

Bibliology

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I. Introduction

A. Systematic Theology

This Bibliology course is part of a system of doctrines that form the basis of our teaching here at NTBI. The doctrines that are combined into a clear system can then be referred to as one whole “Systematic Theology.”

Systematic theology is the collecting, scientifically arranging, comparing, exhibition and defending of all truth from any, and every, source concerning God and His works.

1. What makes up Systematic Theology

a) Progressive Revelation

We will not be studying just one doctrine, but all of the doctrines that focus on the Bible. We typically love to study books of the Bible piece by piece. We know that God has given us His Word progressively over time. The first books written, do not explain everything there is to know. When we start in Genesis, we have some basic information. But as we continue – God sheds more and more light on each subject, until we come to a more thorough and complete understanding. An example is Genesis 3:15, which gives us the briefest introduction to the coming redeemer. But as you continue, we begin to understand the God is going to use a descendant of Abraham to bless the entire world. Eventually, the concept of a Jewish Messiah is developed – when he comes, he will fulfill the redeemer promise of Gen 3:15 and the blessing promised to Abraham. He will rule perfectly with Love, Justice and Holiness. Then in the New Testament, we have the eye-witness accounts of the person who fulfilled all of these positions – Jesus Christ. We know that He will return one day to complete the promises, but we do not fully understand how all of it will turn out until the events finally unfold before us.

We might, of course, have expected a priori that if God wished to communicate the knowledge of His nature and will to mankind He might have done so in a series of propositions, after the manner of theological summaries [DOCTRINES], bodies of divinity and confessions of faith which are drawn up article by article in logical sequence. Doubtless God might have done so, but doubtless He never did. These doctrinal statements may be firmly based upon the Bible, and if so they have their place in religious life and teaching, but the Bible itself does not take this form. What we have just said with regard to the form of the Old Testament suggests that God chose to reveal Himself as the God of living action, revealing Himself in men through His spokesmen the prophets. He is no impassive Deity, detached from the world and wrapped up in His self-existent Being. The very form of the Old Testament reveals the God He is, and prepares us for His incarnation in One who should both accomplish the greatest of all God's mighty self-revealing acts and speak as His supreme Spokesman.²

b) Topical Studies

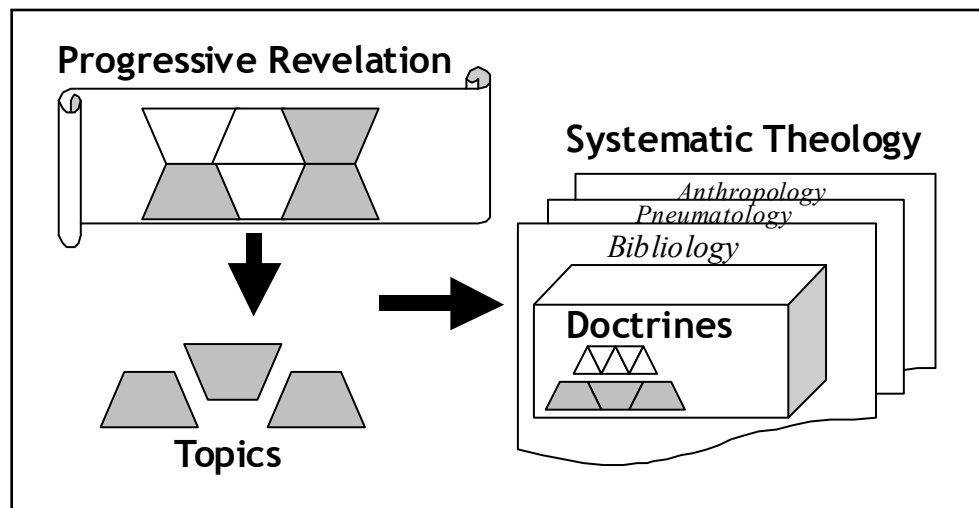
This progressive revelation helps us to understand key themes that each individual book of the Bible is attempting to express for us, but do not give us a complete picture until we sift through the whole Bible and pull all the pieces together. This sifting is what we would refer to as a Topical Study. One topic we will study is that of how the Bible was written by God through Men.

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, ©1948 Vol. 1 pg. 6

² F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, ©1955, pg. 91

c) Doctrines

Once we put all the facts together, we have before us a Doctrine (eg. the doctrine of Inspiration). All the doctrines we discover related to the Bible will go together to give us the Bibliology Doctrines of our Systematic Theology.



d) One Systematic Theology (One Truth)

The point we are making is that God's Word is where we discover a multitude of doctrines, but these doctrines help us understand, TRUTH.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.³

Notice he does not say "truths" – plural. There are not many truths in God's eyes. God's Truth may be made up of many facets, but they all fit together perfectly into one gem. When we understand God's Doctrines correctly, then they will all fit together into One Systematic Theology which reflects God's Truth. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, and 17 – our studying these helps us become equipped for ministry.

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.⁴

2. Importance of Systematic Theology

a) Using Stories and History

There is a growing movement to emphasize the value of stories for education. Much of Scripture is made up of History and individual stories. But these stories do not end with, "and so the moral of the story is..." The key truths of the story must be discovered by analysis.

It is true that in reading a well written story, you are better able to feel emotion and relate to many facets of the story. However, the story IS written for a purpose. That purpose is to convey truth. Is the story, in-and-of-itself, the most important thing? If I could enjoy the story and never understand what it is saying, would it mean much?

I love music written and sung by "Simon and Garfunkel". They have great harmony and very enjoyable tunes. However, they loved to write poetry that spoke to the current events of their day. They had points to their music to help persuade people towards political and social change. My problem is that I really don't understand half of what they are saying! "A Song of Silence" can evoke emotions and enjoyment from me, the listener, but I get absolutely no meaning from the lyrics. (The following website does shed some clues into what it may mean: <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=796>) So then, have I ever been swayed to social or political change by their music? The answer is, "no".

³New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.), Nashville: Thomas Nelson

⁴New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.), Nashville: Thomas Nelson

The importance of a story is the truth that is conveyed. If the feelings, which are provoked, back up the truth, than it does an even better job of conveying, solidifying or helping us remember the truth. But the truth is the key thing!

What should change our lives? The story or the truth?

b) Advantages to Systemizing the Doctrines

When we are able to clearly discover and systemize these doctrines, then we gain a fuller understanding of God's Truth without having to keep all of the stories in our head at one time. There are quite a few advantages:

(1) Helps us better understand the stories.

When I am reading a story and it sounds like the concept it is portraying contradicts doctrine that has been clearly revealed, I am able to recognize that I do not quite understand the story yet. It helps guide me in my understanding.

We realize that we must be careful in these situations to determine if the doctrine being contradicted is as clearly understood as we think, or whether the doctrine should be rethought.

(2) Helps us stand confident against the enemy.

As we watch TV, Movies, listen to Music and build relationships with the world around us, we are inundated by worldly philosophies and views. We can hold these philosophies up to the standards of our doctrines to consider whether they are correct. We know that God's truth is the only thing sufficient for equipping us!

When we have clear doctrine and understand how scripture reveals it, then we are better able to answer cults and others who attempt to persuade us into false religions.

Even our own sinful desires can be revealed as wrong thinking when we have sound doctrine.

(3) Helps encourage unity.

When we have good sound doctrine, then we know that those doctrines will all fit together into a whole. So, if a person is studying heavily the doctrine of justification and then begins to discuss this with another person who is studying heavily the doctrine of sanctification – they will probably get excited as they see how these fit.

Doctrine Unites!

Incomplete Doctrine or Wrong Doctrine Divides.

B. Bibliology

Systematic Theology designs to construct a science or order out of the Biblical revelations and on the basis that it is ο λογος του Θεου ('the Word of God'), and, as surgery must proceed on the basis of belief in the existence of the mortal body, so, and in like manner, Systematic Theology must proceed on the basis of the belief that the Bible is, in all its parts, God's own Word to man.

While the word bible means 'book', the words 'The Bible' distinguish the supreme, incomparable Book. It does surpass all other books as to authority, antiquity, literature, and popularity, yet its peculiar supremacy is seen in the fact that it discloses the truth concerning the infinite God, infinite holiness, infinite sin, and infinite redemption. It is therefore, reasonable to conclude that the Bible is itself infinite, and such it proves itself to be, for no human mind has fully comprehended its message or measured its values.⁵

Our study in systematic theology will be based on what is revealed by God through special revelation to prophets of old and recorded for us by men moved of God in the "BIBLE". Therefore the very foundation of our study is, the "BIBLE." It is right for us to begin our journey through systematic theology by first looking at the doctrines that deal with the Bible.

1. Definition = the study of the doctrines regarding the Bible

In Bibliology, we are seeking to look at the doctrines specifically dealing with the Bible, itself. These will include:

- a) **How the Bible was recorded?**
- b) **How accurate is it?**
- c) **How authoritative it is?**

Besides these doctrines, we will look at some practical issues related to these like:

- d) **How did we get the Bible as we have it today?**
- e) **How was it decided what books are part of the Bible?**
- f) **Why all the translations today?**

2. Overview of Bibliology

Our study will begin by looking at the Bible that we have in our hands.

- We will note some general facts dealing with the history of it.
- We will look at how the Bible was recorded, transmitted to us today and canonized.
 - **Transmission** = How the Bible has been recorded over time.
 - **Canon** = the complete and exclusive collection of all inspired writings which God intended to be part of His revelation to man.
- Having looked at the history of the Bible, we will then look at the Doctrine of Inspiration.
 - **Inspiration** = God spoke through the prophets using their own personalities, styles and vocabularies to record exactly what He wanted communicated to us.
- Next we will look at the Doctrines of Inerrancy and Infallibility.
 - **Inerrancy** = The Bible is true in all that it teaches and thus without error.
 - **Infallible** = The Bible is dependable (will not fail) in all matters of faith and practice.
- Then we will move to the Authority of Scripture.
 - **Authority** = The Bible has the divine right to direct our lives in every area.
- Finally, we will consider translations.
 - **Translation** = Reproducing God's Word in other languages.

⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, pgs. 21-22

II. Development of the Bible

Let's begin with a brief overview of what the Bible is and who the authors are.

A. Revelation

A study of the Bible is really a study of "revelation". God has revealed Himself and His intents in many ways.

How then can we know God or His will for our lives? Only if He reveals Himself to us! Unless He Himself tells us, we can never know for sure the answers to those questions which matter most to us as human beings.⁶

Revelation = God's communication of truth to man, without which man cannot know God.⁷

1. General Revelation

General Revelation = that which is revealed about God through Nature and Human Intelligence.

a) Reveals God's Glory

"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun," (Psalm 19:1-4, NKJV)⁸

b) Reveals God's authority over us

¹⁸for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ⁹ (Romans 1:18-20)

As New Tribes Mission continues to reach tribes, we consistently find that in the most remote corner of the earth, man knows there is a greater power that has produced the design he lives in. We can look at the intricate systems that make up our environment (from our Solar System to the Human Body) and see clear evidence of a design.

If I look at a cloud and see a fluffy shape that resembles an elephant, I don't think much of it. But if I were to look again and see a cloud that is shaped like a wrist watch, and then look closer and notice that it has all the features. It has cloud colored hands, roman numerals, and the word "TIMEX" all spelled out. I now think to myself, "What's going on?" That didn't happen all by itself.

Whenever an archeologist is digging around and discovers pot shards with special implements inside, they immediately recognize that someone with intelligence created these and lived here at one time. They would never think, "Wow, the dirt and dust just happened to settle in this way that resembles objects which would be left by another society."

The Laws of science teach us that the world is moving more and more towards chaos and less intelligent state. Thus, we look at nature and recognize clearly that the body did not become more intricate and detailed over time. Energy is moving consistently to a more settled state. It is clear that there was a designer/creator who produced the nature we are a part of and live in.

If there is a designer who created everything, then He is the Owner of everything and we are His subjects. He has authority over us and we are responsible to Him.

⁶ Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, ©1974, pg. 21

⁷ Irving L. Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament*, ©1978, pg. 18

⁸ The New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ *New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.), Nashville: Thomas Nelson

c) Reveals our Sinful Condition

We also find that every human recognizes external rules for regulating our lives. The rules may be different with each society, but we all have an innate ability to consider something morally right or wrong. Our conscience causes us to judge our actions. This clearly indicates that we feel responsibility to some greater power. It clearly shows us that we have failed in fulfilling our responsibilities.

*14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them¹⁰
(Romans 2:14-15)*

2. Special Revelation

Special Revelation = that which is revealed about God through God's direct communication with man.

God has not just relied on general revelation to make Himself known. General revelation is limited. It does not allow us to determine much about God except that He exists. General revelation shows us that:

1. God is powerful and has the right to judge and determine outcomes here on earth.
2. We are limited and guilty before Him.

But it does not show us:

3. What He has required of us.
4. How we can have right standing before Him.

So logic then says that from General Revelation I determine:

1. That there is a God.
2. He created us for a purpose.
3. I cannot know that purpose without His communication.
4. If He created us for a purpose then He will or has communicated that purpose to me.

Dr. Archer puts it this way:

How then can we know God or His will for our lives? Only if he reveals Himself to us! Unless He Himself tells us, we can never know for sure the answers to those questions which matter most to us as human beings. At this point it is important to observe that the Bible presents itself to us as the written revelation of God. This purports to be a Book in which God gives us the answers to the great questions which concern our soul, and which all the wisdom and science of man are powerless to solve with any degree of certainty. The Bible asserts of itself that it is the special revelation from God; it must therefore be acknowledged as claiming to be the right kind of source from which to derive a trustworthy knowledge of religious truth. It comes to us with the claim that the words are from God Himself: "Thus saith the Lord." If there be a God, and if He is concerned for our salvation, this is the only way (apart from direct revelation from God to each individual of each successive generation) He could reliably impart his knowledge to us. It must be through a reliable written record such as the Bible purports to be.¹¹

a) Direct Communication

God's first form of special revelation was by direct communication. We find in Genesis where God walked and talked directly with Adam and Eve. In Gen 3:15, we have recorded for us some of God's words with man.

¹⁰ *New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.), Nashville: Thomas Nelson

¹¹ Gleason L. Archer, pg. 21

b) Spoken (Oral) Transmission

For those who did not walk with God, they could learn of God's will for mankind by talking to those who had talked directly with God. Thus, God's communication was passed down from generation to generation in an spoken manner.

(1) Preserved Spoken Communication – Later Recorded

We have shown that God's communication comes from Him to us. It is HIS desire to communicate. Therefore we can expect that He will make sure that what He wants communicated will be passed on accurately.

Is it ok to assume that not every precise aspect was perfectly communicated orally from person to person? I believe so, but I do not believe that God would allow man to so pervert or damage what He wanted communicated without making the truth accessible to them. We find that not only did He talk with Adam, but He spoke directly with Cain, Noah, Enoch, Abraham and others.

SAFEGUARDS WHICH KEEP TRUTH ACCESSIBLE

Often times we consider the kids "phone" game, where they sit in a circle and whisper a sentence to the child next to them. By the time it reaches the end of the circle, it is very comical to hear how twisted it became. This can cause us to become concerned that God's oral transmission may have become extremely corrupted. However, there were several safe guards in place to relieve our concerns:

1. God did not whisper. He clearly communicated what He wanted to communicate.
2. Those God originally spoke to lived a very long time and could continue to be referred to for clarity. These men could easily have corrected poor communication if somehow it became twisted in the process.
3. He did not only speak to one person. He spoke to many people during that time. (During the time of Abraham, we even find that there was a priest of God named Melchizedek.)

With these safe guards in place, we can assume that Adam was able to speak very clearly to his descendents and that they had plenty of time to ask questions until they understood. They also were able to compare God's communication through Adam with that which God spoke directly to others.

It is easy to see that God was committed to communicating clearly to us and making sure it was available to many.

RECORDED

Eventually this early communication of God was recorded in a written format in the book of Genesis. We can have confidence that it is what God wanted communicated. In a moment (when we look at Written Transmission), we will see that the men who wrote God's Word did so under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This means that all of the oral communication that was recorded WAS exactly what God said.

IN SUMMARY:

- The message TRANSMITTED orally may not have been word for word exactly what God originally said.
- We can still have real assurance that the meaning God wanted conveyed and passed down was PRESERVED in the oral transmission.
- And the words RECORDED under the guidance of the Holy Spirit were exact.

The men who followed God in the day when only ORAL TRANSMISSION was available had God's revelation available to them and it was _____ for them to enter into a relationship with Him.sufficient.

(2) Non-Preserved Spoken Communication

There were some oral prophets whom God used to communicate His will to an immediate audience. This revelation by God to them would come through:

- Dreams
- Visions
- Direct Conversation
- Special Messengers (Angels, etc.)

In some cases this communication by God was never recorded in a preserved form for us today. We therefore conclude that God did not intend for us to have those messages today. However, we are clearly told that God's Word will not pass away.

*"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isaiah 40:8, KJV)*¹²

In these verses we have two common references to the fact that God's Word is final. In Isaiah 40, we have a passage that is praising how great God is and how everyone will recognize His sovereignty in the day that He restores Israel and brings His program to completion. The point of the passage is that when God gives His Word, it is like a contract and will be completed.

*"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." (Psalm 119:89, KJV)*¹³

In Psalm 119, we have a passage that shows how final and authoritative God's Word is. This emphasizes the sovereign and sure nature of His commands and will. I am so thankful to serve a God who is able to complete the good thoughts He has toward us!

*"There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Joshua 21:45, KJV)*¹⁴

*"For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 12:25, KJV)*¹⁵

In this manner, then, we have God's Word given through oral prophets. His will and commands that were given have or will come to pass. They are as certain as God is sovereign.

c) Written Transmission

As time continued and humanity began to spread out on the earth, so did the need for written communication. Stories, laws and covenants could be written down and referred back to by everyone.

13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; 16 (Exodus 17:13-15)

In Exodus 17, when Joshua defeated Amalek, God had Moses write down what He was going to do. This was to indicate (like a contract) how sure God's actions would be and how faithful He had been to Israel.

Notice that God said to write it in "THE" book. This clearly indicates that Moses had been instructed by God to write a book. This is the first mention we have of God authorizing a book and shows that God took the initiative to give us His revelation and then to have it recorded for longevity.

¹² *The Holy Bible : King James Version.* 1995. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹³ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

¹⁴ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

¹⁵ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

¹⁶ *New King James Version.* 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.) (Exodus 7:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson

- God created us with a purpose
- God revealed Himself to us directly
- God commissioned individuals to record His revelation

There are several indications that books were used commonly to record God's revelation.

(1) The Book of the Law

As we have already seen, Moses was told by God to write certain events down in "the book". This indicates that there was a key book that Moses had been commissioned to create.

"Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed." (Deuteronomy 28:61, KJV)¹⁷

When Joshua came along after Moses, He also continued to record things in "the book of the law".

"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, KJV)¹⁸

"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, KJV)¹⁹

There were some who recognized this book as being recorded so that others could learn God's revelation from it as well.

⁷ Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.⁸ And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asabel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests.⁹ So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. (2 Ch 17:7, KJV)²⁰

Obviously this book was respected as containing God's will for them, and for which they were responsible. Later, when the people were walking in sin, they apparently lost this book. It was re-discovered in the temple many years later. When the king read the book and understood God's revelation to Moses that was recorded in it:

- He became aware of his failure in his responsibility to God
- He became aware of what was needed to have a relationship with God

"And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD... And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

...And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and ... saying, Go ye, enquire 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.

¹⁷ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

¹⁸ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

¹⁹ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

²⁰ The New King James Version

...And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire 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. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again. " (2 Kings 22:3-20, KJV)²¹

(2) The Books of Prophets

We have already seen that God would speak directly to a prophet by giving them special revelation. Some of these simply communicated God's Words directly to the people of their day. There were many prophets who also continued to record God's revelation to them.

It seems that prophecy was the only institution in Israel for imparting new revelation of god's Word. Moses, the great prophet, had written the basic code for Israel's life, state, and religion. All else must agree with that. The priests, as we have seen, were to teach that book, but priests do not concern themselves with new revelations. It is true that a priest with the ephod could ascertain God's will in certain situations. David asked Abiathar to bring the ephod, and then he asked two questions. The answer to both was affirmative. The question of the legitimacy of certain priests in Serubbabel's day was delayed until a priest should arise with the Urim and Thummim – jewel-stones of the ephod – who could decide the questions (Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65). Saul got no word from the Lord "by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. 28:6). It appears that the priests with the ephod bearing the Urim and Thummim could give a "Yes" or "No" reply, but a consideration of the hundreds of Old Testament references to priests indicates that their power to give a word of the Lord seldom if ever extended beyond that. The proclaiming of God's will was left to the prophets.²²

(a) Books of History

Some of these prophets recorded current events that detailed God's actions.

*"And **the LORD said not** that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash." (2 Kings 14:27, KJV)²³*

*"Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that **the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.**" (2 Chronicles 32:26, KJV)²⁴*

Samuel apparently wrote about the history.

*"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 Samuel 10:25, KJV)²⁵*

R. Laird Harris, gives good evidence to the history writing of prophets:

A chain of verses in Chronicles gives us the tradition of a series of writing prophets in Israel. First Chronicles 29:29 says that the history of David was written in the books of the prophets Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. In II Chronicles 9:29 the

²¹ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

²² R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, ©1969, pg. 164

²³ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

²⁴ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

²⁵ The Holy Bible : King James Version.

history of Solomon is said to have been written by the prophets Nathan, Abijah, and Iddo. In II Chronicles 12:15 the work of Rehoboam is said to have been written by the prophets Chemaiah and Iddo. Abijah's history was added by Iddo (II Chron. 13:22); Jehoshaphat's by Jehu the prophet, the son of Hanani (II Chron. 20:34); Hezekiah's by Isaiah the prophet (II Chron 32:32); Manasseh's by unnamed "seers" (II Chron. 33:19). The other kings are said to have their deeds recorded in the "book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (II Chron. 35:27), although the names of the authors are not specified. We have listed here a chain of writing prophets from before the days of David to virtually the end of the kingdom of Judah. The old traditions of Israel preserved for us in the Books of Chronicles clearly include a succession of writing prophets.²⁶

(b) Books of Prophecy

Some of the prophets wrote books describing God's message to the people (current or future).

"Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." (Jeremiah 36:4, KJV)

"So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon." (Jeremiah 51:60, KJV)²⁷

"Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz." (Isaiah 8:1, KJV)²⁸

"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk 2:2, KJV)²⁹

(3) One compiled set of books

Jewish tradition says that Ezra first gathered all of the writings that were part of God's revelation into one complete set. These were passed down from century to century with great respect and care.

(a) Titles

This compiled set of writings were probably first known as:

(i) The Law and Prophets

It's easy to understand why. It is clear that these early books were primarily made up of the law and then books written by the prophets. However, there were other books that were included in these sets.

(ii) The Law, the Prophets and the Writings

Another title was the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. There is a lot of evidence that this title was used equally with the previous, but it clearly became the title and categories of choice in the final Hebrew Bible.

LAW = Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

PROPHETS = Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings; Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve (the 12 minor prophets)

WRITINGS = Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

Some believe the titles show the development of the canon of scripture.

Canon = the books that form the Bible. (simple definition)

There is a big problem with this view. Christ and the NT authors place no emphasis on the "Law, Prophets and Writings". So did Christ not believe that all 3 were part of

²⁶ R. Laird Harris, pgs 166, 167

²⁷ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

²⁸ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

²⁹ *The Holy Bible : King James Version.*

scripture? However, they all quote at times from all of the sections. Obviously, they had all of them available and referred to all as authoritative. They just used a different title.

That there was a general threefold classification is clear from several ancient references. But there is no emphasis upon its rigidity. This is clear, likewise, from the evidence of the New Testament itself. In Luke 24:44 reference is made of the “law of Moses, and...the prophets, and...the psalms,” which are in the context called “the scriptures.” Against this threefold classification are to be considered frequent new Testament references to the Old Testament as simply the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17, Luke 16:16, 17) or Moses and the Prophets. There are approximately a dozen such references. In Luke 24:27 the expression used is “all the prophets.” The Scriptures are referred to in the context as “all that the prophets have spoken.” Moses, of course was a prophet. David also, who wrote many of the Psalms, was recognized as a prophet (throughout the New Testament and also in one passage in the Old Testament, Nehemiah 12:24,36, where the equivalent, “man of God,” is used). So the entire collection could be called the word of “the prophets.” Also the entire work could be called “the law.” In John 10:34 a quotation from the Eighty-second Psalm is said to be written “in your law.” And in Matthew 5:18 the term “the law” is rather obviously the collection called in the context “the law and the prophets.” As far as the New Testament is concerned, the threefold classification receives no emphasis whatsoever. The usual division is the twofold division occasioned by the authorship itself, “Moses and the prophets.”³⁰

There are some other very good reasons which R. Laird Harris lays out for us in his excellent book, *“Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible”*. He clearly shows that the titles overlapped in time and that they do not show the development of the canon.

He believes that in early times there were two systems:

- 2 part division: Law and Prophets
- 3 part division that had no clear title and some discrepancy on which books went where.

However, he believes that after Christianity was established (around 90 AD) the Jews formed a clear and accepted 3 part division but the Christians continued to use a 2 part division.

(Today, our Bibles follow the 3 part division.)

As mentioned earlier, I have previously alleged that the “Law and the Prophets” of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament comprised the whole Old Testament in a twofold division. Dr. Allan A. MacRae suggests that the threefold division was possibly the consequence of liturgical factors. I am now not sure that the twofold division was earlier. After all, the prologue to Ecclesiasticus is contemporary with the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it shows the threefold usage...But in any case I now feel it equally possible to hold that the twofold division was a variant practice followed by the Dead Sea community and by the Christian Church and the practice paralleled the Rabbinic practice of dividing into 3 sections, which practice eventually was solidified in the Talmud arrangement. All is clear and all the facts are accounted for if we say that the Law and the other books listed by fathers of the Early Church were the “Law and the Prophets” of the New Testament and the “Law” and “Books of the Prophets” of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The idea that Christ and the Apostles only held two thirds of the Old Testament to be canonical in the first century has many facts against it and no positive evidence in its favor.³¹

(b) Languages

These early writings were recorded in two languages. Both were:

³⁰ R. Laird Harris, pgs 144, 145

³¹ R. Laird Harris, pgs. 282, 283

- From the Semitic family
- Written from Right to Left
- Written without Vowels.

(i) Hebrew

Almost all of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are written in Hebrew. Hebrew is of a large family of languages known as Semitic, and is akin to such languages as Aramaic, Syriac, Akkadian (Assyrian-Babylonian) and Arabic. To people of the Western hemisphere Hebrew is a “strange” language. It is written “backwards” (from right to left), has many sounds that are foreign to ears accustomed to English words. The forms of the Hebrew alphabet likewise present a problem and sometimes are confused by the best-trained eye...In addition, the Hebrew alphabet is without vowels. It is true that a system of vowel-points has been added which gives untold aid in the study of the language, but to a person thoroughly trained in the language this vowel system often proves a hindrance as much as a help. Modern Hebrew books and magazines are normally printed without vowels; and this is precisely the way the Old Testament text originally appeared.³²

(ii) Aramaic

Trade language of the near east.

Aramaic is a kindred language to Hebrew, and after the time of the exile (c. 500 B.C.) became the tongue of the common man in Palestine. (Nehemiah 8:8 is usually taken in the sense that the people did not know pure Hebrew and therefore needed a translation into the familiar Aramaic.) Since Aramaic was spoken by the Jews several centuries before Christ, it is not surprising to find some portions of the Old Testament in Aramaic instead of Hebrew. Aramaic sections of the Old Testament include: two words as a place-name in Genesis 31:47; one verse in Jeremiah 10:11; about six chapters in the book of Daniel (2:4b-7:28); and several chapters in Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26). To anyone who looks at a copy of the Hebrew Bible these sections will appear no different from other parts of the Old Testament. This is true because the Aramaic characters are like those of the Hebrew, or to be more exact, the square-shaped Hebrew letters are actually borrowed from the Aramaic. So there is no difference in appearance between Hebrew and Aramaic, but the two are distinct languages.³³

(c) Writing Material

There were many different writing materials used throughout history. Some may be a bit surprising.

(i) Stone

The oldest considerable portions of Hebrew writing found in Palestine are also on stone. The best examples of these are the famous Moabite Stone and the Siloam Inscription. The Moabite Stone was erected by Mesha, King of Moab, about 850 B. C. And tells of Moab’s revolt against Jehoram, King of Israel. The Siloam Inscription records the construction of a tunnel in Jerusalem adjoining the pool of Siloam. The inscription probably comes from the time of King Hezekiah, about 700 B. C. That these early specimens of writing exist on stone is in remarkable agreement with the Bible account, for the earliest writing material mentioned in the Old Testament is stone. The Ten Commandments, as almost everyone knows, were first written on stone. The book of Exodus reads: “And He gave to Moses, when He had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18; cf. Also Ex 34:1, 28). After the people of Israel had crossed the Jordan, they were to set up stones and write the law on them (Deut. 27:2-3; cf. Josh. 8:30-32).³⁴

³² Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We God the Bible*, ©1988, pg. 29

³³ Neil R. Lightfoot, pgs. 29, 30

³⁴ Neil R. Lightfoot, pg. 15

(ii) Clay

In Ezekeiel 4:1, Ezekiel uses clay to draw a diagram of Jerusalem. This material was probably a common material used in recording scripture.

(iii) Wood

*In Isaiah 30:8 and Habakuk 2:2 the tablets mentioned are probably wooden.*³⁵

(iv) Leather

*For hundreds of years leather or animal skins played an important role in the history of the Bible. Leather is not specified in the Old Testament, but it was unquestionably the principal material employed for literary purposes by the Hebrews. A scribe's knife, used for the purpose of erasures, is mentioned in Jeremiah 36:23. This furnishes good evidence that the scroll mentioned in this verse was a leather scroll, since a sharp instrument like a knife would not have been applied to a delicate writing surface. Other sources of information indicate that the Old Testament Scriptures were written on and handed down by means of leather. The Jewish Talmud, a code of traditional laws, required explicitly that the Scriptures be copied on animal skins, which regulation undoubtedly embodies an ancient tradition. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that the Old Testament writings were regularly copied on prepared skins. When in New Testament times the Apostle Paul requests that "the parchments" be sent to him (2 Tim 4:13), perhaps he is speaking of portions of the Old Testament.*³⁶

(v) Papyrus

Papyrus = Paper made from the reeds of an Egyptian plant.

This was a reed-plant, growing beside rivers and marshes and such places, the inner bark of which was extracted and dried in flat strips. When these strips were dried, a row of them was laid side by side, and above this another row was laid in criss-cross fashion, and the two rows were gummed together. The result was a piece of writing material. Several of these pieces could be joined together end to end so as to form a long strip which was then rolled up into a scroll of convenient size, called in Greek a biblos or biblion. This name was derived from one of the names of the plant itself, byblos, which was derived in turn from the name of a town in Phoenicia which the Greeks knew as Byblos.

*When the roll was wound up, a slip containing the title of the work and the name of the author was usually pasted on the outside. This could easily fall off, leaving the work without a name.*³⁷

*Papyrus rolls varied in size, but the average roll was about 30 feet long and 9 to 10 inches high. Usually all the writing was done on one side, although at times a scribe might make use of both sides of the roll (cf. Rev. 5:1).*³⁸

(d) Time Period**(i) Pre-Writing Phase (4000 B.C. – 1500 B.C. = 2500 years)**

We believe the earth was created about 6000 years ago, so that would make creation to be about 4000 B.C. Moses came on the scene around 1500 B.C. So the initial time was about 2500 years.

(ii) 1st Writing Phase (1500 B.C. – 400 B.C. = 1100 years)

Moses is the first Prophet that we know recorded scripture. This would've been around 1500 B.C. It is possible that there was an earlier prophet who recorded Job but we can't be sure. There continued to be prophets who God used to record His revelation until the last prophet, Nehemiah around 430 B.C. This 1st writing phase would have lasted about 1070 years. The writings we have from this time period are referred to as the "Old Testament".

³⁵ Neil R. Lightfoot, pg. 16

³⁶ Neil R. Lightfoot, pgs. 16, 17

³⁷ F. F. Bruce, pg. 11, 13

³⁸ Neil R. Lightfoot, pg. 18

(iii) Silence

After this, God was silent for about 430 years. This time is often referred to as the “Intertestamental Period”.

During this time, Man had:

- General Revelation available to all.
(Nature and Man’s Conscience)
- Special Revelation recorded in written form and only available to those with access to the writings.

d) Express Image of God – Christ: Apex of Revelation!

Let’s review for a moment:

- God chose to create us
- God chose to communicate to us (Special Revelation)
 - To enjoy fellowship with us
 - To provide us the opportunity of glorifying Him (for our benefit!)
- God spoke directly to Prophets (Special Revelation)
- These Prophets would tell others (Spoken Transmission)
- Some Prophets began to write down God’s communication (Written Transmission)
- There was a long period of silence from God.

Then the Word from God became Flesh and dwelt among us!

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God.**" (John 1:1, NKJV)*

*"And the **Word became 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, NKJV)*

*"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has declared Him.**" (John 1:18, NKJV)³⁹*

WORD = the revelation that is being communicated – Jesus Christ

God broke the silence by communicating to us in the clearest form possible:

- He became one of us and walked among us.
- He spoke directly to us.
- He exemplified the perfect life that was expected from us.
- He lived out our redemption for many to witness and then record.

APEX = Jesus Christ was God’s greatest, clearest revelation and the center of all revelation.

*"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days **spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.**" (Hebrews 1:1-4, NKJV)⁴⁰*

Notice that these verses tell us that God has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ. It goes on to say that Christ is the “express image” of God. If I took a mold and pressed clay into the mold, the clay would take on the image of the mold. We would be able to look at the clay and learn more about the mold. The clay might not be pressed hard enough to clearly represent every detail of the mold. However, if I have the mold, then I have THE VERY IMAGE itself.

³⁹ The New King James Version

⁴⁰ The New King James Version

This is the concept being presented. Christ is THE IMAGE with all the details being represented. There is no better revelation from God!

All scripture points to Jesus.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me." (John 5:39, NKJV)⁴¹

e) Church Writings –

Christ lived, died and rose again. He then commissioned others to go and witness this revelation. Again we see God taking the initiative to communicate to the world, His revelation.

"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8, NKJV)⁴²

Christ sent the Holy Spirit to them and they then, as prophets of God, began to tell others about God's revelation. However, God had more special revelation to communicate.

(1) Paul – Revealer of the Mystery of the Church

*"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that **by revelation He made known to me the mystery** (as **I have briefly written** already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and **to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him." (Ephesians 3:1-12, NKJV)⁴³*

God appointed Paul as a special prophet.

- Paul was given direct revelation from God.
- He was told all of the details about the Church
- He wrote this revelation down.

But unto none of these twelve Apostles did God reveal the great body of doctrine for this age. Just as God chose Moses to be the revelator to Israel of the Ten Commandments, and all connected with the Law dispensation; so God chose Saul of Tarsus to be the revelator and unfolder of those mighty truths connected with our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection and His ascended Person. And all the "mysteries," or "secrets," revealed to God's people in this dispensation by the Holy Ghost are revealed by Paul. Finally, Paul is the unfolder of that great company of God's elect, called the Church, the Body of Christ, which is also the Bride, the individuals of which body are called members of the Body of Christ – members of Christ Himself.⁴⁴

- God's desire was to make all see.

⁴¹ The New King James Version

⁴² The New King James Version

⁴³ The New King James Version

⁴⁴ William R. Newell, *Galatians 1 and 2 or Paul's Defense of His Gospel*, ©1930, 4

Again we see that God's desire is to communicate! He wants us to know Him and to understand His will. He takes the steps to communicate and then He commissions others to transmit it to others. It is His desire for the whole world to know their responsibility before Him.

- Paul established Churches using the Old Testament and the new revelation from Christ.

The "Bible" Jesus used was the Hebrew Old Testament. He left no instructions about forming a new collection of authoritative writings to stand beside the books that He and His disciples accepted as God's Word. The Old Testament was also the Bible of the early church, but it was the Old Testament as fulfilled by Jesus. Early Christians interpreted the Old Testament in the light of His person and work. This new perspective controlled the early church's interpretation to such a degree that, while Jews and Christians shared the same Bible, they understood it so differently that they might almost have been using two different Bibles.⁴⁵

- Then when he could not be present, he wrote letters to them about God's new revelation for how the church should function.

The works and words of Jesus were first communicated in spoken form. The apostles and their associates proclaimed the gospel by word of mouth. Paul taught the believers orally in the churches he founded when he was present. But when he was absent, he communicated through his letters.⁴⁶

- Paul wrote to meet real needs or to encourage. These were personal letters rather than doctrinal treatises.

Paul's epistles arose out of actual life situations and were intended to meet real needs and answer vital questions. They were not composed as abstract studies in theology, nor were they doctrinal treatises produced by an erudite, cloistered scholar; rather, they were ready outpourings of an alert, compassionate pastoral heart. Again and again troublesome questions arose in the churches that called for Paul's help. Frequently believers failed to understand the implications of Christianity for their lives and engaged in practices that demanded the rebuke and correction of apostolic authority. Current heresies threatened inroads upon the young churches and called forth Paul's instruction and counsel. These churches looked to him for help and cherished his assistance, which was often given in the form of letters. At other times Paul heard good news or received tokens of affection from these churches; this caused him to write or express his joy and to give encouragement and exhortation.⁴⁷

- (a) **Romans**
- (b) **1, 2 Corinthians**
- (c) **Galatians**
- (d) **Ephesians**
- (e) **Philippians**
- (f) **Colossians**
- (g) **1, 2 Thessalonians**
- (h) **1, 2 Timothy**
- (i) **Titus**
- (j) **Philemon**

(2) **Other Church Prophet's Writings**

(a) **Letters**

In this early stage of the church, much of the teaching was done by speech. It was only when the leaders couldn't be present that they resorted to writing letters. There were letters written by other apostles besides just Paul.

⁴⁵Youngblood, R. F. (1997, c1995). Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary : (F. Bruce, Ed.) (electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴⁶Youngblood, R. F.

⁴⁷ D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol 2 Pauline Epistles, ©1977, pg. 18

- (i) **James**
- (ii) **Jude, Hebrews**
- (iii) **1, 2 Peter**
- (iv) **1, 2, 3 John, Revelation**

(b) History

These other apostles were also eye-witnesses to Christ's works and some were commissioned by Christ. As the church grew and time passed, it became more important to write down what was being passed on verbally. This resulted in several books of History being recorded.

- (i) **Mathew**
- (ii) **Mark**
- (iii) **Luke**
- (iv) **Acts**

So long as the eye-witnesses of the great salvation-bringing events were alive to tell the tale, it was not so necessary to have a formal written record. But the apostles were not going to live on earth for ever, and it was obviously desirable that their message should be preserved after they had gone. So we find Mark, the companion and interpreter of Peter, committing to writing in Rome the Gospel as Peter habitually proclaimed it; shortly afterwards we have Matthew's Gospel appearing...⁴⁸

Quite early in its history, the church felt a need for a written account of the teachings of Jesus. His teachings did provide the basis for the new Christian way of life. But the church grew so large that many converts were unable to rely on the instructions of those who had heard and memorized the teachings of Jesus. From about A.D. 50 onward, probably more than one written collection of sayings of Jesus circulated in the churches. The earliest written gospel appears to have been the Gospel of Mark, written about A.D. 64.⁴⁹

(3) Languages

From the silent period through the church age, the predominant language changed from that of Hebrew.

(a) Aramaic

For centuries prior to Christ, Aramaic became the heart language of most of the people who live in Palestine. It was their first language and thus several portions of writings from this time, include aramaic words and phrases.

Aramaic continued for centuries as the vernacular of Palestine. The New Testament preserves for us Aramaic expressions of Jesus, such as talitha cumi (little girl, get up) in Mark 5:41; ephphath (be opened) in Mark 7:34; Eli, eli lama sabachthani (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?) in Matthew 27:46; cf. Mark 15:34. Jesus habitually addressed God as Abba (Aramaic for Father), which did not fail to leave its mark on the vocabulary of the early church (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Another common phrase of early Christians was Maranatha, which means "Our Lord, come!" (1 Cor. 16:22). These expressions clearly show that the language normally spoken by our Lord and his Jewish followers was Aramaic.⁵⁰

(b) Greek

Greek was the universal trade language of the time period of the early church. In particular the form called Koine Greek was a watered down version of classical greek. It combined many words of other languages and employed more slang phrases. Anyone who was educated, could read Greek.

Greek is a very old language. There is quite a bit of evidence that a form of greek was used during the same time that the Old Testament was being recorded. However, it did not become the common language until later.

⁴⁸ F. F. Bruce, pg 105

⁴⁹ Youngblood, R. F. (1997, c1995). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary : An authoritative one-volume reference work on the Bible with full color illustrations* (F. Bruce, Ed.) (electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵⁰ Neil R. Lightfoot, pgs. 30, 31

This shows again how clearly God wanted His revelation to be spread among mankind. He communicated to us in our language using the phrases that most easily could be written in that day and understood by the majority.

Although the spoken language of Jesus was Aramaic, the books which comprise our new Testament were written in Greek. There is little question today on this point, although a few men have maintained that some portions of the New Testament were issued at first in Aramaic. It was in the providence of God, since the gospel was to be proclaimed to every creature, that the New Testament writers made use of a language that was known everywhere. Greek in the first century, as English is today, was the “universal” language.

(4) **Writing Material**

(a) **Papyrus**

The use of papyrus for writing continued for many years. It was used as the primary source of writing throughout the middle east. However, because it was very fragile, very little papyrus documents remain except in the dry environment of Egypt.

Autographs = original document written..

Manuscripts = Handwritten document.

Writing was usually done on one side only, although occasionally a scroll had writing on both sides (see Rev. 5:1). The autographs of the Greek new Testament were almost certainly written on papyrus. It has been estimated that Paul’s shorter letters would have been written on a single papyrus sheet, while the Gospel of Luke would have required a papyrus roll about 30 feet long. In modern times, both biblical and secular papyri have been uncovered in the dry sands of Egypt.

...

The earliest new Testament manuscripts are written on papyrus. Since papyrus was a very fragile writing material, few early copies of the New Testament have survived except in the dry sands of Egypt.⁵¹

Because the papyrus was so fragile, none of the autographs remain today. Since no autographs remain today, when we refer to manuscripts, we will be referring to copies and fragments of copies.

Papyrus documents have lasted in Egypt. But Egyptian papyrus and skins will not survive in the Palestinian climate except in the hot, dry Jordan valley. It is precisely this accidental (or providential!) feature that has preserved for us the Qumran Scrolls – and none from other sections of Palestine.⁵²

(b) **Parchment or Vellum**

Since Egypt was the main exporter of papyrus paper, eventually they were able to control who had libraries. This led to the development of using Animal Skins for writing.

Parchment = paper made from skins of sheep and goats.

Vellum = paper made from skins of calves and antelopes.

Eventually the terms parchment and vellum were both used to refer to paper made from any animal skin.

Parchment cost more than papyrus. These were usually reserved for very expensive books. Probably, copies of the Old Testament scriptures were preserved on parchment during the time of Christ.

Probably, none of the autographs were written on these, but certainly manuscripts (copies) were.

In New Testament times parchment, being more durable and more costly than papyrus, was used chiefly for documents of greater value, or for such as were constantly in use and were, therefore, exposed to greater wear and tear. What

⁵¹ David Alan Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism – A Concise Guide*, ©1994, pgs. 15, 18

⁵² R. Laird Harris, pg. 155

the parchments were which Paul so particulaly desired Timothy to bring we cannot be sure, but it is a reasonable guess that they contained portions of Holy Scripture.⁵³

(5) Time Periods – 2nd Phase of Writing

(a) Time of Christ (0 A.D. – 30 A.D. = 30 years)

The time that Christ – the Express Image of God – walked the earth and communicated directly with men was about 30 years.

(b) Founding of the Church (30 A.D. – 60 A.D. = 30 years)

Christ left the Apostles to begin the church, during which time some writing did take place. At this time – persecution of the church was not heavy.

(i) James – 45 A.D.⁵⁴

(ii) Galatians – 48 A.D.

(iii) 1, 2 Thessalonians - 52 A.D.

(iv) 1, 2 Corinthians – 55 A.D.

(v) Romans – 56 A.D.

(vi) Matthew – 58 A.D.

(vii) Luke – 58 A.D.

(viii) Acts – 61 A.D.

(c) Establishing of the Church (61 A.D. – 70 A.D. = 9 years)

Eventually persecution began to increase until finally the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. This persecution was focused on the Christians. Many of the letters written during this time were while Paul was in prison. The subject matter of several of these books is to keep on persevering even in the face of fiery trials.

(i) Prison Epistles - 61 A.D.⁵⁵

(a) Colossians

(b) Ephesians

(c) Philemon

(d) Philippians

(ii) Other books – 62 A.D. - 68 A.D.

(a) 1, 2 Timothy

(b) Titus

(c) Hebrews

(d) Jude

(e) 1, 2 Peter

(f) Mark

(d) Encouraging the Church (70 A.D. - 96 A.D. = 26 years)

There was a time of silence after the temple was destroyed. Possibly from Ephesus, John wrote his Gospel of the history of Christ. The tone of his Gospel is very different from the others, even though it agrees with the events. Also during this time, John wrote his 3 letters. In Johns books, he encourages us to walk closely to Christ and to maintain fellowship with the Lord. Then while John was exiled on the Island of Patmos, he completed the last book of the Bible.

(i) John – 85 A.D.⁵⁶

(ii) 1, 2, 3 John - ?

(iii) Revelation – 96 A.D.

⁵³ F. F. Bruce, pg. 12

⁵⁴ The following books and dates are seperated according to Irving Jensen, *Jensen's Survey of the New Testament*, ©1982, pg. 20

⁵⁵ Irving Jensen, pg. 20

⁵⁶ Irving Jensen, pg. 20

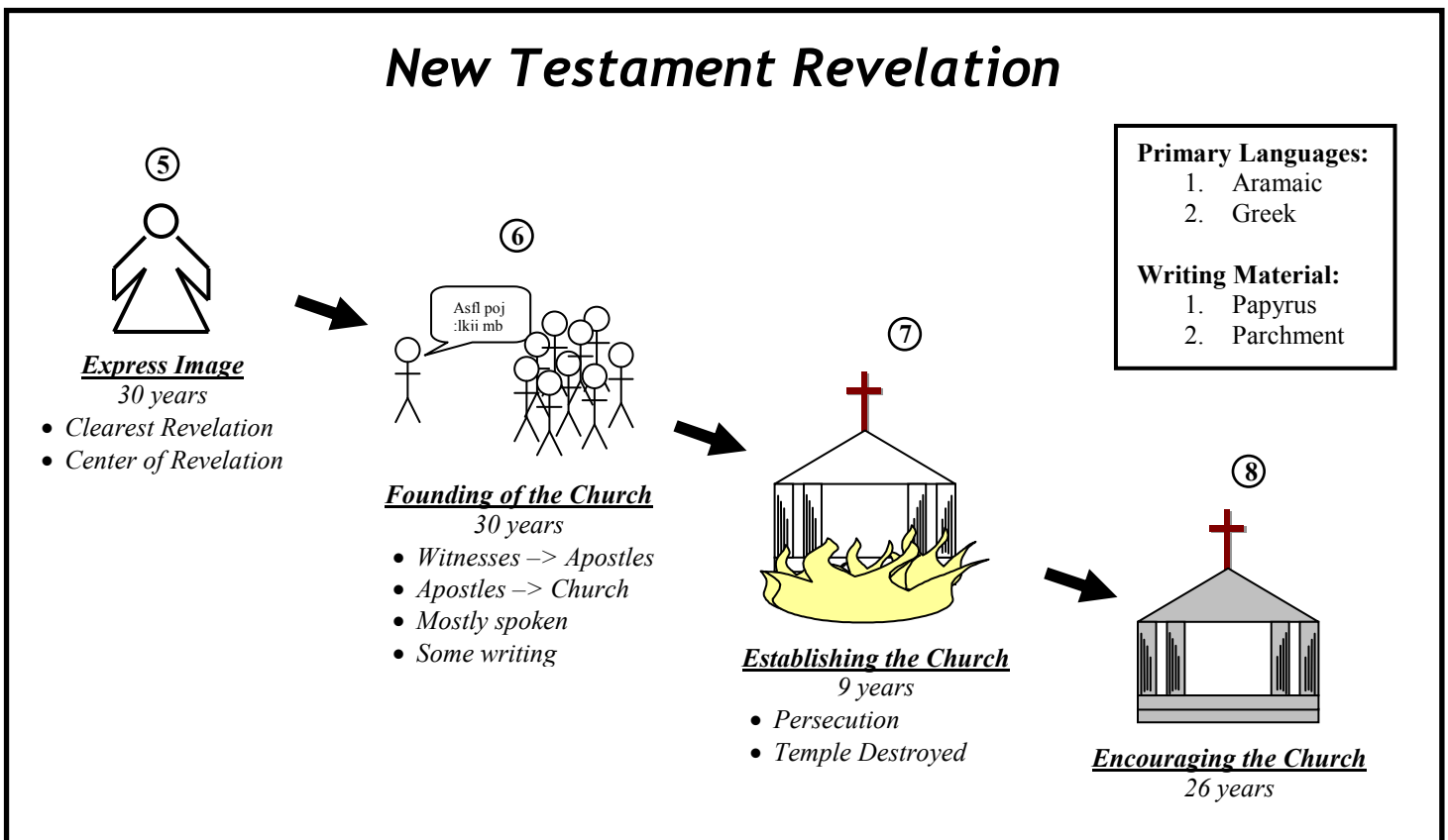
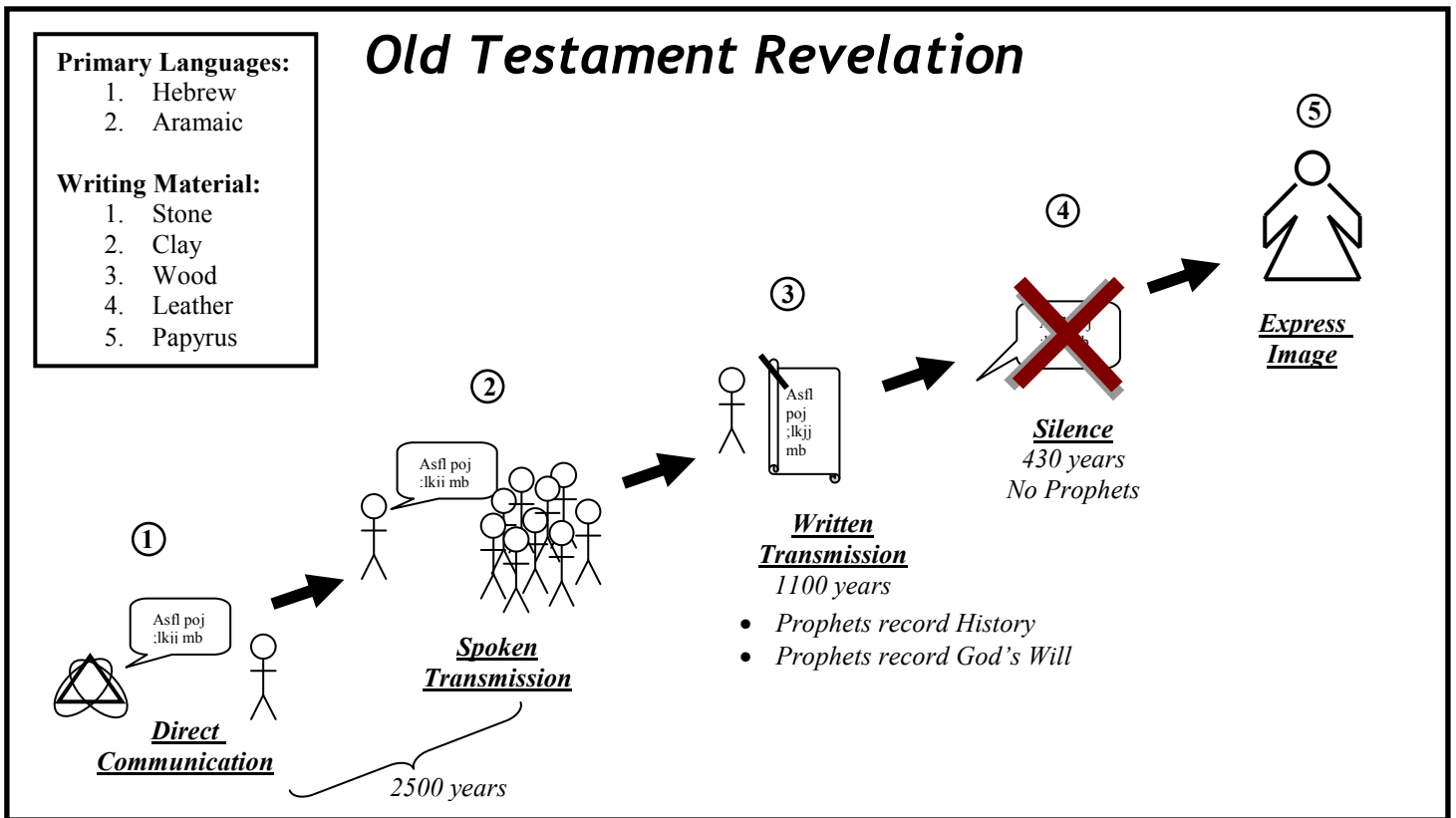
B. Summary

HEBREW ORDER OF OT BOOKS				
Law (Torah)		Prophets (Nebhiim)		Writings (Kethubhim)
1. Genesis	Former Prophets	6. Joshua	Poetical Books	14. Psalms
2. Exodus		7. Judges		15. Proverbs
3. Leviticus		8. Samuel		16. Job
4. Numbers		9. Kings		17. Song of Songs
5. Deuteronomy	Latter Prophets	10. Isaiah	Five Rolls (Megilloth)	18. Ruth
		11. Jeremiah		19. Lamentations
		12. Ezekiel		20. Ecclesiastes
		13. The Twelve		21. Esther
				22. Daniel
			Historical Books	23. Ezra-Nehemiah
				24. Chronicles

ORDER OF OT BOOKS IN OUR BIBLES		
Law (Pentateuch)	Poetry	
1. Genesis	18. Job	
2. Exodus	19. Psalms	
3. Leviticus	20. Proverbs	
4. Numbers	21. Ecclesiastes	
5. Deuteronomy	22. Song of Solomon	
History	Prophets	
6. Joshua	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
7. Judges	23. Isaiah	28. Hosea
8. Ruth	24. Jeremiah	29. Joel
9. 1 Samuel	25. Lamentations	30. Amos
10. 2 Samuel	26. Ezekiel	31. Obadiah
11. 1 Kings	27. Daniel	32. Jonah
12. 2 Kings		33. Micah
13. 1 Chronicles		34. Nahum
14. 2 Chronicles		35. Habakkuk
15. Ezra		36. Zephaniah
16. Nehemiah		37. Haggai
17. Esther		38. Zechariah
		39. Malachi

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF NT BOOKS⁵⁷		
Book	Church Period	Date
James	FOUNDING (15 years aprx)	A.D. 45
Galatians		
1 Thessalonians		
2 Thessalonians		
1 Corinthians		
2 Corinthians		
Romans		
Matthew		
Luke		
Acts		A.D. 61
Colossians		<i>Prison Epistles</i>
Ephesians		
Philemon		
Phillipians		
1 Timothy	<i>Pastoral Epistles</i>	ESTABLISHING (10 years aprx)
Titus		
2 Timothy		
Hebrews	<i>Focus on Persecution</i>	A.D. 68
Jude		
1 Peter		
2 Peter		
Mark		
FALL OF JERUSALEM (15 “silent years”)		A.D. 70
John	CONTINUING (10 years aprx)	A.D. 85
1 John		
2 John		
3 John		
Revelation		A.D. 96

⁵⁷ Adapted from Irving Jensen, *Jensen Bible Study Charts*, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, ©1981, Chart 111



III. Canonicity of the Bible

A. Introduction

1. Definition:

CANON = the complete and exclusive collection of all inspired writings which God intended to be a part of His revelation to man.

We have looked at the fact that God desired to communicate with man.

- He initiated it.
- He commanded His revelation to be written down at times.
- He commanded it to be preserved.

However, we also know that the same prophets, who were used of God to write down His revelation, also spoke other things and even wrote other things that we do not have today. How do we know what writings we have today are the ones God wanted us to have?

Throughout history, man has recognized the writings that God has given to us. Initially they would be received from the hand of the prophet, but later others might question their divine connection. As time progressed, a set of principles were used to maintain a consistent view of which books were revelation from God. The set of books that have consistently been accepted as God's revelation will be seen clearly from these principles.

There are a set of books that have become the standard for knowing how we should live before God. These books are the "CANON".

History of the Title – Canon

Biblical – Canon, comes from the Greek word "kanon". The word means rod, ruler, staff or measuring stick. The Greek word "kanon" is derived from the Hebrew word "qaneh", meaning reed, which is an Old Testament term that denotes a measuring rod (Ezekiel 40:3; 42:16).

Theological – Eventually the word came to mean a rule or standard for anything. Early Christians gave it the meaning, rule of Faith. In this sense the word seems to have been used first by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in a letter circulated in 367 AD.

But for the sake of greater accuracy I must needs, as I write, add this: there are other books outside these, which are not indeed included in the canon, but have been appointed from the time of the fathers to be read to those who are recent converts to our company and wish to be instructed in the word of true religion...

B. History of Canonicity

1. Old Testament

a) The Law

When Moses first wrote, he was recognized as God's clear prophet for the day. He had the unique position of leading the people out of Egypt. He was involved in many of the miracles of that day. Moses had a unique position compared to any other prophet.

"Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?"
(Numbers 12:6-8, NKJV)⁵⁸

When God had him write the law, it is easy to imagine that the people would have immediately accepted it as God's revelation. They would have known its accuracy. The priesthood was in place and oversaw its preservation.

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." (Exodus 17:14, NKJV)

⁵⁸ The New King James Version

[Priests are appointed to care for the Law.] *"So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing." (Deuteronomy 31:9-11, NKJV)*

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." (Exodus 34:27, NKJV)⁵⁹

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel." (Deuteronomy 17:18-20, NKJV)

"Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel." (Deuteronomy 31:19, NKJV)⁶⁰

This acceptance of the Law continued in the time of Joshua, David, and Daniel.

"Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:7-8, NKJV)

[David speaking to Solomon] *"And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn;" (1 Kings 2:3, NKJV)*

[Daniel quoting from Deut 27:15-26] *"Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. "As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth." (Daniel 9:11-13, NKJV)*

[After Judah's captivity (400 B.C.) they still referred to the Law for authority from God.] *"They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses." (Ezra 6:18, NKJV)⁶¹*

b) The Prophets

"The Law" clearly defined a true prophet for the people.

"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, NKJV)

⁵⁹ The New King James Version

⁶⁰ The New King James Version

⁶¹ The New King James Version

"But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him." (Deuteronomy 18:20-22, NKJV) ⁶²

When the Prophets wrote, we know that again they were immediately accepted as authoritative from God. The audience of that day recognized the prophet and thus considered them the same as "the Law".

[The people accepted a covenant with Joshua, then they accepted his additions to "the Law".] *"And the people said to Joshua, 'The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!'" So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord." (Joshua 24:24-26, NKJV)*

[Samuel wrote about how Kings should behave which was to be accepted as the authority from God.] *"And Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?'" So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!" Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, 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. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched. But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace." (1 Samuel 10:24-27, NKJV)*

[Jeremiah quotes the book of Micah for revelation from God.] *"Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest." "' (Jeremiah 26:18, NKJV)*

[Daniel accepted Jeremiah's writing as revelation from God.] *"in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." (Daniel 9:2, NKJV) ⁶³*

c) The Writings

As has already been mentioned, the Writings section was often included in the Prophets section. It is clear that these books were also accepted as being God's revelation by the local audiences. They are quoted in other books by statements like, "as God has said" or "it is written". These quotes show their confidence in the authority of these books.

NOTE: All of the sections (Law, Prophets and Writings) were quoted by Christ as God's Word and therefore we can take His authority that they are God's Canon of Revelation to us.

Examples: Matt 4:4 -> Deut 8:3 / Luke 4:18-19 -> Isaiah 61:1:2 / Mark 12:36 -> Psalm 110:1

[The author of Chronicles is quoting from Psalm 105:1-15.] *"Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore! Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, O seed of Israel His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones! He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth. Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, " (1 Chronicles 16:8-15, NKJV) ⁶⁴*

⁶² The New King James Version

⁶³ The New King James Version

⁶⁴ The New King James Version

d) Other books show the acceptance of the Old Testament.**(1) Septuagint – 250 B.C.**

The Septuagint was a translation of the Old Testament into Greek for Greek speaking Jews. Titled because it was supposedly the work of Seventy Elders (Septuagint = “Seventy”), it is often referred to as LXX. (We will look at this in more detail in the “Transmission” section.) It seems that it started off as primarily a translation of “the Law”. This makes sense as it would be most important to Jews. However, over the course of 50 to 100 years it was filled out to include all of the Old Testament. There are a few other Greek versions that began to arrive during the Christian era. However, all of these contained all of the text of the Hebrew Bible.

(2) Ecclesiasticus – 200 B.C.

There was a non-biblical book called, “Ecclesiasticus” which gives clear evidence to the acceptance of the OT.

This was written by a devout Jew around 200 BC. He refers specifically to every book of the Law and the Propbets and to most of the Writings. The order of the books is followed and the 12 Minor Propbets mentioned. No explanation is given. It is assumed by the writer that all knew the canon as a long settled collection...If the question of canonicity had but recently been settled, or was still under consideration, he would have explained why he accepted these books and the arrangement of them he used.⁶⁵

(3) Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran Texts) – 250 B.C. – 100 B.C.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS — the popular name for about 800 scrolls and fragments of scrolls that were found in 11 caves near Khirbet (“ruin of”) Qumran on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in 1947 and shortly thereafter. Taken together, these leather and PAPHYRUS (primitive paper) manuscripts were a find without precedent in the history of modern archaeology.⁶⁶

The Dead Sea Scrolls contain pieces of every part of the Old Testament. In some cases it contains complete books (Isaiah). Not all of the research and dating has been completed even today. We will look more at these again, when dealing with the “Transmission of the Bible”.

These scrolls and the documents with them, leave no doubt to the fact that the community that contained them quoted from the Old Testament as authoritative and preserved these because of their great value to them.

(4) Josephus – 37 B.C. – 100 A. D.

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish historian from the days of Christ. His writings shed quite a bit of light on the circumstances and culture of the first century. He wrote about how the Jews firmly held to their scriptures.

The famous Jewish historian, who wrote toward the end of the first century A.D., tells us that the pious Jew held his Scriptures dearer than life itself. In his epistle Against Apion he writes: “How firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed no one hath been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change; but it is become natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and if occasion be, willingly to die for them.” In this valuable quotation he also give us a listing of the books of the Jewish Scriptures, which, as we shall see in Part II, are the exact equivalent of the thirty-nine books found in the Protestant Old Testament and in the Jewish Bible. The Apocrypha are not included.⁶⁷

(5) Synod at Jamnia – 90 A.D.

After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.), the Jews were no longer allowed to Govern themselves through their political parties (Pharisees, Sadducees,

⁶⁵ Clarence E. Mason, Jr., *Introduction to the Bible – course notes*, contains good notes on this section. These can be accessed at: http://www.ancientpath.net/Bible/Mason/BI/BI_Canon/BI_Canon_2.htm

⁶⁶ Youngblood, R. F. (1997, c1995). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary* (F. Bruce, Ed.) (electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶⁷ R. Laird Harris, pg. 62

etc.) However, around 90 A.D. they got permission to have one council strictly for spiritual reasons. The information surrounding this council is very sketchy and several historians disagree on what occurred. The Jewish Talmuds, however, do have information that was passed down regarding what took place. They show that the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs and Esther, which were already accepted as canon, were still going to be considered such. They affirmed what was already held.

Some of the discussions which went on at Jamnia were handed down by oral transmission and ultimately recorded in the Rabbinical writings. Among their debates they considered whether canonical recognition should be accorded to the books of Proverbs... Objections had been raised against these books on various grounds; Esther, for example, did not contain the name of God and Ecclesiastes was none too easy to square with contemporary orthodoxy. But the upshot of the Jamnia debates was the firm acknowledgment of all these books as Holy Scripture...

We should not exaggerate the importance of the Jamnia debates for the history of the canon. The books which they decided to acknowledge as canonical were already generally accepted, although questions had been raised about them.⁶⁸

(6) Note Regarding the Canon of the OT

It is important to note again that the Canon was accepted as God's revelation from the time it was delivered by a prophet. There was no committee that these other books referred to in order to prove the canon. There is no evidence that any attempted to decide a canon. Rather, there was some discrepancy brought up by individuals and then groups would defend what had always been held as canon.

Indeed, there are no references to any such council in pre-Christian Jewish history or in the Bible itself. The closest approach is the appeal to the tradition of the men of the Great Synagogue found in the tractate Pirke Aboth. But here the reference is not to a council but to a great generation of rabbis who followed Ezra. And the argument of Pirke Aboth ("Sayings of the Fathers") is that the chain of tradition goes back without a break through the rabbis, through the men of the Great Synagogue, through Ezra and previous rabbis, back through the seventy elders who assisted Moses and to Moses himself, to whom God spoke on Sinai. The ultimate in the tradition is not a council, but a man to whom God spoke – a Prophet.⁶⁹

e) Apocrypha (190 B.C. – 70 A.D.)

(1) Definition = non-biblical books accepted by some, rejected by others

The Old Testament Apocrypha (there is a NT Apocrypha as well) is a set of books that were written after the close of the last prophet in Israel. This is clearly attested to in the Apocrypha itself.

There is strong evidence that the apocryphal books are not prophetic. Since propheticity is the test for canonicity, this would eliminate them from the Canon. First, no apocryphal book claims to be written by a prophet. Indeed, as already noted, one apocryphal book even disclaims being prophetic (1 Mac. 9:27). Second, there is no supernatural confirmation of any of the writers of the apocryphal books, as there is for the prophets who wrote canonical books. Third, there is no predictive prophecy... in the Apocrypha, such as we have in the canonical books (e.g., Isa. 53; Dan. 9; Mic. 5:2), which is a clear indication of the propheticity. Fourth, there is no new messianic truth in the Apocrypha; thus, it adds nothing to the messianic truths of the Old Testament. Fifth, even the Jewish community, whose books they were, acknowledged that the prophetic gifts had ceased in Israel before the Apocrypha was written. Sixth, the apocryphal books were never listed in the Jewish Bible along with the "Prophets," or any other section for that matter. Seventh, never once is any apocryphal book cited authoritatively by a prophetic book written after it [NT]. Taken together, this provides overwhelming evidence that the Apocrypha was not prophetic and therefore, should not be part of the canon of Scripture.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ F. F. Bruce, pgs. 96, 97

⁶⁹ R. Laird Harris, pgs. 155, 156

⁷⁰ Norman Geisler, pg. 524

Some of them are useful in understanding history and culture. Most of them contain mythical stories and legends. They seem to be written to help inspire the Jews to stand firm under persecution and possibly even fight back.

THEY ARE NOT PART OF THE CANON

(2) Septuagint – 250 B.C.

The Septuagint also contained the Apocrypha. But much of the Apocrypha was not written at the time that the Septuagint was appointed. Probably, they were translated and added to it as “helps” rather than as “revelation from God”.

Dr. Norman Geisler gives a clear scholarly response to the view that the Septuagint proves the Apocrypha was inspired.

The fact that the new Testament often quotes from the Greek Old Testament in no way proves that the apocryphal books contained in Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament are inspired. First of all, it is not certain that the Greek Old Testament (LXX) of the first century A.D. contained the Apocrypha; the earliest Greek manuscripts that include these books date from the fourth century A.D. Further, even if these books were in the LXX of the apostolic era, Jesus and the apostles never once quoted them, although they are supposed to have been included in the very version of the Old Testament (the LXX) that they usually cited⁷¹

(3) Not Accepted by the Orthodox Roman Catholic Church until 1546 A.D.

Although these books had been known and read from early times, they were always carefully distinguished from the canonical books by early church leaders and by the conservative leaders of Roman Catholicism.

Jerome flatly rejected them, using the 22 canonical books (later numbering) saying: “Anything outside of these must be placed in the Apocrypha.” Though he was an ardent Romanist, and strangely enough the translator of the Latin Vulgate (The Roman Catholic Bible), these books were later added to it as a sort of secondary canon.

Pope Clement VII (AD 1378-1394) wrote: “The whole Latin church is greatly indebted to St. Jerome for distinguishing the canonical from the non-canonical books.”

Cardinal Cajetan wrote as late as AD 1534, when the issue in the Roman Church as to the place of these books had become very crucial as result of the action of Luther and the other reformers in rejecting them and placing them by them-selves: “We have chosen the rule of Jerome that we may not err in distinguishing the canonical books from those which he delivered to be canonical and which we hold to be canonical. Those which he separated from the canonical books, we hold to be out of the canon.”

In spite of such deliverances from revered Roman prelates, “the Church that never changes” added these books to her canonical list at the Council of Trent. This was not in AD 400, nor 800, nor 1200, but in AD 1546, after she was forced by the Protestant Reformation decision on these books to do something about her slipshod way of handling them through the centuries.

She had depended upon the Apocrypha before this to establish doctrine; it was only logical then that she declare them of equal authority with the canonical books. And loyal Catholics, like Cardinal Cajetan, who strenuously opposed this step of folly, both before and in Council, submitted (even if regretfully) to the decision of the Church.⁷²

f) Summary

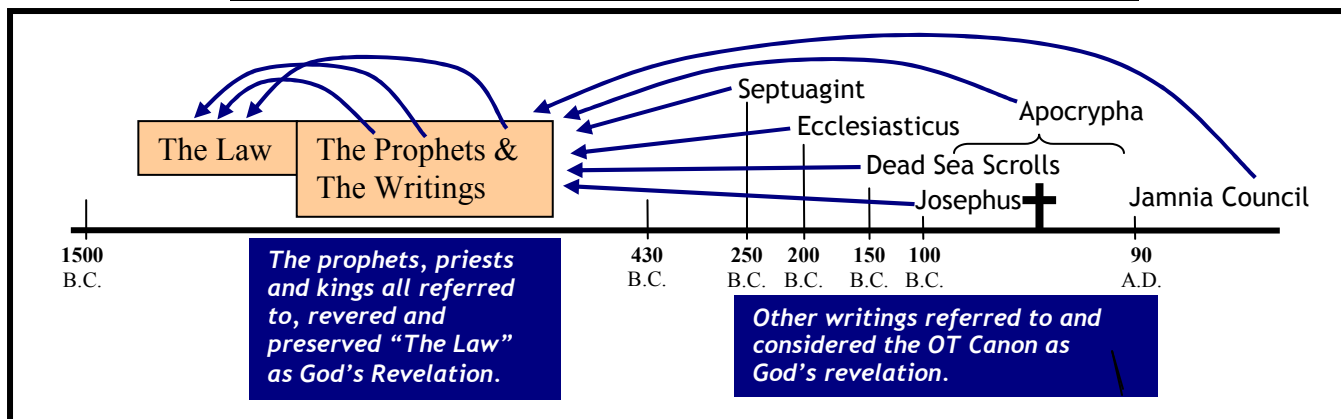
The Prophets (From Moses to Malachi) wrote under God's guidance. Their writings were considered as authoritative as if the prophet had spoken directly to them. The writings were commissioned by God and required that they be preserved. We can see clearly His sovereign hand guiding the direction of the OT Canon.

Thus our conclusion would be that the words of a prophet in his teaching ministry were the very words of God and were received as such. His writings were of equal

⁷¹ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology – Vol. 1 – Introduction / Bible*, ©2002, pg.518

⁷² Clarence E. Mason

credence and none were to be rejected by his contemporaries or successors. These views are, in fact taught and illustrated in the Bible. Moses wrote at the command of God, collected his work into a law, and arranged for its preservation. Succeeding men, most of whom were clearly prophets and all of whom may have been prophets, added to the sacred scrolls, being conscious of the continuity of the record. All of this was received by contemporaries, as far as any positive evidence indicates, as equal in authority to the speaking prophetic voice. In the days following the close of the Old Testament canon it was regarded quite soon as a complete and authoritative body of literature. The Lord Jesus Christ's seal of approval upon this literature, in the form which it then and now has, is guarantee enough of its canonicity and truth for those who find in Him the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But when Christ approved of the Old Testament books, He was not promulgating new doctrine. Rather, He was in full agreement with the Jews of His time and was actually approving the teachings which the people of God had held through generations reaching back to the great basic revelations of God to Moses on the Holy Mount – to Moses, the prophet who was to foreshadow Christ Himself, that Prophet who should come into the world.⁷³



g) Extent of the O.T. Canon

There are many other books that were written during this time besides the Apocrypha. There are four categories regarding how these relate to the Canon:

(1) Homologumena – Those accepted by all

These books were undisputed books of the canon.

34 of the 39 books in the OT

(2) Antilegomena – Those questioned by some at various times

We have already seen that the council of Jamnia reviewed some of these books.

OT = Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezekiel, and Proverbs

(3) Pseudapigrpha – Those rejected by all

Pseudo means false. Some of these claimed to be authors that they could not have been (Baruch was written long after Baruch had died). These books were full of historical as well as other inaccuracies that made it clear they were not from God.

(4) Apocrypha – Rejected by most but accepted by some at various times

These were never accepted in the canon by any until 1546. The early church fathers would quote from them at times, but most of the writings of the church fathers confirm that they rejected them. Eventually the Roman Catholic Church did use them to defend some of their heretical doctrines and thus needed to canonize them. These are the only books to ever be rejected through history and then included later.

2. New Testament

a) Founding of the Church

As we have already stated, during the time of Christ and the very beginning of the church the only Bible they had was the OT. Christ quoted from every section of it as authoritative. At

⁷³ R. Laird Harris, pgs. 178, 179

Pentecost when Peter was preaching to the very first members of the church, he quoted from Joel and the Psalms.

Once the church was begun, they continued to use the OT Scriptures as their Primary tool for evangelism and direction.

"Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." (Acts 6:2, NKJV) "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7, NKJV)⁷⁴

However, as growth began and the church continued to spread out, it became important for the Apostles to communicate to the church in writing. When the Apostle wrote a letter to the church to tell it how to function this letter was considered as authoritative as if God had written it.

So, just like with the OT canon, the initial books were recognized as God's revelation and respected as such.

[The Churches circulated the Letters] "Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." (Colossians 4:16, NKJV)

"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren." (1 Thessalonians 5:27, NKJV)

[Peter had a collection of Paul's Writings.] "Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (2 Peter 3:14-16, NKJV)⁷⁵

It is clear that the scriptures were passed around and collected by the churches. The early regions would not necessarily have all of the writings as they were passed. Eventually, they began to be collected into a standard set of books. There would have been other books written as well to help their understanding (commentaries, etc.)

Don't get the idea that the early church took all the writings of their day and just carelessly accepted that these 'canonical' books were the most valuable. Because of the events that surrounded the time period of the early church, we can know that they would have been very conscious of the fact that these books were to be specifically recognized as "authoritative".

In short, 'canonical' means authoritative books, but 'the canon' means the only authoritative books.⁷⁶

Factors that hastened the distinguishing of the Canon:

(1) Gnosticism

One is the growth of opposing religious teachings. The largest of these was Gnosticism. Gnosticism is a religious system which teaches that we can be freed from this physical existence to enjoy a higher spiritual existence as gods if we have our minds freed through special knowledge. They had their own writings (which many of the "Lost Books of the Bible" and apocrypha NT books are part of) and they used the Christian writings also. Many church fathers spoke out strongly against this. They would have been very clear as to which books were for the Church and which were not.

(2) Marcion's Heresy

The church had been holding to specific books as canon (though not referred to as such) from the beginning. There was a heretic Marcion (140 A.D.) who came to Rome from Asia Minor and began to get a large following.

⁷⁴ The New King James Version

⁷⁵ The New King James Version

⁷⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, ©1997, pg. 24

To have writings that he could base his views on, he began to re-write the documents of the Apostles. He edited them taking out large sections and re-wrote some parts. As a result, he created a competing set of books to base his heretical doctrines on.

Muratorian fragment (150 A.D.)

The church leaders then issued an official list of books that clearly indicated the fallacy of Marcion's books. A fragment from this list was discovered by L. A. Muratori and published in 1740.

*It is pretty obviously an orthodox counterblast to Marcion.⁷⁷
But his activity certainly provided the church leaders, especially in Rome, where he chiefly propagated his views, with an incentive to state the orthodox position regarding the canon more clearly. The main points of this position were that the canon contained four Gospels, not one; thirteen Pauline epistles, not only ten; the book of Acts, which vindicated the apostolic commission of Paul, but also related something of the doings of other apostles, and thus refuted Marcion's depreciation of those; and (in addition to the writings of Paul) writings of some other apostles and 'apostolic men'.⁷⁸*

(3) Montanism

Another heretical group came on the scene around 170 A.D. A man named Mantanus claimed to have fallen under a trance of the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. Two women initially followed him and left their husbands. Many writings came out of this movement, mostly having an apocalyptic nature (prophetic like the book of Revelation). As this movement was denounced, much doubt was created in any prophetic material of that day. Even Revelations and Hebrews began to be disputed (even though they had been accepted previously).

Again, this shows that the early church was very much aware of the need to consider what was authoritative revelation from God and what was spurious.

(4) Persecution

When the early church faced persecution (last one around 300 A.D. focused on destroying the scriptures) from time to time, you can believe that they would have counted the cost of whether they would die before handing over the book of Romans or the Gospel of Thomas.

In other instances stiffer resistance is offered when believers were asked to give up their Christian books. In the account of the martyrdom of Agape, Irene, and Chione, at successive hearings the three women were interrogated by the prefect Dulcinius of Thessalonica, who inquired, 'Do you have in your possession any writings, parchments, or books of the impious Christians?' Chione replied, 'We do not, Sir. Our present emperors have taken these from us'. On the next day when Irene was once again brought before the court, the prefect asked, 'Who was it that advised you to retain these parchments and writings up to the present time?' 'It was almighty God', Irene replied, 'who bade us love him unto death. For this reason we did not dare to be traitors, but we chose to be burned alive or suffer anything else that might happen to us rather than betray them' (ie. the writings).⁷⁹

Clearly they would not feel they were betraying something that they did not recognize as the revealed word of God.

3. Church Fathers (220 A.D. – 405 A.D.)

There were many church fathers during this time who attested to the canon of the NT. Just to list a few: Origen, Dionysius, Eusebius (historian), Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Augustine, etc.

4. Synod of Hippo (393 A.D.) and Carthage (393 A.D.)

The Orthodox Church in Africa at their yearly regional meetings of which Augustine (ordained a priest in Hippo) attended both and was influential in the acceptance of all 27 books of the NT.

⁷⁷ F.F. Bruce, pg. 108

⁷⁸ F.F. Bruce, pg 107

⁷⁹ Bruce M. Metzger, pg. 108

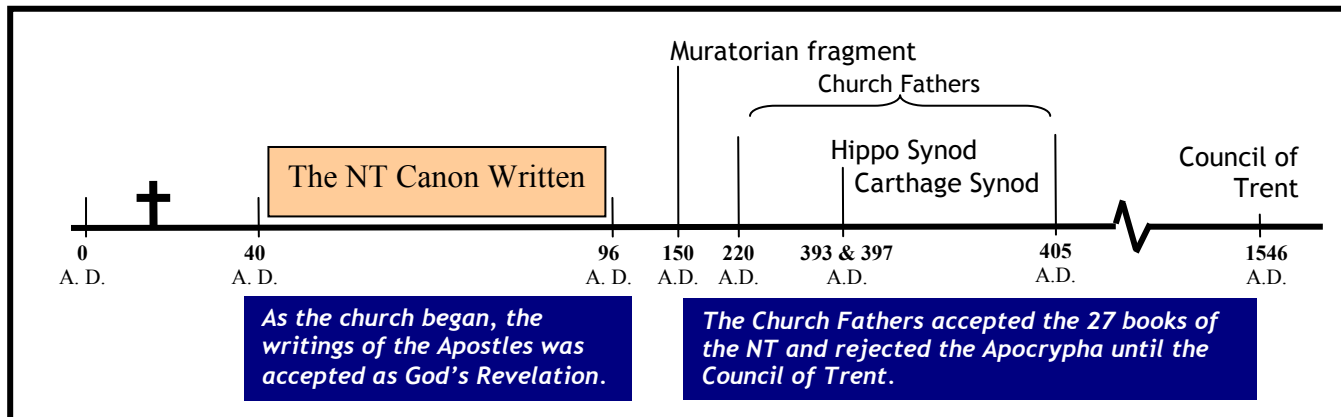
5. Jerome and the Latin Vulgate

Jerome translated all 27 books of the NT into Latin. The Apocrypha NT books were translated into Latin later by others. Jerome refused to translate them.

Jerome, however, the greatest Biblical Scholar of the Western Church, made a clear distinction between the canonical and apocryphal books; it is to him, in fact, that we owe the term 'apocryphal' as applied to them.⁸⁰

6. Summary

The New Testament Canon was created as the Apostles wrote letters to churches to declare God's will to them. At this same time the Apostles recorded the history of Christ and the Founding of the Church. This was equally held as authoritative from God and part of the Scriptures. A few of these books were disputed by some, but clearly the majority held to them. As opposition and heresies arose, the Canon became clearly distinguished and taught. Some books that were rejected from the beginning by most were added later in an unprecedented decision by the Roman Catholic Church.



7. Extent of the NT Canon

As was seen in looking at the extent of the OT Canon, there are other books that were written and considered alongside of the canon. These books might be considered valuable to helping us grow spiritually, but they were not accepted as part of "Scripture". We do not see any of these books being quoted by other books of the Bible, nor do they claim to be part of the "Scriptures".

a) Categories

(1) Homologumena – Those accepted by all

These books were undisputed books of the canon.

(20 of the 27 books in the NT)

(2) Antilegomena – Those questioned by some at various times

We have already seen that the council of Jamnia reviewed some of these books.

NT = Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude & Revelation

(3) Pseudapigripha – Those rejected by all

Pseudo means false. Some of these claimed to be authors that they could not have been. These books were full of historical as well as other inaccuracies that made it clear they were not from God.

(4) Apocrypha – Rejected by most but accepted by some at various times

There are several books that were specifically added to the NT, very late.

These were never accepted in the canon by any until 1546. The early church fathers would quote from them at times, but most of the writings of the church fathers confirm that they rejected them. Eventually the Roman Catholic Church did use them to defend some of their heretical doctrines and thus needed to canonize them. These are the only books to ever be rejected through history and then included later.

⁸⁰ F.F. Bruce, pg 164

LIST:

- Epistle of Barnabas (A.D. 70-79, after he was dead)
- Epistle to the Corinthians (96 A.D.)
- Gospel According to the Hebrews (65-100 A.D.)
- Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (108 A.D.)
- Didache (or Teaching of the Twelve) (100-120 A.D.)
- Seven Epistles of Ignatius (110 A.D.)
- Ancient Homily (or Second Epistle of Clement) (120-140 A.D.)
- Shepherd of Hermas (115 – 140 A.D.)
- Apocalypse of Peter (150 A.D.)
- Epistle to the Laodiceans (4th Century)

b) The “Lost Books of the Bible”

Certainly there are some writings referred to in Scripture which have not been discovered. It is clear that Paul wrote a 3rd letter to the Church of Corinth, which we do not have. In the OT, there are several books referred to for history. These we also do not have.

Today there are several books being spread as the “Lost Books” of the Bible. These are made up of Pseudapigrpha and Apocrypha books. They include a focus on the early years of Jesus. Some of them pretend to be Barnabas and one claims to be Paul writing to the Laodiceans.

In the introduction to the 1979 edition, Dr. Frank Crane makes the following statement:

It is safe to say that a comparison of the accepted books with those rejected may be relied upon, for those books which were accepted are far superior in value to the others. These others which are included in the Lost Books of the Bible comprise all kinds of stories, tales and myths...It is impossible that a man representing so great a force as Jesus of Nazareth should appear in the world without finding many echoes of His personality in contemporary literature-many stories which grew up about Him elapsed. What these tales and stories are, just how He appears to the fictional minds of His day and afterwards, it is interesting to note.⁸¹

c) Writings of the Early Church Fathers

There were many writings of the leaders of the early church. These should not be classified as Apocrypha. They are written to encourage the church. These do help us to understand their spiritual views and faith. However, they are written by fallible men. They do help us to understand what books were always accepted as part of the canon, but none of these were ever considered such.

The earliest Christian writers outside the New Testament are known as the Apostolic Fathers: they belong to the century between A.D. 80 and 180. Their works are not to be classed as ‘New Testament Apocrypha’; they are simply what they profess to be, the writings of Christian men, designed for the edification of their fellow-Christians. But why are they not regarded as canonical? Because they do not bear the marks of canonicity. They themselves recognize the superior authority of the apostolic writings. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, author of seven epistles written while he was on his way to be thrown to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre about A.D. 115, says in his Epistle to the Romans (4.3): ‘I do not enjoin you, as Peter and Paul did. They were Apostles, I am a convict; they were free, but I am a slave to this very hour’. Ignatius was very sure of the rightness of his views, and very anxious that they should be accepted, but he does not enforce them with the apostolic authority.⁸²

⁸¹ *Lost Books of the Bible*, ©1979 Bell Publishing Company, pgs 14,15

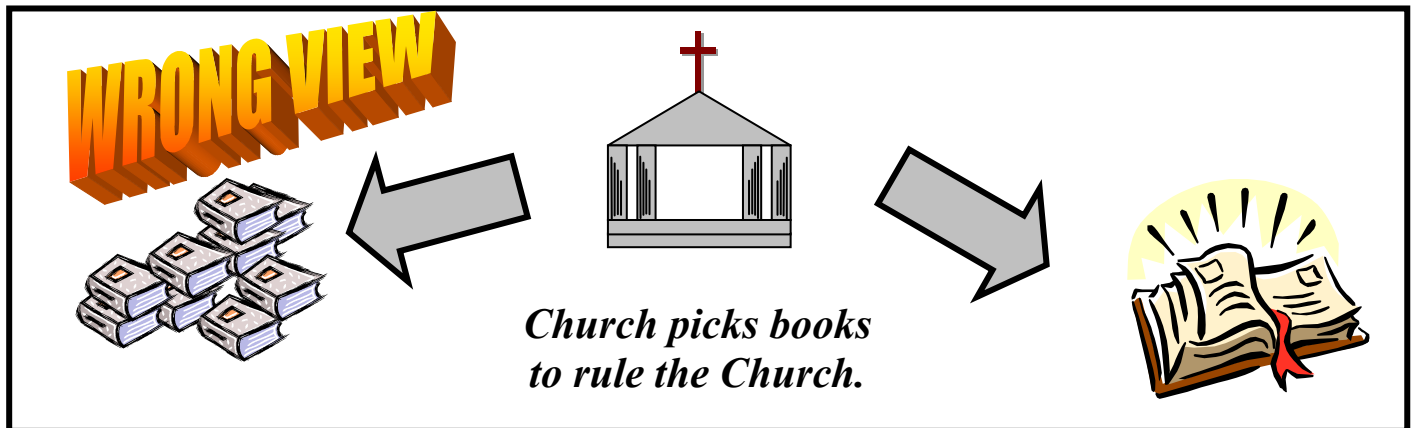
⁸² F. F. Bruce, pg. 260

C. Recognizing Canonicity

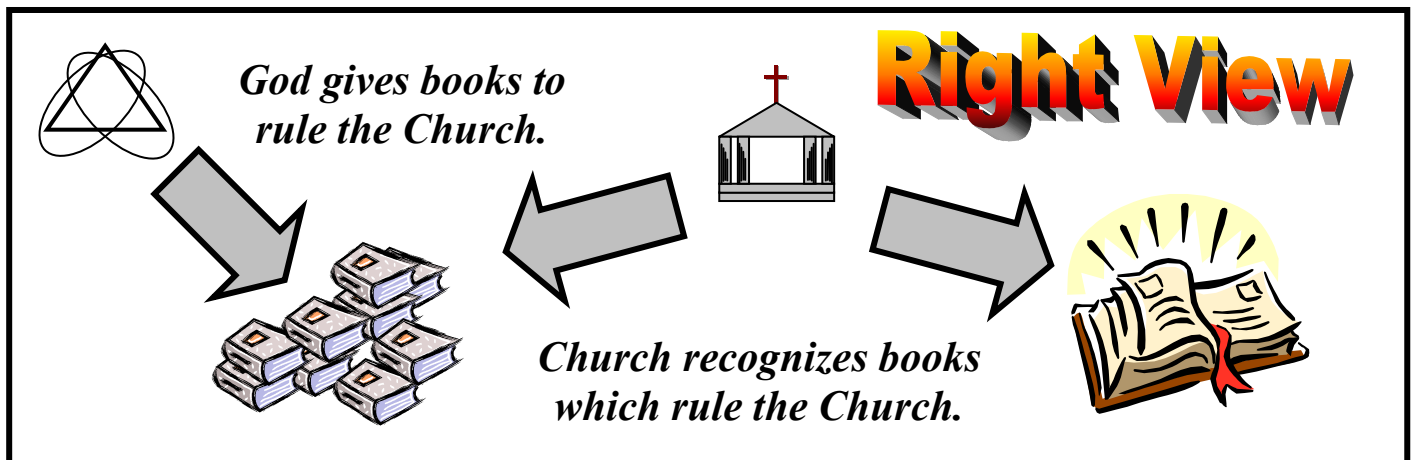
As we can see, Man has recognized God's written revelation throughout history. This is not a new science but is based on some clear principles. There is a wrong way to view canonicity and a right view.

KEY PRINCIPLE OF CANONICITY = God is the AUTHOR of the Bible's AUTHORITY!

The wrong view is that the Church or Men in general DETERMINE canonicity.



The right view is that GOD DETERMINES canonicity and man RECOGNIZES it.



One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa – at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397 – but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.⁸³

Let's consider an analogy. Let's say that over the course of 50 years, I give you books from time to time. As I give you one book, I tell you, "This book is the book of eternal life. It may not taste the best if you eat it, but if you do, you will live forever." Over the years, I give you other books and from time to time I tell you which books are like the book of eternal life. I imagine that each of these books you would treasure separately from others. If you were worried about fires and such, you might make backup copies of them. But you probably wouldn't copy all of the other books. Some of them might be helpful, so you might copy some, but the books of eternal life you would take great care of.

However, before you ever get a chance to eat them, you die and leave a note regarding the history of them. A group discovers your library many years later and read your note. They then begin to look through the books.

⁸³ F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, ©1994, pg. 27

What steps would they begin to take?

1. They check to see if you had a list of the ones that were special.
2. They look at the contents of the books to see what they have to say about each other.
3. They look at the collection of copies and such to see how you cared for them.

There might be other principles they would use, but you can see that they would take logical steps to see which books were which. Please note that:

- Using the principles DOES NOT MAKE a book capable of giving eternal life.
- Using the principles only helps you DISCOVER the special books.

1. Principles of Canonicity

The early church did not have a set of guidelines for immediately accepting a book as canon. It was more intuitive as a result of knowing the Prophets and Apostles. They recognized these men of God as having God's hand of authority on them. Later, when the disputes, heresies and persecutions came, then they begin to develop principles to determine which books were "authority".

These principles are really just logical conclusions that come from knowing that God is the Author of the Authority of the Bible. The basic premise is:

- **God Inspired the Writings and thus they have Authority**

God sovereignly used specific men of God (Prophets and Apostles) to express His revelation to us. Therefore we can test the books based on this premise. If we read these books, we should be able to recognize that they contain the divine stamp of God.

a) Is it Authoritative?

Does the book claim to be God's Word to us? Does it attempt to direct men's understanding of God's Will? Does it command God's people?

b) Is it Prophetic?

Was the book clearly written by a Prophet or Apostle? God clearly showed how to test Prophets and we know that He gave special sign gifts to authenticate the Apostle's ministries. They were used as the foundation of the Church.

*"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the **apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone," (Ephesians 2:19-20, NKJV)*

*"Truly the **signs of an apostle** were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:12, NKJV)*

"God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:4, NKJV)⁸⁴

- **God Preserved the Writings that have Authority to Us**

God took the initiative to communicate to us. We can trust in His sovereignty to divinely preserve the revelation of His Word that is to have authority in our lives today. We can test to see if these books have been preserved and whether they have directed the church. As we read these books, we should be able to clearly see that they are dependable and the truth within them will change our lives.

c) Is it Authentic?

Does it contain lies? Does it give false information? Can I trust what it says as being accurate? If God wrote it, then it will be correct information.

It is exactly on this account that the world has attempted to discredit the Bible throughout modern history. However, Archeology, Science and Mathematics have proven it true over and over again.

⁸⁴ The New King James Version.

d) Is it Received?

Was this book recognized as inspired by God? Did the original audience recognize that a Prophet or Apostle of God recorded it for us? Has it been depended on by the Church?

e) Is it Dynamic?

Does this book have truths that transform lives? As men have recognized its authority, they will have placed faith in its authority and ordered their lives by it. Has this resulted in dynamic life change?

2. A More Thorough look at the Apocrypha

If the Apocrypha should be part of the canon, than we should be able to apply the 5 principles above to reveal this. (NOTE: They do not prove them. Remember, the principles don't make it canon. But if they are part of the canon we will be able to see it.)

a) Is it Authoritative?

Most do not claim to be authoritative. 2 Macc 15:38 claims to be a story that is entertaining to listen to.

b) Is it Prophetic?

None were recognized as a true prophet. Rather they actually claim that the prophets had ceased before the OT apocrypha was recorded. The early Church fathers claimed they were not apostles during the 2nd century when the NT Apocrypha was recorded.

*Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, author of seven epistles written while he was on his way to be thrown to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre about A.D. 115, says in his Epistle to the Romans (4.3): 'I do not enjoin you, as Peter and Paul did. **They were Apostles**, I am a convict; they were free, but I am a slave to this very hour'⁸⁵*

c) Is it Authentic?

Judith claims that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Nineveh. (False – Babylon)

Many of them conflict with the clear doctrine given in the rest of Scripture. They indicate salvation by works. They contain geographical, historical and doctrinal errors.

The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological and historical errors so as not only to vitiate the truth of the narratives they contain, but to make it doubtful whether they even rest on a basis of fact. –W.H. Green

d) Is it Received?

They were not accepted by God's people down through the centuries.

- Josephus explicitly left the apocrypha out of his list of Scripture. Neither does he ever quote from it.
- Jesus quoted from Scripture, but never the Apocrypha.
- The Jewish Scholars at Jamnia did not accept the Apocrypha.
- No canonical list or official church-wide council accepted the Apocrypha until 1546.

This is especially significant since all of the lists available and most of the Fathers of this period rejected the Apocrypha. The first councils to accept the Apocrypha were local ones without ecumenical force.⁸⁶

- Early church fathers rejected them: Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Jerome (who especially rejected them. He refused to translate them until just before he died. He rushed and translated just a few at that point.)
- They were rejected by the Roman Catholic scholars during the Reformation.
- All of the protestant leaders rejected the apocrypha.

e) Is it Dynamic?

No. None of these books have resulted in life transformation. They tend to leave you confused or encouraged to try harder until you give up.

⁸⁵ F. F. Bruce, pg. 260

⁸⁶ Dr. Norman Geisler, pg. 526

D. The Canon is Complete

It is not truly necessary to mention or study this. All we need to do is apply our principles to discover if it is canon or not. However, since there are many who believe that they are getting new revelation from God today and in many of these revelations form the basis for cults, we will look quickly at the concept that the canon is complete.

1. Christ commissioned the Apostles to Found the Church.

We know that the position of founding the Church and establishing it's doctrines was given to the Apostles.

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," (Ephesians 4:11-12, NKJV)

*"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the **apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone," (Ephesians 2:19-20, NKJV)*

*"Truly the **signs of an apostle** were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:12, NKJV)*

"God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:4, NKJV)

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42, NKJV)

"Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4, NKJV)⁸⁷

In order to be accounted as an apostle, they must be an eyewitness. Paul claimed this same qualification.

"Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." (Acts 1:21-22, NKJV)

"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9:1, NKJV)

"After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:6-8, NKJV)⁸⁸

Paul was the last Apostle. Paul and Peter worked closely with Mark and Luke and possibly officiated their books. Barnabas (a possible author of Hebrews) was listed with the prophets.

"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." (Acts 13:1, NKJV)⁸⁹

2. The Church no longer needs new revelation.

The Church is established. This dispensation has received the explanation of the mystery. There is no need for any further revelation.

3. The Apostles died during the first century.

The Apostles all passed away during the first century. Even the church fathers recognized this and claimed that they were not apostles. Irenaeus, Ignatius, Eusebius and others all recognized the

⁸⁷ The New King James Version

⁸⁸ The New King James Version.

⁸⁹ The New King James Version.

authority of books written by the Apostles and recognized that the apostolic ministry had ended. The explicitly rejected the heretics on these principles.

4. Revelation is the last letter written to the established Church and Curses any additions.

Revelation is the last letter written. It clearly establishes itself as a letter to be circulated among the churches. It closes with a statement that nothing should be added to this book. If there were new revelation, then we must admit that it is adding to the scriptures which we have already received.

"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;" (Revelation 22:18, NKJV)⁹⁰

5. Summary

Christ gave Apostles and Prophets as His gift to the church to establish the church. They wrote authoritative documents to edify the church, which have been preserved for us to this day. There are no longer Apostles or Prophets giving us new revelation from God. We have all that is needed for life in godliness (The Life of Christ empowering us and the Scriptures to teach us).

The canon is closed.

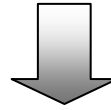
⁹⁰ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

IV. Transmission of the Bible

God gave us His revelation = Development of the Bible

Men recognized its authority = Canonicity of the Bible

Men copied it to preserve it = Transmission of the Bible



A. Overview

1. Definition = How the Bible has been recorded over time.

This is dealing with the copying of the originals so that when one is destroyed another exists to keep the lineage going. It's like making backups of your computer data.

2. Autographs = Original document written.

When the prophets and apostles first recorded God's revelation, that document would be the autograph.

None of these have survived the centuries. We do not have any autographs available to us today.

3. Manuscripts = Handwritten document.

The word manuscript actually refers to a handwritten document. But it has come to be used in this discussion to almost only refer to copies of the autographs.

4. Preservation

We have shown that God desired to communicate to us. He initiated it. He commissioned men as His voice. He had it recorded. He gave men the responsibility of preserving it. His sovereignty is what we recognize throughout this process.

Just like a study of Bibliology is a study of God's revelation, so a study of the transmission of the text is really a study of God's preservation.

a) God gave men the responsibility of preserving it.

This began with the Levites and Priests.

"So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;" (Deuteronomy 31:24-26, NKJV)

"So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing." (Deuteronomy 31:9-11, NKJV)

"What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2, NKJV)⁹¹

b) The authority of these books has demanded that they be copied.

If you were a church in the 1st century, you would have longed to have a copy of the letters written by Paul to describe "the mystery"! They demanded that they be copied and copied again. The fires of Rome and the humidity of Judah required that they make backup copies of something that carried the authority of revelation from God. And if a copy was found to have mistakes it was destroyed.

According to Talmudic tradition, any manuscript that contained a mistake or error, and all those that were aged beyond use, were systematically and religiously destroyed...According to the Talmud only certain kinds of skins could be used, the size of columns was regulated and the ritual a scribe followed in copying a

⁹¹ The New King James Version.

manuscript followed religious rules. If a manuscript was found to contain even one mistake, it was discarded and destroyed.⁹²

c) Survived Persecution and Criticism

Some of Judah's own kings attempted to destroy God's Word. From attacks by Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans and Germans, this Book has faced attempts to wipe it out longer than any other book.

Many critics have tried to prove it wrong from history, science and ridicule, but the Bible always is proven right in the end. No other book in history has withstood international attacks and still remains with the same purity as our precious Bible!

"Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been attempting to refute and overthrow this Book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this Book as a man with a jackhammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, 'Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.' So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this Book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this Book had not been the Book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives." (H.L. Hastings cited in Josh McDowell's, Evidence that Demands A Verdict p. 21)

d) Preservation Positions

(1) Perfect Preservation

This view holds that God has preserved everything that was written under inspiration.

Result:

- Must discover the exact words that were preserved

- Whichever variant is contained in the oldest copies.

This reasoning assumes that the oldest text is the closest to the originals and thus will have the least amount of errors.

- Whichever variant has the most copies.

This reasoning is based on the concept that they would have picked the best and copied it the most. When errors were introduced, it would have been localized, but the right would have the most copies.

Zane Hodges and Author Farstad have produced a copy.

- Whichever variant was most "received" by the church through history

The reasoning behind this view is that since God has promised to preserve it through the centuries, it would have to be available to the majority throughout history. The Church would have recognized it and perpetuated it.

This view usually results in holding to the Byzantine Text that has traditionally been held by the Greek Orthodox Church.⁹³



E. F. Hills, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on NT textual criticism at Harvard Divinity School, argued:

If the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament scriptures is a true doctrine of providential preservation of the scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the copying of the scriptures and the preservation and use

⁹² Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Us, How We Got Our Bible*, ©1974, pg. 141

⁹³ Refer to "<http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol06/Robinson2001.htm>" for a good article on this view.

of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God's people in every age.⁹⁴

- The version that was used by Erasmus in producing the KJV

This view is based on the reasoning that Erasmus had all of the variants and possible versions available to him. Since God promised to preserve it, he would have access to it. Since it should be received by all, he would have had the scholarship and opportunity to research this. His version would be the best option available.

- Translation must be done from the exact preserved text

This view is seen in the valuing of a translation above other translations (e.g. NASV because it is based on the “oldest” texts – or – KJV because it is based on the “received” text).

(2) Providential Preservation

This position holds that God has preserved what He desires us to have. We can look at all of the manuscripts and see how little difference there is. Therefore we can take confidence in knowing that all of these versions have the words that God preserved in order to reveal Himself to us. They are all sufficient for entering into relationship with him.

Result:

- Do not need to discover the exact words that were preserved.
 - All versions are profitable
 - Do not build doctrine or strong conclusions on passages with large variants
 - Look at a combination of reasoning to determine what may be the closest to the original.
 - How old is it?
 - What locations do the variants seem to come from?
 - What support does the variant have from Church Fathers?
 - How easily could the variant have been introduced?
 - How clear is it that a scribe may have attempted to “correct” a supposed error?
 - Etc.

“*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*” by Bruce M. Metzger attempts to explain the reasons for all the major variant choices by the editors of the UBS Greek New Testament.

- Translations can be based off any of the texts, but need to be careful to express overall meaning clearly and not introduce interpretation because of a variant.

This is the “official” position of NTM but our translators come from both positions. Most countries have a version translated into the national language. We encourage the translators to make the tribal translations from the same text that the national translation was based upon. We do not value any English translation above another.

We believe in the word-by-word inspiration and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, as they were written in the original manuscripts. Since the time those manuscripts were written, many good translations have been produced in English and in other languages. New Tribes Mission does not give specific endorsement to any one particular English language translation of the Scriptures.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ As quoted by Daniel B. Wallace, *Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism*, ©2005, http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=1221

⁹⁵ *To the Finish*, ©2004, <http://www.ntm.org/members/documents/ToTheFinish.pdf>

5. Textual Criticism Introduction

When we considered *Spoken Transmission* earlier, we mentioned the phone game and how sometimes it is thought that in the passing down of the text, errors might be introduced. However, as we considered it more, we found several factors which relieved our fears (God spoke clearly, age of those who spoke to God and the ability to compare what was said to each).

In the same way, as we consider the transmission of the text we must recognize that there is potential for mistakes or variants to be introduced by the continual copying of copies of originals. Textual Criticism is the field of study that attempts to determine what the mistakes that were introduced are and thus what the most likely original text is. The holy grail of textual criticism is to fully restore the original text without any errors.

Everyone agrees that there is not a single manuscript today that is completely error free. Some believe that there are “families” of manuscripts that are more reliable than others but even these are considered to have some error.

Textual Criticism is not a new concept. Even Erasmus and Stephanus (who compiled the base text of the King James Version) reviewed many manuscripts and selected what they believed to be the best readings.

Stephanus had over 350 readings from Codex Bezae in his apparatus—and Beza himself had the two oldest uncials known at that time. Nor is the oft-repeated “truism” that Erasmus only had access to a few inferior manuscripts accurate either: his notes refer to readings from “other manuscripts seen by him in his travels,” and “that he had heard of B, appears from Sepulveda’s correspondence with him in 1533,” and some of these B readings are found in his notes as well.⁹⁶

Today there are several key principles that are exercised. However, the principles and process can be so complex that it moves from just a science to almost an art.

There are basically 2 categories of errors which have been introduced:

- Unintentional
 - Errors of the Eye
 - Wrong Divisions (when there was no word spacing in the original)
 - Omissions (of letters, words or even lines)
 - Repetitions
 - Transposition – reversal of position of letters or words
 - Spelling, abbreviations, etc.
 - Errors of the Ear

When scribes made copies from dictation, or even when a solitary scribe in his own cell pronounced to himself the words which he was transcribing, confusion would sometimes arise over words having the same pronunciation as others, but differing in spelling (as the English words ‘there’ and ‘their’ or ‘grate’ and ‘great’). During the early centuries of the Christian era certain vowels and diphthongs of the Greek language lost their distinctive sounds and came to be pronounced alike, as they are today in modern Greek.⁹⁷

- Substituting different words that sound the same
- Substituting different verses or phrases because of familiarity

- Errors of the Mind

⁹⁶ Theodore P. Letis, *Edward Freer Hills’s Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text*, ©1987, pgs 24, 25

⁹⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament – Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, ©1992, pg. 190

- Changing in the mind what was viewed before copying it down.
- Mixing synonymous passages
- Transposing words
- Intentional (Well meaning “corrections” or additions)

Odd though it may seem, scribes who thought were more dangerous than those who wished merely to be faithful in copying what lay before them. Many of the alterations which may be classified as intentional were no doubt introduced in good faith by copyists who believed that they were correcting an error or infelicity of language which had previously crept into the sacred text and needed to be rectified. A later scribe might even introduce an erroneous reading that had been previously corrected.⁹⁸

- Grammatical or Linguistical
 - Spelling of proper names, verb forms
 - Updating to current word forms (“shall” to “will” etc.)
- Harmonization
 - Attempts to “harmonize” parallel passages that originally had differences.
 - Attempts to “finish the thought”. (eg. Adding “to repentance” to Matt 9:13)
- Correcting Historical and Geographical Errors
- Merging differences between copies (A scribe might have two copies with slight differences. Instead of preferring one above the other, the indecisive scribe might combine both into a new copy.)
- Doctrinal Alterations
- Addition of details

As we consider the transmission of the text, we will touch on some of the areas where errors may have been introduced.

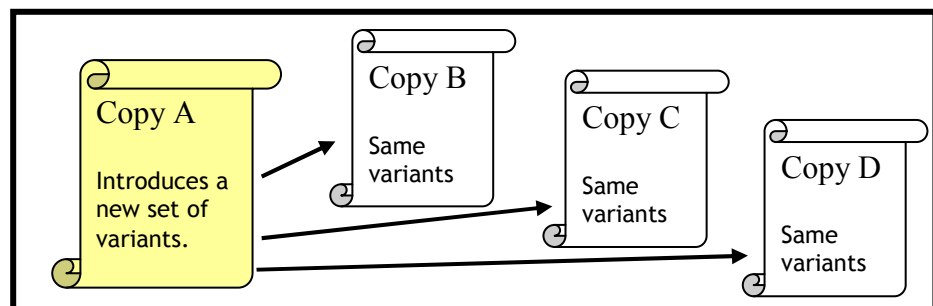
a) Terms

(1) Variants

A variant is when one text disagrees with another text. For instance, one text found may say “Jesus wept” and another might say “Jesus weep” and another might even say “Jesus cried”. Each of these would be considered a variant. Notice that all of these are clearly changes in spelling and not meaning. Most of the variants are of this nature.

(2) Text Types (Families of Transmission)

When a certain set of variants seem to be found consistently, we call this set of variants a text type or a text family. They seem to indicate that the copies were made from the same earlier copy.



⁹⁸ Bruce M. Metzger, pg. 195

There are four principal stages in the work of the textual critic. First, he makes a study of such individual manuscripts as are available to him, correcting obvious slips and taking cognizance of what appear to be scribal alterations, whether accidental or deliberate. Next, he arranges these manuscripts in groups. Those which share some peculiar feature of spelling or wording, or some common error, are probably related to one another and have a common archetype. There are different ways of grouping manuscripts, according as their evident relation to one another is more or less close. Those whose mutual relation can be fairly precisely established are said to constitute a family. But a number of separate families, while they are diverse from one another in many respects, may have a sufficient number of significant features in common to suggest that they all represent one rather early textual type. In the third place, when the arranging of manuscripts in groups leads to the establishment of an archetype for each of the groups which have been distinguished, these archetypes themselves are subjected to comparative study in the hope that it may be possible to reconstruct a provisional archetype from which the archetypes themselves are descended; if this is achieved, then we have arrived as closely as we can to the autographic text.⁹⁹

(3) Versions

A version is when a translation is made from the original language. This differs from say Wycliffe's first translation into English. His translation was not from the original but from the Latin Vulgate. Translation from a translation is not a "VERSION".

(4) Revisions

A revision is when a version is carefully reviewed and then updated with corrections. NKJV is a revision of the KJV. The English Revised Version was supposed to be a revision of the KJV but ended up becoming a complete new version.

(5) Polyglots

A polyglot is when multiple versions are put together in columns to form a single book.

B. Old Testament¹⁰⁰

Prior to around 300 B.C. there is very little information regarding the transmission of the text. We know that the earliest writing of Hebrew actually dates to about 1500 B.C. and has been found in the Sinai Peninsula. This is interesting as this would be about the same time that Moses was writing and in the same location. The text would have probably begun on Clay Tablets as was the common form of that time and area. Later it would have been copied onto leather and papyrus.

We also know from the scriptures themselves that there were scribes whose job in life was to copy texts in order to maintain them over long periods of time. As we consider the steps of the later scribes, we can assume that very similar steps would have been taken and passed down. Certainly the tradition of careful copying includes explicit steps which are recorded in the Talmud.

1. Overview

In order to discuss the transmission of the Old Testament we will need to make reference to more than one form that developed around the same time. We will first get a brief overview of these forms and then explain more clearly how they were transmitted.

a) Hebrew Manuscripts

(1) Dead Sea Scrolls (300 B.C. – 135 A.D.)

The earliest manuscripts that we can find today are from the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls have several fragments of copies of the books of the Old Testament. There are still many scrolls that have not been reviewed yet. These fragments have a variety of text types that agree at times with one form and then in another place with a different form.

⁹⁹ F. F. Bruce, pg. 179

¹⁰⁰ Great sources of information regarding this topic is the article, "The Text of the Old Testament", by Merrill F. Unger as recorded in "Bibliotheca Sacra - Volume 108", and in the book "Old Testament Textual Criticism", by Ellis R. Brotzman, chapter 2.

(2) The Age of the Talmud (135 A.D. – 500 A.D.)

During the second and third centuries the Jews would read from the scriptures in Hebrew, but the natural tongue of the people was in Aramaic. This required that the scribes would then need to interpret or explain what was read. These explanations were recorded in the Talmud. The Talmuds tell us a great deal about the scribal traditions and their belief in the scripture. The Talmuds include many quotes from the Old Testament that helps us to determine the text that was used in that day.

It was during this time period that the text was separated into verses. Then they were separated into paragraphs. In order to facilitate the reading traditions, the text was separated into liturgical divisions (allowing the text to be read through in a year or in 3 years). There were several other additions made to the text during this time including adding heavy dots, leaving blank spaces, changing vowels of words that were of a delicate or crude nature. These changes and additions were designed to aid in the public reading of the text only.

(3) Masoretic (500 A.D. – 1000 A.D.)

As persecution increased in Palestine, many scholars fled to Babylon and a thriving Jewish community began to focus on the Text. These Jews took the traditions that had been handed down orally and strictly followed them (thus the name Masorete which is based from a word meaning “tradition”).

The Masoretic Jews contributed heavily to the Hebrew text in use today. They created a set of symbols to graphically represent the vowel points which they only knew from oral tradition. They added accent marks to indicate pauses (like our commas and semicolons) and changes in thought. They also included notes in the margins to help in study and understanding of the text.

It is important to note here, that they took great steps to preserve the tradition of the text. They were extremely careful to honor the Scripture. Rather than allow a text to remain damaged or with error and thus dishonor God’s name as recorded in it, they would destroy the text. This explains why almost all of the texts we have today agree with the Masoretic text. They also took great pains to check their copies.

It must not be thought that in their devotion to traditional interpretation these Masoretes took liberties with the sacred text. On the contrary, they treated it with the greatest imaginable reverence, and devised a complicated system of safeguards against scribal slips. They counted, for example, the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in each book; they pointed out the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible, and made even more detailed calculations than these. ‘Everything countable seems to be counted’, says Dr. Wheeler Robinson (Ancient and English Versions of the Bible, ©1940, p. 29); and they made up mnemonics by which the various totals might be readily remembered.¹⁰¹

[1] A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, [2] prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew, [3] These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. [4] Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codes. [5] The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 nor more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters. [6] The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words should be written without a line, it is worthless. [7] The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other colour, and be prepared according to a definite recipe. [8] An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate. [9] No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him ... [10] Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; [11] between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants; [12] between every book, three lines. [13] The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so. [14] Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, [15] wash his whole body,

¹⁰¹ F. F. Bruce, pg. 117

[16] not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, [17] and should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.¹⁰²

(4) Medieval Manuscripts (1000 A.D. – 1450 A.D.)

There are over 3000 manuscripts that were created during this timeframe. They do not differ in any large detail from that of the Masoretic texts.

(5) Printing Press (1450 A.D. to Current)

The Hebrew Bible was pretty well established under the Masoretic text entering this time period. With the advent of the printing press, many more copies firmly established it as the standard text. There were some minor revisions during this time till the current version that has been prepared by the Hebrew University Bible Project – *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*.

b) Greek Version

The main Greek version (The Septuagint / LXX) dates from around 250 B.C. till 150 B.C. (with some of it possibly dating into the first century A.D.) It began in Alexandria as a translation of the “Law” and then other books were translated and added to it. You can see a transition in the translation as time progressed that corresponds to the development of the Greek language. It is fairly well established that this translation was for Greek speaking Hebrews. Therefore it maintains many Hebrew ways of saying things but in the Greek language. This would reflect the Hebrew culture and the Greek language of the audience. (In other words, it was not good Greek).

c) Other Versions

Most of these were made from the Septuagint.

(1) Aramaic Targums (app. 100 A.D.)

These are the paraphrases of the Hebrew scripture in to the Aramaic.

(2) Coptic Versions (app. 100 A.D.)

(3) Syriac Versions (100 A.D. – 200 A.D.)

(4) Ethiopic Versions (app. 300 A.D.)

(5) Arabic Versions

(6) Armenian Version (app. 400 A.D.)

2. Relationships

The Old Testament for many years was only known from the Greek Translations and the Masoretic Text. There were many opinions about which was the oldest and how they would have passed down. From their differences, it is clear that they are from two different families of transmission.

However, with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, for the first time we had older copies that might shed some light on the transmission. It is amazing to find that instead of clearly reflecting only one of these families it actually had fragments that reflected both transmissions in the same fragment! These discoveries have produced a new set of theories regarding how the text was transmitted.

It is now thought that text was collated into a book by Ezra (this is from tradition and there is no good evidence not to accept it as true.) This resulted in an initial book of one text type. This text type was taken to Babylon and Egypt. The Babylonian text type eventually made its way back to Palestine. The Greek was developed from the Egyptian Text Type and the Masoretic was developed from the Palestinian Text Type. Around 100 B.C. both of these text families would have begun to be intermingled and thus resulted in a merged text type of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

3. Summary

It is very possible that some variants were introduced by:

a) Translation into other languages

b) Introduction of Scribal Marginal Notes

It is very likely that the small number of variants is the result of the text being “received” and thus any thing that was clearly recognized as flawed was destroyed.

As we compare these copies, it is amazing to find that over 1000 years there is tremendous accuracy.

¹⁰² Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, ©1986, pgs. 348,349

C. **New Testament**

The New Testament transmission is much better attested and our earliest copies are much closer in date to the autographs than the Old Testament transmission. The copies that make up this transmission are classified in several ways. By the type of writing and material used, by the perceived date of the copy and by the text type family represented by the copy.

1. **Families of Text Type**

There is still much debate about which of these families most accurately represents the original, which is the oldest, etc. There are many who prefer one text type over another and there are many who prefer to determine each variant on its own merit (where the text family is only one criteria along with date of the manuscripts that attest to it, church fathers who referred to it, etc.).

The concept of families of text type was championed by Westcott and Hort. They proposed a system of families that has since been clearly refuted and thrown out. However, the concept of families has been corrected to a point where there is much more agreement among the scholars. Today these families that are widely accepted are:

a) **Byzantine**

When Constantine moved the capitol of Christendom to Constantinople (formerly Byzantine) his strength heavily effected the amount of copies and acceptance of copies. The family of text that generally came from this time is normally referred to as the Byzantine Text Type. However, it is also called the “Majority Text” and at times the “Received Text”. This is the primary text of the Eastern Orthodox Church (Greek Orthodox) throughout it’s history. This is the base text which Erasmus and Stephanus used. It is the basis of the KJV. Because of the huge support it has had over a large part of the world (location as well as sheer numbers), it has been supported by some as the best family of text. Newer evidence has attested to it being a very old text type.

b) **Alexandrian**

This text type is known for the location that it seems to have stemmed from, Alexandria, Egypt. This text was called the “neutral” text by Westcott and Hort. They preferred it above all the rest and felt it was the purest. Today, many bibles will include marginal notes that say “missing in the older and better manuscripts”. Typically, they are referring to this family of text. It includes the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus manuscripts.

c) **Western**

This text type was used by many church fathers over quite a spread of time. It has more recently been considered possibly the best and oldest of the text types.

d) **Caesarean**

The church father, Origen, used this text type as well as the Alexandrian text type. It was definitely used in Caesarea and did have influence into other areas. It was used in Egypt by the first half of the third century. The Chester Beatty papyri appear to be from this family. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem (middle of fourth century) used this text type.

2. **Modern Textual Views**

Today it has become more accepted to create a text where each variant is weighed on its own merit and thus an eclectic text made up of all of the text families is produced. The United Bible Society (UBS) and two men named Nestle and Aland have combined work to produce “*The Greek New Testament*”. Its companion, “*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*”, explains the reasons for the decisions that were made on all the major variants.

There is a Majority Text version that has been created by Zane Hodges and Author Farstad. This is slightly different than the Byzantine Version in use today by the Greek Orthodox Church.

None of these texts are considered the official basis for all NTM translation projects.

3. **Writing Styles**

The different manuscripts have traditionally been written in two different styles.

a) **Uncials**

Uncials are when the letters were written in all capital letters. The earliest manuscripts employed this style of writing.

b) Minuscules

Minuscules are basically a form of cursive writing where only lowercase letters were used. The vast majority of manuscripts are of this style of writing.

4. Age**a) Papyri – 88**

Papyri are the oldest manuscripts and were written in Uncial.

b) Uncials – 274**c) Minuscules – 2795****d) Lectionaries – 2209 (uncial / minuscule)**

Lectionaries were books that were produced to lead church services. These would include scripture to be read in the service. It is believed that almost the entire New Testament could be recreated simply from these quotes.

D. Additions or “helps”

To aid in quoting scripture Stephen Langton (University of Paris / Archbishop of Canterbury) divided the Bible into Chapters in 1227. Robert Stephanus (Paris printer) added verses in 1551 and 1555.

E. Summary

Altogether there are over 5,366 partial or complete manuscripts. (app. 11% uncial and 89% minuscule)

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Illiad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480- 425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1350 yrs	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460- 400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.- A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tactitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61-113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50-100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c.325 (complete N.T.)	50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

Today, many more manuscripts continue to be discovered. As they do, many get us closer to the originals. The John Rylands Manuscript was found in 1917 and dates between 117 A.D. to 130 A.D. This is basically within 17 to 30 years of John's writing of Revelation.

F.F. Bruce makes the following statement:

Something more ought to be said, and said with emphasis. We have been discussing various textual types and reviewing their comparative claims to be regarded as best representatives of the original new Testament text. But there are not wide divergencies between these type, of a kind that could make any difference to the Church's responsibility to be a witness and guardian of Holy Writ. The Authorized Version of 1611 represents, by and large, the Byzantine text. The Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901, which were produced under the influence of Westcott and Hort's textual theory and work, represent in the main the Alexandrian text. The Revised Standard Version of 1946 reflects the views of contemporary textual scholars, who have traced the various early lines of textual transmission back to the second century,

and represents an eclectic text, each variant reading of the second-century textual types being considered on its merits, without marked preference being given to any single one of these types. But the words of one of the editors of this latest revision are perfectly true:

“It will be obvious to the careful reader that still in 1946, as in 1881 and 1901, no doctrine of the Christian faith has been affected by the revision, for the simple reason that, out of the thousands of variant readings in the manuscripts, none has turned up thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine.”

If the variant readings are so numerous, it is because the witnesses are so numerous. But all the witnesses, and all the types which represent, agree on every article of Christian belief and practice. Our century has seen no greater authority in this field of New Testament textual criticism than Sir Frederic Kenyon, who died in August, 1952, and we may take his words to heart with confidence:

“It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God.”

And again:

“The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”¹⁰³

Westcott and Hort (1881) were two Cambridge scholars who put in almost 30 years of study into producing a revised edition of the Greek NT.

They say that:

- the agreement between all the variants leave about 7/8 of the whole text above question.
- 1/8 of the remaining variants are made up largely by switching of word order and other “trivialities”.
- Only a small fraction of this fraction (1/8) contains anything that could possibly be called a “substantial variation” and can hardly form more than 1/1000 part of the entire text.
- Not a single principle of faith or divine command is caused to be questioned.

Again we but stand amazed at how God has divinely preserved His Word that He wants us to have!

¹⁰³ F. F. Bruce, pgs. 189, 190

Timeline of Bible Translation History

¹⁰⁴**1,400 BC:** The first written Word of God: The Ten Commandments delivered to Moses.

500 BC: Completion of All Original Hebrew Manuscripts which make up The 39 Books of the Old Testament.

200 BC: Completion of the Septuagint Greek Manuscripts which contain The 39 Old Testament Books AND 14 Apocrypha Books.

1st Century AD: Completion of All Original Greek Manuscripts which make up The 27 Books of the New Testament.

315 AD: Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, identifies the 27 books of the New Testament which are today recognized as the canon of scripture.

382 AD: Jerome's Latin Vulgate Manuscripts Produced which contain All 80 Books (39 Old Test. + 14 Apocrypha + 27 New Test).

500 AD: Scriptures have been Translated into Over 500 Languages.

600 AD: LATIN was the Only Language Allowed for Scripture.

995 AD: Anglo-Saxon (Early Roots of English Language) Translations of The New Testament Produced.

1384 AD: Wycliffe is the First Person to Produce a (Hand-Written) manuscript Copy of the Complete Bible; All 80 Books.

1455 AD: Gutenberg Invents the Printing Press; Books May Now be mass-Produced Instead of Individually Hand-Written. The First Book Ever Printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.

1516 AD: Erasmus Produces a Greek/Latin Parallel New Testament.

1522 AD: Martin Luther's German New Testament.

1526 AD: William Tyndale's New Testament; The First New Testament printed in the English Language.

1535 AD: Myles Coverdale's Bible; The First Complete Bible printed in the English Language (80 Books: O.T. & N.T. & Apocrypha).

1537 AD: Tyndale-Matthews Bible; The Second Complete Bible printed in English. Done by John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers (80 Books).

1539 AD: The "Great Bible" Printed; The First English Language Bible Authorized for Public Use (80 Books).

1560 AD: The Geneva Bible Printed; The First English Language Bible to add Numbered Verses to Each Chapter (80 Books).

1568 AD: The Bishops Bible Printed; The Bible of which the King James was a Revision (80 Books).

1609 AD: The Douay Old Testament is added to the Rheims New Testament (of 1582) Making the First Complete English Catholic Bible; Translated from the Latin Vulgate (80 Books).

1611 AD: The King James Bible Printed; Originally with All 80 Books. The Apocrypha was Officially Removed in 1885 Leaving Only 66 Books.

1782 AD: Robert Aitken's Bible; The First English Language Bible (KJV) Printed in America.

1791 AD: Isaac Collins and Isaiah Thomas Respectively Produce the First Family Bible and First Illustrated Bible Printed in America. Both were King James Versions, with All 80 Books.

1808 AD: Jane Aitken's Bible (Daughter of Robert Aitken); The First Bible to be Printed by a Woman.

1833 AD: Noah Webster's Bible; After Producing his Famous Dictionary, Webster Printed his Own Revision of the King James Bible.

1841 AD: English Hexapla New Testament; an Early Textual Comparison showing the Greek and 6 Famous English Translations in Parallel Columns.

1846 AD: The Illuminated Bible; The Most Lavishly Illustrated Bible printed in America. A King James Version, with All 80 Books.

1885 AD: The "English Revised Version" Bible; The First Major English Revision of the KJV.

1901 AD: The "American Standard Version"; The First Major American Revision of the KJV.

1971 AD: The "New American Standard Bible" (NASB) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Word for Word English Translation" of the Bible.

1973 AD: The "New International Version" (NIV) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Phrase for Phrase English Translation" of the Bible.

1982 AD: The "New King James Version" (NKJV) is Published as a "Modern English Version Maintaining the Original Style of the King James."

2002 AD: The English Standard Version (ESV) is Published as a translation to bridge the gap between the accuracy of the NASB and the readability of the NIV.

¹⁰⁴ This English Bible History Article & Timeline is ©2002 by author & editor: John L. Jeffcoat III., <http://www.greatsite.com>

V. Doctrine of Inspiration

We have looked at how the Bible developed and saw that God initiated communication with us. If He desires to communicate to us, then we can expect He communicated in a manner that ensures His truth is clearly communicated to us so that we can understand it. We have looked at how the Bible was received as canon by those who recognized the authority of God in it. We have also seen how God has preserved the Bible so that we have His Message to us.

Clearly this is a book with God's Divine intervention all over it.

Knowing the history of the Book and knowing that it is God's revelation to man, leads us to examine it for the doctrines that we should live by.

We will first look at the doctrine of "Inspiration".

A. Definition

The word "Theopneustos" (θεόπνευστος) is a word made up of two Greek words "Theos" (God) and "Pneustos" (Breath – closely related to spirit, pneuma). So it is basically the word "God Breathed". However, just because these two words are combined, they do not necessarily have to encompass the entire idea. (e.g. We combine "butter" and "fly" but a "butterfly" is not "thick milk with wings".) If we look at it in context we will find that it has the idea of God moving men by means of His Holy Spirit to communicate His revelation to us.

1. Short Definition

Inspiration = God speaking thru specially chosen men using their own personalities, styles and vocabularies so that what was written was exactly what He wanted written.

Note:

- God Spoke
- He used the Personality, Styles and Vocabularies of chosen men
- What was written down to the word was exactly what He wanted written

2. Long Definition

Inspiration =

...the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit, who through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors invested the very words of the original books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God without error in all that they teach or imply (including history and science), and the Bible is thereby the infallible rule and final authority for faith and practice of all believers.¹⁰⁵

3. Inspiration refers to the autographs, not translations or copies.

When we are referring to the copies, we are not saying that they are inspired. We are not expecting that God has produced a second miracle by supernaturally guiding the copier or translator's hand to produce EXACTLY the words that He wants re-produced in the copies.

Clearly, any part where there is but full agreement (no variants) must reflect the inspiration of God. This is the greater portion of the Bible. Where there are variances – many of these are obvious mistakes, such that we can easily find the original inspiration of God here as well.

Derived Inspiration = To the degree any copy exactly reproduces the original words; the copy itself reflects the divine inspiration of the original.

B. Key Passages

The authors of the Bible declare that the Bible is the Word of God and Inspired by Him. Some would say that this is circular reasoning (Using the Bible to prove the Bible). However, R. Laird Harris in "*Inspiration and Canonicity*" spends the majority of his second chapter explaining why we do this.

¹⁰⁵ Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology – Volume One*, pg. 241

Assume the Bible is just a good source of History

His explanation (in much more detail) starts by assuming that the Bible is not inspired but is just another book on par with other books that have been written down through the Centuries. There are several facts that will come from this assumption:

- It is extremely well preserved such that we have more evidence regarding the original text than we do of Homer's works, Shakespeare's works and other works that are accepted as being accurate to the author's intent. Therefore we can assume that in reading it we will know exactly what the author's intended to express.
- It is a valuable resource to understand the history and culture of the Jews, Jesus and the Early Church Apostles.
- It agrees with other ancient writings in showing that the belief of the Jews throughout the Old Testament era was that it was the very Words of God recorded by men moved by the Holy spirit.
- It declares that Jesus believed that it was the very Words of God.
- It declares that the Early Church Apostles believed that the Old Testament writings and their writings were the very Words of God recorded as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

As History it declares the Teachings of Jews, Jesus and the Apostles

So what we end up with is the Bible is an accurate source of the history of the Jews, Jesus and the Apostles and declares that they all believed the Bible was the inspired Word of God. My faith is in what Jesus and the Apostles taught! I trust them. Therefore I can use the Bible to prove what they taught.

[Zechariah was a late prophet and claimed the earlier Prophets spoke by God.] *"Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts."* (Zechariah 7:12, NKJV)

[Jesus claims that in disregarding the Scriptures they were disregarding God.] *"He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?' (Matthew 15:3, NKJV) 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition."* (Matthew 15:6, NKJV)

[Paul claimed that what he taught was received directly from Christ] *"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."* (Galatians 1:11-12, NKJV)

[Paul declared the Bible was inspired.] *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,"* (2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV)¹⁰⁶

These Holy Men's teachings were that the Bible is Inspired

In reality, the Bible does not declare itself to be inspired, but it does record the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles who **DID** declare it to be inspired! Thus the Bible is not used in circular reasoning. That is really a very good argument!

That being said, let's look at the three key passages in scripture that clearly express the concept of Inspiration. We will look at each in detail and then summarize the importance gathered into a whole.

¹⁰⁶ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

1. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 – The Need and Person of Inspiration

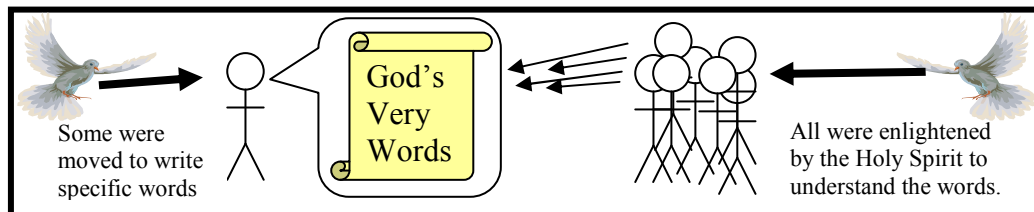
Paul tells us that the only way we can know God is by the Spirit of God. This simple logic proves that if God wanted to communicate to us, it would have to be through his Spirit.

*"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' **But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.** For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, **not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**" (1 Corinthians 2:9-13, NKJV)*

His argument is as follows:

- NEED - I can't know for sure what you are thinking – only you in your spirit truly know.
- NEED - I can't know for sure what God's thinking is – only His Spirit can truly know.
- PERSON - Some were moved of His Spirit to write specific words.
- PERSON - All believers are enlightened by the Spirit to understand His Words.

Therefore, we can clearly say that one reason the Spirit was given was to guarantee that we would receive and be able to understand God's revelation.



Again we see that He initiated it and provided the means for it. He did this by:

- Speaking through the Apostles
- Extending the Spirit's work down to the very Words

To the Very Words - This concept of to the very words is extremely important. You will find several passages clearly indicating that the words were selected by God.

"Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word.'" (Jeremiah 26:2, NKJV)

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel." (Exodus 24:4, NKJV)

"I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him." (Deuteronomy 18:18, NKJV)

[Notice the Emphasis on "I AM" vs. "I WAS"] *"But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matthew 22:31-32, NKJV)*

[Singular vs. Plural is Important!] *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ." (Galatians 3:16, NKJV)*¹⁰⁷

The original words selected were exactly the words that would communicate most clearly God's revelation to the original audience. Today, we may need to use different words to communicate the same revelation because of the differences in our languages and cultures (this is especially true in translating into tribal languages). But the original words were important and were specifically chosen.

2. 2 Peter 1:20-21 – The Method of Inspiration

*"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:19-21, NKJV)*¹⁰⁸

The method for how the Holy Spirit inspires revelation is:

- Not by human will
- Moved by the person of the Holy Spirit
- Uses the Man as the Instrument

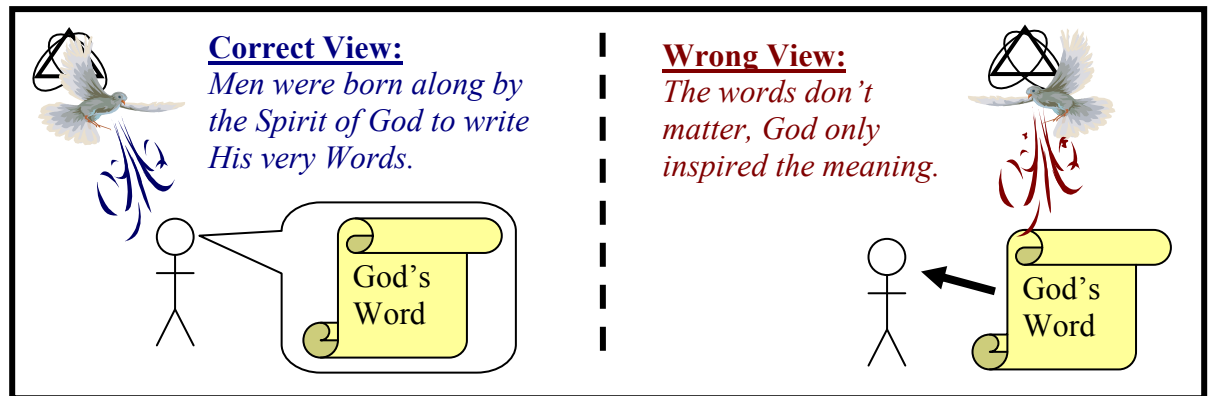
The word moved is an interesting word. It has the idea of being borne along. This word has the idea of something being carried on the wind. It is an active word that indicates God taking the initiative to work through these men. Acts 2:27 uses the same word to describe a boat being forced by the wind.

*"So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive." (Acts 27:15, NKJV)*¹⁰⁹

Consider that at first they were fighting the wind then they decided to go with the wind. It is not as if they let go of the rudder, released all the cables to the sails and allowed the wind to do what it wanted. Rather, the men on the ship continued to work and handle the ship, but they did it in accordance with the wind. In the same way, the prophets were borne along by the Spirit of God, but they maintained all of their personalities, styles and vocabularies.

This was not **Mechanical Dictation**. Meaning, God did not just make them robots and then speak words. If this was the case, then we would not see the personality, style and vocabulary of all the authors. However, we do see Amos the farmer using outdoors/down-to-earth language, and Isaiah the educated consort of nobility using flowery academic expressions. We read a book and say, "That sounds like Paul" without knowing who the author is. God used each man's human element while moving them by the Holy Spirit.

One view of inspiration is that God inspired INTO the word His meaning. This is not correct. It has the idea that the word is man's and only the meaning we get from it is inspired by God. This passage shows that God actively "blew" through the man (so to speak) the very words that He wanted.



¹⁰⁷ The New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰⁸ The New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰⁹ The New King James Version. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

[Side Note: The Roman Catholic Church has wrongly interpreted this verse to mean that no one should “privately interpret” scripture. They believe that the Bible is not for laymen, but that laymen must depend on the authority of church clergy. This is not the context or intent of this passage. The intent is to show that men can’t make the scripture mean whatever they want. Rather, God is the author of the authority. It can only mean what He wants it to mean. And this tells us there can only be ONE correct interpretation of scripture.]

3. 2 Timothy 3:16-18– The Declaration of Inspiration

In this passage, Paul exhorts Timothy concerning the Holy Scriptures.

"and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:15-18, NKJV)¹¹⁰

It is interesting to note what Paul means by Scripture. Paul tells Timothy that he has known the Holy Scriptures from childhood. This would mean that he is referring to the Old Testament Scriptures that Timothy would have been raised on. However, in 1 Timothy 5:18 we find Paul quoting the Old Testament and Luke’s Gospel simultaneously together:

"For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (1 Timothy 5:18, NKJV)¹¹¹

He clearly refers to both passages as Scripture. This was in his previous letter to Timothy, so Timothy would have understood the reference in 2 Timothy 3:16 to include the New Testament Scriptures that had been written at that time.

So what Paul says is:

- ALL Scripture (Old and New)
- Are given by Inspiration (the only place this word is used in scripture)
- And are profitable for equipping the man of God for every good work.

There has been some debate over whether this should be translated as “All inspired scripture is profitable...” or “All Scripture is Inspired and Profitable...” In my understanding of Greek, I find that these two words (Inspiration and Profitable) are actually adjectives connected with an “and” – meaning they describe the type of scripture. So you have three things describing scripture: all, inspired and profitable. The way we would say this is, “All Scripture is inspired and profitable...” This is confirmed in all of my research.

It certainly does not mean, as it is sometimes deduced from the old Revised Version, that every Scripture which is inspired is also profitable. The Revised translation was a mistake acknowledged by almost all and has been corrected in the Revised Standard Version. The verse says that all Scripture is inspired of God.¹¹²

This is much more in agreement when you consider the scripture that Paul has already referred to. He did not tell Timothy that he had known the inspired parts of scripture.

The word “inspired” is the word that we mentioned at the beginning: theopneustos.

These words are the very out breath of God!

4. Summary

Inspiration is:

- Initiated by God’s will
- Uses the personality, style and vocabulary of chosen men

¹¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹¹ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹² R. Laird Harris, pg. 63

- Moves them by the Holy Spirit
- So that EVERY WORD in ALL SCRIPTURE is GOD's WORD!

C. 3 Main Theories

1. Orthodox View

The main view from the early church until now has always been that:

The Bible IS the Word of God.

It has become more clarified over time as opposing views have arisen. (Had to clarify that it is ALL scripture, then they had to clarify that it was EVERY WORD, etc.)

2. Modernist View

This view began in the 1700's with the intellectual movement of evolution and humanism. It believes that:

The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God.

There are errors and thoughts of men. Only when they quote or deal with divine truths is it dealing with the Word of God.

3. Neo-Orthodox View

This view began in the 1900's by Karl Barth. He taught that:

The Bible BECOMES the Word of God as we study it.

This means that for each person it may appear slightly different. This is the foundation for being a Christian and still believing that truth is relative. It can mean something different to each person but what it means to us carries the authority of God.

D. Summary

- 1. God desired and initiated communication to us.**
- 2. Language is valuable as a means of communication.**
- 3. God used languages precisely to communicate specific details of His truth to us.**
- 4. God used the personality and vocabularies of the author to communicate.**
- 5. God's attention was even down to the very words that were used.**
- 6. Every part of the Bible is the revealed Word of God given by the Spirit of God using chosen Men of God.**

VI. Doctrine of Inerrancy

A. Introduction

1. Definition = The autographs of scripture are without error and completely true.

Inerrancy simply means “without error”. This concept is basically the idea that when we read that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish knowing that science can’t show any fish that would naturally swallow a man while keeping him alive – we believe it as accurate and true.

This only extends to the autographs. However, if I copy a book wrong but you can compare it to other copies – you will be able to see quickly where my copy errors are. The teaching would still be true.

2. Importance

This might not seem all that important but in all actuality it is extremely important! This view has come under great attack today. You are probably familiar with some of the debates in Christendom regarding things like: homosexuality, divorce and re-marriage, theistic-evolution, etc. Many of these issues are not debates on whether a literal view of scripture teaches clearly on them, but rather on whether scripture is accurate or true in its teachings on them.

Some have separated what is true from what may have error. They refer to:

- Revelatory – Scripture that teaches about spiritual matters (salvation, Christian living, etc.)
- Non-Revelatory – Scripture regarding physical matters (history, science, math, etc.)

But, if scripture is not reliable in science then spiritual matters cannot be sound:

- Christ’s virgin birth can be questioned. If science rejects Christ’s virgin birth, then it must also reject His divinity! (Spiritual resting on Physical)
- 6 day creation and Adam and Eve may be a myth. If Adam and Eve are a creation myth and not actual history then there is no account of original sin. So man may not be born in sin. So some men may not need redeeming. (Spiritual resting on History)

This is an extremely important issue!

B. Logic

The Doctrine of Inerrancy should be pretty clear simply as a result of the Doctrine of Inspiration. The Inspiration says that the Bible is God’s Word. If God is God, then He is true. Therefore His Word is true.

- God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) cannot err

*"Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, **in which it is impossible for God to lie**, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:17-18, NKJV)*

*"Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, **who cannot lie**, promised before time began," (Titus 1:1-2, NKJV)*

*"Certainly not! Indeed, let **God be true** but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged." (Romans 3:4, NKJV)*

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (John 16:13, NKJV)

"We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6, NKJV)¹¹³

¹¹³ The New King James Version

- And the Bible is the Word of God (as proved in the Doctrine of Inspiration)
- Therefore, the Bible cannot err.

"The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." (Psalm 119:160, NKJV)
"Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way." (Psalm 119:128, NKJV)
"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17, NKJV) ¹¹⁴

C. **Biblical Claims (Indirect)**

The Bible does not directly claim that there are no errors in it. But it is always handled by Christ and the authors as completely true and reliable. Indirectly (or inductively), it is claimed as inerrant.

2 Peter 1:19-21 tells us that we have something more reliable than even the accounts of eye-witnesses – The scriptures! He clearly believes that it is without error.

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 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 1:18-22, KJV) ¹¹⁵

Matt 4:4 records Christ's response to Satan when Satan was tempting Him. Christ tells him that man is to trust every word of God as reliable for living by. Clearly His complete confidence was in it being accurate and true. (It is interesting to compare this to Satan's question in the Garden of Eden. Gen 3 tells us how Satan there said, "Did God say...?" In both these passages the question revolves around food. Adam and Eve had a feast before them, while Christ had been fasting for 40 days. Adam and Eve questioned God's Word and had to have one more type of food. While Christ fully trusted God's Word and resisted the devil.)

Matthew 22:29 tells how Christ told the Sadducees that their error came from not knowing the scriptures. Apparently the Scriptures were without error and if they fully known and relied on them, then they would be without error in their reasoning.

"Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." (Matthew 22:29, NKJV) ¹¹⁶

Obviously the scriptures indirectly reveal that they are without error.

D. **Objections and their Answers**

There are a number of reasons that people have attempted to show that the Bible does have errors.

1. **Author's were Human and to Err is Human**

Probably the biggest reason people believe the Bible contains errors is because of the use of Humans as the instrument for writing. We showed how God used their personalities, styles and vocabularies. Wouldn't this suggest that He would use their understanding of science and history also? We all know that their understanding wouldn't be as good as it is today therefore it would contain errors. We all know how fallible humans are.

The problem with this concept is that it assumes that Humans will make mistakes constantly. While it is true that humans do make mistakes, this does not mean that they constantly make mistakes. Therefore, it is possible for the humans to be enlightened, inspired and thus record things that are without error.

This is similar to the Person of Jesus Christ. He was 100% Human and 100% God. Therefore He has all the characteristics of being a Human (no sin nature) and all the characteristics of being God.

¹¹⁴ *The New King James Version*

¹¹⁵ *The Holy Bible : King James Version*

¹¹⁶ *The New King James Version*

He did not make mistakes. Is there any reason to think that God could not use humans to record His revelation without errors? No, there is no good reason.

2. Scripture contains approximations

It is true that scripture will round or approximate some calculations at times. This does not mean it is wrong. If I said there we have a 200 person student body this year. Would this statement be true? Yes. Am I attempting to say that we have exactly 200 students? No. You would understand this as an approximate number. That does not make it an error or a mistake. It is exactly what I was trying to say. And what I was trying to say is true.

3. There are discrepancies in parallel accounts

Sometimes we will find multiple accounts for something recorded in scripture. One author may look at an event from one perspective and record what is important to him. If another includes slightly different details, that does not make the first one wrong. If the second one said there was ONLY the detail that he records, then we would have to say there is an error. However, this is not the case. These events are extra details that can all be compiled to give a complete picture in as much as God wants us to know (undoubtedly there are other details we aren't being told). In some cases, there can be scribal errors. Usually this will be clear by differences in other manuscripts (those containing the correct details).

4. Scripture refers to science inconsistencies

There are several places where scripture records things like the moon not giving off light, sun standing still, etc. However, it is not uncommon to explain an event from the perspective of the subject. This is not wrong, but a style of speech. This is similar to using anthropomorphisms to say that God "walked to and fro". It is just a figure of speech, not attempting to declare that God has legs. This is clear and understood as such.

5. Scripture freely quotes other portions

There are times when scripture paraphrases or freely quotes a previous passage. This does not mean that it is wrong. A paraphrase can still be true (or error free). The difference is when you paraphrase and change what the original actually said. Or if in the free speech you attempt to pass it off as exact. However, this does not happen in scripture. If I told you that someone said they were tired when actually they said, "I'm sleepy", am I in error? No.

E. Summary

The Bible does not contain errors. It only makes sense that it is true if it is God's Word (or we make God a liar). Christ and the other author have believed this as true. This only applies to the autographs and it is very easy to see when copies introduce errors. (It is not always easy to tell exactly which copy has the correct part, but again this does not affect any part of doctrine.)

VII. Doctrine of Infallibility

The Doctrine of Infallibility is very closely related to the Doctrine of Inerrancy.

A. **Definition: The Bible is 100% trustworthy and will not fail.**

This means that if it promises something, it will happen. If it tells us the best way to live, than what it tells us IS the best way to live. If it says you can have faith in something than YOU CAN HAVE FAITH IN IT!

This is closely related to Inerrancy and yet different. Inerrant simply means it has no errors in what it says, but the concept might still not be trustworthy.

If I said that you should live without talking for the same amount of time as 10,000 days plus 10,000 days equals, which is 20,000 days. Everything included in the statement may be true, but am I reliable. Should you follow what I'm saying? Would you want to exercise it? Probably not.

B. **Logic**

This is again based on the logic that God is reliable and the Bible is His revelation of His will for men. Therefore, the Bible is reliable to tell us how to live before God. It is reliable. It will not fail.

C. **Claimed**

This doctrine is actually claimed directly from Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that all Scripture is reliable.

"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV)¹¹⁷

Again, Christ repeated the Old Testament saying that tells us that we should live by EVERY Word that God has spoken.

"But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.''" (Matthew 4:4, NKJV)¹¹⁸

He says that men should rely upon it and then He did rely upon it for directing how He should live. He quoted Scripture in response to every temptation from Satan – not to defeat Satan but to show Satan what He was choosing as reliable to live by. He was choosing to live by it rather than by the temptations that Satan was suggesting to Him.

D. **Summary**

1. **Inspiration tells us that the Bible (in ever part down to the very words) is the Word of God.**
2. **Inerrancy tells us that the Bible does not have any errors in the autographs.**
3. **Infallibility tells us that the Bible can be depended upon for every thing it says.**

¹¹⁷ The New King James Version

¹¹⁸ The New King James Version

VIII. Authority of the Bible

Finally, as we wrap all of this study up, we will look at how this study of Bibliology has centered on the Authority of God's Word.

God is the Author of the Bible's Authority!

A. *Everything about the Bible reflects its authority*

I would like to take a moment and just remind you of some of the things we have seen in this study.

1. **Development**
 - a) **God took the initiative. (Comes from His Authority)**
 - b) **God revealed Himself to us. (Reveals His Authority)**
2. **Canonicity**
 - a) **Men recognized the inherent authority and thus separated the canon.**
 - b) **No man or church council approved the Bible's authority but recognized it.**
 - c) **The Bible is recognized as dynamic in changing lives.**
3. **Transmission**
 - a) **God gave men the responsibility of preserving the word.**
 - b) **The authority of the Word demanded it be preserved.**
 - c) **The authority of the Word was honored and thus carefully handled.**
 - d) **The Bible stands alone in ancient witness because of its recognized authority.**
4. **Inspiration**
 - a) **God "breathed" the Bible.**
 - b) **God moved men by the Holy Spirit.**
 - c) **God emphasized every word in every part.**
5. **Inerrancy / Infallibility**
 - a) **God's Word is error free. It is the only source of authority that is.**
 - b) **God's Word is trustworthy to live by.**
 - c) **We are sanctified by it.**

We must admit that the Authority of God's Word has been emphasized in every part! As a matter of fact, the Authority of the Word is at the very heart of where each of these truths are developed from.

B. *God is the Creator and thus Owner – He is the Authority*

God created us. We recognize that the person who makes something is the owner of it. God, by definition, is the source of all truth. What He wishes comes to be. What He plans comes to pass. He is AUTHORITY!

Therefore, when He chooses to give us His word, commands us to study it, preserve it and then to live by it, then it carries His authority!

Christ was the ultimate revelation of God. As He lived the perfect Human life, His choices were based on the authority of the Word of God.

The BIBLE carries the AUTHORITY OF GOD!

**The question is not, "Do you believe IN the Word of God?"
But, "Do you BELIEVE the Word of God?"**

C. Exposition

Let's look at passages of scripture and consider what God has to say about our view of the Word.

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13, NKJV)¹¹⁹

Paul here tells the Church at Thessalonica that he is thrilled! He thanks God continuously because of their view of Scripture.

What was the view – they welcomed it as the Word of God.

You see, if we TRULY believe this is the Word of God, then we have the best gift this world has ever seen. This is not something that should be handled casually. It is not something that we should put on the shelf with every other book and treat it the same. It is GOD'S WORD TO US!

Do you believe it?**2. 1 Peter 2:2**

"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby," (1 Peter 2:2, NKJV)¹²⁰

There are three key points we find in this passage:

a) As newborn babes

How does a newborn baby react to a bottle of milk? Does he push it away? Does he act like he could take it or leave it? NO, he grabs that bottle and begins to suck as if he has never had it before!

Could Peter choose a more descriptive way of telling us how we should think of God's Word? Do we treat it like it's the only source of nourishment we have ever seen?

He doesn't say, "When you are a baby in Christ, do this..." Notice that he is talking to EVERYONE. Old mature believers, and young believers. They all should have this same attitude.

b) Desire the pure milk.

Secondly he doesn't want you to just recognize your need, but recognize it's the BEST. DESIRE THE BEST!

This isn't something that will just meet your need, but this is the best there is!

How clearly do you recognize the purity of God's Word versus the human philosophies of this World?

c) Grow by it.

Its not just something to study and learn. You can grow unless you know, but you can know and still not grow! If you would grow then you need to LIVE BY IT. Don't just desire it, but eat it! Take it in and depend on it for your life.

I'm talking total commitment to it ruling every area. True Authority demands COMMITMENT!

D. Final Note:

God's word is the authority whether you recognize it or not. What it says is the best – is the best. There are many who willfully reject its authority, but it still is the authority and they will be judged one day. There are many who don't know it's the authority, but it still is the authority and they will be judged one day. There are many who know it's the authority, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?

¹¹⁹ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹²⁰ *The New King James Version*. 1996, c1982 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

IX. Translations of the Bible

The following notes are taken from Michael Sullivan's class notes (NTBI, Jackson, Michigan).

Translation: *Reproducing the Word of God in other languages* - A translation is the rendering of a given literary composition from one language into another. (Geisler & Nix p. 187)

I Tim. 2:1-4 – It is God's desire that all men have His word of truth.

Matt. 28:19 – The great commission was to teach all nations - "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded."

Various forms of translations:

Version = Translation from an original language of communication i.e. KJV, NASV, NIV

- 1st complete Bible in English: John Wycliffe; It was not a version because it was the translation from another translation – The Latin Vulgate.
- 1st translation of NT into English from original Greek: William Tyndale 1526

Revision = Correction or update of a version after careful review

- KJV originally was intended to be a revision but actually became a version but has had several revisions since then.
- NKJV, NASB are revisions

Paraphrase: Free or loose translation rendering idea for idea rather than Word for Word.

- The Living Bible and the Good News Bible are popular examples.
- These Bibles have their place, but should be seen as interpretive paraphrases rather than exact translations.

Translations Concepts

"No translation can succeed 100%. Every translation suffers some loss, some addition and possibly also some distortion of information." - Linguistics scholar Eugene Glassman

- **autographs** - the *original* manuscripts (hand written documents) or writings written by either the author or a secretary.
- **Inspiration** in its truest sense refers only to the original *autographs*.
- Why Did God Not Preserve the (Original writings) Autographs?
 - Man worships relics - Shroud of Turin, birthplace of Jesus, the bronze serpent in II Kings 18:4 (see Num. 21:8-9)
 - It is hard to corrupt a multitude of copies.
 - The N.T. epistles were distributed & copied so quickly that no false teacher could get his hands on them.
 - Language is fluid and changes.
 - Rather than focus on the original autographs the focus has become getting the word into the language of people.

- “A translation or copy is authoritative only to the extent it accurately reproduces the autographs.” Geisler & Nix, FGTU. p. 14
- 20th century copies & translations of the Bible do not possess **original** inspiration but they have a **derived** inspiration insofar as they are faithful copies of the autographs.
- Best thing: Get back to the original languages as much as possible (this was the shared conviction of both Luther and Tyndale).
- With the good Greek/Hebrew study tools we have available to us today, any believer can become confident that we have an accurate translation if he's willing to give diligent study with dependence on the Lord.
- The Greek/Hebrew tools available today allow any individual the opportunity to research and study out scriptures from the perspective of the original documents.

Translating methods:

White: *Translation is, in fact, a complex undertaking involving the study of the vocabulary, the grammar, and the syntax of both the language from which one is translating, and the language into which the translation is taking place. (KJV. p. 23)*

- **formal equivalency** - method of translation that gives *as literal a translation as possible*.
- **dynamic equivalency** - seeks to translate the *meaning* from one language into another.
 - Illus. 1: French saying - “*j’ai le cafard.*” Lit. trans. - “*I have the cockroach.*” - But the meaning: “I am depressed” or “I have the blues.” - If you want to translate accurate meaning from French to English, what do you do?
 - Illus. 2: German saying: “*Morgenstund’ hat Gold im Mund’.*” Lit: “*Morning hours have gold in the mouth.*” - Idiomatic saying similar to “The early bird catches the worm.” ***We have to make room for the meaning in the translation.
- **transliteration** – bringing a form of the word in its foreign language into the language of the new translation (i.e. – baptism).

Early Translations of the Bible

- We have already mentioned that the Bible had been translated into Coptic, Syrian, Aramaic, and other languages within the first centuries.
- The major translation that had the most lasting impact on the Church through the Middle Ages was **Jerome’s Latin Vulgate**.
 - It was a translation from the original Greek and Hebrew.
 - He took from 382 – 405 A. D. to complete the work.
 - He met considerable opposition in producing the text.
 - This was the Bible printed by Gutenberg.
 - Latin was the language of the scholars throughout Europe.
- The earliest Bibles had no chapter and verse divisions. These were added for convenience in quoting the Scriptures.
 - **Stephen Langton** - professor at University of Paris and later Archbishop of Canterbury, divided the Bible into chapters in 1227.
 - **Robert Stephanus** - a Paris printer, added verses in 1551 & 1555.

Landmark English Translations

- There were many minor attempts throughout the history of Christianity in England to bring portions of the scriptures in Old English.
- In 1066 with the Norman Conquest came the beginnings of Middle English.
- John Wycliffe: He is called the Morning star for it was his desire to place the Bible in the language of the common people.
 - He translated his scriptures from the Latin Vulgate - 1380 N.T.; 1388 O.T. The work was carried on posthumously by John Purvey.
 - 170 handmade copies still exist today.
 - His work was made popular by the Lollards, or the “poor priests” of England.
- The landmark influence which opened the way to more common distribution of scriptures was the invention of the printing press which at first began to make available many translations of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures. Your textbook gives a good history of how Erasmus came to develop a new Greek text of the scriptures.
- William Tyndale (He knew 8 languages fluently - Dutch, German, French, Span., Heb., Gk, Latin, Eng) developed the first major English version from the original Greek.
 - What is important for us to view here is that English translations have only improved over the years, the very opposite of the claims of liberals.
 - Each year that goes by the evidence continually mounts as to the accuracy of the English Bible.
 - Text used: Erasmus 2nd and 3rd (1519 and 1522) + Wycliffe Bible + Luther's 1522 translation
 - Date completed: 1526.
 - He was executed before finishing the OT (He did the Pentateuch, Historical books, Jonah, perhaps some others).
 - The work was carried on by John Rogers (The Matthews Bible -- 1537) and Myles Coverdale (Coverdale Bible -- 1537; Great Bible --1539)
- The Geneva Bible: This was the Bible of the Puritans. It was based on Beza's Greek text, which was a revision of Erasmus' work.
- Bishop's Bible: Anglicans scholarly revision of Great Bible
- King James Version – It was begun in 1604 at the bidding of John Reynolds.
 - It was to be a revision of the Bishop's Bible with careful comparison to original Hebrew and Greek.
 - It used later editions of the Textus Receptus (received text) by Stephanus and Beza, plus a comparison with Luther, a loyalty to Tyndale, and consultation with Waldensian versions.
 - It was completed in 1611 by 54 men, Puritan and Anglican, known for piety and scholarship.
 - According to John Foxe (and others) 85 to 95% of KJV NT is the work of William Tyndale left intact.
 - KJV today: It is the 5th major edition (1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769) called the Oxford Revision of 1769. It is the editing work of Dr. Ben Blaney. His intent: remove archaic expressions, update spelling. There are a total of 24,000 changes from 1611. They are chiefly in spelling: grinne changed to grin, sinne to sin, righteousnesse to righteousness, etc. Some of the order of "have care" to "have a care." Dr. D. A. Waite listened to a tape of the entire 1611 Bible being read aloud while reading along in a 1917 Scofield KJV and detected almost no changes that could be audibly detected.

(About 90% of Greek manuscripts in existence show simply remarkable uniformity, coming from many geographic locations over several centuries. They also show remarkable

agreement with the best ancient versions, notably the Syriac and Old Latin, which was apparently the basis of the early Romaunt language version of the Waldensians. This agreement is so phenomenal, in fact, B.F. Westcott took it to be the very proof of falsification!)

Textus Receptus = Bible of Waldensians, Anabaptists and Reformers. Luther's Bible, Tyndale's Bible, Geneva (Beza, Coverdale, Farel), Italian Diodati Bible, French Olivetan Bible, Spanish de Reina Bible, Hungarian Karoli Bible, Dutch Statervertaling Bible (Most of these are direct descendants of Waldensian Versions, sought out and destroyed by RCC, KJV, NKJV)

- English Revised (NT 1881, OT 1884) Version was to be a revision of KJV but it used the Critical Text of Westcott and Hort, supplanting the Textus Receptus for first time.
 - There was and still is controversy over it.
 - It leans heavily upon the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus which were not discovered until after the KJV was translated.
 - Vaticanus (B)
 - Property of RCC -- Unknown until 1475; dated 325 to 350 A.D. -- Oldest uncial/vellum!
 - 1860's available on a very limited basis to some viewers, under tight supervision of papacy
 - Contains most of NT, missing Mark 16:9-20/John 7:53-8:11 and Heb. 9:14 to end of Rev.
 - Sinaiticus (Aleph) was discovered by Constantin Tischendorf in 1859 while visiting St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Eastern Orthodox).
 - Vellum dated at 340 to 350 A.D. It contained half of OT (Septuagint) and nearly all NT omitting Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:4.
 - [Textual expert F.H.A. Scrivener attested it was "covered with alterations" showing the hand of as many as 10 different scribes making 10 revisions on the text]
 - When you see in your Bible a footnote saying, "These words are not found in the earliest and best manuscripts," ***it is usually referring to these two manuscripts!***
 - Because I do not consider myself a scholar in this area, I do not enter into the debate as to which is the better Greek text from which to translate the Bible, The Critical Text of Westcott-Hort or the Textus Receptus of Erasmus, revised by Stephanus & Beza.
 - The major argument for the Critical Text is its antiquity. The major arguments for the TR are its history of transmission and the majority of texts found. The details of the debate are too detailed for this class. Your textbook favors the Critical text as do most Bible translators today but I am not personally dissuaded from some of the issues for the Textus Receptus.

Two major competing texts:

Critical Text/Minority; <i>Westcott & Hort</i> ; Nestle-Aland #27; United Bible Society #4	Textus Receptus/Majority; <i>Received</i> ; Traditional; Byzantine; Syrian; Antiochan
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- ASV: American revision of ERV 1901
- RSV: NT 1946 OT 1950 - Highly controversial. Rejected by fundamentalists for being liberal. 32 scholars, 1 Jewish. This opened the era of multiple translations.
- NASB NT 1963 OT 1970
- NIV Designed for ease in readability and comprehension - NT 1973 OT 1978; 100 scholars 200,000 man-hours 25 years - [1983 edition -- 983 revisions]
- NKJV NT 1979 OT 1982

A word about Mark 16:9-20: Many people take sides here

- The evidence against: * mostly from Vaticanus and Sinaiticus
 - very best manuscripts and as textual witnesses are in a class by themselves
 - these do not have the closing verses
 - neither do some old Latin and Syriac manuscripts
- In favor of:
 - Alexandria, Ephraem, Codex Bezae (KJV) other early uncials, late uncials, & the Latin Vulgate
 - Sinaiticus has an unusual space after Mark 16:8.

How do you choose a translation?

- Understand the textual issues involved and prayerfully seek God's face as to which is the best text for the Bible.
- Which method of translation results in the most accurate rendering of the Word of God?
- Which Bible was the result of the efforts of the most qualified translators? (level of competency, existence of theology, bias, & personal piety)
- Unwise popular trend: "I like the way this one reads." Subjective Impact versus Objective Fidelity
 - Subjective Impact: preference based on how it appeals to me. (II Tim. 3:1-5, 4:1-4)
 - Objective Fidelity: faithfulness both to God's original words and meaning (Prov. 30:5-6)
- Job of Translator - Render exact words of author in as clear and sensible manner as possible. This raises many questions which you will get into as you travel further in areas of Bible translation, especially as you seek to bring the Word of God into another culture.

" Before Tyndale's day the English versions of the Bible had been but translations of a translation, being derived from the Vulgate or older Latin versions. Tyndale, for the first time, went back to the original Hebrew and Greek -- and not only did he go back to the original languages seeking for the truth, but he embodied that truth in so noble a translation that it has ever since been deemed wise by scholars and revisers to make but few changes in it; consequently every succeeding version is in reality little more than a revision of Tyndale's. It has truly been said that "the peculiar genius which breathes through the English Bible, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the grandeur -- unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars -- all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man and that man is William Tyndale." -- John Foxe

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