. Textual criticism began with the printed Bible when Stephanus (1550) placed in the margin of Erasmus' 5th edition (the "Textus Receptus") variant readings from the fifteen manuscripts used in the work. Stephanus used Greek numbers to indicate the variants. (Two of these manuscripts were uncials and the rest miniscules.)

When Bruce Walton (1600's) published his **PolyGlot Bible**, he used the information from Stephanus and added the variants from fifteen other manuscripts along with their locations in various libraries. Later, John Mill (1707) published his monumental English New Testament in which he recorded nearly all the known variants of

his day. Mill was aware of eighty-two manuscripts.

The modern system of cataloguing the New Testament manuscripts was introduced by J. J. Wettstein (1751-52) in his two-volume edition of the New Testament published in Amsterdam, Holland. Wettstein designated the known uncials with capital letters and the cursives and minuscules with Arabic numerals. Wettstein catalogued about one-hundred and twenty-five New Testament manuscripts.

J.M.A. Scholz (1820-36) listed six-hundred and sixteen manuscripts in his catalogue which texts were in addition to the ones Wettstein (above) knew. Better means of travel and better ways of communicating was speeding up the process of manuscript collecting. By the late 1800's, F.H.A. Scrivener in his **Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament** (1861-94) listed three-thousand known, ancient Greek manuscripts. Then, from 1884-1912, C.R. Gregory expanded the list to four-thousand entries. (Von Dobschuetz, Eltester, and Kurt Aland mentioned above succeeded Gregory in these collating efforts.)

After a manuscript is discovered and catalogued by letter or number, it is collated; that is, it is compared to a well-known printed text and the variants are noted. If the collation process is accurate, the variant readings will inform the critic as to the "family" to which the manuscript belongs. (Early collation efforts were not nearly as accurate as they now are since no effort was being then made to record every variant. Not until the nineteenth century did collation achieve some accuracy as Tischendorf and others took over the process. In fact, Tischendorf's eighth edition of his Greek New Testament [1869] is still used.)

The twentieth century method of collation is **eclectic**. In fact, the Revised Standard Version New Testament and most modern versions excluding the New King James are all based on an eclectic Greek text. These modern translators followed two rules: (1) They choose the reading that they subjectively think best fits the context and (2) they choose the reading they believe explains the origin of the variant readings. These latter two rules originated in the nineteenth century with Westcott and Hort (see addendum at end of this chapter) who opted for two ancient uncials as the best Greek manuscripts. The eclectic approach to translation, being subjective, allows for a choosing of whatever Greek source. (One Revised Standard translator said he used Nestle's text at home and Souter's at the office.) [Note: the source for the foregoing is Pickering, p. 22.] The Greek text published by the United Bible society for the use of Bible translators, because of the eclectic method, has **errors** in the text! (Today's English Version is based on the foregoing eclectic Greek Bible.) Metzger explained that the translators "followed one and then another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author's style" (Pickering). What Metzger is claiming is that each translator now relies on his own feelings as to what the original said. (One of the goals of modern scholarship has been to produce a critical Greek Testament that would compare to Tischendorf's eighth edition. So far no such work has been achieved and this effort began in 1966.)

Study Questions

1. How do textual critics count variants in the ancient Greek manuscripts? Are there any doctrinal problems caused by such variants?
2. How are variants caused?
3. What two rules are followed in determining the accuracy of a reading in an ancient manuscript?
4. Study the passages that are given that have given textual critics problems. Which do you think belong or do not belong?
5. Who are the leading textual critics today?
6. What is the primary task of a collator and what is collation?
7. When textual criticism first began, how many manuscripts were known and who catalogued them?
8. Trace the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century efforts at cataloguing. What speeded up the process?
9. Describe the twentieth century method of collation.
10. What problems are arising for translations because of the above method?

Addendum

(Westcott And Hort)

Brook Foss Westcott (1825-1901)

Westcott (fig. 13.8) was born in Birmingham, England, on January 12, 1825: he attended Kind Edwards VI's School. He was greatly influenced by the headmaster, James Prince Lee, who in Westcott's opinion was "superior...among the great masters of his time." (E.H. Robertson, *Makers of the English Bible*. [Cambridge: Lutterworth,1990]. 136). He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1844 and became a teaching fellow in 1849. Some of his own pupils were J.B. Lightfoot, E.W. Benson, and F.J.A. Hort. In 1851 he was ordained at the parish church in Prestwich by his old teacher, Lee, who was then bishop of Manchester, and the next year went to teach at Harrow School assistant master. In 1855, Westcott returned to Cambridge for a brief stay when he met the famous German textual critic

Tischendorf, with whom was unimpressed for his seemingly exclusive interest in “palimpsests and codices” (bid., 137). In 1869 Westcott was appointed as canon of Peterborough and the next year was called to Cambridge University as Regis Professor of Divinity, through the instigation of Lightfoot. He was very involved in the life of the university, both in administration and pastoral concern. He helped to found and organize the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and the Cambridge Clergy Training School (later called Westcott House). In 1875 Westcott was appointed honorary chaplain to the queen. During this time his most noted work on New Testament textual criticism progressed and in 1881 was published. In 1890, at the age of sixty-six, he was appointed to succeed Lightfoot as bishop of Durham, where he showed a deep concern for ordination candidates at Auckland Castle, as well as for the social and industrial problems in his diocese. For the next ten years, with ever failing health he maintained his strenuous work traveling between Durham and London until his death on July 27, 1901.

Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)

Hort (fig. 13.9) was born in Dublin, Ireland, in April 1829, moved with his family to Cheltenham, England, at age nine, and then moved again at age ten to Boulogne in the north of France. There he became interested in classics. His family later returned to Cheltenham, where he finished school and entered Rugby School October 1841. In 1846 he moved to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became intrigued with religious things and sought out evangelicals. But they seemed to him almost careless in their forms of worship. As a result, Hort continued to vacillate between the old, stable Anglican religion that he had grown up with and the new, creative ideas that were taught at Cambridge.

Hort graduated from Cambridge with first class honors in both moral and natural sciences and was considered one of the university’s influential thinkers. Being offered a fellowship in 1852, at the same time as J.B. Lightfoot, he chose the field of New Testament. Hort was ordained in 1854 and retained his Cambridge fellowship until his marriage in 1857, when he moved to a country parish in Ippolyts-cum-Great Wymondly, near Hitchin. There he pastored for fifteen years, devoting any spare time to revising the Greek New Testament. He was finally asked to return to Cambridge in 1871 with a fellowship and lectureship in theology at Emmanuel College. In 1878 he was offered the position of Hulsean Professor of Divinity, and shortly afterward, in 1881, his work with Westcott was completed. Hort continued his work at Cambridge despite failing health until his death on November 30, 1892. (Wagner)

CHAPTER EIGHT – THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH: NEHEMIAH 8:8

Introduction

When William Tyndale was discussing a theological point with a cleric who argued that men would be better off without God's law than without the Pope's law, Tyndale retorted that if God spared his life, before long he would make the boy who drives the plow know more Bible than the cleric did" (Lewis, p. 9). The entire history of the English Bible may rightly be seen as an effort to fulfill Tyndale's objective; that is, to make the Bible available and plain to the common man. And, as in Jesus' day, the "common" hear it gladly (Mark 12:37). If not for translation, only those who read the original language could read the Bible.

The English Language: A Background

English is the "daughter" of two families of languages: Indo-European (the Bible was transmitted to Europe via this family of languages) and Japhetic (Germanic and Gaelic). English began as a dialect of "low German" and has become a world language. Bede (673- 735) wrote in his **Ecclesiastical History of the Saxons** that the beginnings of the **Saxon** ("low German") and **Anglo** mixture had to do with the military and given to the Britons by the Germanic Heuga and Horsa (449) when the Britons were at war with the Scots. Too, many Celtic tribes invaded Briton pre-AD. 1000. Saxon pirates also attacked Briton, especially after Rome withdrew about A.D. 410. Those European Saxons settled in Briton from about A.D. 447 and the "low German" language had a beginning. [Towns whose names end in ex (Sussex, Wessex, etcetera) trace their beginnings to Saxon invaders.

When the "Angles" invaded Briton (c.a. A.D. 547) and established a kingdom in northern England the "AngloSaxon" language had a beginning. The "Angle-landers" eventually drove the Brits into Cornwall, Wales, and France and "Angle-land" were born.

England was known as "Angle-land" as early as A.D. 314. "St. Patrick" (384-461) lived there and a "St. Augustine" (not the bishop of Hippo who died in A.D. 400) made an extended missionary tour there around A.D. 397. The language then spoken by the natives is now known as old Saxon or "old English" (A.D. 450- 1100). When the Normans invaded Angle-land (1066) Scandinavian influences were imported to the old English and by A.D. 1100-1500 a language now called "middle English" was spoken. The works of Chaucer and John Wycliffe are in this latter English.

Modern English is dated from the time of the invention of a movable type printing press by John Gutenberg (c.a. 1454). A great "vowel shift" occurred in the language, for some unknown reason, and the modern tongue of English was born.

Anglo-Saxon Bibles

The earliest known "Bible" in the Anglo-Saxon language dates from A.D. 680. The reason the term, Bible, is in quotes in the preceding sentence is that this work is more nearly a paraphrase by one Caedmon. Bede (see above) informs that Caedmon dreamed that an angel told him to sing. When Caedmon asked (being ungifted in poetry and song) what he was to sing, the angel supposedly told him to sing about God's creation. Caedmon reportedly began to sing "phrases he had never heard before," which phrases were actually paraphrases from the Bible. Caedmon's transcriptions of his songs became known as the "people's Bible for his songs were memorized by vast numbers of people" (Geuler, p. 544).

The second Anglo-Saxon work is associated with Aldhelm (640-709) and his efforts produced the first, straight-forward translation of several parts of the Bible. Aldhelm also translated the Psalms around A.D. 700.

The first Anglo-Saxon translations of the four gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were done by Egbert (c.a. A.D. 700). Egbert had established a school of the court of Aachen, under orders from Charlemagne, Archbishop of York and did the translating work there.

Perhaps the greatest English scholar of his time and maybe also in Europe was the Venerable Bede (674-735) already mentioned twice in this book. Bede's historical efforts, theological efforts, and scholastic efforts were second to none in his day. Bede started a translation of John from the Latin into Anglo-Saxon and finished that work the very hour of his death. (Egbert, above, also had finished his efforts just days before Bede died.)

King Alfred the Great (849-901) translated Bede's **Ecclesiastical History** from Latin to Anglo-Saxon, along with the Ten Commandments, extracts from Exodus, Acts 15:23-29, and a negative form of the golden rule. (The novel, **Beowulf**, was written during this period of history and its tales show how barbaric most were then.) King Alfred established the "Danelaw" which demanded Christian baptism and loyalty to the king and Alfred's reign induced a religious revival in Briton or "Angleland."

Around A.D. 950, an Anglo-Saxon named Aldred produced an interlinear "gloss" word for word from a seventh-century Latin text. The Latin Bible was the work of Eadrid, bishop of Lindesfarne (698-721). Aldred's interlinear is now known as the "Lindesfarne Gospels." A copy-cat sequel known as the "Rushworth Gospels" was produced by a Mac Regal, one-hundred years later.

The last of the truly Anglo-Saxon works was made around AD. 1000 by the Abbot of Eynsham in Wessex. The abbot, one Aelfric, translated the first seven books of the Old Testament from Latin to Anglo-Saxon. He also cited other Old Testament passages in his sermons or homilies. Aelfric used the "Wessex Gospels" which an anonymous translator had produced prior to Aelfric's time. Aelfric was opposed in his translating work for Latin was the "language of God" to many of that day, but he said, "Happy is he, who can read the scriptures and translate the words into action."

It should be noted here that these early attempts to translate portions of the Bible in the vernacular faced three obstacles:

1. Traditionally, people had been taught, and many felt that Latin was the only proper medium to express religion.

2. The clergy of the day were uneasy about offering the scriptures to the "laity" for unorthodox teachings might result. (Actually the clergy were unorthodox, K.M.)

3. English was felt to be unsuitable for religious expression. (Compare the feeling today against using American "slang" in translations.) Tyndale had to fight these feelings to make his translation, and he thus argued that "... the Greek tongue (of the New Testament, K.M.) agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin. The manner of speaking is both one; so that in a thousand places thou needst not but to translate it into English word for word; when thou must seek a compass in the Latin" (Lewis, p. 50). If Tyndale were right, perhaps this smooth transition into English is the reason for the King James long run of popularity.

Middle English Partial Versions

The Saxon domination of Briton ended in 1066 with William's (the "Northman") conquering of Harold of Hastings. From that time, northern Angle-landers dominated and their Norman-French language influenced the Anglo-Saxon language with "middle English" becoming the vernacular. Some partial and a rare complete version or two in this new language were developed.

In about 1200, Orm (or Ormin) an Augustinian monk completed a poetical paraphrase of the Gospel accounts and Acts. There is an accompanying commentary to Acts which work is entitled "Ormulum." The works are preserved in one manuscript, which is possibly the autograph, and consists of 20,000 sentences composed of the Saxon-influenced Teutonic (low German) vocabulary. Orm says that he did the translating so that "the young Christian fold may depend upon the Gospel only."

Over a century later, William of Shoreham (1320), produced the first prose translation of a part of the Bible which work's vocabulary is the southern dialect of the Norman-influenced, Anglo-Saxon or middle English. Shoreham's translation of the Psalms, however, is in Kentish which is translated from the Vulgate. It used to be thought that Shoreham was the author of the first prose translation of the whole Bible, but the Psalms translation shows that there was some, now unknown, earlier work.

Contemporary with Shoreham's work is a Psalter (c.a. 1320-40) translated by the "Hermit of Hampole," Richard Rolle. These psalms are done in the northern dialect of the Norman-French influenced Anglo-Saxon or middle English. (From this point it should suffice to label these works as middle English.)

One of the best known texts from the middle English period is John Wycliffe's (Wyclif) complete Bible (1329- 84). However, how much of the work was Wycliffe's and how much was his associates (Nicholas of Hereford and John Purvey) is still being discussed. Nicholas translated some of the Old Testament from Latin and the entire Old Testament was completed by 1382. (John Purvey, below, revised the entire work after Wycliffe's death. There are 200 available copies of the Wycliffe Bible in its entirety and all but thirty are Purvey's revision.) As a manuscript Bible, the Wycliffe Bible was very expensive and the "Ye Olde Shoppe" language would be difficult to peruse by modern English readers. (Wycliffe, or Wyclif, was contemporary with Chaucer.) Wycliffe was opposed to the papacy and so angered the Pope that after Wycliffe had died and been buried, the Pope ordered the body to be exhumed, burned, and the ashes thrown in the river Swift. Wycliffe held a Doctor of Theology degree and also served for a time as the king of England's chaplain (1366-74). Wycliffe's Bible knowledge lead him to deny the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation; that is that the actual body of Christ and His actual blood are present on the Lord's supper table. The Pope had issued five "bulls" (edicts) against Wycliffe before he died. Wycliffe never recanted his Bible stance.

John Purvey (1354-1482) revised the Wycliffe Bible in 1395 or eleven years after Wycliffe's death. Purvey

replaced many of the transliterated words (letter for letter transpositions from one language to another) with a middle English idiom and the preface from Jerome's Vulgate with an extensive prologue. [Papal influence on Briton (Angle-land or England) was much weakened when people began to read Purvey's revision. For the Bible, they learned, was much different from Catholicism's Latin liturgies.] No printing press had yet been invented, but had it been, perhaps Purvey's "Wycliffe Version" would have gained wider acclaim.

At the start of the Renaissance, a man was born to whom this chapter as already referred-William Tyndale (1492-1536). Tyndale's version lays claim to being the first **printed** edition of a **part** of the Bible, but not the first completed English Bible to come off of a printing press. Gutenberg's press dates to 1396 and cheap paper was invented or discovered in Europe by this time. A Mazarin (Latin) Bible was published in 1456 and Greek was studied in 1458 in many universities with the very first Greek-Middle English Lexicon published in 1492. (The first, printed Hebrew Bible is from 1488; the first printed Hebrew grammar from 1503; the first printed Hebrew Lexicon from 1506.) Interestingly, eighty printed Latin Bibles appeared in Europe around 1470, and were introduced into England by William Caxton in 1476. William Tyndale was motivated by all this Hebrew, Greek, and Latin activity to make a Middle English revision from the Hebrew and Greek Bibles. Tyndale, because of Catholic persecution, had to leave England and to finish his work in Europe. His New Testament was completed in Cologne (1526); the Penteteuch at Marburg (1530); Jonah in Antwerp (1531). His completed sections were smuggled into England causing further opposition from the Papacy and the king of England. In 1534 after Tyndale had finished Genesis, he was kidnapped and taken to England where he was able to finish Proverbs, the Prophets, in fact most of the Old Testament before he was burned at the stake. He cried out as he died, "Lord open the king of England's eyes." King James will be the answer to that prayer for the so-called "Authorized King James Version" is practically a fifth revision of Tyndale's Bible "and where it departs from his, the revision committee of 1881, 1885, and 1901 returned to it with regularity" (Geisler, p. 407).

The credit for the first complete **printed** Bible in Middle English goes to the work of Miles Coverdale (1488- 1569). Coverdale had been an assistant of Tyndale's and a proof-reader for Tyndale in Antwerp, Belgium (1534). Coverdale followed Jerome's Vulgate and Luther's German New Testament and used Tyndale's and Erasmus' work. It seems that Coverdale's Bible is basically Tyndale's Version with no noticeable improvements (Geisler, p. 407). Coverdale did introduce chapter summaries and separated the Apocrypha from the Old Testament's inspired writings. This Coverdale Bible was first published in 1535; again in 1550, and 1553. The true successor to this Bible will come to be known as "The Great Bible" (1539; see below). History buffs know that Anne Boleyn, whom Henry VIII had executed, used and favored Coverdale's Bible and her execution seemed to bring disfavor to his work.

The pseudonym, Thomas Matthew, (real name-John Rogers) is attached to the next Middle English version. John Rogers was the first martyr under Queen Mary's persecution and Rogers had also assisted Tyndale. Rogers combined the Tyndale and Coverdale versions as sources and also borrowed heavily from the known **French** versions of his day. (One studying textual criticism in France would trace those versions instead of studying English Bible backgrounds as is being done here.) Both Coverdale and Rogers (Matthew) had received licenses to produce their Bibles, but since Coverdale had not used the original languages his text was open to attack by Catholics; and since Rogers (Matthews) put marginal notes in his Bible and offended conservatives because he "added" to God's Word, both Bibles were never popular among the majority.

A revision of the "Matthews Bible" was done by Richard Taverner (1505-75). Taverner was a "layman," but also a Greek scholar. His work is the first English Bible to render more nearly correctly the Greek article. (There is no **a** nor **an** in Greek, and when the appears there are rules as to its translation, KM.)

In 1539, a revision of Coverdale's Bible, **The Great Bible**, was published and became the greatest influence on subsequent English versions. **The Great Bible** became vastly more popular than **Matthews** and yet was easy to "carry around" for it received its name because of its size (16-1/2" X 11 inches). This Bible was issued in an attempt to mollify conservatives who had been aroused in 1538 to oppose any notes of extraneous materials which might be added to printed Bibles. The second edition of **The Great Bible** had a preface by Thomas Cranmer, the first Protestant archbishop of Canterbury, and thus is known as "Cranmer's Bible." Cranmer's Bible became the official text of the Church of England following the death of Henry VIII. The 1553 reprint became the text for the **Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments** (1549, 1552) of the Anglican churches.

Mary Tudor's terrorizing of English Protestants lead to many martyrs and refugees, many of whom fled to Geneva, Switzerland where they were offered safe haven. John Knox, the leading "Presbyterian" of his day in Geneva, published a "stop-gap" Bible for the refugees in 1557. Basically this New Testament was Tyndale's Bible revised by Dean William Whittingham of Durham University. The **Geneva Bible** introduced the **italicized** words into the text which emphases let the reader know that those particular words were added by the translators. (The

King James Version adopted this method.) The complete Geneva Bible came out in 1560 and was still a very popular version in 1611 and the birth of the King James. In fact, the Puritans carried the Geneva Bible on the Mayflower and did not want that "modern version" King James. Perhaps because the Geneva Bible was the first English (albeit Middle English) Bible to be produced by a translating committee led to the Geneva Bible's popularity and endurance. The scripture quotations in the preface to the original King James Version are from the Geneva Bible and this Bible influenced the language of Shakespeare's plays.

The last of the middle English versions prior to the King James is known as the **Bishop's Bible** (1568). This revision of the **Great Bible** came about because Anglican ecclesiastics were annoyed by the popularity of the **Geneva Bible** and so those bishops argued for a Bible to be used in church. Most of the translators were bishops, and they designed this Bible to be a "safe" version for public reading; hence **baptism** instead of **immersion**, a practice the **King James** translators followed. It is a better translation than the **Great Bible** and far less radically Calvinistic than the **Geneva Bible**. There were about nineteen bishops on the translation committee and only nineteen editions were ever published.

Study Questions

1. From what background languages was "English" born?
2. List the Anglo-Saxon Bibles. What lessons can one learn from such productions as pertains to a Bible for the "common" man?
3. Since some early Bible translators were also kings, what can be deduced about government and religion in those days?
4. What obstacles were faced, even early in history, by those trying to produce Bibles for all to read?
5. What external language so influenced Anglo-Saxon that "middle English" was born?
6. From a good ecclesiastical history book, find John Wyclif and describe his life and work.
7. What, can one surmise, caused so much fear and anger in the papacy and generally in Catholicism whenever the Bible was mentioned or translated?
8. What was the most popular middle English Bible? Discuss its history.
9. Why is the English Bible's history traced here?
10. What Bible was carried on the Mayflower? Why?

CHAPTER NINE – RHEIMS – DOUAY AND THE CATHOLIC BIBLES

Introduction

While Protestants were making English translations in Briton, exiled Roman Catholics were impelled to make one for themselves around 1558, following Mary Tudor's death (the Catholic Queen who persecuted as many Protestants as she could). Elizabeth I ended the persecution of Protestants, but then persecuted and exiled Catholics. Some of those Catholics emigrated to Spanish Flanders and a process of education and translation began.

Rheims-Douay

In 1568, at the town of Douay in then Spanish Flanders, exiled Catholics founded an English College whose purpose was to train priests. The founder of that school was one William Allen who had served as a "canon" to Queen Mary of Tudor in Briton. Allen served as the school president until the college was moved to Rheims, France in 1578. The new president was Richard Bristow who was a graduate of Douay (1569). William Allen had been called to Rome where he was elevated to "Cardinal." Oddly, in 1593 the college of Rheims would be moved back to Douay.

After William Allen arrived in Rome, he sent a letter to a professor at Rheims-Douay college in 1578 in which epistle Allen expressed the feelings of the Catholic church toward the new English (low German and middle) translations from the **Latin** Vulgate. The New Cardinal exclaimed that Catholic priests were having trouble using English in the Mass, but the "heretics" (Protestants, K.M.) were able to use these "spurious" English Bibles and were making many converts among the Catholics. The priests, William Allen felt, needed him and other scholars to give them a version in their own tongue. After sending the letter and thinking about the assumed need for such a translation, "Cardinal" Allen asked the Pope for permission to make a Catholic-English translation.

The **Rheims-Douay** or **Douay-Rheims** Bible was completed in 1582 by one Gregory Martin who died in 1582. Martin had a Master of Arts from Oxford University (a Protestant school) acquired in 1564, but he renounced Protestantism and emigrated to Douay in 1570 where he was made a lecturer on the Bible and the Hebrew language. The New Testament notes that denigrate Protestants are the work of William Allen and Richard Bristow. An assistant to Gregory Martin was William Reynolds who had also renounced Protestantism and had become a Catholic.

Rheims-Douay: An Evaluation

The judgment here is that this Bible is a poor English rendition. The translators believed that Latin was "God's language" (based on Jerome's "dream" that God had spoken to Jerome in Latin about producing the Vulgate) and the Rheims-Douay based on the Vulgate is actually a translation of a translation.

The Rheims-Douay is a polemic Bible designed to attack Protestantism. The notes are biased by Catholic doctrinal positions and are belittling of Protestant beliefs. The Rheims-Douay New Testament was republished from Douay in 1600 as the college had returned there because of a change in the political climate of the time.

The new publisher in 1600 was Thomas Worthington, another Oxford scholar turned Catholic. Worthington had earned a Doctor of Divinity degree from the **Jesuit** University in Treer, France in 1588. Worthington was then the third president at Douay and being a Jesuit scholar was highly motivated to "war" on Protestantism. (See below about the Jesuits.) A new publication of the Old Testament was delayed in 1600 because of a lack of finances and because some new editions of the Vulgate (1582-1609) were being produced. The Rheims-Douay republished Old Testament finally appeared on the scene in 1610, but it came under heavy criticism because of its lack of true, scholarly translation.

The Rheims-Douay Old Testament contained excessive Latinisms because the scholars were guarding against using too much of that vulgar, English vernacular. There are added polemic notes, of course, against the Protestants and seven of the Apocrypha are interspersed as if they were inspired, canonical books. Gregory Martin began the Old Testament; William Allen and Richard Bristow worked on it; Thomas Worthington, apparently, added the polemic notes.

The Old Testament text of the Rheims-Douay is based on the Louvain Vulgate, which had been published in 1547. The **Louvain Vulgate** is exactly like a later Latin Bible published as the **Sixtine-Clement** in 1592 which edition, obviously, bore the names of two people. The notes in the Louvain Vulgate are in agreement with the edicts of the Catholic "Council of Trent" (1546-63) and so are those in the 1600 Rheims-Douay. The Rheims-Douay's New Testament did influence the King James translators by compelling them to a better translation

in answer to the Catholic attacks, but the Rheims-Douay Old Testament had no effect on the King James translation committees.

The Jesuits

The founder of the Jesuit "order" in Catholicism was Ignatius Loyola, a Spaniard. His followers are credited with "saving" the Catholic church from a Protestant takeover during the late sixteenth century. Loyola, who is "canonized" in Catholicism as Saint Ignatius, had been a soldier serving under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella (of Christopher Columbus fame) in a war against Spanish Muslims. Ignatius' literary work, **Spiritual Exercises**, which he wrote after that "holy war" is the basis for the 1850 doctrine of papal infallibility. Catholicism would become more fanatical and far less tolerant of other religions, especially Protestantism, because of Ignatius Loyola's militant teachings. (There are several Loyola Universities in America including one in Chicago, one in New Orleans, and one in Marymount, California.) The Jesuits, following Ignatius' militant challenges in "exercising" spirituality, pleaded with the Pope to be allowed to "capture" the Protestant colleges and universities and to be allowed to weed out all the heretics' books of instruction and anything else injurious to Catholicism. (One might well view the Jesuit order as the military arm of the Vatican.)

The Jesuits at Douay and at Rheims are responsible for the Catholic version of the Bible discussed here. One can well imagine, now, why this "Douay" version is so bent on attacking Protestantism. One has written that the Jesuits insisted that their Bible had been launched to "destroy Tyndale's English version" (Lindell, pp. 232-233). The Jesuit-led Council of Trent mentioned above decided, among other things, to condemn:

1. The Bible as insufficient for salvation for it was impious to place the Bible on the same level as apostolic tradition (i.e Catholic, tradition, K.M.).
2. Those who denied the canonicity of the Apocrypha are "heretics." (Which books are inaccurate, filled with error, and contradictory of the Bible, K.M. See volume two in this series.)
3. All English translations, including the error-filled Vulgate; for all scripture must be studied in the original languages. (The Council, as is Catholicism's history, was seeking to keep the Bible from all but their clergy.)
4. All who studied the Bible without the direction of a priest. (This was the purpose, also, of the Jesuit produced Rheims-Douay; that is, to undermine the Bible for all peoples for all time, K.M.)

Catholic Universities In Europe

The English-speaking colleges run by Catholics in Europe not only desired to undermine the Bible for the common man, but they were also designed to prepare priests to re-enter Britain. As has been noted, the prominent Jesuit seminary was at Douay-Rheims, and the taught attitude of those priests is well expressed in the preface to the "Douay" version which states that those portions of the Bible should be memorized which "made most against the heretics." **The King James Version will be the answer to this Catholic attack.**

Revised Editions

The revised edition of the **Rheims-Douay** is called the **Challoner** version (1749-50). Richard Challoner was a Catholic bishop in London, England and his work is a nearly new translation since he was trying to keep up with the popularity of the King James Version.

There were two earlier revisions of the "Douay" New Testament. One was completed in 1718 and published by an Irish scholar named Cornelius Nary which translation he based on the Vulgate and the second complete Bible was published by Robert Whitam, the president of Douay Publications. Also a revised Douay New Testament, which Challoner used, came out in 1738; but Challoner's is a complete revision of the Old and New Testaments completed in 1750 with an Old Testament revision following in 1753.

The Confraternity

The first **official** Catholic Bible in America, oddly, was not the Rheims-Douay, but the **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine** version. But, this latter Bible was not the first Catholic version ever to be brought to the Americans for that accomplishment belongs to a large edition of the "Douay" Old Testament brought from Europe in 1790. That "Douay" Old Testament followed Challoner's revisions and carries the distinction of being the first English Bible of any land to be published in the brand new United States of America. (In 1860, one William Kenrick published a six-volume revision of the "Douay" Bible which Kenrick claimed was translated from Hebrew and Greek. The sad fact is, Kenrick lied.)

In 1936 one Edward Arbez and twenty-eight other Catholic scholars who were all members of the "Catholic Biblical Association of the Episcopal Commission of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" got together to produce a new Catholic Bible. Working from the Rheims-Douay and the original language, the Confraternity Council removed archaic expressions, used American spelling, removed many polemic footnotes, and published

the New Testament which was sent out by the **Saint Anthony Guild Press** in 1941 and carried around the world by Catholic soldiers in World War II. The Bible bears the imprimatur of the Pope as an "official" Catholic Bible in America. The papal encyclical announcing the officialness of the New Testament was the **Divinio Afflante Spiritu** (1943) from Pope Pius. The Old Testament, as of this writing, is still in process.

Ronald Knox

The **official** Catholic Bible in Great Britain is known as the "Ronald Knox" Version. After the papal encyclical of 1943 authorizing translation to use the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, Ronald Knox (using the **Sixtine-Clement** Latin version of the Vulgate [1592]) began to make his translation. He did not use the better texts the Confraternity Council had used nor did Knox work from the originals. His Bible is inferior in quality of translation and accuracy to the Confraternity.

Summary

Although the Bibles used by Catholics in England today are called "Douay" versions, they are actually Bibles that resemble the Challoner revisions. Some have tried to compare the **English Revised Version** 1881 (see chapter eleven) and the "Douay", but the latter is based solely on the Vulgate and Old Latin versions (see addendum below).

Note especially what has been said in this chapter. One thousand years passed from the time of Latin versions to the time of confrontations between Latin versions and Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The Vulgate yielded before the **Testus Receptus** (Erasmus' Greek text) and this is the reason the Jesuits entered the field of translation. But, the King James Version will transcend even the efforts of the Jesuits and their **Rheims-Douay** version. Attempts to keep on revising the Douay have not been successful, either, in overcoming the popularity of the King James.

Addendum

Some Bible historians speak of Latinisms in the Bible as "Jerome's Jumble." Especially is Jerome accused of translating the Greek **monogenes** as **sunegenitos** or "only begotten" (cf. John 3:16) thus creating the wrong idea of the Greek term when that word just means **unique** or **only**. However, the manuscript evidence mitigates against the idea that Jerome's work on the Vulgate caused the problem.

It is generally agreed that as Christianity spread the Syriac (common or Peshitta, Aramaic) and Latin versions were the first to be produced. Translations in Syriac and Latin can be dated to the latter half of the second century and those Latin manuscripts are designated as "Old Latin" (not meaning the Vulgate of the late fourth century). The Old Latin manuscripts originated in North Africa, and all of these versions translate **monogenes** with **sunegenitos**.

Cyprian, bishop in Carthage, wrote numerous tracts and letters filled with scripture quotations using an African Old Latin text. Codex Bobbiensis (k) is a surviving copy of the Old Latin Bible Cyprian used. The codex retains a fragment of Matthew and Mark and is kept in a library in Turin, Italy. Codex Palatinus (e); Codex Floriacensis (h) are also akin to African Old Latin and this type of Bible was possibly used by Jerome in the production of the Vulgate. Some feel Jerome "reluctantly added" the Apocrypha of these Old Latin Bibles to his Vulgate (Geisler, p. 233).

The European Old Latin Bibles such as Codex Colbertrianus (c); Codex Vercellensis (a); Codex Veronensis (b); and Codex Vindobonensis (i) are late Bibles from the fourth century to the ninth and not used by Jerome. Although these Codexes are labelled European because of where they were found, for the most part they are copies of the African Old Latin.

The Vulgate

Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (340-420) was born in Dalmatia. He was trained in Latin to age twelve, then traveled to Rome to study more Latin, Greek, pagan authors, etcetera until he was twenty. At age nineteen "Jerome" became a "Christian(?)" after he had a dream of judgment in which he was rebuked by God-in-Latin. Jerome studied Hebrew, starting when he was thirty-four. The Hebrew study lasted five years. In 382 Jerome was sent to Rome as secretary to the pope where he was commissioned to produce a new Latin version.

Jerome claimed that he translated the New Testament from the Greek, and he revised the Vulgate Old Testament using the Septuagint as a guide. Jerome's work on the New Testament was so hasty it became confused in people's minds with the Old Latin versions and multitudes since have referred to the Vulgate as "Old Latin." By A.D. 405 the Vulgate was completed. The Vulgate differs from English versions in the order of the books, verse numbering, and the amount of material since Jerome tended to interpret rather than translate. (In some Vulgate manuscripts a spurious "Epistle to the Laodiceans" has been added.)

Conclusion

Catholic Bibles, especially in the footnotes, were initially designed to attack Protestantism. These Bibles are not generally popular among the masses.

Study Questions

1. Why does one Catholic Bible bear the name "Douay Version?"
2. What three Catholic scholars developed the "Douay" Bible?
3. What constrained Catholics to desire a new version?
4. Why are there so many "Latinisms" in the "Douay" version?
5. Did the Catholic scholars working on the "Douay" Bible use the available Hebrew and Greek manuscripts? Why or why not?
6. What Protestant Bible was the "answer" to the "Douay" Version?
7. Explain the ideas of the Jesuit order. The Jesuits influenced the Council of _____ and the _____ Bible.
8. The Council of Trent condemned several things. List four.
9. Discuss the revised editions of the "Douay" and discuss the first official Catholic Bible in America.
10. What text has superceded the "Douay" in popular usage?

CHAPTER TEN – THE KING JAMES VERSION: MATTHEW 24:35

Introduction

One has written that the translators of the 1611 King James Version somehow "preserved what was good in the earlier translations, with the result that the language of our English Bible is not the language of the age in which the translators lived, but in its grand simplicity stands out in contrast to the ornate and often affected diction of the time" (Fuller, p. 244). Certainly, even though it has passed through several revisions (at least eight), the King James Bible has existed as a popular Bible for nearly four hundred years. As the various sects of Protestantism began to use the same translations of the Bible, that movement became somewhat more unified. Then in 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I of England (1603-25). James summoned a conference of churchmen and theologians (1604) to discuss things amiss in the Anglican church. The conference became the catalyst for the formation of the King James Bible (KJV).

KJV: It's Birth

The age in which the KJV was born was not struck by any rush of industrial or mechanical achievements; however, linguistic scholarship was at its peak. One hundred and fifty years of printing, for example, had allowed Jewish Rabbis to place at the disposal of scholars the treasures of the Hebrew tongue. Many Protestant scholars were becoming aware that the Masoretic (vowelpointed) Hebrew Old Testament was substantially a correct copy handed down from earlier scribal periods. (See chapter four in this series.)

The King James translators could thus turn to Hebrew scholars such as Buxtorf of Basle, Switzerland for information on the Hebrew Old Testament. The Greek New Testament used by the King James committee was essentially Erasmus' 1516 edition that had been formerly used by Stephens (1550); Beza (1598); and Elzevir (1600). Erasmus' edition of 1522 has been called the "Textus Receptus" since those times. One wrote of the "Textus Receptus" that, "It should be stated at once that the Textus Receptus is not a bad text. It is not a heretical text. It is substantially correct" (A.T. Robertson, p. 21). Robertson added: "Erasmus seemed to feel that he had published the original Greek New Testament as it was written ... and Erasmus' third edition (1522) became the **Textus Receptus** in England since Stephens (1550) used it in his translation work" (Ibid., pp. 18-19). There were 3,300 copies of Erasmus' first two editions circulated and his testament would remain a standard for about threehundred more years.

KJV: Its Language

The condition of the English language in 1611 is little noted by those who find some perverse delight in denigrating the KJV. English, then, was general, simple, and words had generic meanings. Therefore, that English was well-suited to be the receptor language for the Hebrew and common Greek donor languages. Since 1611, however, vast additions in vocabulary have been made to the English so that several words may now be necessary to convey the same meaning conveyed by one word in 1611. It is much more difficult, today, to translate into English from the broad, generic, simple vocabularies of the ancient Hebrew and Greek tongues than it was in 1611.

It must, however, be duly noted here that the King James translators labored under the mistaken notion that the Greek was not common, everyday language. Not knowing such a fact, however, does not seem to have been a huge obstacle for those translators, for the Greek of the New Testament, whatever they thought it was, is a broad, generic, simple language as was English in 1611.

KJV: 1611

In January of 1604, James I of England called together numerous ecclesiastics to the Hampton Court Conference in response to a petition (the Millenary Petition) from the Puritans listing a number of grievances. The Puritan leader, John Reynolds, was calling for an authorized English version of the Bible that would be acceptable to all Christian parties. King James cared little for such Puritans; was rude to them at the conference; but James approved of such a conference simply because he thought he could become a popular peacemaker in his realm. The Puritan's petition also called for correction of the various abuses of the Anglican clergy, especially concerning revenues. One has written that a very primary impetus for a new Protestant Bible had also come from the printing of the Rheims-Douay Catholic text. That Catholic Bible had challenged Protestantism at its very core and had "stung the sensibilities and the scholarship of Protestants. In the preface of that Bible (Rheims-Douay, K.M., see chapter nine) there was criticism and belittling of Anglicans and all other Protestants. The Puritans felt that the corrupted version of the Rheimists was spreading poison among the people even as formerly withholding the Bible,

Rome had starved the people" (Fuller, p. 249).

James approved of a new version. He could be a hero in his new realm and he could replace the **Bishop's Bible** and the **Geneva Bible**. James believed he was appointed by God, not by the Bishops who taught that there was no king without the bishops. James could replace their Bible and undermine their efforts at authority. And, since the conservative James detested the notes in the **Geneva Bible**, it would be gone also. Therefore, for political more than spiritual reasons, King James I of England called for a version that would "embody the best in the existing versions and which could be read both in public worship and in homes" (Fuller, p. 250).

Six committees were assigned consisting of fifty-four scholars, seven of whom did no actual translating work. Two groups met at Cambridge to revise 1 Chronicles through Ecclesiastes and the Apocrypha. Two committees met at Oxford to revise Isaiah through Malachi, the Gospel accounts, Acts and Revelation. At Westminster the two groups worked on Genesis through 2 Kings and Romans through Jude. Each committee was given specific instructions on which text to use if there were differences from the **Bishop's Bible**. Sometimes Tyndale's or Matthew's or Coverdale's would be followed.

The ecclesiastical language of the KJV comes from the influence of the **Bishop's Bible** which was influenced by the Rheims' (Catholic) New Testament. This is the reason **baptidzo** is transliterated as baptism instead of translated as immersion. (Some have perpetuated the hoax that since King James was not immersed the King James translators were afraid to translate the Greek.) No marginal notes were affixed except where a Hebrew or Greek term needed explanation and Latinisms were reintroduced (as in the **Geneva Bible**) but were classified. The King James New Testament often departs from Tyndale's, but the **English Revised** (1881) and the **American Standard** (1901) often return to those ancient renderings.

KJV: Scholarship

Some have questioned the scholarly abilities of the KJV translators, but Melancthon's Latin grammar was universally used until 1734; Beza (Calvin's co-worker) and Carwright are scholars still researched and quoted today and one translator had such skill in fifty languages "that had he been present at the confusion of tongues at Babel, he might have served as Interpreter General" (McClure, p. 87). Another wrote concerning the sources the KJV translators used, that "on the whole, the differences in the matter of the sources available in AD. 390, 1590, and 1890 are not very serious" (Jacobus, p. 41).

In 1611 the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrian uncials were still unknown. One has commented on this paucity of early manuscripts then available: "That Textus Receptus was taken in the first instance, from late cursive manuscripts, but its readings (for the KJV, K.M.) are maintained only so far as they agree with the best ancient versions ... that is, of the manuscripts possessed by the KJV translators, the majority agreed with the Textus Receptus. The few they did not use belonged to a group that have all the textual problems of the Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus. That is, the King James translators opposed including the variations adopted in 1881" (Cook, p. 226). Another wrote that, "The popular notion seems to be that we are indebted for our knowledge of the true texts of scripture entirely to the existing uncials; and that the essence of the secret dwells with the four or five oldest of these uncials. By consequence, it is popularly supposed since we are possessed of such uncial copies, we could dispense with the testimony of the cursives altogether. A more complete misconception of the facts of the case can hardly be imagined. For the plain truth is that all the phenomena exhibited by the uncial manuscripts are reproduced in the cursives" (Burgan-Miller, p. 202). Another said, "Our experience among the Greek cursives proves to us that transmission has not been careless, and they do represent a wholesome traditional text in the passages involving doctrine" (Hoskier, p. 416).

The KJV translators seem to have used excellent materials, as seen above, and certainly risked their lives to produce the version. They were neither frivolous nor careless scholars. One historian, discussing the kind of ecclesiastical "scholarship" in today's world expressed his regrets at the shallow frivolity of modern translation efforts but then exclaimed that "no such weakness was manifested in the scholarship of the Reformers" (Cheyne, pp. 58-59). Note the following from the 1921 **Ladies Home Journal**: "Priests, Atheists, skeptics, devotees, agnostics, and evangelists all generally agree that the Authorized Version (KJV, K.M.) of the English Bible is the best example of English literature that the world has ever seen ... Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive nor elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a substitute. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible ... ! thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible ... Now, as the English speaking people have the best Bible in the world, and as it is the most beautiful monument erected with the English alphabet, we ought to make the most of it; for it is an incomparably rich inheritance, free to all who can read. This means that we ought invariably in the church and on public occasions use the Authorized Version; all others are inferior" (Dr. William

Lyon Phelps, Professor of English Literature, Yale University from Fuller, p. 260). Sentiment aside, the foregoing professor did know good translation when he read it!

KJV: Authorized?

Strictly speaking, the KJV was never officially authorized by state or church. The preface does read: "Appointed to be read in the Churches," but no such formal pronouncement ever came from James I or the Anglican bishops.

Three editions appeared the very first year of publication. Those folio Bibles were initially sixteen inches by ten and one-half inches in size. Later editions were smaller. One edition became known as the "Wicked" Bible because it omitted not from "thou shalt not commit adultery." Another edition took on the sobriquet "Vinegar" Bible because a chapter heading of Luke 20 had **vinegar** instead of **vineyard** and another misprint caused one edition to be labeled the "Murderers" Bible because **filled** became **killed** in "Let the children first be filled" (Mark 7:27). Usher's speculative dates were added to the revisional work (in the margins) in 1701 and have remained. Revisions since (up to a twenty-first century KJV) have attempted to correct spellings and archaic wordings.

KJV: Some Things To Know

At Matthew 12:40 the KJV has **whale** but the original means a "great fish" or "sea monster." Holy **Ghost** is used in many places, but Holy **Spirit** is the meaning (cf. Acts 2:4). Ghost meant **guest** in 1611. There is no if in the Greek text of Hebrews 6:6, but the KJV has it and there is no reason to insert this word.

The term **conversation** in the KJV is from a word meaning "manner of life" not a term meaning talking with each other. **Prevent** meant to **go before** in 1611 (cf. 1 Thess. 4:15). The wording "let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor. 10:24) in the Greek reads: "but each the other's good." A listing follows of several archaic words and their meanings:

Anathema - (1 Cor. 16:22) - Accursed.

Anon - (Matt. 13:20; Mark 1:30) - Immediately, at once.

Assay - (Acts 9:26; 16:7; Heb. 11:29) To attempt, try.

Bishopric - (Acts 1:20) - Office.

Comely - (1 Cor. 7:35; 11:13) - Becoming, suitable, proper.

Conversation - (Phil. 3:20; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Cor. 1:12) - Citizenship, conduct, behaved.

Corban - (Mark 7:11) - Given to God, a gift to God.

Easter - (Acts 12:4) - Passover.

Jewry - (Luke 23:5; John 7:1) - Judea.

Keep Under - (1 Cor. 9:27) - Discipline, buffet.

Lade - (Luke 11:46) - Load.

Maranatha - (1 Cor. 16:22) - O Lord, come.

Quaternions - (Acts 12:4) - Squads (4 persons).

Rabboni - (John 20:16) - Teacher.

Raca - (Matt. 5:22) - Worthless, empty.

Scrip - (Matt. 10:10; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3) - Bag, wallet.

Shamefacedness - (1 Tim. 2:9) - Propriety, modesty.

Swaddling clothes - (Luke 2:7, 12) - Clothes used for infants.

Talitha cumi - (Mark 5:41) - Little girl, damsel.

Untoward - (Acts 2:40) - Crooked, perverse.

Vain jangling - (1 Tim. 1:6) - Idle talk.

Note here that a good Bible dictionary is necessary to understand any text, but some things that are hard to understand in the KJV follow:

1. I **trow** not – (Luke 17:9) – To think, I think not.

2. He **purgeth** it, that it may bring more fruit (John 15:2) – He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3. I know nothing **by myself**; yet am I not hereby justified –(I Cor. 4:4) – I know nothing against myself, yet, I am not justified by this.

4. Ye are not **straitened** in us, but ye are **straitened** in your own **bowels** – (2 Cor. 6:12) – You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

5. Not to boast in **another man's line** of things made ready to our hand – (2 Cor. 10:16) – Not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment, or not to glory in another's province in regard of things ready to our hand.
6. And from thence we **fetch'd a compass** – (Acts 28:13) – And from thence we made a circuit -- or from there we circled around.
7. Children or **nephews** – (I Tim. 5:4) – Children or grandchildren.
8. We took up our **carriages** – (Acts 21:15) – We took up our baggage; or we packed.
9. (but was **let hereto**) – (Rome 1:13) – (and was hindered hitherto) or (but was hindered until now).
10. Jesus **prevented** him – (Matt. 17:25) – Jesus spake first to him, or Jesus anticipated him.
11. For some with **conscience of the idol** unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol. – (I Cor. 8:7) – Question: Does an idol have a conscience? – But some being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol.
12. For thy speech **bewrayeth** thee – (Matt 26:73) – For your speech betrays you, or for thy speech maketh thee known. (**Bewrayeth** – to make, manifest, evident “maketh thee manifest”.)

Three additional things one might keep in mind when studying from the KJV are: (1) A mistranslation at Acts 3:19, which should be “repent and **turn**” not “repentand be converted.” Salvation is not passive on man's part. (2) An incomplete translation at 1 Corinthians 16:2 which reads in the Greek, **kata macan sabbatou** or “on the first day of every week.” (3) The KJV translators placed **eth** on the end of the present tense verbs indicating continuous action which is a very helpful aid to a Bible student.

A comment is given here on the word, **Easter**, at Acts 12:4. The term did not mean bunnies, baskets, and eggs in 1611 but did indicate a certain time of the spring when **Passover** took place. The original language indicates the Passover of spring. No KJV translator would have had in mind, however, the modern holiday. Also, in the KJV the terms **hades** and **hell** are not handled consistently, however the KJV translators were thoughtful enough to tell the reader when a word was added by italicizing it.

Conclusion

The KJV is not perfect, but it is very useful as a **standard** Bible. It has the distinction of being in use for nearly four centuries and was translated by men who revered God's Word. It is highly recommended here as a study Bible.

Study Questions

1. What were some of the compelling reasons that English speaking people desired a new translation in the late sixteenth century?
2. Discuss James I's role in the birth of the KJV.
3. Why was there nearly an exact "fit" of the Hebrew, Greek, and English languages in 1611?
4. What materials were available to the KJV translators?
5. What was James I's attitude toward the **Bishop's Bible** and the **Geneva Bible**? Why?
6. Why is the term **baptidzo** (Greek) transliterated to baptism in the KJV?
7. How scholarly were the KJV translators?
8. Was the KJV actually authorized?
9. Are there any word problems in the KJV? What are some of them?
10. A **standard** Bible is one done by a committee, which committee has given every effort to follow the original and has not placed theological bias in the text. What about the KJV? What text do you use?

CHAPTER ELEVEN – ENGLISH REVISED – AMERICAN STANDARD

ENGLISH REVISED 1881 and 1901

Introduction

The American Standard Version, the outgrowth of American participation in the revision project that produced the RV (1881-85), may be thought of as an American edition of that version (the English RV, KM.) rather than an independent one" (Lewis, p. 69). The English Revised Version of 1881, thus, is the "first cousin" to the 1901 American Standard Version.

A motion to produce a new version of the Bible, in English, was made in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury on February 20, 1870. A translation committee of Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Unitarians was formed who, while "openly acknowledging the charm and merit of the KJV, ... envisioned a minimal revision in order to bring the English Bible into harmony with the original texts" (Lewis, p. 69). The translators, however, would make 5,788 changes to the underlying Greek text known as the **Valerium Edition of the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**, first published in 1880, which Greek Testament was used by the English revision committee. The English revisers were given specific instructions for translating so that as literal a work could be produced as possible. In the end, the KJV's archaic elements were emended in 36,191 places.

During the summer of 1870, the English invited American participation in the project. The British negotiator, Joseph Angus, worked with the American, Phillip Schaff, to prepare a list of rules to be followed along with a list of the names of possible American participants. (Schaff reported that in deciding on who should be chosen as translators, he considered scholarship first and denominational affiliation second. He also emphasized geographical location trying to ensure that a chosen translator could attend the meetings.) The group chosen represented nine denominations: Baptist, Congregationalist, Dutch Reformed, Friends, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Unitarian. The American translating committee was organized on December 7, 1871 at the "Bible House" in New York City, beginning work there on October 4, 1872.

The Object Of The Translators

The goal of the English and American translators seems to have been to make, what they considered a good Bible (the KJV) better, more accurate, and more consistent in terms of the biblical scholarship of that day. Interestingly, "1 in the ten and one-half years the British revision required (1870-81, K.M.), the British and American companies did not meet together to discuss their results" (Lewis, p. 71). The British work would be mailed to the Americans who would return the materials along with American suggestions. The first two English revisions were sent to the States in the foregoing manner, but the third was not and for an American suggestion about some word to be used or change to be made, two-thirds of the English committee had to agree. (At the time there were just nineteen on the American committee who received no compensation for their work which effort took place over twenty-nine years [1872-1901].) Each American translator did receive ten copies of the memorial edition of the American Standard (1901) to give to his friends.

When the ERV was completed in 1881, an appendix was included which listed what the English considered to be the most important American preferences with another one-thousand suggestions included in the text or margin (Riddle, p. 24). No one Greek text was accepted by the ERV, New Testament revisions. The English did follow the Westcott-Hort Greek text (based on the oldest uncials), but just as often used the Greek New Testament formulated by Tregelles for at least one English translator, Scrivener, opposed the use of the Westcott-Hort text (Lewis, p. 71). As far as the American committee, "According to Riddle, no member of that committee personally endorsed the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism" (Lewis, p. 71). British views of translation were **often** accepted by the Americans and when the ASV was finally prepared few judgments of the original American company were used.

A Problem

"According to notes preserved in a memorandum of Dr. Phillip Schaff by his son (David S. Schaff, **Life of Phillip Schaff**, 1897, pp. 381-82) the committee members disagreed over the extent of the projected American appendix to the British work" (Lewis, p. 72). The British met on July 7, 1880 and decided to reduce the size of the list of American suggestions and to head the New Testament appendix with, "List of Readings and Renderings Preferred by the American Committee Recorded at Their Desire" (Lewis, p. 73). Implied, then, in the British

edition was that the list included all that the Americans wanted changed, which event caused the American committee to clamor for a home-land edition. The American committee made no formal, public protest to the British so as not to affect the sales of the English revision of 1881. The Americans also had to agree, because of copyright legalities, to wait fourteen years before publishing a rival edition. The American Standard Version did not appear, however, until twenty years later long after Phillip Schaff died (1893) leaving T. Dwight, J.H. Thayer, and M.B. Riddle, as the New Testament committee heads and G.E. Day, J. DeWitt, C.M. Mead, (YoL 3) and H. Osgood to head the Old Testament company. Thomas Nelson and Sons received the copyrights in 1897 and on June 24, that same year work began on the final American Version which went on sale August 26, 1901.

Differences: ERV and ASV with KJV

The ERV and ASV translators preferred using who and whom instead of which when referring to persons. The "wot" and "wist" of the KJV are "know" and "knew" in the ASV-ERV versions which latter texts also use **Jehovah** instead of Lord. As in the Tyndale, Coverdale, and Geneva Bible, the ERV-ASV translators use **love** instead of **charity** (KJV) in translating the Greek term **agape**. (The opinion here is that the word **love** as used today poorly translates **agape** and that **charity** is a better choice.)

The ASV translators removed more of the archaisms found in the KJV than did the ERV committees. However, the ASV-ERV translators do a far superior job of translating "tempt" in the KJV as **trial**, especially when the context is concerning wrong doing. Because the ERV-ASV translators somewhat followed the Westcott-Hort text, Acts 8:37 found in the KJV is missing in the ASV. (For further facts in this area, see below under "Things To Know About The ASV.")

Opponents And Friends

The chief opponent of the English revision efforts was "Dean" John Bergan, whose book, **The Revision Revisited**, greatly criticized the work of the ERV committee. Bergan's opposition to the Westcott-Hort theory that the oldest Greek uncials are the best manuscripts has been followed in recent years by D.O. Fuller and Edward Hill who believe that the ASV is inferior in style to the KJV. Charles Spurgeon, in fact, said of the ASV that it was "strong in Greek and weak in English" (Bruce, p. 147).

However, Greek scholars such as F.F. Bruce argue that for English students who know no Greek, the "RV with its marginal references is still the most useful edition" (Bruce, p. 147). Because there does seem to be a difficulty in readability, the ERV never has been very popular in Britain and for the same reason the ASV in America. The ASV did become the "authorized" version of the North Presbyterian denomination, but the same Bible has been rejected by Protestant Episcopalians. Such denominations as the latter (including Methodists) object strangely to rendering **baptidzo** as **immersion** instead of transliterating the Greek term as baptism as the KJV committee had done. These latter denominations practice sprinkling water on infants rather than immersing believing adults.

Lewis thinks that the ASV is a better work than the KJV: "As compared with the KJV, the ASV represents definite improvement in text, in interpretation, in wording, and in typographical form" (p. 79). It seems fair to mention here that the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament was published just **five** days before the ERV New Testament of 1881. The materials for the Westcott-Hort critical work had been made available, in advance, to the English committee and then later to the Americans. Thus, the ERV and ASV cannot be said wholly to follow the Westcott-Hort theories and in several hundred places the ERV-ASV companies do not follow that Greek text. However, sixteen verses in the KJV New Testament thought to be spurious are not in the ERV-ASV but are relegated to the margin. However, the KJV and ERV-ASV Old Testaments are comparable for "The Hebrew text of the ASV is substantially the same as that of the KJV" (Lewis, p. 81). The ASV did drop Usher's dates but places "The Millennial Reign" as the heading for Revelation 20. One has noted concerning the KJV and ASV that "The King James Version of the Bible brought the church to us. It was the translation that gave us the Restoration Movement. The few inaccuracies in translation and obsolete words are not of any great importance but they were well taken care of in the American Revised Version (VoL. 3) of 1901. The 1901 translation is probably the most accurate word for word translation ever made" (Wallace, xv). The Westcott-Hort theory about the oldest uncial manuscripts, although still quite influential, has largely been replaced in modern textual criticism by the Eclectic Principle. In this method each variant in the ancient manuscripts is judged, subjectively, on its own merits in order to determine what the scribe would have likely written. This subjective approach has affected modern efforts at translation since 1945.

Some Things To Know About The ASV

Besides the original committee members who were chosen to work with the British revisors, about one

hundred and one translators can be said to have had a part in producing the 1901 American Standard Version. To many, as noted above, the ASV is known for its nearly literal fidelity to the underlying Greek text used by the translators.

The ASV has some superior emendations of the KJV. At Acts 17:22 Paul is quoted as saying "very religious" as opposed to "too superstitious" (KJV). However, the reading of Acts 26:28, "with but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian" usually causes a debate with those who prefer the KJV's "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And the ASV's "life" at Matthew 6:27 is inferior to "stature" in the KJV. But, the ASV rendering **justice** instead of **judgment** (KJV, Matt. 23:23) is a better reading. (It does seem unusual that both the KJV and ASV render Matthew 5:21; 19:18; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9; and James 2:11 as "Thou shalt not kill" and leave the impression that all killing is prohibited. The original in both testaments means "Thou shalt do no murder.") Too, the ASV took out the "street language" in 1 Samuel 15:22; 2 Kings 18:27, and Isaiah 36:12.

The ASV has a footnote concerning Mark 16:9-20 because the two oldest Greek uncials omitted it although Vaticanus has an exact space left open for it. The footnote 420 KEITH MOSHER reads, "The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse 9 to the end." The Mark passage is in the vast majority of the Greek manuscripts and is authentic. Confidence is shaken only in those who would delete this text! The ASV also relegates the eunuch's confession (Acts 8:37) to a footnote because of those two early uncials and the obsession Westcott-Hort theorists have for them. The context demands a confession.

The ASV leaves out **the** before **faith** in Galatians 2:16 indicating "faith-only" as sufficient to salvation. The KJV has **the** and the Greek text demands it. However, the ASV correctly renders the Greek **hades** as Hades instead of Hell as in the KJV (Acts 2:27; 2:31; Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14).

The ASV has **Passover** in Acts 12:4 instead of **Easter**, but there is some consternation using "**every** scripture" instead of "**all** scripture" (KJV) at 2 Timothy 3:16. To say every might imply to some that not every verse or word is inspired. **Prevent** (KJV) is corrected to **precede** in the ASV (cf. 1 Thess. 4:15) and "peculiar people" to "a people for God's own possession" (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9). The term, **whale**, is in both the ASV and KJV at Matthew 12:40, and for some reason the ASV has bridles in a horse's mouth instead of **bits** (KJV, James 3:3).

Names of money, weights, and measures in the ASV are unfamiliar to American readers and require the use of a Bible dictionary to interpret. Too, several archaic terms not known today remain in the ASV: Quaternions (Acts 12:4, soldiers); concision (Phil. 3:2, cut-off or mutilate); shambles (1 Cor. 10:25, meat market); draught (Matt. 15:17; Mark 7:19, a sink or drain); shamefastness (1 Tim. 2:9, a sense of shame, modesty); raca (Matt. 5:22, empty, useless); mammon (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:9, 11, money, riches, treasure); maranatha (1 Cor. 16:22, Lord come); must needs (Luke 14:18; 21:9, must go or must come); would fain (Luke 13:31 et. al., would gladly, want to); behoove (Luke 24:26, ought); lest haply (Matt. 4:6; 7:6; Luke 4:11, unless); and anathema (1 Cor. 16:22, accursed).

Conclusion

The American Standard of 1901 is a good version of Holy Writ albeit not perfect. However, the ASV is representative of fine scholarship and committee effort. It is quite literal, has not been highly popular, but is a great study Bible for serious English readers.

Study Questions

1. Which came first, the English Revised or the American Standard?
2. What Greek texts were available to the English revision committee?
3. Is it true that the ERV and ASV wholly followed the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament?
4. Why did you answer question three as you did?
5. What can be factually stated about the American Standard and King James' Old Testaments?
6. Why was the ASV not published until 1901 and by whom?
7. Discuss some of the differences between the ERV and ASV.
8. Why did some, such as John Burgan, criticize the then new ASV?
9. What do you think about the ASV's rendering at Acts 26:28?
10. Why is the ASV a very important translation in English?

CHAPTER TWELVE – MODERN VERSIONS PART 1

Introduction

Since the release of the Revised Standard Version New Testament in 1946, a rash of translations has appeared. Those who are faced with the question as to which translation to use should remember that **truth** is always of primary importance (John 17:17; 8:31-32; 2 Peter 1:22; John 12:48). A version chosen, then, must be one that is truth. However, all English translations have some difficulties, therefore the recommendation here is that one choose a Bible translated by a committee and prepared by translators who made a good effort not to allow their biases to inform their interpreting work. Such choices are, at best, subjective, but these last two chapters of this study book are intended to inform the student of any difficulties with a given version. Space forbids covering all the new versions and so the more popular ones often used are considered.

Revised Standard Version

The committee translated New Testament, named the Revised Standard, was published in 1946 with the accompanying Old Testament coming out in 1952. The thirty-two translators were backed by the National Council of the Churches of Christ, a left-leaning denominational group. Although the translators expressly state in the preface that they were not attempting a new translation but a revision of the ASV, the publishers advertised the RSV as a "new translation" (**Christian Century**, February 5, 1947). The revisers did not hesitate to abandon the wording of the ASV, where they deemed such a change to be appropriate, and to revert to the KJV renderings. (The opinion here is that some of the ways the committee changed the KJV wording were unwarranted.) Note here that the RSV mentioned here is 1946-1952. (A new edition purports to remove the masculine wording about God.)

The RSV does not use any method, italics or marginal notes, to inform non-Greek reading students that certain words were added as the ASV and KJV translators did. In the RSV preface the claim is made that thee, thou, thy, and thine are used for deity, but in referring to Christ the translators used you and your their disbelief in Jesus' Deity seems to be the cause of such an obvious denigration of His Deity. (See the addendum at the end of this chapter for the theological backgrounds of three members of the committee.)

The term **almah** is translated **young woman** in Isaiah 7:14, but **parthenos** is **virgin** at Matthew 1:23. There is no contextual reason to assert that the mother of Jesus had a questionable virginity. In fact, the RSV removed the term **firstborn** from Matthew 1:25 and thus implied that Joseph was the actual father.

In the 1946 New Testament Mark 16:9-20 was relegated to a footnote, but later editions replaced the passage and added a marginal note about the difficulty in the two oldest uncial manuscripts. The initial removal of the Markan passage, however, has raised a question about its authenticity until this moment, but replacing the passage in later editions seems an indication that sales of the Bible were the paramount considerations.

At Genesis 12:3, the RSV revisers removed an implied reference to Christ as the seed of Abraham who would bless all nations (Gal. 3:8-19), and completely reworded the end of the verse in Genesis to read, "in thee shall all the families of the earth bless themselves." As the evidence mounts concerning these attempts to remove references to Christ and to denigrate His Deity, one begins to understand that the RSV committee apparently did not believe in a pre-existent Logos who is the Second Person of the Godhead. The RSV omitted **begotten** (John 3:16), which is a virgin-birth reference and changed Luke 2:23 to imply again that Joseph was Jesus' father. In fact, Luke 2:43 is changed from "Joseph and his mother" (as the Greek reads, K.M.) to "his parents." Joseph was **not** Jesus' "parent" (Luke 1:35). The RSV does not deserve the respect the term **standard** implies.

New English Bible

Some scholars give this Bible more acclaim than they do the Revised Standard Version. The vice-chairman and Director of the translating company was C.H. Dodd whose work, **The Authority of the Bible** (1962, Harper) left no doubt as to Dodd's modernistic view of scripture. Dodd thought that the Old Testament writers had imaginations and thoughts of a "high order" (p. 68) but the books were not written by men whose names are on them and that "Moses left us no writings" (p. 36). Dodd compared the New Testament to Platonic philosophy (p. 190) and argued for a Stoic influence on the writers. Nearly all of the objections made above to the Revised Standard Version are leveled here against the New English Bible.

The New English Bible was promoted by the Presbytery of Stirling and Dunbane to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1946 as a "counterpart" to the Revised Standard Version. The Presbytery argued that the "language of the Authorized Version (KJV, K.M.), already archaic when it was made, had now become more

definitely archaic and less generally understood." This latter criticism is still leveled against the King James Version but note the following:

New English Bible Version	King James
Machination	lying in wait
Anxious to ingratiate pleasure	willing to do
Indefatigable in refuting convinced	mightily
Extirpate	destroy
Exasperate	grieve
Patricides and matricides killers	father killers & mother
Inculcating abstinence	commanding to

(Gratitude goes to Roy J. Hearn, deceased, Director for seventeen years of the Memphis School of Preaching for the above chart.)

There are crude colloquialisms in the New English Bible and lewd, base language is found especially at Matthew 1:25; 21:31-32; Luke 2:6; Romans 1:26-27; Galatians 4:12; and Revelation 12:2. (A Matthew 1:16 footnote **makes** Joseph the father of Jesus.) There are omissions in this Bible that have no textual basis in the manuscripts (e.g. Matt. 21:9) and some passages are even rewritten, paraphrased, or just mistranslated.

Today's English Version

(Good News For Modern Man)

The translator of this version was Robert Bratcher. A graduate of Memphis School of Preaching, Gideon Rodriquez, worked with Bratcher to produce a version for the Tagalog speaking people of the Philippines. Brother Rodriquez reported many problems with Bratcher in attempts to stay with the original meanings. Bratcher (**0 Jornal Baptista**, July 9, 1953) wrote that "Jesus Christ could not enjoy omniscience. This is an attribute of God ... Jesus did not claim He and the Father to be one-which would be absurd." Perhaps in his translating work Bratcher missed John 10:30.

In the "Good News" Bible the word blood (**heema** in the Greek, compare **hematology**) is changed to other expressions in twenty places in an attempt to remove the blood-sacrifice or atonement achieved by the Christ. In fifteen other verses the term **blood** is changed to **death**. (At 1 Peter 1:19 **blood** is changed to **sacrifice**.) The term, **death**, removes Christ's actual redeeming work on the Cross and makes His death on a level with all others. (see Matt. 26:28).

The 1968 revision of the "Good News" Bible changed virgin to girl (Isa. 7:14) trying to remove all references to a miraculous conception of Deity and this effort is emphasized at John 1:1 where this Bible reads that the Word was the "same as God" not the "Word was God." The attack on Jesus' Deity is clearly seen at Romans 9:5 where the Bible reads that Jesus is "God blessed forever" but the TEV reads, "And Christ as a human being belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever, Amen." Today's English Version is not, in any sense, a reliable, sound study Bible.

Living Bible Paraphrased

Published in 1967 by Tyndale House, Kenneth Taylor's paraphrase is quite popular among those less serious about an accurate translation. There are different editions or formats of this Bible, but basically the work is a commentary since the revision committee in the preface admitted that "a previous rendering, though valid (in the standards, KJV and ASV, K.M.) should conform to a more standard interpretation." One wonders about a "revision committee" since Taylor did the paraphrasing but one does not wonder about "a more standard interpretation," which confession means that the translator(s?) was not concerned with accuracy but with his (their) doctrine. O.T.

Allis wrote about those who do not accurately render the Holy Spirit's intended meaning in the original: "The result is the introducing of many innovations which are quite unnecessary and even dangerous because not seldom they alter not merely the diction and phrasing but also the meaning of familiar passages of scripture. There is a great difference in the accurate rendering of what the Greek says and an attempt to give the meaning of what the Greek says in another language. The one is translation, the other is paraphrase or interpretation. The only reason for the enduring popularity of the Authorized Version (KJV, K.M.) lies in the fact that it is primarily and pervasively an accurate translation of the original Greek" (from Wallace, p. 577).

The **Living Bible Paraphrased** has changed the meanings of hundreds of verses including Genesis 1:1 and infinitum. Original sin is taught at Psalm 51:5 as "But I was born a sinner." The King James has, "I was shapen in iniquity;" that is, my mother sinned and I was conceived. (Note Eph. 2:3 in the LBP - "We started out being bad, being born with evil natures." The Bible says that "by nature we were the children of wrath." That is by **phusis** (nature) which in Eph. 2:3 means habit or **second nature** achieved by long-standing practice not by being born such.)

Premillennialism, a favorite Kenneth Taylor doctrine, is inserted wherever possible in the LBP. For example, Taylor rewrote 2 Timothy 4:1 to read, "And so I solemnly charge you before God and before Jesus Christ; who will some day judge the living and dead when he appears to set up his kingdom." The Bible reads, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." The phrase "and his kingdom" is a direct object (accusative case in the Greek, K.M.) of **judge**. The kingdom or church will be judged at His second coming not be established as Taylor wrote. Taylor got so carried away with his premillennial obsession that he not only rewrote Isaiah 2:1-4, he added the line that "in those days the world will be ruled from Jerusalem!" Isaiah, referring to Pentecost (Acts 2) not to the second coming, had written "for out of Zion shall go forth the law," meaning that Messiah's law or gospel would start in Jerusalem and spread to the world (Acts 1:8).

Taylor believed in "faith alone" for salvation and inserted the phrase whenever he could. At Romans 4:12, in the LBP, one reads that Abraham found favor with God by "faith alone." (See also Rom. 4:9 in LBP, etcetera.) Taylor perverted so many verses that it is hard to decide what to comment here, but the plan of salvation, clearly, cannot be found in this Bible. Note Taylor's rendition of 1 Peter 3:21, "(That by the way is what baptism pictures for us: In baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom by the resurrection of Christ; not because our bodies are washed clean by the water [Note now the following contradiction to Taylor's rendering of the first part of the verse, K.M.] but because in baptism we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin.") Amazingly, Taylor writes at Acts 2:38 that baptism is "for the forgiveness of your sins," but he then perverts the end of this verse by adding that one receives "this gift, the Holy Spirit."

Taylor's view of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit also caused him to change passages. Taylor interprets Romans 8:16 to mean, "For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts, and tells us that we really are God's children." The Bible reads that, "The Spirit itself beareth witness **with** (bold for emphasis, K.M.) our spirit, that we are the children of God." Note that the Holy Spirit's witness is **along with** the human spirit, or, in other words, **external** to the human's spirit. A human soul, studying the Holy Spirit's message (Eph. 6:17), has the Spirit's "witness" or "word" on whether or not that human soul belongs to God.

As already noted, one could write several books examining Taylor's subpar interpretation. The **Living Bible Paraphrased** has no good qualities as a study Bible nor is it good, nighttime reading material.

New Revised Standard Version

The preface of the New Testament of this Bible, published by Zondervan in 1991, contains the statement that "the New Revised Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version published in 1952." Also in the preface there is an explanation why male-oriented or "sexist" terms have been eliminated. Therefore the pronouns he, him, and his and the nouns male, men and brethren are scarcely found. The feminist movement had pressured for such language and the NRSV is the anti-male Bible result.

The NRSV was promoted by a division called "Christian Education," a work of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. Again, these are radical, left-wing liberals whose political agenda is obviously stronger than its sense of translation accuracy.

The NRSV has all of the anti-Deity problems concerning Christ as did the RSV but changes "man shall not live by bread alone" to "One shall not" in Matthew 4:4. It also mistranslates **porneia** (the sexual act, fornication), as "unchastity" in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. Would one be free to divorce a mate who dressed **unchastely** or spoke **unchastely**? One following the wording of this Bible could argue so.

As in the RSV, Phoebe is a "deacon" (Rom. 16:1-2) instead of a servant. However in a female oriented

Bible one would think they would have made Phoebe a deaconess! The qualifications for an elder (Titus 1:6) and a "widow indeed" is "married only once" in this version. The Bible states that an elder must have "one wife" meaning his marriage at the time must be scriptural. Remarried widows would be qualified for aid if the second husband died according to the NRSV. The NRSV also teaches that elders should "avoid drunkenness," and thus allows social drinking for this group of leaders (1 Tim. 3:3). The Bible has "not given to wine" which means abstinence. (The text of 1 Tim. 3:11 in the NRSV and the marginal note permit female deacons.)

The NRSV is interesting reading for those desiring to learn how modern culture, left to itself, would change the Bible. The "New" in the title is meant as a selling point, but there is nothing new about those who would so recklessly abandon the original and pervert the text. God is still "our Father," nor our "unisex Being."

Conclusion

Free interpretation should be avoided when one is evaluating a version for the purpose of purchasing a study Bible. Once one has a standard translation, the modern paraphrases (such as J.B. Phillip's New Testament, not covered here) make for interesting comparison and should so be used. That is, if one is intent on serious study of what the Bible meant when first inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Study Questions

1. Find a copy of the Revised Standard Version. Comparing Romans 12:1 to a standard such as the ASV, does the RSV teach that everything one does is worship?
2. In the RSV, find Matthew 15:19; John 8:41; Revelation 18:3. Then note 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, and Revelation 2:21. Then find Matthew 19:9 and 5:32. In each of the foregoing verses the Greek text has the word **porneia** meaning the **sexual act** between humans or humans and animals. Is the RSV consistent? Does the meaning change in the foregoing verses because of the translation?
3. Is it at all possible that theological bias "creeps" into the translation process?
4. What is translation? What is interpretation? What kind of Bible do you want from which to study?
5. If possible, read the following verses in a copy of the **New English Bible**: John 19:24; 2 Corinthians 11:9; 2 Timothy 4:16; John 6:40; and Acts 7:54. Does such street language belong in God's Holy Word?
6. Is Taylor's **Living Bible Paraphrased** really a paraphrase? (Using a good dictionary, find the usage for paraphrase.)
7. What is premillennialism? What does the doctrine that Jesus must yet establish His kingdom say about His first coming?
8. What is "faith alone?" Does anyone **really** practice such? (James used the term faith to refer to personal faith, James 2:24.) (Paul, in Romans, used the word faith to refer to the whole gospel system, causing those not recognizing the differing uses to teach a contradiction between James and Paul resulting in a "faith only" salvation doctrine.)
9. What about the "male-oriented" Christianity? Is New Testament Christianity only for men? Are men superior to women in Christ's teaching?
10. With all the available versions, what might be a good way to find a standard study Bible?

Addendum

Theological Backgrounds Of Select Members Of The RSV Translators

Edgar J. Goodspeed and James Russell Bowie were both modernists. Goodspeed's, **An Introduction to the New Testament** (Chicago Press, 1937) and Bowie's, **The Master: A Life of Jesus Christ** both rejected verbal inspiration and the genuineness of the Bible books. Bowie compared the Christ to a Greek mythological "god" who was definitely not Deity. Another committee member, Harry M. Orlinsky (Jewish Institute of Religion, New York) rejected the virgin birth and insisted that Christians **injected** Christology into the Septuagint.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – MODERN VERSIONS PART 2

For nearly 2,250 years men have been translating either the Old Testament (first to Greek around 250 B.C.) or the New Testament from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek into receptor language. (The language from which one translates is called the **donor**; the one to which one translates is known as the **receptor**.) Although any translation is subject to human error, there are some that are better than others. Therefore, chapters twelve and thirteen of this book are devoted to examining a few of the modern versions. Since space is limited, the New American Standard, the New King James, The New International, and the English Revised are the last four modern Bibles studied here.

New American Standard

In 1963 the Lockman Foundation launched a new **translation** project designed to give "consideration ... to the latest available manuscripts" (Preface to the New American Standard). Truth be told, the New American Standard is actually a revision of the Lockman Foundation's **Amplified Bible** and the committee of translators followed Nestle's Greek Testament (23rd edition) rather than the Greek text underlying the American Standard Version (1901). (Nestle's text more nearly resembles the Textus Receptus.)

A good feature of the NASB is that it uses brackets in the text to "indicate words probably not in the original," but note the word **probably** (Preface). There are footnotes to indicate that some manuscripts or most manuscripts said something about a passage (cf. John 5:4). However, the NASB committee, through footnotes, denied Messianic prophecy in all of the Old Testament including Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Numbers 24:7; and Deuteronomy 18:15. Also in the preface, under "Explanation of General Format," the committee explains that you is capitalized when referring to Deity. In the text, pronouns referring to Christ are not capitalized.

The NASB uses **unchastity** in translating **porneia** (the act of fornication) at Matthew 5:32 but translates **porneia** as **immorality** in Matthew 19:9 (cf. 2 Cor. 12:21; 1 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 2:14; and 1 Cor. 5:1). These mistranslations of **porneia** would "permit" easy divorce if followed. The NASB also has "which is your spiritual service of worship" at Romans 12:16 which reading is a mistranslation indicating that all service to God is worship.

The NASB's "you shall not commit murder" (Matt. 5:21; 19:18; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9; and James 2:11) is a better reading than the KJV and ASV. The NASB also has **bits** (James 3:3), **predestined** (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:29), **sea monster** (Matt. 12:40), and **every week** (1 Cor. 16:2) all of which are better readings than the KJV and ASV. However, there is an explicit contradiction in the NASB between Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15. Overall the NASB casts doubt on Jesus' Deity, allows for easy divorce, and is not the "New" nor related to the American Standard of 1901.

The New King James Version

The preface of the NKJV has, under the heading, **Purpose**, the following: "In the preface of the 1611 edition, the translators of the Authorized Version, known popularly as the King James Version, state that it was not their purpose to make a new translation, but to make a good one better. In harmony with the purpose of the King James scholars, the translators and editors of the present work have not pursued a goal of innovation." The perception of the committee members who prepared the NKJV, then, was that their work was a **continuation** of the efforts made to produce the original KJV.

The NKJV committee evidently revered the Bible as the inspired Word of God. They also used an underlying Greek text similar to the Textus Receptus used by the committee members in 1611. The NKJV was first published in 1982, and the **Slimline Edition** of the NKJV New Testament had a "What Must I Do To Be Saved" section on page XIII. The acts of conversion listed in the latter section are incomplete. The NKJV committee did attempt to update the many archaic words of the KJV, but the effort in the newer version was not entirely successful. Words like mammon, Hosanna, Rabboni, Quadrans, abaddon, apollyon, etcetera, were kept in the NKJV.

The New King James did consistently transliterate **hades** correctly and did change **Easter** to **Passover** (Acts 12:4). It correctly rendered **strife** and **contention** instead of "debate" at Romans 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 12:20. The NKJV translators also removed the ambiguous term, **unknown** (in italics in the KJV at 1 Cor. 14:2), not found in the Greek and used by charismatics to foster their ecstatic gibberish. (The first edition had Jesus' bones broken at 1 Cor. 11:24, but all later editions corrected this error.)

The NKJV does corrupt Galatians 2:16 where it reads "faith in Christ" instead of "the faith in Christ" and

thus the new rendering implies faith only. The same error in the NKJV is committed at Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:12; and Philippians 3:9. The NKJV dilutes the "Golden Rule" at Matthew 7:12 by translating "would do to you" instead of "should do to you." There is a great deal of difference from treating someone the way I would want him to treat me, which is the "golden plated" rule, and treating him right as he "should" me regardless of any motive that wants him to treat me correctly.

The NKJV removed the **eth** on the end of verbs as done in the KJV and thus eliminated the reader's ability to recognize a continuous action verb just from reading the English. However, oblique typeface in the NKJV New Testament aids the reader in knowing he is perusing a quote from the Old Testament, and this Bible does **not** tamper with Jesus' Deity nor His virgin conception.

One large problem with this new Bible is its use of **sexual immorality** as the translation of **porneia** in Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Acts 15:20, 29; Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:13, 18; 7:2; and Jude 7. Again, **porneia** is an **act**. And, the NKJV inconsistently translates **porneia** as **fornication** (an act) in John 8:41; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; and Revelation 19:2. If the NKJV were the only source of God's instructions available people would be getting divorces based on "sexual immorality" which includes watching pornography, reading lewd material, lusting in one's heart, etcetera. One's mate could just think a wrong thought, then, and be put away! Yet, **porneia** is a stronger idea than lusting. The act must be committed.

Of the modern versions, the NKJV is better than most. As a standard Bible for serious students, the NKJV cannot be said to be one. It is useful as a comparative study Bible.

The New International Version

In a letter to this author, the late J. Noel Meredith wrote: "The New International Version claims to be an interdenominational effort, by scores of scholars, to translate God's word afresh. Its history goes back to the 1950's, although major work was not begun until 1968 after the New York Bible Society International agreed to sponsor the project. The New Testament appeared in 1973 and the Old Testament is to appear later."

In the preface to the NIV, the translators announced that they "have striven for more than a word for word translation" and so they have "frequent modifications in sentence structure." The NIV translators more than accomplished the foregoing tasks. The author compared the first three chapters of Genesis in the NIV, KN, ASV, RSV with the Hebraica Biblica and the Septuagint. The NIV translators do not begin to measure up to the others and even removed the "seed of woman" (a biological impossibility, therefore a virgin-birth prophecy) from Genesis 3:15 where the Hebrew word demands sperm or seed!

There are **major** doctrinal errors in the NIV. This Bible expresses a contradiction at Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15 as the NASB did. By translating **katalusai** (to "loose down" or "utterly destroy") in Matt. 5:17 and **kataresas** (to "cancel") in Ephesians 2:15 both as **abolish**. The NIV creates a contradiction with Hebrews 9:15 and 2 Corinthians 3:7-11. Jesus did not **abolish** the law of Moses, He fulfilled it.

In Romans 8 and Galatians 5 one reads about a "sinful nature" in the NIV. The term so translated is **sarx** which simply means **flesh** (not nature). No one has been born with nor inherited a "sinful nature." This Calvinistic bias is completely unwarranted as a translation and is an utter perversion of the meaning. Paul used **sarx** (flesh) to refer to being under the Old Covenant in Romans 7 and 8 and Galatians 5 not to some original sin or sinful nature. There is further, **no** grammatical reason to translate **sarx** (flesh) as **sinful nature**. It is the judgment here that only theological bias can account for such an unwarranted change in the text. No sin is inherited and all sin is the result of one's actions (Ezek. 17:18-20). (The criticism here is further substantiated by the NIV reading at Psalm 51:4 which reads the same as the TEV, "a sinner from birth.")

The NIV at Ephesians 5:19 reads: "sing and make music" rather than "sing and make melody." Music is the art of **combining** vocal or instrumental **sounds** or **tones**. The Greek term **psallo** refers to singing and making melody on something and the text supplies the instrument "in your heart." The reading in the NIV permits the combining of vocal **and** instrumental music in worship.

The NIV "scholars" failed to be consistent when translating **ha-daz**. At Matthew 16:18 one reads, **hades**, but at Matthew 11:23 one reads **depths** and at Luke 16:23 one reads **hell** but at Acts 2:27 one reads **grave**. Four different translations of one term was not grammatically necessary, and the careful student will immediately recognize how biased and subjective the NIV translators were.

The NIV renders **porneia** (the **act** of fornication) as **marital unfaithfulness** (which would include desertion and refusal to cohabitate) instead of fornication at Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. But at 1 Corinthians 5:1; Acts 15:20, 29; 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18; and Jude 7 the NIV has "sexual immorality" which phraseology does not properly render the original and permits easy divorce.

Some have tried to "sell" the NIV to members of churches of Christ by asserting that a member of the church was on the translating committee. It is the case that some group calling itself "church of Christ" is listed in

the preface. The group is a denomination **not** affiliated with the New Testament church. And, brother Jack P. Lewis (double Ph.D in Hebrew) did tell this author and others in a Hebrew grammar class that he offered a suggestion on a section in the Book of Kings that was never used. But, brother Lewis made it clear that he was **not** a committee member.

The NIV at Ephesians 1:3 has one "who hears" already saved and the one who "believes" having the personal Holy Spirit. Thus Acts 2:38 is contradicted.

This section on the NIV could go on forever. All of the omissions of the Westcott-Hort text are found, errors are rampant, and additions are unwarranted. One recently wrote that since the NIV and other modern texts removed **fornication** and translated **porneia** as **sexual immorality**, that these new Bibles without strong standards had "reinforced the values clarification theories used in schools today" (Barker, p. 143). It seems that the NIV committee has authored a new-age Bible that places no restrictions on man's desire to have a licentious lifestyle. The NIV is, without doubt, the most dangerous of all the new Bibles, not only because it is filled with error, but because good brethren have accepted and promoted it. A new translation is a good thing if, and only if, it is translated from the original without addition. The NIV did not so translate and **admits** this in its preface.

The English Standard Version

"In the autumn of 2001, a fresh English translation made its appearance. Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers (Wheaton, IL) introduced the English Standard Version (ESV)" (Jackson, p. 1). The goal of these revisers was to "capture the precise wording of the original text and personal style of each Bible writer" (Ibid.).

The starting point for the translators was the 1971 Revised Standard Version, but some use was also made of the 1952 RSV. The underlying Greek texts are related to the Westcott-Hort theories. (UBS, 1993 and Nestle, 27th ed.). The translators used the Masoretic or Hebraica Biblica for the Old Testament work. (Jackson reports that "more than 100 scholars" translated, p. 1).

The translating philosophy of these scholars can be interpreted as striving for a literal (as far as possible) translation, but the translators added in the preface that they "have sought to capture the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original text" (p. viii). "Echoes" are faint renditions and "overtones" are additions to the text so subjectivity in translation did occur. An example of this bias can be seen in the ESV's rendering of **any man** as **anyone** and **sons** as **sons** only when **sons** had a legal meaning. The Greek is gender specific and it is not hard to translate male or female terms correctly; **any man** is a different idea from **anyone**.

Jackson notes several strengths of the ESV such as the access the translation had to a large collection of ancient manuscripts (p. 1). The ESV retains **virgin** at Isaiah 7:14 and replaced archaic terms with modern usage. The KJV mistranslation "tempt" is corrected to "tested" in the ESV (cf. Gen. 22:1) and "bowels" in the KJV is rendered correctly with "afflictions" in the ESV. Jackson also likes "not enslaved" at 1 Corinthians 7:15 instead of "not under bondage" and the ESV is an improvement, but theological bias about a deserted mate is the problem here not so much the translation.

The ESV does not indicate added words in italics and some of the footnotes are neither helpful nor accurate. At Daniel 3:16, for example, the text of the ESV reads, "If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning furnace." But the footnote reads, "If our God whom we serve is able ...". The statement in the footnote brings into question the power of God. The ESV footnote at Matthew 16:18 promotes Peter as the rock on which the church is built and eliminates the true foundation, Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). The text leaves out "body broken for you" at 1 Corinthians 11:24 and places the phrase in the footnote. The Greek text has it.

The website of Good News Publishers Board of Directors (www.gnpcb.org/pagelau-statementoffaith/) informs that they believe in a direct operation of the Holy Spirit; that baptism is non-essential to salvation; that the Lord's Supper is a non-essential. These Calvinistic leanings may account for the changing of **shall** to **will** and vice-versa throughout the translation. English students know that **will** with the first person implies an action imperative and shall with the second and third person implies the same. Actions that are unchangeable because God predestined them is a fiction of Calvinism and not a true Bible doctrine.

Acts 2:41-42 is perverted in the ESV as are Ephesians 4:8; 1 Peter 2:9; Proverbs 22:1; 1 Samuel 13:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 10:9-10; 6:4-5; and 2 Corinthians 3:16. And, interestingly the footnotes in the ESV that allude to "some manuscripts" are referring to the Textus Receptus. (Many scholars, today, are questioning the validity of the Westcott-Hort theory that the ancient uncials [two of them] are the best manuscripts. Westcott-Hort theorists jibe at the Textus Receptus as unscholarly.)

The ESV misses the point entirely at 1 Corinthians 13:10 by translating **telios** as the **perfect** but **merous** as **the partial**. The contrast is **not** between partial revelation and complete revelation. The early church **had all** the

truth (2 Peter 1:3) **before** it was written (2 Cor. 4:7). The contrast is between an "out of part" delivery system of spiritual gifts that were only a beginning **part** of revelation and a complete or perfect system that is written and easily preserved and passed on to generations.

Jackson feels that the ESV may be a version that "will serve the English-speaking world with distinction" (p. 3) although at the time he had "not gone through the entire volume" (p. 1). Certainly the ESV does not denigrate the deity of Christ nor mock inspiration. Time will tell as to its accuracy.

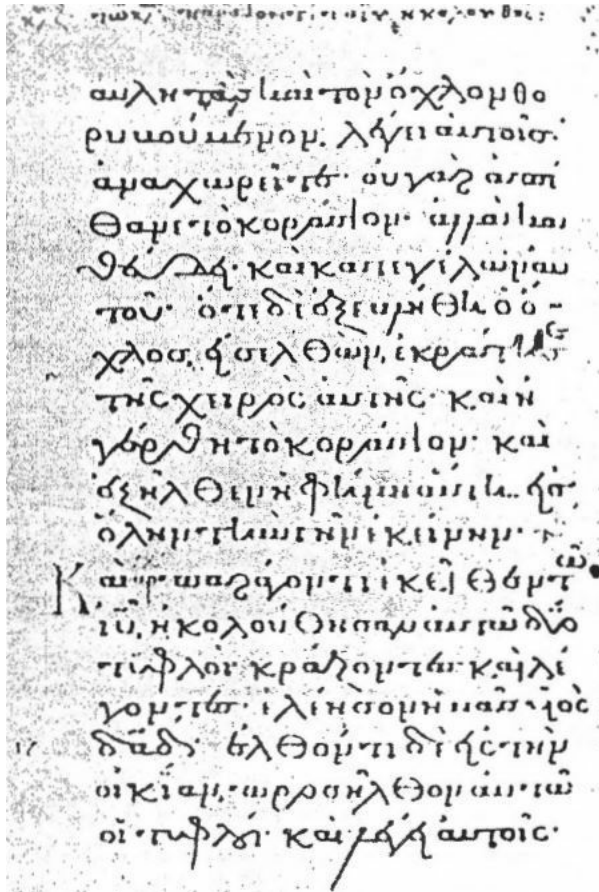
Conclusion

All translations have problems. One not able to read Hebrew and Greek should check the one he uses with the 1901 ASV and 1611 KJV both of which are standards and not filled with bias and doctrinal error. There is a 21st Century KJV, but not possessing one, I can give no review here. Some publications such as Mary Pell's; who cut out all the verses she did not like, or the Cotton Patch or the Condensed (Reader's Digest) Version are not worthy to be called Bibles. Keep studying and remember that one can trust the ASV and KJV for sure.

Study Questions

1. What is the most important consideration when deciding on a version of the Bible to use for study?
2. What is meant by the “donor” language? What is meant by the “receptor” language?
3. What is the New American Standard? A revision of the 1901 ASV or of Lockman's **Amplified Bible**?
4. What is the danger of having an explicit contradiction (as in the New American Standard, Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15) appear in the translation?
5. Using a Greek Lexicon (Dictionary), discover what *porneia* means. What are the implications from translating **porneia** as **sexual immorality** or **unchastity** instead of the **act** of fornication?
6. Using the above Greek Lexicon, what does **sarx** mean?
7. Why, do you think, the translators of the New International Version interpreted **sarx** as “**sinful nature**?”
8. What does Psalm 51:4 mean? How did the New International Version render this verse?
9. One is to “make melody,” according to the Bible, in one's **heart** (Eph. 5:19). How does the New International Version read? What does the latter translation imply?
10. What are some translation difficulties one should know about the English Standard Version of 2003?

APPENDICES



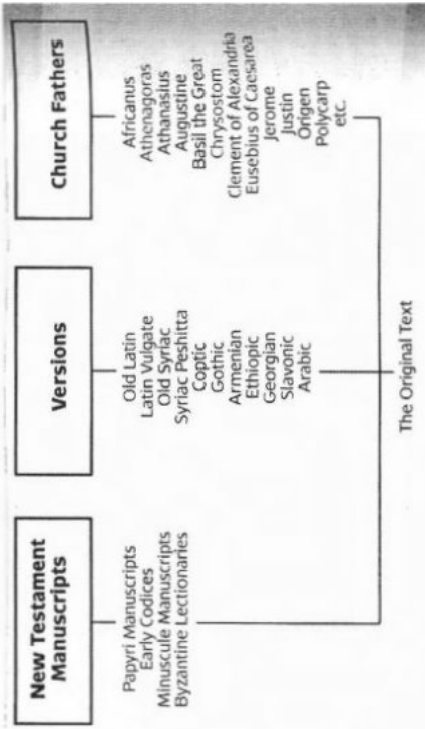
A typical late cursive manuscript of the New Testament (From Lightfoot, **How We Got The Bible**)

Areas of Development of the Textual Families

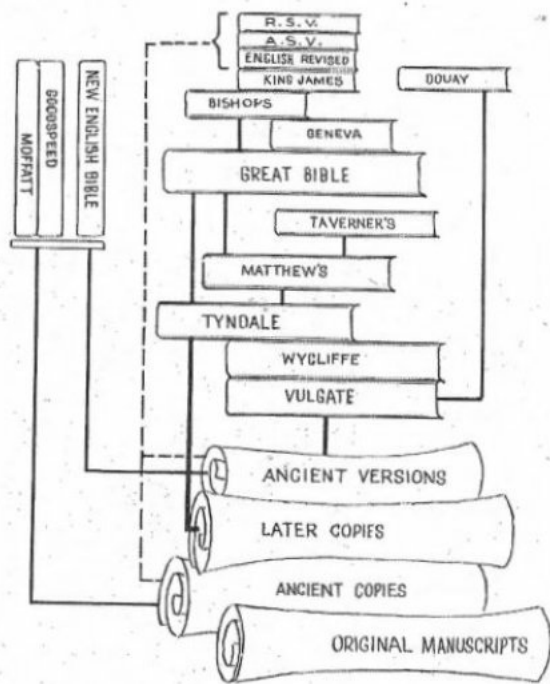


Above from Wegner

Sources for Textual Critics



Above from Wegner



The English Bible

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