

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

LESSON 1

HOW WERE THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE FIRST WRITTEN?

The earliest books of the Bible (including Genesis-Deuteronomy, the five books of Moses) were written on papyrus made from plants growing along the Nile River. Papyrus could be formed into long sheets and rolled up onto scrolls. Writing could only be done on one side of the papyrus.

- Video demonstration: [How Papyrus is Made](#)

Later books (including many in the New Testament) were written on animal skins called parchment or vellum. (2 Timothy 4:13). Writers could use both sides of parchment and vellum. These sheets were folded into a small booklet called a “codex.” In the days when the New Testament was being written the largest codex could hold the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- Video demonstration – [Dirty Jobs- Making Vellum & Parchment](#)

Other Information:

- [The Difference between Paper, Parchment & Vellum](#)
- [How the Sumerians started writing](#)
- [Writing before the alphabet](#)
- [Was the alphabet invented on Mt. Sinai?](#)
- [How the Christian church kept literacy alive in the Middle Ages](#)
- [Where were the copies made? Scriptoria.](#)

BIBLE IMAGES

This site includes [scanned images of old Bibles](#) for you to peruse.

LESSON 2

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

[The Report on the Inspiration of Scripture](#) from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR).

THE EFFECT OF FALSE PRESUPPOSITIONS

Bruno Bauer's impact on [Socialism's Rejection of Christianity](#)

- [The impact the 18th-century German attack on the Bible](#) had on Islamic Apologetics
- [Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Authenticity of Scripture](#)

ERRORS IN *THE DA VINCI CODE*

“When someone presupposes that the miraculous is impossible, all evidence is dismissed and denied in the first place” (Dr. Paul Maier).

- Visit [Deciphering the Errors in the Da Vinci Code](#)

Other Sites:

- A discussion of the [truth or falsehood of 11 statements](#) from Dan Brown's book, *The Da Vinci Code*.
- Four videos in which Dr. Paul Maier and others discuss *The Da Vinci Code*.
 - How reliable is the account of [Emperor Constantine in The Da Vinci Code?](#)
 - [Who decided](#) what books became part of the New Testament?
 - [What does history reveal about the claims of The Da Vinci Code?](#)
 - What are the [major errors in The Da Vinci Code?](#)

HOW DO THEY VIEW THE BIBLE?

Mormons believe the Bible is the Word of God “as far as it is translated correctly.” Read [article 8 of the Articles of Faith](#).

- [Changes in the book of Mormon](#)
- Also look at jefflindsay.com.

Jehovah's Witnesses

- This group appears to accept the Bible. Consider [Jehovah's Witness beliefs](#) and [The Bible- a Book from God](#)
- The [translators of The New World Translation](#), the Jehovah's Witnesses own Bible, were under-qualified: [click here](#).

LESSON 3

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

Download Lutheran Hour Ministries booklet: [click here](#).

THE SOPHERIM

How were the scribes able to safeguard their copying from typical transmission errors? The sopherim (“counters of letters”) were scribes who numbered the words and letters in each Old Testament book. They left lists with these statistics at the end of each book to insure the accuracy of future copies. The sopherim began with Ezra the priest and completed their counting of letters in the first century B.C. [Click here](#).

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

- An examination of the Essenes who are believed to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls: [click here](#).
- A fragment of John's Gospel found in the John Ryland's collection: [click here](#).

- Evidence for Daniel being written before 155 BC: [click here](#).
- A convincing argument that Daniel is prophetic and not historic: [click here](#).
- Using DNA to ensure the proper placement of scroll fragments: [click here](#).
- The Synchrotron – a new tool to read damaged, fragile manuscripts: [click here](#).

LESSON 4

OLDEST NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

The oldest New Testament manuscripts we have are from the 4th century A.D.

- [Codex Sinaiticus](#)
- [Codex Vaticanus](#)- Catholic Encyclopedia Article
- [Codex Alexandrinus](#)
 - [Catholic Encyclopedia Article](#)
- [Partial New Testament Papyri](#) which predate the three codices above.
- [The History of Modern Greek Editions](#)
- [A History of Human Writing](#)
- A thorough discussion of [The Evolution of Uncial Text in Greek](#)

[DATING THE GOSPELS](#): Consider this appeal to an earlier date for the Gospels from William R. Braqstad.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM:

Since we do not have the original autographs written by the prophets and apostles, textual criticism provides a way for us to evaluate differences among the manuscript copies to determine the actual text of the original autographs.

- This Website describes how there came to be [differences and variations between the Hand-Copied Manuscripts](#)
- A [simple description of Textual Criticism](#)
- Dr. Raymond F. Surburg describes the good textual criticism Dr. Maier spoke of in the video: “[The Historical-Grammatical Method](#)”
- Textual Criticism considers the [end of the Gospel of Mark](#).
- Textual Criticism considers the account of the [Adulterous Woman in John 8](#)

LESSON 5

THE ENGLISH BIBLE

- [The Story of John Wycliffe](#)
 - [More in-depth link](#)
- [The Story of John Huss](#)
 - [More in-depth link](#)
- [The story of Desiderius Erasmus](#)
- [The story of William Tyndale](#)
- [The Origin of the English Bible](#)
- [The History of the King James Bible](#)

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

- The [History of the Bible Museum](#)
- [Dr. Paul Maier's Homepage](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

How Papyrus Is Made

<http://youtu.be/FNtqAkzpuU>

(If you cannot find the video, go to www.youtube.com and in the search box enter “How to make papyrus paper”. This is a 2 minute 33 second video.)

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Dirty Jobs- Making Vellum & Parchment

<http://youtu.be/02Bwc1N9Cgo>

(If you cannot find this video, go to www.youtube.com/ and in the search box put “Dirty Jobs-Making Vellum”)

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The Difference between Paper, Parchment & Vellum

<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/formats/paper-vellum.html>

What's the difference between parchment, vellum, and paper?

The term *parchment* is a general term for an animal skin which has been prepared for writing or printing. Parchment has been made for centuries, and is usually calf, goat, or sheep skin. The term *vellum* from the French *veau* refers to a parchment made from calf skin. The manufacture of parchment is quite involved. After the skin is removed from the animal and any hair or flesh is cleaned away, it is stretched on a wooden frame. While it is stretched, the parchment maker or *parchminer* scrapes the surface of the skin with a special curved knife. In order to create tension in the skin, scraping is alternated by wetting and drying the skin. The parchment is scraped, wetted, and dried several times to bring it to the right thickness and tautness. Sometimes a final finish is achieved using pumice as an abrasive followed by chalk in order to prepare the surface of the skin to accept ink.

Parchment has traditionally been used instead of paper for important documents such as religious texts, public laws, indentures, and land records as it has always been considered a strong and stable material. The five pages of the U.S. Constitution as well as the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Articles of Confederation are written on parchment.

The terms *parchment* and *vellum* are also used in the paper making industry. Parchment paper is made from cellulose fibers prepared from fir trees or plants such as cotton or flax. Paper can be made which mimics the thickness and smooth surface of parchment. The terms refer to the finish of the paper and should not be relied upon as an indicator of its long term stability.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

How the Sumerians started Writing

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/#ngc-the-first-writings>

(We can no longer find the video “Start Writing: The Ancient Sumerians. This new video discusses the earliest found Egyptian writing and also mentions the Sumerian cuneiform. In the **Video Search** box enter: “The First Writings” and click on the video when it comes up.)

Transcript:

Narrator: Scattered inside King Scorpion’s tomb, Gunther Dryer found about a hundred and eighty small ivory tags. Each one was inscribed with mysterious images- some obviously animals, others less clear. The implications were staggering:

Gunther Dryer: When we found the first of these little tags in the sand filling of the chambers, we couldn’t believe it because at the first glance they resemble later hieroglyphs. But we knew writing only from a much later period, two hundred years later. Could it be possible, was our question, that they knew writing already?

Narrator: Hieroglyphs use both meaning and sound signs which combine to form words. The pharaohs used hieroglyphs as the language of their kingdom for thousands of years. But no one had ever found any sign of hieroglyphs predating the pharaohs.

It had always been thought that the idea of writing first arose- not in northern Africa, but in the Middle East, in ancient Mesopotamia. Here by the time of the first pharaohs a system of accounting, now called cuneiform, had already developed into writing.

In tomb UJ, which predates the pharaohs, each of the tags had a hole in it suggesting it had once been attached- either to the wooden boxes whose remains were found nearby, or to other containers.

Gunther Dryer: What could be the use of such labels? Just decoration? Not very likely. They had been fixed with these holes to something. And it was most likely that

they transferred some information. So we started to understand them and to read them.

Narrator: The breakthrough came when Dryer found tags that made sense as hieroglyphs. One showed a stork and a seat.

Gunther Dryer: What could be the meaning? Seated stork? Not very likely. But we know from later hieroglyphic writing they represent phonetic values, phonetic sounds. The stork would be read “ba”, the seat “set”, together we could read “ba-set” and that in fact is the name of a city in the Delta.

Narrator: Baset was an ancient city over three hundred miles to the north of Abidas. Dryer now found other tags that could also be read as Egyptian place names.

Gunther Dryer: The important thing is this is phonetic writing. Signs represent sounds of a language, and that’s a major step in the developing of writing. And these are the earliest examples of such phonetic writing- much earlier than what we know from Mesopotamia.

Narrator: It means that the oldest piece of writing ever found is Egyptian. Dryer’s discovery is momentous.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Writing before the Alphabet

<http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/video/1496198833/>

(If you cannot find this video, log onto www.pbs.org and in the search bar enter “History Detectives, season 3, history of writing”)

Transcript:

Although spoken languages believed to have developed tens of thousands of years ago, the written word emerged much later as hunter-gatherers developed more permanent agrarian societies. Some nine thousand years ago the Sumerians invented counting tokens. These simple stamps were inscribed with pictures that represented the objects to be itemized. They could be impressed in clay to document a record of land, grain or cattle ownership.

These pictographs became more stylized as scribes began drawing them with a wedge-shaped stylus made of reeds. This script is now known as cuneiform, our first written language.

The next step occurred in Egypt sometime toward the end of the fourth millennium BC. Unlike cuneiform which depicted individual objects, hieroglyphics represented sounds. This major advance called a one-sign, one sound system of writing is regarded as the first alphabet.

Language developed elsewhere too. Cultures with no apparent connection to the near East- in China, the Indus Valley and much later the Ulnecs and Mayans of meso-America developed their own advanced alphabets. Whether these arose independently or were influenced by existing languages is still a matter of fierce debate among scholars.

To find out more go to history detectives on the web at PBS.org.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Was the alphabet invented on Mt. Sinai?

<http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c5/bigbang.htm>

(If you cannot find the video, log on to www.childrenofthecode.org/ and in the search bar enter “A brief history of the code - part 1”)

Transcript:

Dr. Leonard Shlain: The first forms of writing, hieroglyphics and cuneiform, were extremely difficult to learn and they were limited to a very small percentage- less than two percent of the population of Egypt and Mesopotamia could read and write.

Dr. Frank Moore Cross: The old writing systems were all exceedingly complex, could be used only by a scribal elite. These usually under the dominance of the king or the temple.

Dr. Shlain: There's an old saying that in the valley of the blind the one eyed man is king. If you know how to read and write and nobody else does, within a very short period of time you gain all the power. And then about 3500 years ago a group of people halfway between Mesopotamia and Egypt figured out a much simpler way to read and write, called the alphabet. And the alphabet transformed the world. The alphabet continues to transform the world.

Dr. Johanna Drucker: There are several different writing systems that have been invented in the course of human history. There's actually only one alphabet. It has many visual forms that are currently in use, but we can trace most of those forms back to a common root- which is the proto-Canaanite alphabet that emerged sometime around 1800 B.C. in the Sinai peninsula.

Dr. Shlain : You mention the name “Sinai” to anybody historically- there's only one event that's associated with the Sinai, and that is the giving of the Ten Commandments. And I think it's amazing that the oldest alphabet ever discovered was in the Sinai. So the question is, was the enormous event that really happened there the invention of the alphabet?

David Abram: The Israelites are born as a people in relation to the written word. That is to say, they become a people during the Exodus when Moses goes up a mountain with two blank stones and he comes down with writing on... the guy's a scribe obviously.

Dr. Robert Logan: Moses introduced the Ten Commandments which was codified law, he came with the written code written with alphabetic writing and he introduced a new form of monotheism.

David Abram: The alphabet is there at the beginning of the monotheistic tradition.

Dr. Drucker: Really the core of Jewish learning, teaching and faith is to be able to read the Scriptures.

Dr. Shlain: And what better way to inspire people to want to learn how to read and write this new form of language than to say that this is given to you, written for you by the moving finger of God.

David Abram: The history of the Jewish people, and hints of Christianity as well, is integrally entwined with the story of the alphabet- of this writing system that unlike any others that came before it or any others that developed elsewhere, this phonetic writing system, this first writing system that privileged the human voice.

(clip from the movie "The 13th Warrior")

Dr. Drucker: What amazes me, I was doing some work on early writing systems recently for another project and the Phoenician letter forms and the earliest proto-alphabetic forms were constantly before my eyes, and then I was out in the landscape and I would see billboards and signs on the sides of trucks and I would think, "That's amazing- those are actually Phoenician letter forms and they aren't that different." And that's four thousand years, modestly speaking of those forms being in existence. And suddenly I had this incredible, uncanny feeling of this ancient culture, it's as though this sort of mind code of an ancient culture is still with us. Very few things that we use in daily life that have that living legacy still active with them: the wheel, fire, forks, knives, a couple other things. But really, it's amazing.

Dr. Frank Moore Cross: I would put the invention of the alphabet among if you wish the absolute cardinal inventions of all of human history.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

How the Christian church kept literacy alive in the Middle Ages

<http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c5/viral.htm>

(if you cannot find this video, go to www.childrenofthecode.org/ and in the search bar enter “viral spread”)

Transcript:

(graphic: “Classical to Medieval Literacy”)

Dr. Johanna Drucker: The alphabet as we know it, as we think of it, is the alphabet that we get from the Phoenicians, who got it from the Semites, who then pass it to the Greeks and the Etruscans, who then pass it to the Romans who then become the instrument for spreading it throughout western Europe- of course as part of the Holy Roman Empire.

(graphic: “The Rise and Fall of Literacy”)

Dr. Drucker: Written literacy comes and goes in different cultures, in other words there’s a fairly high standard of literacy, that is the capacity to actually read the alphabet as a code for writing in the classical world

Dr. David Olson: People have actually calculated what percentage of- say the classical Greeks could read, and I think it was only something like 10 or 12 percent I think that could read in Greek, in classical Greece. Which is quite a lot of people.

Dr. Johanna Drucker: Literacy levels in Rome are like forty, fifty percent. If you’re going to go outside of Rome into a peasant environment in early Italy you’re not going to find a high level of literacy.

Dr. Leonard Schlain: And then you have this extraordinary period in western culture called the Dark Ages, where literacy got lost.

Dr. Thomas Cable: Only a small proportion of people in Anglo-Saxon and late medieval times could read.

Dr. Malcom Richardson: The number of people who could actually sit down and read and write with a great deal of fluency may have been one percent.

Dr. Cable: it didn't necessarily connect to higher socio-economic status because there could very well be the lord of a castle who could not read, but it was mainly the Church.

Dr. Leonard Shlain: The reason that the Christian Church made such an impact on the Medieval period is that the only people that were literate in Europe were the Church and the rest of the people were not.

Dr. John H. Fisher: Well, see, the Church followed the Roman Empire. Latin was established while Rome was still the preeminent power in Europe. Then the Church moved in and the pope became the emperor and all of the church documents were in Latin. So there's a continuity from 100 B.C. to 1500 A.D. of Latin being the standard language.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Where were the copies made? Scriptoria.

http://christdesert.org/Seeking_God/Scriptoria/index.html



A Brief History of Scriptoria and the Evolution of the Book

Since the 4th millennium B.C. , scribes have created books from within scriptoria. Before the invention of moveable type, all books were written by hand, and any copies, likewise were generated manually. The book itself has seen radical metamorphoses.

The first writings that can be called books were made on clay tablets. The scribe, using a stylus, wrote in the soft clay, and errors could be easily smoothed over and corrected. After the clay dried, it was an indelible book. Waxed boards were an improvement over clay tablets as regards to ease of handling and storage. As with clay, errors in wax could be smoothed over and corrected, and in addition, the waxed boards could be reused later if necessary. Papyrus, parchment, and paper were the next successive developments which facilitated the creation of books closer to the form we know today.

Papyrus books were in the form of scrolls or rolls. Later, (c. 4th century) the parchment codex, a loose-leaf manuscript, ultimately replaced the papyrus scroll. There seems to have always been a need to reuse writing materials, and during the 7th through the 9th centuries, many parchment manuscripts from the 5th through the 7th centuries were shaved, scrubbed and scoured to be ready for rewriting. These "recycled" parchments are called palimpsests. Then in the 13th century, paper began displacing parchment.

All of this evolution in the book was accompanied by one constant, the scriptorium. Scribes in Hebrew history transcribed the books of the Law, and the very earliest Christian cenobites copied Biblical books, and other Christian writings. St. Pachomius (292-346), founder of the first cenobitic Christian community, does not mention scribes in his Rule, however, other documents of the period or shortly after his death confirm their presence in his monasteries. St. Jerome (331-420) saw the scriptorium as a source of revenue for the monasteries - and for the monks, a stimulus for reading.

The director of the scriptorium, the Armarius, gave necessary instructions, assigned tasks, distributed

writing materials, and managed all writing, art work, and collating. Copying text was the scribe's primary task. Rubrics, ornate initials, and other decorative flourishes were added to the pages by the rubricators and/or miniators. Very rarely was the scribe, rubricator, and miniator the same monk.

The scribe, before writing, however, cut the parchment into the desired size, which varied greatly depending upon the client's instruction, the purpose of the book, and the style of the period and locale. Some books were pocket-size prayerbooks, while others were large choir books to be used in the monastery church. For cutting the parchment, the scribe was given a sharp, curved knife *novacula* or *rasorium* and a ruler *regula*, *linula*, *norma*, *canon*, *præductale*. If the parchment was torn or damaged, the scribe would effect repair with glue or often sewing artistic designs with needle and thread of varicolored silk.

The work of the scribes, miniators, and rubricators was meticulous and painstaking, and the *armarii* took great care to insure the absence of errors. During the Middle Ages, to certify copy fidelity, formulae tracing back to the ancient Orient were often appended to manuscripts. St. Jerome, who maintained his own personal scriptorium and staff of scribes, has transmitted such a formula of St. Irenaeus (d.202):

"You who will transcribe this book, I charge you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His glorious Second Coming, in which He will come to judge the living and dead, compare what you have copied against the original and correct it carefully. Furthermore, transcribe this adjuration and place it in the copy." (*De Viris illustribus* 35)

It should be comforting for us to know that in the face of such a weighty admonition, the scribes had the liberty of some personal expression (by permission, of course) within the manuscripts they copied. Hebrew scribes would often add at the ends of books the words *Amen*, *Sela*, or *Salom*, meaning, respectively, "So be it!", "Pause!" and "Peace!" Latin monks, in addition to using the now Christianized word *Amen*, added functional terms such as *Explicuit*, "The End", or *Explicuit feliciter*, "Thank goodness it's finished!", or other expressions of relief.

As today, the basic unit of the book was the double sheet, *diploma*, *plicatura*, or rarely *arcus*. Once folded, these *diplomae* were gathered inside one another, just as books are gathered today. Unlike today, it was a difficult task coordinating a large number of *diplomae* so that facing *folia* (individual pages) were in proper numerical order, hence, the largest mediæval book was usually a *sexternion*, or six *diplomae*. Naturally smaller books were also made: five *diplomae* or *quinternion*, four *diplomae* or *quaternion*, and likewise *ternion*, and *binion*. On the European continent until the 12th century *quaternions* were the most popular book, with *binions*, *ternions*, and *quinternions* not too far behind in popularity.

Curiously, the preference of the Irish, as well as that of the ancients, was the *quinternion*. In the 13th century, possibly as a result of the benefits of the paper codex, *sexternions* became plentiful, and even books of ten *diplomae*, *decaternion* were made.

As mentioned above, St. Jerome maintained his own personal scriptorium, as did other influential men of the time such as Origen and St. Augustine of Hippo. According to St. Clement of Alexandria (died c. 215), as early as the 5th century B.C. Anaxagoras employed his private scriptorium, as did Atticus in the time of Cicero.

The scriptoria were producing their last parchment books in the 14th and on into the 15th century. The paper codex was having its sway. However, even as late as the 17th century, parchment was used for precious liturgical volumes and collectors' books (nostalgia is nothing new). The 15th Century invention of the printing press cast an ominous shadow on the monks' scriptoria.

As with so many things, if we look to the East we find centuries-old prototypes of technology. In 11th century China, printing was accomplished with moveable wooden characters; and in 14th century Korea, cast metal characters were used. It was not until 15th Century Europe, however, that Laurens Jansoon Coster from Haarlem, the Netherlands, and Procopius Waldfoghel from Avignon, southern France first used moveable type. It was Johann Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, however, who is remembered for devising the most satisfactory printing method of his time. As early as 1439, Gutenberg was experimenting with his method of printing. The earliest dated specimen of printing, dated 1454, is a collection of indulgences by Pope Nicholas V, and the Gutenberg or Forty-two-Line Bible, completed in 1456, has the honor of being the first, complete, printed book.

Even after the triumph of printing, the manuscripts of the scriptoria had their influence. The style of script and its position on the page, the artistic rubrication, the flourish of initial lettering, and the intricate marginal designs provided a model for the printed page. In fact, in the early development of printing, these illuminations were added by hand. Later when the woodcut, metal-cut, and type form served the purpose, printers would employ artists to create woodcut illustrations copying the illuminations of manuscripts.

One prominent illustrator was Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Another illustrator, Erhard Reuwich, journeyed with the author ostensibly to draw scenes as he and the author witnessed them. His innovative method falls into question, however, with the presence in one book of his representation of a unicorn.

In what can be considered an upgrade to the scriptorium, Cardinal Juan de Torquemada in 1476, persuaded Conrad Sweyenheym and Arnold Pannartz of Mainz to operate a printing studio in the protocenobium of Santa Scholastica at Subiaco, Italy - the site of St. Benedict's original monasteries. This venture was the first printing house in Italy.

The Brethren of the Common Life (14th-16th century, Netherlands and Germany) continued their work in the classic scriptorium about 100 years longer than all other monasteries. Their manuscripts, which included vitae of the saints, theological works, and liturgical books, were beautifully illuminated and bound. They were dependent upon the scriptorium work and simple arts and crafts for their revenue,

and they found a healthy market of commissions. A passage from their Customary, or house rules, reflects the significance they placed on scriptorium work:

"Concerning the work of copying, note that you should order the work of your hands to the end that it may lead you to purity of heart, because you are weak and cannot be always at spiritual exercises and for this reason was handiwork instituted. Wherefore you ought to attend in your copying to three things, to wit, that you make the letters properly and perfectly, that you copy without error, that you understand the sense of what you are copying, and that you concentrate your wandering mind on the task."

Elsewhere in the customary is found this instruction for the brethren: "Twice a week they write for one hour in the evening for the poor, to wit from six to seven." This attitude of the efficacy of the scriptorium was likewise pervasive in the monastery of St. Martin of Tours where copying was the only skill allowed the monks.

Since the close of the 16th century, when the Brethren of the Common Life and their revered scriptoria faded away, calligraphic copying and illumination by hand have served the purpose merely of artistic interest, while the practical rôle of producing books fell to the printing press. In history's ageless manuscript, however, the names of monk, scribe, and scriptorium are ornately and indelibly transcribed.

diploma, plicatura, & arcus

the basic unit of a book

- arcus, n. a bow.
- diploma, n. (literally a doubling), a folded paper.
- plicatura, n. a folding.

Cassell's Latin Dictionary, Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.

novacula or rasorium

Novacula and rasorium are both late Latin words which mean "a sharp-edged instrument." The English word "razor" derives from rasorium.

Psalm 51:4. "Lingua tua sicut novacula acuta, qui facis dolum."

"Your tongue is like a sharpened razor, O you who work iniquity."

Judges 13:5. "...quia concipies et paries filium cuius non tanget caput novacula...."

"..for you shall conceive and bear a son and no razor shall touch his head."

Biblia Sacra Juxta Latinam Vulgatam Versionem, edited by Robert Weber, O.S.B. et. al.,
Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 2 vol., 1st ed., Stuttgart, 1969.

regula, linula, norma, canon, præductale

are all Latin words meaning roughly "ruler" or a tool for measuring and/or making straight lines. Norma has a more exact definition as a carpenter's or mason's square. Regula and canon also denote "rule" in the sense of a law.

Cassell's Latin Dictionary, Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.

rubricators and miniators

the illuminators of the scriptorium

rubric, n. the title or heading, as of a chapter or a law, written or printed in red or in special lettering.
archaic. a: red ocher; b: a red color

rubricator, n. a person who inserts rubrics into manuscripts.

miniature, adj. of the color of minium; orange red. v.t. to color or paint with minium; rubricate or illuminate.

miniator, n. a person who miniatures.

World Book Dictionary, Doubleday, 1979.

scribe

scribe (also scribe, 4th-6th centuries)

1: writer, amanuensis, secretary, one whose business is writing; a copyist, transcriber of manuscripts;
now especially the writer of a particular manuscript copy of a classical or mediæval work.

2: a penman, one (more or less) skilled in penmanship.

- Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so,
- And if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.
- Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, Act II, Scene IV, 3-4.

Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1971.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Scanned Images of old Bibles

<http://www.bibles-online.net/>



1530 Luther NT

Zu der zeit wann Johannes der tauffer /
vonn dem heiligen geiste vntd gesalbt
bym reych ist nach bey kommen. Vnd er
prophet Haseu gesagt hat / vntd geist
fendestymme vntd darwusten / Derselber dem he
m nach seyne freygerichteig.

Er aber Johannes hatte cyn kleid von Lau
nen lebend gartel vntd seyne leinend. Seyne spe
chen vntd wilb homig. Da gieng zu ihm bynauß
vntd das geist rich land / vntd alle leinend er

1535 Coverdale Bible



1537 Matthew's Bible



1541 Great Bible



1549 Matthew-Tyndale Bible



1550 Stephanus Greek NT



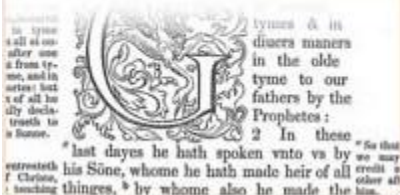
1551 Taverner's Bible



1552 Jugge's Tyndale NT



1557 Geneva NT



1563 Foxe's Book of Martyrs



1568 Bishops' Bible

The Creation by Saint Iohn.

[illegible]

1583 "Noblest" Geneva Bible

THE 1583 GENEVA BIBLE, THE FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATED BY PROTESTANTS, WAS THE FIRST TO BE TRANSLATED BY A GROUP OF ENGLISHMEN. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BE TRANSLATED BY A GROUP OF ENGLISHMEN. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BE TRANSLATED BY A GROUP OF ENGLISHMEN.

It was much an attempt taken in haste to let forth the fruits of those changes, whereof they are full particulars.

2. Also they have inserted their notes by, by from the beginning, both their places, and these members of the same.

3. Printed good will to me (well)

1599 Hutter Polyglot

ELIAS HVITTERS.

A CULMIS QUAM PUTE SAPIENTIAM IN LINGVA:
 nunc acquiescit. Ne Alia perperam, uno mu-
 nemus, tamen ream expugnatione adpice sit, et
 per mundo diuino, per Colorem Alphabochi con-
 beneuolentem iuxta Tria in tria florent, cordis an-
 imulus propiti & appositus expugnetur natura,
 quoniam in hunc unum dicit, nos hoc singulis ad-
 uocatum, solent & exoptant, uolunt

IOSEPH. pinto, abbas prior in Albiensium monasterio.

1611 First Edition King James

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

CTCR Document: The INSPIRATION of SCRIPTURE

<http://www.lcms.org/Document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=302>

The Inspiration of Scripture

**A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
March 1975**

CONTENTS

- I. Inspiration and the Writers of Scripture**
 - A. Inspiration and Revelation
 - B. Inspiration and Sources
 - C. Inspiration and the Act of Writing the Scriptures
 - D. Inspiration and the Writers of Biblical Literature
 - E. Inspiration and the Biblical Writings
 - F. Inspiration and Literary Forms
 - G. Inspiration and the Authorship of Biblical Books
- II. Inspiration and History**
 - A. Inspiration and Inerrancy
 - B. Inspiration and Historical Records in the Bible
 - C. Inspiration and the Meaning of Historical Events
- III. Inspiration and Biblical Authority**
 - A. Inspiration and the Unity of Scripture
 - B. Inspiration and the Authority of Scripture
 - C. Inspiration and the Gospel
 - D. Inspiration and Saving Faith
 - E. Inspiration and Doctrinal Formulations
- IV. Inspiration and Canonicity**
- Conclusion**
- Notes**

Preface

In response to Resolutions 3-16, 3-17, and 3-19 of the 1962 convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at Cleveland, Ohio, [1] the Commission on Theology and

Church Relations produced "A Study Document on Revelation, Inspiration, and Inerrancy." This document presented two positions relative to these topics together with an evaluation of each and a thesis-like statement of the doctrine under discussion which offered some conclusions that seemed justified by the Commission's studies.

After the Commission had received and studied reactions to the above named document, it published another report in the form of a single, positive treatment of the subject entitled "Revision of the Study Document on Revelation, Inspiration, and Inerrancy."

Subsequent conventions of the Synod continued to adopt resolutions which called for further study of the inspiration of the Scriptures and related subjects. [2] The Commission, therefore, prepared the document herewith offered to the Synod with the prayer that it may be useful in resolving some of the questions which have been raised in recent years about the inspiration, inerrancy, authority, authorship, canonicity, and unity of the Sacred Writings. May this document encourage the kind of fraternal discussion that will with the aid of the Holy Spirit promote concord and reconciliation in the Synod.

Abbreviations

All citations of the Lutheran Confessions are taken from The Book of Concord, edited by T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), except when noted to the contrary.

The following abbreviations have been used:

Ap - Apology of the Augsburg Confession

LC - Large Catechism

Scriptural quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

I

INSPIRATION AND THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE

A. Inspiration and Revelation

"Inspiration" and "revelation" are terms which designate very closely related spiritual realities. According to 1 Cor. 2:9-13 both refer to an operation of the Holy Spirit; both are involved in imparting to man the knowledge of God and His saving counsels; both are necessary for our enlightenment "that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God."

But "inspiration" and "revelation" are not completely coextensive terms. Revelation can occur without inspiration; inspiration can occur without revelation.

The term "revelation" denotes every disclosure that God has given to men of His being, will, purposes, and acts whether this be through general revelation in the things which He has made and in His continuing providence, or through special revelation as in theophanies, visions, and dreams, in the Word of the Lord that came to the prophets for the instruction of His people, or in the incarnation of His Son.

The term "inspiration" denotes the guidance of the Holy Spirit under which the Biblical authors recorded what God had revealed to them about the mysteries of His being and the meaning of His mighty acts in human history for man's salvation and under which they wrote concerning any other subject, even if it was about a matter of which they had knowledge apart from revelation (e. g., that Josiah was killed at Megiddo, that Demas deserted Paul, that Eutychus fell out of a window).

Apokalupsis (revelatio) means the drawing back of a veil to disclose hidden things; theopneustos (inspiratus) refers to that which is breathed into, infused. In theology these terms are used to express the truth that the Holy Spirit inspired the writings. When holy men were speaking about the mysteries of God's being, of His eternal purposes, and of His actions in human history, then both revelation and inspiration were involved. 2 Peter 1:20-21 teaches that no prophecy in the Scriptures about the power and coming of God's Son into human history is a matter of some human being's private

interpretation of what God was doing, but holy men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Note how revelation and inspiration are related in 1 Cor. 2:9-13: the Holy Spirit reveals the mysteries of God's grace and teaches the words in which the mystery is spoken. However, inspiration is not always inseparably associated with revelation in the Scriptures. While revelation is frequently accompanied by a command to write down what was seen and heard (Ex. 34:27; Deut. 31:9; Is.8:1; Jer.30:2; 36:2; Hab.2:2; Rev.1:11 et al.), there were occasions when there was revelation without such a command (Gen. 28:10-15; Luke 2:1-14). Conversely, revelation is not always associated with inspiration. The prophets and apostles wrote of many things of which they had knowledge apart from revelation. St. Luke, for instance, says that he compiled his narrative on the basis of information delivered by eyewitnesses of the events he records. (Luke 1: 1-4)

It was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he did not know whether he had baptized anyone else besides the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. 1:16); by inspiration of the Holy Spirit he included in his Second Epistle to Timothy the plea to come soon and bring along the cloak, books, and parchments that he had left with Carpus at Troas (2 Tim. 4:9, 13); by inspiration he volunteered his personal opinion about the advisability of getting married in times of persecution (1 Cor. 7:25-26). But no revelation was needed for him to know that his memory failed him about how many people he had baptized in Corinth, or to know that he wanted his cloak and books, or to know it was his opinion that in view of the impending distress it might be better not to get married.

While inspiration is predicated of "all Scripture" (2 Tim. 3: 16), the sacred writers speak of revelation only in connection with supernatural disclosure of divine mysteries and secret counsels concerning which man could otherwise have no knowledge. (Matt. 11:25-27; 16:17; Luke 2:26; Rom. 1:17; 1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:12; Gal. 1:12;

Rev. 1:1)

From the standpoint of the Biblical authors, then, it is possible to distinguish between revelation and inspiration in that they wrote some things by inspiration on the basis of revelation, and some things by inspiration alone without need of supernatural disclosure. It is useless for us, however, to whom their writings have come, to attempt to draw a sharp line between what we have received through that operation of the Holy Spirit called inspiration and the operation called revelation, for to us all the inspired writings are revelatory. Apart from the inspired Scriptures we have no other revelation of God, of His will, and of His redemptive acts in human history which can make us wise unto salvation and which is profitable for teaching, reproof, restoration, and training (2 Tim.3:15-16). And the Scriptures do not acknowledge any other revelation that can save and instruct us if we refuse to hear them. (Luke 16:31)

B. Inspiration and Sources

As Luke 1: 1-4 clearly indicates, some of the material incorporated in this Gospel was derived from sources to which Luke had access when he undertook to "write an orderly account" for Theophilus. Luke's words suggest that two kinds of sources were in existence before he began to write his Gospel. Eyewitnesses had delivered oral traditions on the basis of which "many" had compiled written narratives. Other Scriptures also make it evident that Biblical authors had sources upon which they drew in producing their writings (Num. 21:14; Josh. 10:13; 1 Sam. 10:25; 1 Kings 11:41; 14:19, 29; 2 Chron. 9:29 et al.). Since these sources are not available to us, we have no knowledge of them beyond the references to them in the Scriptures, but these references are sufficient to establish that they did exist.

The use of sources by Biblical authors does not militate against the teaching that they wrote by inspiration. Such sources existed, and the sacred writers used them as they were led by the Spirit. It would seem highly improbable that there would have been no traditions and no records of the sayings and deeds of Jesus prior to the composition of

the Gospels contained in the New Testament.

Another question has to do with the Holy Spirit's activity relative to precanonical sources. When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with His disciples, He said, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). After Pentecost the Holy Spirit was present in the Christian community to guide it into all truth (John 16:13) and to bestow all the gifts that the church needed to fulfill the commission given to it by Christ to preach the Gospel in all the world.

The promise of John 14:26 included the Holy Spirit's presence to preserve and empower the church's witness to Christ even before the Christian message was committed to writing. Inspiration of the Biblical writings does not preclude the Holy Spirit's influence in preserving the traditions prior to the composition of the Biblical books.

C. Inspiration and the Act of Writing the Scriptures

Inspiration is a mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit connected with the writing of the Sacred Scriptures, irrespective of whether the authors obtained knowledge concerning the things of which they wrote by revelation or by research. Referring to Scriptures with which Timothy had been acquainted from childhood, the apostle Paul says that they were all inspired by God, i.e., God-breathed (2 Tim.3:15-16). St. Peter affirms the inspiration of the Old Testament when he says that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). About apostolic Scriptures the apostle Paul says that they impart what had been revealed "in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit." (1 Cor. 2:13)

2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Cor. 2:13 represent both prophets and apostles as "speaking" (lalein) by inspiration. This must not be understood as referring only to their oral utterances so as to exclude their written words. The apostle Paul thought of himself as "speaking" to his readers in his letters (Rom. 7:1; 1 Cor. 9:8; 2 Cor. 12:19), and 2 Peter 3:16 refers to things about which St. Paul "speaks" in epistles. The Biblical data do not

warrant limiting inspiration to prophetic and apostolic oral proclamation. Prophets and apostles "spoke" as they were moved by the Holy Ghost also when they were writing the Biblical books in which God has preserved their message for all times to be the foundation on which the church is built (Eph. 2:20). 1 John 1:3-4 and 2 Thess. 2:15 clearly indicate that the apostles made no distinction between that which they proclaimed by word of mouth and that which they wrote.

D. Inspiration and the Writers of Biblical Literature

Nothing in the Holy Scriptures indicates that when God chose human beings to be His instruments through whom He spoke and wrote His Word to men, He used them in such a way that they were deprived of their individuality and identity. The Holy Spirit took men as they had been shaped by all their circumstances, cultural influences, educational opportunities, and natural capacities and placed them into His service to speak "from God." (2 Peter 1:21)

When inspiring the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit did not work through men as though they were lifeless machines (e. g., a tape recorder), but He employed them in such a way as to leave room for the real influence of each writer's own temperament, endowments, interests, purposes, perspective-and even limitations (e. g., Paul's lapse of memory, 1 Cor. 1:16. See also Luke's purpose and research, Luke 1:1-4). By inspiration holy men spoke from God in a human language, made up of human words, subject to human principles of grammar and syntax, employing human literary devices or else their speech and writing would have been unintelligible. (Cf. Paul's estimate of the value of supernatural utterances in 1 Cor. 14.)

The Holy Spirit did not give the Biblical writers a heavenly vocabulary, a celestial grammar, or divine attributes, such as omniscience. Through men of human capacities the Holy Spirit spoke divine truth in human idiom.

E. Inspiration and the Biblical Writings

Since inspiration was not a mechanical process akin to dictation, the Scriptures in many ways bear the marks of their human authorship. Literary style varies from book to book and even accounts of the same event by different writers frequently are not completely alike in perspective, wording, emphasis, or the number of details provided. Indeed, the great freedom which the Holy Spirit allowed the human authors in selecting materials, quoting sources, arranging their accounts, interpreting events, and applying what they record to the life of God's people creates problems for which there is no easy solution. Nevertheless, inspiration is the operation of the Holy Spirit which makes the words of Scripture God's Word and assures that through all the rich variety found in the Scriptures God speaks His eternal and immutable truth to us.

F. Inspiration and Literary Forms

Included in the rich variety found in the Scriptures are the several literary types (genres) employed by the sacred authors. The Holy Spirit moved the Biblical writers to make use of almost every literary device there is in order to communicate God's Word to man. With the exception of myth, saga, and legend (in the sense in which these terms are usually understood by literary and historical critics) there are in the Bible many types of literature, including at least one that does not occur in other literature, namely, the gospel form which is unique to the New Testament.

Besides the obvious types of prose and poetry many other forms of literature are easily identifiable in the Holy Scriptures. There are historical narratives, prophetic oracles and apostolic proclamation, proverbs and parables, prayers and liturgical fragments, creeds and hymns, doctrinal and hortatory treatises addressed to congregations and letters written to individuals, laments and dirges, sermons and speeches, and even such secular instruments as legal contracts, political treaties, and royal edicts.

The doctrine that all Scripture is God-breathed implies that the Holy Spirit moved the sacred authors to speak from God through all of the kinds of literature contained in the Bible, and that a Biblical periscope must first of all be analyzed in terms of its formal structure and character if the interpretation of a given passage is to be consistent with

the type of literature it is.

G. Inspiration and the Authorship of Biblical Books

For the Scriptures to commend themselves to God's people as His inspired Word, it was not necessary that in every case the authorship of a Biblical book be known or that the book itself indicate who its author was. Some books both in the Old and the New Testaments give us no direct evidence pertaining to their authorship, and even in some cases where the author is mentioned by name, as, for instance, James and Jude, the exact identity of these men is difficult to determine.

When an inspired writing, however, testifies to its own authorship, or when one inspired writing identifies the author of another inspired writing, the inspired witness of the Scriptures must be accepted. There is nothing in the New Testament, for instance, to suggest that Jesus' view of the authorship of the Pentateuch, of Isaiah, of Daniel differed from that of His contemporaries. All the New Testament evidence indicates that Jesus agreed with the Jews of His day in affirming the Mosaic, Isaianic, and Danielic authorship of the books involved. Once this fact is acknowledged, the issue of the authorship of these Old Testament books is settled. It amounts to rejection of Christ's word and the witness of inspired Scriptures to call this matter into question.

II INSPIRATION AND HISTORY

A. Inspiration and Inerrancy

Even though there are differences and variety in the Sacred Writings which sometimes perplex us because we can find no harmonization for them that satisfies human reason, faith confesses the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God. Since the inerrancy of the Scriptures is a matter of faith, it is by definition a doctrine which is believed solely on the basis of the witness of the Scriptures concerning themselves and not on the basis of empirical verification.

1. This is not to say that in no case is the inerrancy of the Scriptures

demonstrable by extra-Biblical evidence. The Scriptures, for instance, report historical events through which God worked out His saving purposes. Since these events occurred on the plane of human history, they are to that extent susceptible of investigation and even of verification by historical research. The Christian faith does not relegate the acts of God for man's redemption to the arena of super-history so as to detach them from the realm of reality open to examination by the historian. While the Biblical witness to what God was doing in history is not verifiable or unverifiable by the techniques of historical research, Christians gladly submit the Scriptures to investigation with the full confidence that whenever the extra-Biblical evidence is correctly read and understood it will vindicate the complete reliability of the Biblical records relative to that dimension of the events which is subject to human examination.

2. This is to say that faith in the inerrancy of the Scriptures does not rely on corroboration of Biblical truth by empirical evidence-faith holds to the inerrancy of the Scriptures even when there is no extra-Biblical substantiation and even when other sources appear to be in conflict with the Scriptures. Luther explained that he used writers of history in such a way that while he did not disregard them, he did not permit them to induce him to contradict the Scriptures. In the Scriptures God speaks. Historians make mistakes. [3]

Faith affirms that God could speak His Word of Truth even through men whose knowledge of nature and history apart from direct revelation was partial and limited. Faith affirms that even in the presence of difficulties which human reason may regard as deficiencies, we have, nevertheless, in the Scriptures God's totally reliable Word which cannot mislead and deceive us.

"None of the natural limitations which belong to the human mind even when under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost can impair the authority of the Bible or the inerrancy of the Word of God; for Holy Scripture is the book of divine truth which

transcends everything called truth by the wise men of this world (1 Cor. 1:17 ff., 27; Col. 2:8) and is therefore able to make us 'wise unto salvation' (2 Tim. 3:15)."

[4]

Inspiration was not mechanical dictation but rather an operation of the Holy Spirit that allowed a function to each author's individuality in writing the Scriptures. Therefore the predication of inerrancy to the Bible does not imply that when the New Testament reproduces and applies Old Testament statements this must always occur by means of verbatim quotations, or that there must be verbal correspondence between parallel accounts of the same event wherever they are found either in the Old or the New Testament.

Each writer inerrantly imparted God's truth as the Holy Spirit moved him to do so in his own way, from his own perspective, and for his own purposes. Far from impugning the veracity of the Scriptures this multidimensional application of whatsoever was spoken aforetime and this multidimensional view of events reported serves to impart more fully the truth which God reveals for the edification of His people. The Biblical conception of inspiration does not see these differences as errors, but as inspired variety which we should recognize with thanksgiving and study prayerfully imploring the Spirit's help so that we may receive all the instruction He wishes to impart.

B. Inspiration and Historical Records in the Bible

The Holy Scriptures do not purport to be a textbook of universal history offering an exhaustive account of the history of all nations and peoples from the beginning of time up to the various periods when the Biblical books were written. The Bible is selective in the history that it reports, recording only those events and developments in general history, and especially in the history of God's people, which serve to show that God is the Lord of history and that in His steadfast faithfulness He always remembered His covenant made with the fathers to carry out His redemptive purpose in human history.

The history that the Bible does report is of vital significance for the Christian faith. If it were the purpose of the Bible merely to inculcate some eternal principles or universal truths for men to observe in their quest for blessedness, then it would make no difference whether the stories used to illustrate the principles and truths were pure fabrications or factual reports of real events.

The Bible, however, was written to bear witness to the action of God in human history to accomplish the redemption of fallen mankind. If Biblical historical records are unreliable or even false, then God's saving actions in history are called into question too. The Christian faith rests so squarely on God's actions in human history, centering in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, that if Biblical historical records are false, our faith is left without a foundation. (1 Cor. 15:17)

Working with the presuppositions and canons of their craft in order to account for and reconstruct events in history, secular historians are able to discern and take into account only the secondary causes in the historical process. By observation of factors at work in the historical process now and by the application of the principle of analogy historians may be able to formulate some "laws of history" operative at the level of their investigation of past events. But faith knows that behind the secondary causes discernible to the historian there is the author and Lord of history who has given us in His Word a truthful record of His mighty acts.

C. Inspiration and the Meaning of Historical Events

Without the writings of men who spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, human beings would be left to their own resources to speculate about the meaning of history or to wonder, indeed, if it has any meaning at all (Ap IV, 167).

Without the inspired Scriptures how could we know the significance of Israel's history or of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth? A knowledge of the history recorded in the Scriptures is of no benefit unless we understand the purpose of the history (Ap IV, 51).

In the Scriptures the report of events is accompanied by an explanatory word from

which alone we can learn that in all the confusion that characterizes human history God was carrying out His saving purposes.

If the Old Testament is not the Word of the God who knows the end from the beginning (Is. 46: 10), then it is simply a piece of human nationalistic propaganda that attempts to ascribe cosmic significance to the history of an obscure ancient people and does not deserve serious consideration. If Old Testament claims about what God was doing in Israel's history are a matter of human interpretation of Israel's history, they are arrogant nonsense. But we must know this first of all that what the Old Testament says about the meaning of Israel's history is not a matter of one's own interpretation because what the Old Testament teaches never came from the impulse of man, but holy men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

III INSPIRATION AND BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

A. Inspiration and the Unity of Scripture

The unity of the Scriptures is Christological.

Jesus said that the Old Testament testifies of Him (John 5:39) and that Moses wrote of Him (John 5:46). In the parable of the householder (Matt. 21:33-46) He cited Ps. 118:22-23 as applying to Himself. In Mark 14:27 He refers to Himself as the subject of Zech. 13:7. He went up to Jerusalem that everything written of the Son of Man in the prophets might be fulfilled in Him (Luke 18:31-33). Beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded to the disciples on the Emmaus road the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27). In a post-resurrection appearance to His startled and frightened disciples He comforted them by assuring them that it was He whom they saw and not a spirit, and then He explained that everything that had happened to Him took place in order to fulfill what was written about Him in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms. (Luke 24:36-48)

Also the apostles and evangelists understood the Old Testament as witnessing to

Christ. Peter identified Jesus as the prophet of whom Moses wrote in Deut. 18:15, 18-19 (Acts 3:20-22), and to Cornelius he testified that "to him [Jesus of Nazareth] all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian from Is. 53. Paul preached Christ from Pss. 2 and 16 and Is. 55 (Acts 13: 32-37). The last thing recorded in the Book of Acts about Paul's ministry is that he tried to convince the Jews about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the prophets. (Acts 28:23)

The New Testament, too, witnesses to Jesus. John's Gospel was written that men might believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31). Paul preached Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). Peter proclaimed that God made Jesus both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:22-36)

The unity of the Scriptures consists in this that from Genesis (3:15) to Revelation (22:16) they testify to Jesus, the Christ of God, through whom came grace and truth. The unity of the Scriptures is theological. It is the triune and only God who reveals Himself in both Testaments. While a certain progression is discernible in the revelation that God gave of Himself and of His saving actions in history when earlier Scriptures are compared with later Scriptures, nevertheless there are in the Scriptures no conflicting and contradictory conceptions of God and of His ways with men. God's revelation of Himself in the Scriptures, though varying in fullness from age to age, is always perfectly consistent with itself.

The unity of the Scriptures is doctrinal. Throughout the Scriptures, wherever such topics are treated whether as the specific subject of discussion or only incidentally mentioned, the same doctrine is taught concerning creation, anthropology, justification, sacraments, church, the end of the world, resurrection of the dead, judgment, eternal life, eternal death, or any other article of the Christian faith.

The unity of the Scriptures results from the fact that the witness to Jesus in both the Old

and the New Testaments was inspired by the same Spirit. The prophets predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory by the Spirit of Christ within them; the apostles preached the good news through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven (1 Pet. 1: 10- 12). Because the same Spirit, whose office it is to glorify Christ (John 16: 14) and reveal the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11), spoke through prophets and apostles, there is complete unity not only in their witness to all that God purposed and performed for the salvation of sinners through His Son, but with respect to everything they spoke from God.

The unity which results from the inspiration of the prophetic and apostolic writings is the basic presupposition of the hermeneutical principle that the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures. Denial of the inspired unity of the Scriptures renders this principle inapplicable and inoperative. If the Scriptures were merely the writings of human beings who are separated not only by centuries but by radical differences of viewpoint, they could not be used to interpret each other. Such writings, even when they speak about the same subject, do so from entirely different perspectives and from within different frames of reference so that each writing must be interpreted solely on its own terms and not from an alien vantage point.

The principle that Scripture interprets Scripture means that passages of Scripture which treat of the same subject explain each other. This principle does not mean that what the Bible teaches about the way to salvation, for instance, may be used as a criterion to justify some minimal understanding of what the Bible says about creation. It is an abuse of this principle when Paul's statement that men and women participate equally in grace is used to interpret (or interpret away!) what he says about the social relationship of man and woman based on the orders of creation.

B. Inspiration and the Authority of Scripture

Post-Reformation Lutheran theologians not only distinguished between the causative authority and the normative authority of the Scriptures, but they also very carefully

explained the close relationship between these two aspects of Scriptural authority. The power to create saving faith which is inherent in the Scriptures, because the Holy Spirit operates through their witness to Christ (the Gospel), the dogmatists called causative authority. The power of the Scriptures to regulate doctrine in the church by working acceptance of their teachings the dogmatists regarded as a result of the causative authority and called it normative authority. Both causative and normative authority belong to the Scriptures simply because they are God's Word through which the Holy Spirit works to produce obedience to the Gospel and to all the other articles of faith contained in the Scriptures.

"Such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, that it is bound never to be without fruit For these words are not inoperative or dead, but creative, living words" (LC 1, 100, Concordia Triglotta, p 609). "It has, and is able to do, all that God is and can do [since it has all the virtue and power of God comprised in it]." ("Es hat end vermag alles, was Gottes ist"; "omnem Dei virtutem et potentiam in se habet comprehensam ") (LC IV, 17, Concordia Triglotta, p 736

The twofold authority of the Scriptures derives from the operation of the Holy Spirit connected with the writing of the Scriptures (inspiration), since it is by reason of this operation of the Spirit that the Biblical word is God's Word, which speaks with God's own authority whether men acknowledge it or not. However, the authority which the Scriptures exercise in the church, both causative and normative, results not from the bare fact that they are inspired, but rather from the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures by which He turns men from unbelief to faith in Christ and leads them to recognize, confess, and obey the Scriptures as the Word of God in all that they teach. Nevertheless, an indispensable role must be ascribed to inspiration with respect to the normative authority of the Scriptures for doctrine and practice in the church. Great significance attaches to the fact that the Bible is inspired when determining what it teaches on a given point because by inspiration the Holy Spirit taught the very words best suited to express divine truth. The words that the Holy Spirit taught in the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written are the foundation of doctrine.

In determining Biblical teaching we must work with the words the Holy Spirit has given us. In this sense, it is inspiration that makes the words of the Holy Scriptures normative for theology. (See Sections C and E of part 111 for the importance of inspired terms.) When Lutheran theologians speak of the Spirit's operation associated with the writing of the Scriptures, they use the term "inspiration"; when they speak of the Spirit's operation through the Scriptures as the Word of God to produce acceptance of and obedience to Scriptural teachings, they use the term "divine efficacy." On the one hand, therefore, it is a confusion of the relationship between inspiration and Biblical authority to say that inspiration of the written Word pertains to the effective power of the Scriptures to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel. On the other hand, however, it should be noted that while the authority of the Scriptures must be inseparably linked to their inspiration, this ought not to be done in such a way as to fail to take into account the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures in working acceptance of their teachings.

The bare assertion of the Holy Spirit's operation connected with the writing of the Scriptures does not move men to obey the Word; it is the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures that leads men to obey the Word in all that it teaches. Inspiration explains how we got the Scriptures; authority explains why we ought to and do believe the Scriptures. We ought to believe the Scriptures because they are God's Word; we do believe the Scriptures because as God's Word they work effectively in us to enable us to believe.

Inspiration pertains to the writing of the Scriptures; authority pertains to the power of Scriptures to create faith and to regulate the confession of the church by working acceptance of their teachings.

C. Inspiration and the Gospel

By inspiration the Biblical authors were given the very words best suited to express the spiritual truths they imparted in their writings. St. Paul affirms this particularly with

respect to his proclamation of the "secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification" (1 Cor. 2:7). He reminds the Corinthians "in what terms" he preached the Gospel to them and admonishes them to hold fast to the Gospel just as they had received it, for he delivered to them what he himself had received (1 Cor. 15:1-4) not from man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11-12) If we hold fast to the terms in which the Scriptures teach the Gospel, our Gospel will be the proclamation that God forgives sin on account of the substitutionary life and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; 3:13). If we use terms with meaning other than those given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to express what God has done in Christ for our salvation, we are not imparting the Gospel revealed in the Scriptures but a "different gospel," which is not "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-7). There is only one Gospel.

The inspired Scriptures impart the Gospel without any distortion or any corruption because the Holy Spirit provided the terms for expressing the mystery of God's grace in Christ. The inspired Scriptures, then, provide us not merely with a model to guide us in our attempts to speak about God's redemptive purposes in a way that we regard as relevant to human needs as the world understands them. The Scriptures provide us with a norm for preaching the Gospel from which we dare not depart without invoking upon ourselves the apostolic curse. (Gal. 1: 8-9)

D. Inspiration and Saving Faith

The inspiration of the Scriptures is an article of faith which Christians believe because the Scriptures have the inherent power to commend themselves to men for what they claim to be and are, namely, the Word of God. The Scriptures commend themselves to men as the Word of God just as apostolic preaching did, namely, because it worked effectively in them. (See 1 Thess. 2:13.) For Christians, then, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures is a matter of great importance, and they steadfastly confess that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God over against everything that would call this article of faith into question.

Christians, however, also know and believe what the inspired Scriptures teach about the creation of saving faith, or faith that trusts in the merits of Christ for salvation. Such faith is created by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3) through the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:17). The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not by reason of the fact that it comes to us in inspired Scriptures, but because the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel as His instrument to enable men to confess that Christ is Lord.

For the man of God (i. e., for one who is already a believer) the inspired Scriptures are profitable to equip him for every good work by teaching, reproof, correction, and training him. The Scriptures save a man because they are able to make him wise unto salvation through faith (2 Tim. 3:15-16). They save because they are able to make wise (bestow faith); they are profitable for edifying and nurturing those who already have faith because believers know them to be God's inspired Word.

Faith in the Gospel of God's grace toward sinners in Christ Jesus does not result from a prior conviction about the inspiration of the Scriptures in which the Gospel is proclaimed. First faith is wrought by the Gospel, and then faith recognizes the Scriptures as the very Word of God profitable for teaching; The worship that faith accords to God includes believing everything laid down and written in His Word. (Acts 24: 14)

E. Inspiration and Doctrinal Formulations

While inspiration is in no way analogous to dictation, the Scriptures do teach that the Holy Spirit "taught" the words which the sacred writers used to express the content of Christian doctrine. In 1 Cor. 2:13 where the apostle Paul says that what the Holy Spirit revealed he imparted in words taught by the Spirit, he adds a participial phrase which can only be understood to mean that the Spirit provided terms suited to the subject matter. (John 14:26; 16:13)

Biblical doctrinal formulations do not, therefore, represent mere human attempts to press language into the service of expressing divine truth. While the Biblical writers used terms current in the everyday parlance of their times, Biblical doctrinal formulations are not on that account culturally conditioned in the sense that they are provisional or tentative; in Spirit-taught words they express what God has revealed in a way that remains permanently valid and is for all times the only normative way of talking about the topic they treat. For this reason the letters to Timothy make repeated references to the use of sound (healthy) words in imparting Christian teaching. (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; cf. 2 Tim. 4:3)

Inspiration gives the assurance that in the Bible we have sound doctrine imparted in Spirit-taught words, that the Biblical doctrinal formulations express the content of revelation in terms that dare not be discarded even when the range and function of language in theology is a matter of much discussion as it is at present.

IV INSPIRATION AND CANONICITY

God used the church to gather and preserve the holy writings in which He willed to give to mankind His saving Word until the end of the time. The role of the church in the formulation of canon was not active but passive. The church did not create the canon when it sought to determine on the basis of certain criteria that it set up, which books were authentic and which were not. For example, the church did not on the basis of empirical evidence which satisfied it that a book was inspired proceed to authenticate the books which make up the Bible.

The role of the church in the formulation of the canon was passive in that the church served merely as the community in which the Sacred Writings authenticated themselves by their inherent power to convince God's people that they are His Word. A Biblical book did not become authentic because the church accepted it; the church accepted it because it was authentic and commended itself to the church as an inspired, prophetic, or apostolic writing. God led the church to recognize and preserve certain writings as

His Word because they speak with prophetic and apostolic authority and are the vehicles of divine power calling sinners to repentance and to faith in the Christ to whom they bear witness.

During the period of early church history when the apostolic writings were commending themselves to the church and being recognized by Christians as God's inspired Word, it happened that the authenticity of some New Testament books was questioned. These books, however, have maintained their place in the canon, and the distinction between writings universally accepted and writings that were spoken against is no longer a pressing issue or a matter of major concern for the church today.

The theoretical possibility that a hitherto lost and unknown prophetic or apostolic writing might by God's providence be restored to the church has sometimes been discussed. While this possibility must be acknowledged, it would seem that until such a writing makes its appearance, the question is purely academic and has no real significance for the church. The church will not speculate about additional Sacred Scriptures, but will thank God for those which He has given us because they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Throughout its history only prophetic and apostolic writings (or writings of men intimately associated with the apostles) have authenticated themselves to the church as canonical. This fact precludes the possibility that the writings of later Christians will be included among the canonical books because the offices of prophet and apostle no longer exist in the church.

CONCLUSION

Whether the sacred authors obtained knowledge of the things concerning which they wrote by revelation or whether God led them to other sources from which they received information, everything that is recorded in the Scriptures was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Inspiration is supernatural guidance which, while it did not deprive the Biblical writers of their individuality and identity, nevertheless makes the Scriptures in

their totality the Word of God.

Because the Scriptures are the Word of God, faith holds them to be inerrant even in the presence of some problems for which there is no explanation that satisfies human reason. As the Word of God the Scriptures speak with God's own authority and have the power to create faith in the Savior to whom they witness and to regulate the confession of the church by working acceptance of all that they teach.

In the Scriptures God has given us a record of His mighty acts in human history together with an explanatory Word apart from which we could not know that through all the confusion that characterizes the flow of events God was working out His eternal counsels for man's salvation. When through the Gospel proclaimed in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit calls sinners to faith in Jesus Christ, they recognize the Scriptures as God's Word characterized by complete unity with respect to all that God has revealed for our salvation and instruction.

Notes

[1.] Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Cleveland, 1962, Resolutions 3-16, 3-17, and 3-19, pp. 104-106.

[2.] Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, New York, 1967, Resolution 2-22, p. 93. See also Proceedings of the Fiftieth Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, New Orleans, 1973, Minutes, Session 16, p. 46.

[3.] St. Louis Edition, XIV, 491.

[4.] Theses of agreement, "Theses on Scripture and Inspiration," adopted by the conventions of the merging churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia in 1956 and 1959. The "Theses on Scripture and Inspiration" were reprinted and distributed by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations in "Statements From The Lutheran Church of Australia," 1973, pp. 6-7.

[5.] Robert Preus, "Notes on the Inerrancy of Scripture," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXVIII (June 1967), 363-375.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Socialism's Rejection of Christianity

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1882/05/bauer.htm>

Works of Frederick Engels 1882

Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity

Source: Marx and Engels, *On Religion*, Progress Publishers, 1966;

Published: May 4-11, 1882 in *Sozialdemokrat*.

In Berlin, on April 13, a man died who once played a role as a philosopher and a theologian, but was hardly heard of for years, only attracting the attention of the public from time to time as a "literary eccentric". Official theologians, including Renan, wrote him off and, therefore, maintained a silence of death about him. And yet he was worth more than them all and did more than all of them in a question which interests us Socialists, too: the question of the historical origin of Christianity.

On the occasion of his death, let us give a brief account of the present position on this question, and Bauer's contribution to its solution.

The view that dominated from the free-thinkers of the Middle Ages to the Enlighteners of the 18th century, the latter included, that all religions, and therefore Christianity too, were the work of deceivers was no longer sufficient after Hegel had set philosophy the task of showing a rational evolution in world history.

It is clear that if spontaneously arising religions — like the fetish worship of the Negroes or the common primitive religion of the Aryans — come to being without deception playing any part, deception by the priests soon becomes inevitable in their further development. But, in spite of all sincere fanaticism, artificial religions cannot even, at their foundation, do without deception and falsification of history. Christianity, too, has pretty achievements to boast of in this respect from

the very beginning, as Bauer shows in his criticism of the New Testament. But that only confirms a general phenomenon and does not explain the particular case in question.

A religion that brought the Roman world empire into subjection, and dominated by far the larger part of civilized humanity for 1,800 years, cannot be disposed of merely by declaring it to be nonsense gleaned together by frauds. One cannot dispose of it before one succeeds in explaining its origin and its development from the historical conditions under which it arose and reached its dominating position. This applies to Christianity. The question to be solved, then, is how it came about that the popular masses in the Roman Empire so far preferred this nonsense — which was preached, into the bargain, by slaves and oppressed — to all other religions, that the ambitious Constantine finally saw in the adoption of this religion of nonsense the best means of exalting himself to the position of autocrat of the Roman world.

Bruno Bauer has contributed far more to the solution of this question than anybody else. No matter how much the half-believing theologians of the period of reaction have struggled against him since 1849, he irrefutably proved the chronological order of the Gospels and their mutual interdependence, shown by Wilke from the purely linguistic standpoint, by the very contents of the Gospels themselves. He exposed the utter lack of scientific spirit of Strauss' vague myth theory according to which anybody can hold for historical as much as he likes in the Gospel narrations. And, if almost nothing from the whole content of the Gospels turns out to be historically provable — so that even the historical existence of a Jesus Christ can be questioned — Bauer has, thereby, only cleared the ground for the solution of the question: what is the origin of the ideas and thoughts that have been woven together into a sort of system in Christianity, and how came they to dominate the world?

Bauer studied this question until his death. His research reached its culminating point in the conclusion that the Alexandrian Jew Philo, who was still living about A.D. 40 but was already very old, was the real father of Christianity, and that the Roman stoic Seneca was, so to speak, its uncle. The numerous writings attributed to Philo which have reached us originate indeed in a fusion of allegorically and rationalistically conceived Jewish traditions with Greek, particularly stoic, philosophy. This conciliation of western and eastern outlooks already contains all the essentially Christian ideas: the inborn sinfulness of man, the Logos, the Word, which is with God and is God and which becomes the mediator between God and man: atonement, not by sacrifices of animals, but by bringing one's own heart of God, and finally the essential feature that the new religious philosophy reverses the previous world order, seeks its disciples among the poor, the miserable, the slaves, and the rejected, and despises the rich, the powerful, and the privileged, whence the precept to despise all worldly pleasure and to mortify the flesh.

On the other hand, Augustus himself saw to it that not only the God-man, but also the so-called immaculate conception became formulae imposed by the state. He not only had Caesar and himself worshipped as gods, he also spread the notion that he, Augustus Caesar Divus, the Divine, was not the son of a human father but that his mother had conceived him of the god Apollo. But was not that Apollo perhaps a relation of the one sung by Heinrich Heine?
[Reference to Heine's *Apollgott*.]

As we see, we need only the keystone and we have the whole of Christianity in its basic features: the incarnation of the Word become man in a definite person and his sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of sinful mankind.

Truly reliable sources leave us uncertain as to when this keystone was introduced into the stoic-philonic doctrines. But this much is sure: it was not introduced by philosophers, either Philo's disciples or stoics. Religions are founded by people who feel a need for religion themselves and have a feeling for the religious needs of the masses. As a rule, this is not the case with the classical philosophers. On the other hand, we find that in times of general decay, now, for instance, philosophy and religious dogmatism are generally current in a vulgarized and shallow form. While classic Greek philosophy in its last forms — particularly in the Epicurean school — led to atheistic materialism, Greek vulgar philosophy led to the doctrine of a one and only God and of the immortality of the human soul. Likewise, rationally vulgarized Judaism in mixture and intercourse with aliens and half-Jews ended by neglecting the ritual and transforming the formerly exclusively Jewish national god, Jahveh, into the one true God, the creator of heaven and earth, and by adopting the idea of the immortality of the soul which was alien to early Judaism. Thus, monotheistic vulgar philosophy came into contact with vulgar religion, which presented it with the ready-made one and only God. Thus, the ground was prepared on which the elaboration among the Jews of the likewise vulgarized philonic notions and not Philo's own works that Christianity proceeded from is proved by the New Testament's almost complete disregard of most of these works, particularly the allegorical and philosophical interpretation of the narrations of the Old Testament. This is an aspect to which Bauer did not devote enough attention.

One can get an idea of what Christianity looked like in its early form by reading the so-called Book of Revelation of John. Wild, confused fanaticism, only the beginnings of dogmas, only the mortification of the flesh of the so-called Christian morals, but on the other hand a multitude of visions and prophesies. The development of the dogmas and moral doctrine belongs to a later period, in which the Gospels and the so-called Epistles of the Apostles were written. In this — at least as regards morals — the philosophy of the stoics, of Seneca in particular, was unceremoniously made us of. Bauer proved that the Epistles often copy the latter word-for-word; in fact, even the faithful noticed this, but they maintained that Seneca had copied from the New Testament, though it had not yet been written in his time. Dogma developed, on the one hand in connection with the legend of Jesus which was then taking shape, and, on the other hand, in the struggle between Christians of Jewish and of pagan origin.

Bauer also gives very valuable data on the causes which helped Christianity to triumph and attain world domination. But here the German philosopher is prevented by his idealism from seeing clearly and formulating precisely. Phrases often replace substance in decisive points. Instead, therefore, of going into details of Bauer's views, we shall give our own conception of this point, based on Bauer's works, and also on our personal study.

The Roman conquest dissolved in all subjugated countries, first, directly, the former political conditions, and then, indirectly, also the social conditions of life.

Firstly by substituting for the former organization according to estates (slavery apart) the simple distinction between Roman citizens and peregrines or subjects.

Secondly, and mainly, by exacting tribute in the name of the Roman state. If, under the empire, a limit was set as far as possible in the interest of the state to the governors' thirst for wealth, that thirst was replaced by ever more effective and oppressive taxation for the benefit of the state treasury, the effect of which was terribly destructive.

Thirdly, Roman law was finally administered everywhere by Roman judges, while the native social system was declared invalid insofar as it was incompatible with the provisions of Roman law.

These three levers necessarily developed a tremendous levelling power, particularly when they were applied for several hundred years to populations — the most vigorous sections of which had been either suppressed or taken away into slavery in the battles preceding, accompanying, and often following, the conquest. Social relations in the provinces came nearer and nearer to those obtaining in the capital and in Italy. The population became more and more sharply divided into three classes, thrown together out of the most varying elements and nationalities: rich people, including not a few emancipated slaves (cf. Petronius), big landowners or usurers or both at once, like Seneca, the uncle of Christianity; propertyless free people, who in Rome were fed and amused by the state — in the provinces they got on as they could by themselves — and finally the great mass, the slaves. In the face of the state, *i.e.*, the emperor, the first two classes had as few rights as the slaves in the face of their masters. From the time of Tiberius to that of Nero, in particular, it was a practice to sentence rich Roman citizens to death in order to confiscate their property. The support of the government was — *materially*, the army, which was more like an army of hired foreign soldiers than the old Roman peasant army, and *morally*, the general view that there was no way out of that condition; that not, indeed, this or that Caesar, but the empire based on military domination was an immutable necessity. This is not the place to examine what very material facts this view was based on.

The general rightlessness and despair of the possibility of a better condition gave rise to a corresponding general slackening and demoralization. The few surviving old Romans of the patrician type and views either were removed or died out; Tacitus was the last of them. The others were glad when they were able to keep away from public life; all they existed for was to collect and enjoy riches, and to indulge in private gossip and private intrigue. The propertyless free citizens were state pensioners in Rome, but in the provinces their condition was an unhappy one. They had to work, and to compete with slave-labor into the bargain. But they were confined to the towns. Besides them, there was also in the provinces peasants, free landowners (here and there probably still common ownership) or, as in Gaul, bondsmen for debts to the big landowners. This class was the least affected by the social upheaval; it was also the one to resist longest the religious upheaval. [Engels note: According to Fallmeyer, the peasants in Main, Peloponnesus, still offered sacrifices to Zeus in the 9th century.] Finally, there were the slaves, deprived of rights and of their own will and the possibility to free themselves, as the defeat of Spartacus had already proved; most of them, however, were former free citizens, or sons of free-born citizens. It must, therefore, have been among them that hatred of their conditions of life was still generally vigorous, though externally powerless.

We shall find that the type of ideologists at the time corresponded to this state of affairs. The philosophers were either mere money-earning schoolmasters or buffoons in the pay of wealthy revellers. Some were even slaves. An example of what became of them under good conditions is supplied by Seneca. This stoic and preacher of virtue and abstinence was Nero's first court intriguer, which he could not have been without servility; he secured from him presents in money, properties, gardens, and palaces — and while he preached the poor man Lazarus of the Gospel, he was, in reality, the rich man of the same parable. Not until Nero wanted to get at him did he request the emperor to take back all his presents, his philosophy being enough for him. Only completely isolated philosophers, like Persius, had the courage to brandish the lash of satire over their degenerated contemporaries. But, as for the second type of ideologists, the jurists, they were enthusiastic over the new conditions because the abolition of all differences between Estates allowed them broad scope in the elaboration of their favorite private right, in return for which they prepared for the emperor the vilest state system of right that ever existed.

With the political and social peculiarities of the various peoples, the Roman Empire also doomed to ruin their particular religions. All religions of antiquity were spontaneous tribal, and later national, religions, which arose from and merged with the social and political conditions of the respective peoples. Once these, their bases, were disrupted, and their traditional forms of society, their inherited political institutions and their national independence shattered, the religion corresponding to these also naturally collapsed. The national gods could suffer other gods beside them, as was the general rule of antiquity, but not above them. The transplanting of Oriental divinities to Rome was harmful only to the Roman religion, it could not check the decay of the Oriental religions. As soon as the national gods were unable to protect the independence of their nation, they met their own destruction. This was the case everywhere (except with peasants, especially in the mountains). What vulgar philosophical enlightenment — I almost said Voltairianism — did in Rome and Greece, was done in the provinces by Roman oppression and the replacing of men proud of their freedom by desperate subjects and self-seeking ragamuffins.

Such was the material and moral situation. The present was unbearable, the future still more menacing, if possible. There was no way out. Only despair or refuge in the commonest sensuous pleasure, for *those* who could afford it at least, and they were a tiny minority. Otherwise, nothing but surrender to the inevitable.

But, in all classes there was necessarily a number of people who, despairing of material salvation, sought in its stead a spiritual salvation, a consolation in their consciousness to save them from utter despair. This consolation could not be provided by the stoics any more than by the Epicurean school, for the very reason that these philosophers were not intended for common consciousness and, secondly, because the conduct of disciples of the schools cast discredit on their doctrines. The consolation was to be a substitute, not for the lost philosophy, but for the lost religion; it had to take on a religious form, the same as anything which had to grip the masses both then and as late as the 17th century.

We hardly need to note that the majority of those who were pining for such consolation of their consciousness, for this flight from the external world into the internal, were necessarily among the *slaves*.

It was in the midst of this general economic, political, intellectual, and moral decadence that Christianity appeared. It entered into a resolute antithesis to all previous religions.

In all previous religions, ritual had been the main thing. Only by taking part in the sacrifices and processions, and in the Orient by observing the most detailed diet and cleanliness precepts, could one show to what religion one belonged. While Rome and Greece were tolerant in the last respect, there was in the Orient a rage for religious prohibitions that contributed no little to the final downfall. People of two different religions (Egyptians, Persians, Jews, Chaldeans) could not eat or drink together, perform any every-day act together, or hardly speak to each other. It was largely due to this segregation of man from man that the Orient collapsed. Christianity knew no distinctive ceremonies, not even the sacrifices and processions of the classic world. By thus rejecting all national religions and their common ceremonies, and addressing itself to all peoples without distinction, it became the *first possible world religion*. Judaism, too, with its new universal god, had made a start on the way to becoming a universal religion; but the children of Israel always remained an aristocracy among the believers and the circumcised, and Christianity itself had to get rid of the notion of the superiority of the Jewish Christians (still dominant in the so-called Book of Revelation of John) before it could really become a universal religion. Islam, itself, on the other hand, by preserving its specifically Oriental ritual, limited the area of its propagation to the Orient and North Africa, conquered and populated anew by Arab Bedouins; here it could become the dominating religion, but not in the West.

Secondly, Christianity struck a chord that was bound to echo in countless hearts. To all complaints about the wickedness of the times and the general material and moral distress, Christian consciousness of sin answered: It is so and it cannot be otherwise; thou art in blame, ye are all to blame for the corruption of the world, thine and your own internal corruption! And where was the man who could deny it? Mea culpa! The admission of each one's share in the responsibility for the general unhappiness was irrefutable and was made the precondition for the spiritual salvation which Christianity at the same time announced. And this spiritual salvation was so instituted that it could be easily understood by members of every old religious community. The idea of atonement to placate the offended deity was current in all the old religions; how could the idea of self-sacrifice of the mediator atoning once for all for the sins of humanity not easily find ground there? Christianity, therefore, clearly expressed the universal feeling that men themselves are guilty of the general corruption as the consciousness of sin of each one; at the same time, it provided, in the death-sacrifice of his judge, a form of the universally longed-for internal salvation from the corrupt world, the consolation of consciousness; it thus again proved its capacity to become a world religion and, indeed, a religion which suited the world as it then was.

So it happened that, among the thousands of prophets and preachers in the desert that filled that period of countless religious novations, the founders of Christianity alone met with success. Not only Palestine, but the entire Orient swarmed with such founders of religions, and between them there raged what can be called a Darwinian struggle for ideological existence. Thanks mainly to the elements mentioned above, Christianity won the day. How it gradually developed its character of world religion by natural selection in the struggle of sects against one another and against the pagan world is taught in detail by the history of the Church in the first three centuries.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

18th-century German attack on the Bible and Islamic Apologetics

<http://www.contra-mundum.org/schirmacher/rationalism.html>

The influence of German Biblical criticism on Muslim apologetics in the 19th century

by Dr. Christine Schirmacher

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From the Festschrift for Rousas John Rushdoony

"Christian Reconstruction means the reordering of every area of life and thought in terms of the whole word of God"[1]

This includes Oriental studies!

This article has been written in remembrance of the suffering of Rushdoony's Armenian family from Islamic persecution.

"Let me add that a powerful factor in my childhood were the stories by escapees of Turkish atrocities against Christians."[2]

The aim of this paper is to trace the development of a new Muslim view of Christianity in the 19th century, which still has an enormous impact on today's Muslim apologetical works. The composition of anti-Christian books has changed in character due to the achievement of a different view of Christian dogmas and Christianity itself in the 19th century[3].

The development of Muslim-Christian polemics dates back to an event in the middle of the 19th century. On the 10th and 11th of April in 1854 we find ourselves in the schoolroom of the British missionary agency 'Church Missionary Society' (CMS) in Agra, India, among several hundred Muslims and Europeans, mostly Christian missionaries, but also a few government officials of the British colonial power. They had all gathered in order to listen to a public debate initiated by the Muslim community of Agra. The debate was carried out between the German missionary, Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865), coming out of the pietistic movement in Württemberg, Swabia, and an Indian Muslim Shīʿī theologian, Rahmatullāh Ibn Khalīl al-'Uthmānī al-

Kairânawî (1818-1891)[4]. Despite the fact that this debate took place nearly 150 years ago, both of the opponents are still well remembered in the Muslim world today pertaining to matters of dialogue. The subject of discussion at this public debate, which lasted for two days, was mainly the deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf)[5].

The challenger of the debate in 1854 was the Muslim theologian al-Kairânawî, who intended to publicly demonstrate the inferiority of Christianity and make it clear once and for all that Muslims should not be shaken in their faith because of the proclamation of the Christian creed by Protestant missionaries in India in the past decades.

India had been opened to Protestant Christian missionary activities by a decree of the British Parliament in 1813, and the first Anglican Bishop was secretly consecrated on 8th of May 1814 in Lambeth Palace, Calcutta[6]. In 1832/1833 non-British missionary agencies were allowed to follow and began to establish their net of Christian mission all over India, more or less officially supported by the Britains. It is interesting enough that the Shî'î al-Kairânawî represented himself in 1854 as the defender of the Muslim religion and obviously was accepted as such by the whole Muslim community.

Although it was planned to extend the discussion to subjects of the Trinity (tathlîth), the Qur'ân being the Word of God and the sending of the prophet Muhammad, the debate did not proceed further than the deviation of the Christian scriptures. The discussion centered on this point of controversy: al-Kairânawî insisted that the Christian scriptures had been abrogated and tried to prove this with examples taken out of the Bible itself, while the Christian missionaries persistently affirmed the integrity of the Old and New Testament. After two days the opponents separated and "both sides claimed the victory"[7]. Also a few conversions to Christianity took place following the debate. Besides the well known Safdar 'Alî[8], who was baptized in 1864, perhaps the most famous Muslim convert to Christianity in India had been 'Imâd ud-Dîn (ca. 1830-1900), who was baptized in 1866, and ordained as an Anglican priest in 1872[9]. He had been involved in mosque-preaching against Christian missionary work before and afterwards wrote several apologetical works against Islam such as the famous book 'Guidance for Muslims' (hidâyat al-muslimîn) or 'Inquiry into the Faith' (tahqîq al-imân).

But why is this 1854-debate of such significance? Have there not been many more debates before and up until the present which have concentrated again and again on the main points of encounter between Islam and Christianity, like the deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf)?

The 1854 Agra-debate is a historical milestone. Experts of the religious situation of India in the 19th century have asserted: "... there was in these days no debate on the scale of the high drama of the Rahmatullâh-Pfander debates of the 1850s"[10]. I will attempt to analyse the significance of this Muslim-Christian debate in India and its effects on future Muslim apologetical works.

Significance of place and time

Concerning the 19th century onwards Jacques Waardenburg has written:

"we see another period of confrontation, now mostly political, between Muslim states and the expanding West, heir to Christian tradition. In this time we witness a growing polemics of Islam, at first linked with the national movements, against religions like Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism ...[11]"

This is perfectly true for India: In the 19th century Agra, the former symbol of the Mughal power developed into one of the centers of Muslim learning and culture in India. The British government transformed it into their administration centre of the North-West-Provinces. In addition, the British government allowed foreign Mission agencies to enter the country. Especially in Agra, mostly British missionaries were stationed and they opened a huge orphanage after a disastrous famine in the year 1837. Several children were baptized as Christians, so that the growing influence of the Christian mission was universally recognized. In Agra itself several polemical Christian books against the Muslim creed had been published[12]. All of these facts made the Muslim population extremely aware of the presence of Westerners and missionaries as an instrument of British colonialism.

So we find ourselves in the heat of Christian-Muslim tensions in Agra in the middle of the 19th century: the Muslim 'ulamâ' felt threatened by the presence of European Christian missionaries and during the 1840s and 1850s underwent a severe crisis due to the decline of values of their own religion and culture. Different parties gathered in the middle of the 19th century in Agra and various lines intersected at this historical turning point: 1) the representatives of India's colonial power, being Great Britain the protector of the European missionaries, 2) the German pietist and Protestant missionary Pfander himself, his co-workers and perhaps a few of his converts, 3) representatives of the Anglican church, who were neither against the debate nor wholeheartedly supported it. Thomas Valpy French (1825-1891) should be named, who later became the first Anglican bishop of Lahore. He himself was not overly convinced of the benefit or the necessity of open encounter and proselytizing, but having been challenged by the Muslim theologians, was determined to defend the integrity of the Bible[13]. 4) There were Catholic missionaries in Agra, who obviously disliked the work of their Protestant colleagues and materially supported Muslims who helped them to refute the Protestant missionaries, and 5) the Muslim audience, including Shî'îs and Sunnis, while the Shî'î theologian al-Kairânawî prepared himself to defend the Muslim creed against Christian mission with the help of Dr. Muhammad Wazîr Khân, having worked since 1851 in a British medical hospital. He had received parts of his medical training in Great Britain where he collected material in order to prove Christianity to be false.

Significance of individuals involved in the controversy

Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865)

The German missionary Karl Gottlieb Pfander, who was involved in the controversy, was a few decades after his death still considered as "the greatest of all missionaries to Mohammedans"[14] or "one of the most interesting figures among the Missionaries to Muhammedans of the 19th century"[15].

In the West, he remained nevertheless quite unknown until the very present, but especially his controversial book 'Balance of Truth' (mîzân al-haqq) is still a current topic of debate in the

Muslim world today. This apologetical work, written in 1829, originally in German[16] in refutation of Islam, intends to convince its readers of the supreme values of Christianity, mostly by defending the integrity of the Old and New Testament and refuting the Muslim charge of the deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf). After its first publication in 1831 in Armenian it was quickly translated into at least half a dozen Muslim languages, including e. g. Urdu (1840), Persian (1835), Turkish (1862) and Arabic (1865)[17] and has had an enormous influence. This book 'Balance of Truth' (mîzân al-haqq) still is both quoted by and refuted by Muslim apologists today. It has remained a subject of controversy in the Muslim world. Twelve years after Pfander's death, a participant of the Agra-debate of 1854 wrote: "He has passed away, but the stir and movement he exited has not passed ..." [18].

'Balance of Truth' (mîzân al-haqq), the "standard work of encounter between Christianity and Islam[19]" was used by generations of Christian missionaries as an apologetical tool to refute Islam, and for this reason was reprinted many times up until the present. Despite the fact that we also hear severe critiques concerning the work, especially in the 20th century[20], we can date the last Arabic and English reprints back to the year 1986[21], and these reprints are still used today for missionary activities among Muslims.

The author of the book, Karl Gottlieb Pfander, having been stationed as missionary of the British mission agency CMS in India from 1837-1857, was requested on the 10th of April, 1854 by Muslim theologians of Agra to publicly defend the Christian dogma of the integrity of the Bible. In fact, it was he himself who had opened the discussion by public preaching on the bazars, by writing and distributing books for several years. It should also be noted that Pfander tried to prove the high value which the Qur'ân attributes to the Bible with the help of Qur'ânic statements. He also quoted Muslim commentators in order to hint at the difference of their judgement about Christianity: "... the Christians were trying to show that in the Qur'ân itself Muhammad shows respect for Christianity and veneration for its beliefs and teachings.[22]"

Rahmatullâh Ibn Khalîl al-'Uthmânî al-Kairânawî (1818-1891)

Nevertheless, Pfander's opponent is much more interesting for the theme of Muslim-Christian historical encounter:

The Shî'î theologian Rahmatullâh Ibn Khalîl al-'Uthmânî was engaged in the battle against the presence of Christian missionaries in India from the beginning of the 1850s, and in 1855 had already written three polemical works against Christianity in order to defend Islam, probably with the help of the Bengali physician Muhammad Wazîr Khân. al-Kairânawî and Wazîr Khân belong to the most outstanding figures of Indian Muslim defense against Christian mission in the 19th century. They came into contact at the beginning of the 1850s in connection with their apologetical work. In 1854 both of them took part in the public Agra-debate, al-Kairânawî being the challenger and the leader of the discussion, Muhammad Wazîr Khân acting as interpreter between the Urdu and English speaking participants.

The influence of al-Kairânawî on 19th century Muslim views of Christianity

al-Kairânawî's influence is not restricted to this single event in Agra. This was only a prelude to his future impact, which is due to his written works. When it comes to Muslim apologetics, al-

Kairânawî certainly comes to mind: The reason for this is his famous book 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq), which he composed as a response to Pfander's 'Balance of Truth' (mîzân al-haqq). Written in Arabic in 1867 by request of the Ottoman sultan Abdülaziz I. (1861-1876)[23], the book has seen several translations into Turkish (1876/1877), French (1880), English (ca. 1900), Urdu (1968), i. e. into almost the same languages as Pfander's 'Balance of Truth' (mîzân al-haqq) has been translated. Like 'Balance of Truth', the book 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) has been reprinted up until the present. In 1964 a new edition came out, supervised by the 'Department for Islamic Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco', and a foreword was added by the adab-professor 'Umar ad-Dasûqî. The last Arabic editions date from the year 1978; one of the two was authorized by the late Shaikh 'Abd al-Halîm Mahmûd of al-Azhar-University, Cairo. In 1989 a short version in English came into being, published by Ta-Ha Publishers in London.

Only a few polemical Muslim works have become as famous as al-Kairânawî's 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq). It has been stated: "The first great classic of modern Muslim polemic has never been superseded"[24].

Ignaz Goldziher reported that during his visit in 1877 in Damascus, everybody was talking of al-Kairânawî's 'Demonstration of the Truth'[25]. Undoubtedly, the book played a key role for Muslim polemics in the past but it is still currently on the 'top ten' of Muslim apologetical works. Concerning the significance of the book, Georges C. Anawati wrote in 1969: "C'est le grand ouvrage de base qui a servi et continue à servir d'arsenal pour les apologistes musulmans de la fin du 19e siècle jusqu'à nos jours"[26], and again in 1981: "... et aujourd'hui encore, il reste le livre par excellence où les musulmans traditionalistes et peu ouverts au christianisme, puisent leurs arguments"[27].

Concerning al-Kairânawî's book 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) it was stated in 1968: "The editor of the Urdu version has expressed the strong opinion that nothing written in the intervening hundred years on the theme of Islam and Christianity has replaced the books which were generated in the mind of Maulânâ Rahmat Allâh Kairânawî by the situation of extreme tension which faced the 'ulamâ' of northern India in the first half of the 19th century[28]"

The popularity of this apologetical work is also due to the fact that only a very cautious Shî'î colouring can be found in the book. As far as it can be seen in the different editions from 1867 onwards, the reason for this is not any revision, but is rather the original tone of al-Kairânawî himself, who only once hinted at his own Shî'î background when dealing with hadîth. Therefore it could become the standard work of Muslim apologetics as well as in 'orthodox' circles like al-Azhar.

In order to realize the influence of 'The Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq), it can be noted that the Sunni 19th century 'reform-wing' theologian Rashîd Ridâ made extensive use of al-Kairânawî's book when dealing with Christianity. Coming to the question of Muhammad's mission, he quoted the famous 'Abduh/Ridâ Qur'ân commentary 'Exegesis of the wise Qur'ân' (tafsîr al-qur'ân al-hakîm) about 60 pages from al-Kairânawî's 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr

al-haqq)[29]. Another name of a Muslim polemicist, making use of it, which should be mentioned is Muhammad Muhammad Abû Zahra[30]. In his famous 'Lectures on Christianity' (muhâdarât fî n-nasrânîya) he made use of al-Kairânawî's commentaries on the Christian creed[31].

Reasons for the influence of izhâr al-haqq

The very reason for the immense influence of al-Kairânawî's book 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) can be found in his developing of a new method to prove Islam to be the only true religion: it is quite obvious that al-Kairânawî does not restrict the defense of Islam to a mere devaluation of the Christian creed or to a praise of Islam. al-Kairânawî took advantage of the new orientation of European theology which had taken place especially during the 19th century. From a former conservative standpoint in regard to the integrity of the Christian scriptures, European theology had undergone a rapid change to a more and more critical standpoint regarding the reliability of historical and textual questions especially since the 19th century. Critical and liberal standpoints found their way into universities and churches. In this evolution Germany was the forerunner for the whole Christian Occident. Numerous theological liberal works appeared and found their way into the Muslim world rather quickly.

al-Kairânawî was - ostensibly - the very first apologist in the Muslim world who referred to these books and Bible commentaries in order to fight Christianity with its own weapons. For the first time, he used different works of famous European theologians who were influenced by liberalism and historical criticism of European theology of the 19th century. During the Agra-debate, al-Kairânawî quoted these representatives of liberalism in order to show the conservative missionaries that Christian theology had already produced evidence that the Bible is unreliable.

European theology and philosophy influences Muslim apologetics

This is not the only example where the Muslim world borrowed fruits of European theology or philosophy which affirmed Islam. Before the 19th century, there had been a movement in European theology which was called rationalism. Representatives of German rationalism, e. g. Karl Friedrich Bahrdt (1741-1792) or the famous Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761-1851) maintained that Jesus Christ has been crucified, but they neglected that he had really died on the cross; a standpoint which is again an 'outside' position today. Bahrdt writes at the end of the 19th century:

"This is my opinion on this last part of the history of Jesus. Jesus has been put to death: he underwent all the sufferings of an evil-doer, he endured the suffering of death, but he overcame death - he came from death to life - he came out of the mausoleum ... on the third day after having been put to death ... and he has shown himself to his disciples as somebody being revived from the dead"[32].

It is possible, even if not probable, that the Ahmadiyya-standpoint (the Ahmadiyya being a Muslim sect of Indian-Pakistani origin) of Jesus having died a natural death in India after he survived his

crucifixion, did not originate in Islam itself, but was fostered by developments in Europe like rationalism; Muslim apologists claimed: "European theologians and scientists have proven that Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion".

Some Christian university theologians even went so far as the climax of theological liberalism, which is, historically spoken, connected with enlightenment, that they neglected Jesus as a historical figure or at least his deity or his being part of the trinity. Muslim apologists have used these theories as proofs for their old affirmation that according to Sura 4,157-158 Jesus never died on the cross, even if he was perhaps crucified, which is doubtful.

The Gospel of Barnabas confirms Muslim apologists

Doubts of European theologians and philosophers concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ or concerning the reliability of the four canonical gospels also played a key role when the 'Gospel of Barnabas' was defended in numerous books and pamphlets by Muslim apologists as the only true Gospel of Jesus Christ mostly in the 20th century. Muslims had mostly taken over positive statements about the value of the 'Gospel of Barnabas' by European critics of conservative theology of the 18th and 19th century, while at the same time Christian missionaries tried to prove that it is impossible to date this Gospel back to the first centuries A.D. The 'Gospel of Barnabas' proves that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross; Judas was transformed into the likeness of Jesus and crucified, while everybody thought he was Jesus himself; so the Qur'ân is again affirmed in his refutation of the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Qur'ân is confirmed by 'objective' 'scientific' results: Muslim apologists name European theologians or philosophers like the well-known English deist John Toland (1670-1722), who positively mentioned the announcement of Muhammad in the Gospel of Barnabas. Muslim apologists concentrate on European authors who, on the one hand trace the Gospel of Barnabas back to the first centuries and herewith accept its value and who, at the same time doubt and critique the integrity of the Bible and the inspiration of the Old and New Testament[33].

It is possible that al-Kairânawî himself 'brought' the 'Gospel of Barnabas' to the Moslem world by mentioning it for the first time in 1854 in his Urdu work i'jâz-i 'Isâwî[34] and afterwards in 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) from 1867 onwards as an old Christian Gospel which foretells the coming of the prophet Muhammad. In the middle of the 19th century, the 'Gospel of Barnabas' was not even published as a whole. Only a few fragments were known to the Western world when al-Kairânawî used it as a weapon against the Christian rejection of Muhammad, who had been foretold from the beginning of revelation. It is quite probable that Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ, who defended the Gospel as the only surviving reliable Gospel of the time of Jesus, and who published the first Arabic edition of the Gospel of Barnabas in 1908 under the title 'True Gospel' (al-injîl as-sahîh), was led to this Gospel through the work of al-Kairânawî. Several translations have appeared since 1908 to promote this 'only true Gospel of Jesus Christ' (Urdu 1916, English 1916, Persian 1927, Indonesian 1969, Dutch 1990, German 1994).

Changes of Muslim apologetics are due to developments in European theology

In the 19th century a new wave of criticism emerged in Europe and quickly found its way into the Muslim world. In European universities all miracles reported in the Old and New Testament were called into question, historical events were doubted, the formulation of Christology, trinity, and the deity of Jesus Christ, his crucifixion and resurrection were discussed from their very foundation. All these doubts and critical remarks of European theology found their way into the Muslim world and were enthusiastically taken as proofs of the traditional Muslim view of a corrupted Christian Bible. This way of arguing against the reliability of the Old and New Testament has marked the form of controversy especially since al-Kairânawî.

During the Agra-debate, this method of controversy was used for the first time. al-Kairânawî confronted the theologically conservative missionary Pfander and his friends in 1854 with the newest results of European critical research. Pfander, who had already left Europe in 1825 as a missionary, had not witnessed the important developments which had taken place in European theology in the 19th century. Moreover, the pupils of the conservative Basel Mission Society (Basler Missionsgesellschaft), where Pfander was educated from 1821-1825, had allowed their pupils to visit the theological seminary at Basel, but had restricted its influence on the candidates[35]. David Friedrich Strauss' world-famous book 'Das Leben Jesu' (The Life of Jesus) was not published until 1835, when Pfander had already been ten years abroad. As the Agra-debate took place in 1854, Pfander had already suspected that his Muslim opponents were busily studying European theological works, but he either underestimated the far-reaching effects of these studies or he did not have enough knowledge himself of these new developments. Pfander wrote concerning his Muslim opponents: "... several of their friends in Delhi, have been for the last two or three years hard at work in studying the Bible, reading the controversial books we have published, and searching out our commentaries and critical writers ..., only to obtain material for refuting it.[36]"

al-Kairânawî and Muhammad Wazîr Khân presented during the Agra-debate the newest critical remarks on textual variations and on contradictions between different biblical texts of the latest theories in Europe. al-Kairânawî seemingly inherited most of his material from Muhammad Wazîr Khân, who received part of his medical training in Great Britain where he came into contact with European theologically critical works. In addition, al-Kairânawî received the latest European works from the Catholic missionaries in India, who strongly disliked the work of their Protestant colleagues[37].

In several polemical works against Christianity in Agra and later on, the Muslim theologian al-Kairânawî presented, for the first time, the latest scientific research from Europe. Against this new sort of attack Pfander was helpless since his books responded to the traditional Muslim charges against Christianity and not to the European results of higher or lower criticism presented from the Muslim side.

Europe did not have the slightest idea about the effects on its theological evolution to the Near East. Protestant missions were comparatively new to the Muslim countries, only dating from the 19th century[38] in which a new branch of Christian mission was extended to the Muslim

countries, apart from single attempts in former centuries as for example undertaken by Henry Martyn or Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg. It can be added here that after the debate Pfander sought in Basel European authors who were refuting these theories, but only in order to demonstrate to the Muslim polemicists that the standpoint of these theologians is only one part of the prism of European theology[39].

Apart from the Agra-debate, we are able to witness that al-Kairânawî developed this method of proving the corruption of the Bible with European voices. In his book 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq), al-Kairânawî draws all the evidence from European sources he can procure: he quotes Luther's critical attitude concerning the pope and King Henry VIII of England, European critical remarks on the apostle Paul's devastating influence on early Christianity, he refers to doubts among theologians as to whether the epistles of Jacob or Judas belong to the original biblical canon or not, he criticizes the forming of dogmas on the first Christian councils like Nicea about three hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he refers to doubts about the authorship of the books of Moses, Josua, Judges, etc. When he comes to the genealogies of Christ, he detects "errors and contradictions", "absurdities" in the narrative of Eliah being fed by ravens, and he quotes commentaries on the Bible from Eichhorn, Horne, or Henry and Scott. I could continue with hundreds of contradictions al-Kairânawî 'detects' between single biblical texts[40]. In six thick volumes, 'The Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) served as a summary of all possible charges against Christianity and was therefore used after al-Kairânawî's death as a sort of encyclopaedia since al-Kairânawî extended the material of former polemicists like 'Ali Tabarî, Ibn Hazm or Ibn Taymiyya to a great extent.

European theology changes Muslim views of Christianity

Here it is obvious that al-Kairânawî has changed the former Muslim view of the deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf) and the Muslim view of Christianity as a whole: The dogma of the deviation of the Christian scripture (tahrîf) should, according to al-Kairânawî, no longer be understood as mere single alterations in the texts of the Old and New Testament, which had crept into the texts throughout the process of copying them during the centuries. Apologists in former times only criticized certain biblical dogmas such as the trinity or the dogma of the deity of Jesus Christ as the Qur'ân itself does. al-Kairânawî expanded the Qur'ânic criticism of the corruption of the Bible to a much larger extent. Leading Muslim apologists now follow the example of al-Kairânawî's 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) and take over the 'results' of the textual studies of European theologians. al-Kairânawî came to the conclusion that the biblical texts are totally distorted, corrupted and unreliable in *all* their historical, dogmatical and narrative passages. This is for al-Kairânawî no matter of dispute, since the Christian 'ulamâ' of Europe themselves admit the complete distortion of all biblical texts. So al-Kairânawî and his followers feel confirmed in the traditional Muslim view that the Bible is corrupted just as the Qur'ân states. Muslim apologists have known this for centuries already, but now European theologians have confirmed it themselves through scientific studies in history, geology or archeology.

The effect of this use of European theology can be summarized: in today's Muslim apologetical works against Christianity we find numerous results of the severe studies in textual exegesis and different sciences undertaken in the West. With this transformation of the dogma of the deviation of the Christian scripture (tahrîf) in Christianity and the acknowledgment of European theology serving as a proof for the Muslim statements, the whole Muslim view of Christianity has changed. In former times, only certain dogmas of Christianity had to be refuted, but Christianity as a whole contained the same message as Islam. Now Christianity seems to have been proven to be corrupted as a whole: if Christian scientists and theologians in the West determine, that it is untenable to believe in this collection of fanciful stories and legends originating in heathenism or Greek Platonic philosophy, it is no longer tenable to praise this revelation. Muslim apologists only take seriously what the religious authorities of Christianity have discovered about their own creed. In contrast to this great error, Islam is the religion of understanding and intelligence. The Islamic dogmas are clear, understandable and reasonable.

Furthermore, we witness that Muslim polemical works following the al-Kairânawî-Pfander-battle always pursue this fundamental attitude: Christian theologians themselves admit, that the Old and New Testament is not inspired by God as we have it today, but both parts of the Bible are full of errors, misconceptions, contradictions, absurdities if not willfull distortions. Thus Muslim theologians are confirmed in their interpretation of the Christian Scriptures.

We can witness this form of controversy today when it comes to Muslim apologetical works: Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ used the results of European theological studies in his Qur'ân commentary 'tafsîr'. For him the apostle Paul is especially guilty for having introduced heathenism into Christianity. It was not until the council of Nicea in the year 325 A. D. that the dogma of trinity and redemption through the crucifixion of Jesus was established. With this development, the dogma of the unity of God (tauhîd) was replaced by polytheism (shirk)[41]. We witness the same tendency in Abû Zahras 'Lectures on Christianity' (muhâdarât fî-n-nasrânîya): Jesus Christ himself preached monotheism, but this dogma was distorted by the influence of syncretism, new-Platonic and Greek philosophy and Roman heathenism[42]. Ahmad Shalaby considers Christianity as a mixture of heathenism and of the convictions of the apostle Paul[43] and Jesus' miracles narrated in the four Gospels as unreliable[44].

Elwood M. Wherry remarks according to his personal view of course concerning the beginning of the 20th century: "The Muslims were obliged to abandon their own works and endeavour to save the day by a counter assault, in which they scrupled not to use the stock arguments of European infidelity in their effort to overthrow the authority of the Christian Scriptures. This characteristic has marked the Muslim method of controversy ever since.[45]"

Summary

1. In the 19th century a Muslim-Christian debate took place far away from the traditional centres of Muslim learning. In Agra in 1854, probably for the first time, Muslim theologians used European critical works as proofs against Christian missionaries.

2. The 19th century marks a turning point when it comes to Muslim apologetics: the Muslims developed a completely new method to prove Christianity to be the 'false religion' with the help of European sources being mainly Christian theological works (e. g. Bible commentaries).
3. After the publication of al-Kairânawîs 'Demonstration of the Truth' (izhâr al-haqq) this method of controversy became common among Muslim apologists such as Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ or Muhammad Muhammad Abû Zahra to prove the traditional charge of the deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf).
4. The deviation of the Christian scriptures (tahrîf) is the center of Christian-Muslim apologetics of the 19th century (Christology or redemption the center of apologetics in the 20th century).
5. This leads to a new Muslim view of Christianity during the 19th century. The dogmas of Christianity are no longer distorted in fragments but rather as a whole.

[1] Quoted from *Committees of Correspondence* Dec, 1991, Update #1, p. 3

[2] From a letter by Rousas John Rushdoony printed in John Graham Child, *Biblical Law in the Theology of R. J. Rushdoony: A Systematic Theological Analysis and Appreciation*, (Master of Theology: University of South Africa, 1985), 323

[3] The following text is based on material of my dissertation C. Schirmacher, *Mit den Waffen des Gegners, Christlich-Muslimische Kontroversen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, dargestellt am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung um Karl Gottlieb Pfanders 'mîzân al-haqq' und Rahmatullâh ibn Khalîl al-'Uthmânî al-Kairânawîs 'izhâr al-haqq' und der Diskussion über das Barnabasevangelium* (Berlin, 1992)

[4] For a more detailed description of the debate see e. g. A. A. Powell, *Contact and Controversy between Islam and Christianity in Northern India 1833-1857: The Relations between Muslims and Protestant Missionaries in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis) (London, 1983), 273 f.

[5] Arabic theological terms in brackets

[6] H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, (New Delhi, 1932), 6:124

[7] E. Stock, "The C.M.S. Missions to Mohammedans", *The Muslim World*, 2/1912, pp. 128; W. H. T. Gairdner, *The Reproach of Islam* (London, 1909), 248

[8] The story of Safdar 'Alis conversion to Christianity appeared in *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 2 NS/July 1866, pp. 215-221. Parts of his own report of his conversion are published in D. R. Paul, *Lights in the World, Life Sketches of Maulvi Safdar Ali and the Rev. Janni Alli* (sic) (Lucknow, 1969), 20-23+28-30

[9] The German magazine of the Basle Mission Society *EMM* (Evangelisches Missions-Magazin) published the story of his conversion under the title "A Mohammedan brought to Christ, being the Autobiography of a Native Clergyman in India" (14/1871, pp. 397-412), being probably a summary of his own tract dealing with his conversion in Urdu, which was republished in 1957 in Lahore and 1978 in Vanyambadi.

[10] N. Gupta, *Delhi between two Empires 1803-1931*, Society, Government and Urban Growth (Delhi, 1981), 79

[11] J. Waardenburg, "World Religions as seen in the Light of Islam", in ed. A. T. Welch; P. Cachia, *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge* (Edinburgh, 1979), 248

[12] See A. A. Powell, "Maulânâ Rahmat Allâh Kairânawî and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 20/1976, pp. 42-63

[13] S. Neill, *A History of Christianity in India 1707-1858* (Cambridge, 1985), 344

[14] Church Missionary Society (ed.), *One Hundred Years, Being the Short History of the Church Missionary Society* (London, 1898), 78

[15] Transl. from: J. Richter, *Mission und Evangelisation im Orient*, (Gütersloh: 1908/1930), 71

[16] The original handwritten text is still to be found in the archives of the Basle Mission Society headquarter (Basler Mission), Switzerland.

[17] In Turkey, where Pfander was missionary from 1858-1865, "the circulation of the Mîzân seems to have brought matters to a crisis..." (Pfander's letter of 16th Sept 1862 to the CMS, Doc. No. 63a; archives of Heslop Room/University of Birmingham). The Ottoman government resolved to expel all missionary agencies in consequences of the baptism of several converts to Christianity by Pfander and his co-workers in the year 1864.

[18] H. Birks, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French, First Bishop of Lahore* (London, 1895), 1: 70

[19] Transl. from H. R. Flachsmeier, *Geschichte der evangelischen Weltmission* (Giessen, 1963), 446

[20] See e. g. L. L. Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record, Anglican and Reform Approaches in India and the Near East 1800-1938* (Pasadena, 1977), 42; E. Kellerhals, *Der Islam. Seine Geschichte, seine Lehre, sein Wesen* (Basel, 1956 2nd ed.: 334 f.

[21] The Publishers of the 1986 English edition wrote in their introduction to the book: "Perhaps the way of discussion seems questionable to some theologians in our century, but until today the book touches the central points in sincere dialogue between Muslims and Christians". "The Publishers", Introduction, in C. G. Pfander, D. D., *The Mîzân-ul-Haqq, Balance of Truth* (Villach, 1986)

[22] H. G. Dorman, *Toward Understanding Islam* (Edinburgh, 1948), 31

[23] Ahmad Hijâzî as-Saqqâ (ed.), *Rahmat Allâh al-Hindî, izhâr al-haqq* (Cairo: 1978), 29-30. al-Kairânawî had to go into exile because the British government suspected him to have participated in the anti-British revolt of 1857. al-Kairânawî fled to Mekka, and when the Ottoman sultan made his pilgrimage (hajj) to Mekka at the beginning of the 1860ies, he was informed about the events in India of 1854. al-Kairânawî had to stay in Mecca until his death in 1891.

[24] H. G. Dorman, op. cit., p. 44

[25] Goldziher wrote: "Während meines Aufenthaltes in der umajjadischen Chalifenstadt übte eine enorme Zugkraft auf das Lesepublikum aus das arabisch geschriebene polemische Werk izhâr al-haqq von dem indischen Muhammedaner Sheikh Rahmat Allâh gegen die mîzân al-haqq betitelte Missions- und Controversschrift eines englischen Predigers des Evangeliums, welcher mit den Geschützen christlicher Theologie die Bollwerke des Islam erschüttern wollte." I. Goldziher, "Ueber muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitâb", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 32/1878, pp. 343-344

[26] G. C. Anawati, "Polémique, Apologie et Dialogue Islamo-Chrétiens", *Positions Classiques Médiévales et Positions Contemporaines, Euntes Docete*, 22/1969, pp. 420

[27] G. C. Anawati, Les grands courants de la pensée religieuse musulmane dans l'Égypte contemporaine, in: G. C. Anawati; M. Borrmans, Tendences et courants dans l'Islam arabe contemporain, vol. 1: Égypte et Afrique du Nord, Entwicklung und Frieden, Wissenschaftliche Reihe, (München, 1982), 26: 58

[28] A. A. Powell, "Maulânâ Rahmat Allâh Kairânawî and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century", loc. cit., p. 63

[29] Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ (ed.), *tafsîr al-qur'ân al-hakîm* (Cairo: 1347/1928, 1st ed., 9: 231-293)

[30] This is mentioned by the editor of one of the newest editions of izhâr al-haqq: Ahmad Hijâzî as-Saqqâ (ed.), *Rahmat Allâh al-Hindî, izhâr al-haqq*, loc. cit., p. 33

[31] Quotations of al-Kairânawî by Muhammad Muhammad Abû Zahra in his *muhâdarât fî-n-nasrânîya* (Cairo, 1966) 3rd ed., 32

[32] Translated from: K. F. Bahrtdt, *Ausführungen des Plans und Zwecks* (sic) *Jesu* (Berlin: 1784-1793), 10: 187

[33] E. g. J. Toland, *Christianity Not Mysterious* (London, 1696) had a rationalistic understanding of the wonders narrated in the Bible. In his work 'Nazarenus' he attributes at the same time a great probability to the Gospel of Barnabas going back to the very first centuries A. D.: J. Toland, *Nazarenus or Jewish, Gentile and Mahometan Christianity* (London, 1718). He

defended the Gospel of Barnabas against the common charge from the Christian side as being a willfull forgery of a renegade of the Middle Ages: "How great ... is the ignorance of those, who make this an original invention of the Mahometans". J. Toland, Nazarenus, loc. cit., p. 17 or: "After this mature examination I coul'd safely say, that this Gospel might in the main be the antient Gospel of Barnabas ...". J. Toland, *Tetradymus* (London, 1720) 148

[34] Rahmatullâh Ibn Khalîl al-'Uthmânî al-Kairânawî, i'jâz-i 'Isâwî (Agra, 1853/Delhi 1876)

[35] Teachers of the Basel Mission Seminary thought about the lectures at Basel university, given from one of the most famous theologians of the 19th century and representative of biblical criticism, Wilhelm Martin Lebrecht de Wette (1780-1849): "Doch trug man Bedenken, sie bei De-Wette hospitieren zu lassen und sie so in die historische Kritik einzuführen. Überhaupt fürchtete man, die Zöglinge möchten aus diesen Vorlesungen nicht denjenigen Gewinn davontragen, der dem Zeitaufwand entspräche". P. Eppler, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815-1899* (Basel, 1900) 16-17

[36] undated letter, perhaps to Thomas Valpy French, participant of the Agra-debate 1854: H. Birks, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Valpy French*, op. cit., 1: 71

[37] E. Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society its Environment, its Men and its Work* (London, 1899-1916), 2: 171

[38] The 19th century is called the 'Missionsjahrhundert' (century of mission) in Europe because of the founding of numerous Protestant missionary agencies and seminaries for the education and sending of missionaries to foreign countries.

[39] He asked for the books in a letter to his former school in Basel "... um den Mohammedanern, die sich mit denselben gar sehr brüsten, zu zeigen, daß diese Neologen und Pantheisten weit über den Koran hinausgehen und also gefährliche und schlechte Hilfsgenossen seien, teils um nachzuweisen, daß Strauß und Konsorten längst ihre Widerlegung gefunden haben..." C. F. Eppler, D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander, *Ein Zeuge der Wahrheit unter den Bekennern des Islam* (Basel, 1888), 152

[40] It is true what H. G. Dorman states for the real apologetical literature until the present time: "Through most of this material there moves a strain of suspicion and resentment. In only a few of the books is there an open friendliness in the approach. For the most part the polemist are fighting hard to win a declared battle and to overthrow the enemy. There is surprisingly little difference from the classical polemical methods of the earlier centuries." H. G. Dorman, op. cit., p. 113

[41] Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ, al-manâr 10/1325-1326, p. 386

[42] Muhammad Muhammad Abû Zahra in his *muhâdarât fî-n-nasrânîya*, loc. cit., p. 11

[43] Ahmad Shalaby, muqâranat al-adyân, Vol. 2: al-masîhîya, (Cairo, 1965) 2nd ed.: 64

[44] viz. p. 62

[45] E. M. Wherry, *The Mohammedan Controversy* (London, 1905), 2

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Authenticity of Scripture

http://www.knowjesus.com/Hist_Jesus.shtml

The Historical Jesus

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a renewed discussion as to who Jesus of Nazareth was. The general consensus among non evangelical scholars has been that the Jesus presented in the Bible, and the one who actually walked on the earth are two distinctly different people. The Bias of the Gospel and Epistles authors is often cited as the problem.

Was Jesus the Messiah, God in the flesh, Savior, and Son of God as Christians proclaim Him to be? Or was He just a teacher of wisdom who lived in first century Palestine? Does Jesus have relevance in our lives today? Though I am a Christian – some would say that this biases me – I will show that my faith, and my fellow believers' faith in Jesus Christ is rooted in historical fact -- not on mythology.

Past and Present Quests for the Historical Jesus

The Old Quest

The Old Quest for the Historical Jesus spanned the years 1778-1906. Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) wrote an article entitled "On the Intention of Jesus and His Disciples", and it was published posthumously, ten years after his death most probably because the ideas were considered extremely controversial during his lifetime. On the Intention was one of the series of articles Reimarus wrote which later came to be known as the "Wolfenbuttel Fragments". The publication of Reimarus' paper roughly marks the beginning of the Old Quest period. He proposed a distinction between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of Christian faith was proposed, and was probably one of the first such scholarly distinctions, modern scholars have since followed suit. Reimarus believed that one could know Jesus without having to believe in miracles. Reimarus' Jesus had eschatological – or end times – convictions, similar to those represented when Jesus said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." According to Reimarus, Jesus' death proved that he and his life's work was a total failure, but the disciples didn't want to accept this because then they would have to go back to their hard working fishermen jobs as opposed to the life of ease they enjoyed following after Jesus. They therefore stole Jesus' body, and later proclaimed him to be risen from the dead, inventing stories of his Second Coming along the way.

Reimarus' reconstruction has no historical grounding whatsoever. His view of Jesus is founded on his presuppositions and what he believes is rational. This is not history. Jesus' disciples did not have an easy life following him. They were harshly persecuted, often placing their very lives in danger. Making up stories of Jesus' resurrection would then cause the disciples to suffer for their faith, and not only that, but to subject their families to torturous deaths as well. Very few people are willing to suffer for what they know is a lie. "And even if they didn't have the courage to expose the lie, it is likely that they would have at least stopped preaching it when the suffering increased. But they didn't, and Christianity spread like wildfire" (Ingolfsland 5). David Frederick Strauss (1808-1874) was a student of Georg William Hegel, who held to a view of history where each historical movement (thesis) is confronted by a counter-movement (antithesis). The thesis and antithesis are at some point resolved in a synthesis. This synthesis then becomes the new thesis, which produces another antithesis, and so on. Strauss believed that the thesis for Christianity was the tradition that the gospels were reliable concerning the person of Jesus, and the antithesis was the idea that the gospels were basically accurate, once the miracle accounts were removed or otherwise explained. The synthesis was provided by Strauss' theory that the gospel events never happened. He saw the gospels as myths. "To Strauss, 'myth' was not a bad term. Myth is an idea expressed in historical form. The important thing was to get beyond the myth to the idea behind it" (Ingolfsland 7). Strauss believed that Jesus' death caused the disciples to lose their faith entirely. They therefore returned to their old jobs in Galilee. Their faith was then revived, so much so that they began having visions of Jesus, and preached of his resurrection. The book *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* written by Strauss in 1835 further explains his theory. This book was written at a popular level, and was one of the most influential books up until that time. Strauss' book denied the historicity of the Gospels because the supernatural events described in the Gospels are judged by Strauss to be almost entirely mythical. Because the myths permeated the Gospel texts so thoroughly, the non-mythical portions cannot be trusted either.

There are a few problems with Strauss' theory. He places the gospels in the category of mythology. The gospels fit better into the category of ancient biography. "While ancient biographies in general may have contained some mythological elements, they were written to tell the reader about the subject and cannot simply be dismissed as 'mythology'" (Ingolfsland 8). Strauss also dates the Gospels to the second century, contrary to the most critical scholarship. There is also no reason given for the disciples' faith to suddenly return, and this is foundational for Strauss' theory because the revived faith caused the visions.

Up until the 1800's it was widely accepted that Matthew was the first Gospel account to be written down. That changed in an 1835 essay by Karl Lachmann, who proposed that Mark wrote the first of the Synoptic Gospels. In 1838 two scholars C.G. Wilke and C.H. Weisse, took the theory of Markan priority further, proposing that Mark wrote 1st, and that his gospel was a common source for both Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke also used another common source – Q (Q stands for *Quelle*, which is a German word meaning source) according to Johannes Weiss, 1890. Q material is material common to Matthew and Luke but absent from Mark. The existence of a Q document is only a hypothesis; no such document has ever been recovered. The Q hypothesis is one way to explain the synoptic problem – the similarities between the three gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke. Theories using Q can be more or less elaborate depending on the scholar. One elaborate Q hypothesis is a triple layered stratification by John S. Kloppenborg. The earliest stratum according to this theory, is Q-1 which contains sapiential material. Q-2 is slightly later than Q-1, and contains the addition of chreiai (wisdom

sayings added to short narratives). Q-3 is the latest Q material, and has the temptation story added to it, which further developed the prevalent tendency toward narrative-biographical material. According to some more liberal scholars, Q functioned as a full-fledged gospel for its community, and from it we can derive what the Q community knew and what they did not know about Jesus.

Bruno Bauer was the most anti-Christianity scholar up to this point in historical Jesus study. Bauer believed that Mark wrote first, and that Mark was a purely literary work, and an unreliable one at that. Since the other Gospel accounts were highly dependent on Mark, there is nothing historical about any of them. He believed that Christianity originally met a need within the people of that time, and the gospels had no foundation in history, Jesus never existed and therefore Christianity was a fairy tale with no historical foundation. His was by far the most radical viewpoint of his day. "Baur simply fails to deal with the evidence. There is simply too much historical evidence to deny Jesus' existence. The only denials today generally come from hard core atheist groups more concerned with ideology than history or truth" (Ingolfsland 10). William Wrede (1859-1906) proposed that the Gospel of Mark was not written by Mark, but was created by the "Markan community" or the church. The early church gave Jesus His Messiah status. Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, and His disciples never thought of Him as the Messiah either. The early church made up the portions in Mark where Jesus warned against speaking about Him and the things He had done, especially about Him being the Messiah. Wrede deemed this the "messianic secret". After Wrede's theory, other liberal scholars started catching on, and saw the church as being behind the gospels, not the gospels as the foundation of the church. Evidence for Jesus' view of himself will be presented later in this paper; there is plenty to negate Wrede's attestation that Jesus never thought of himself as the Messiah.

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) became a pioneer in the use of form criticism, his methodology was based on existential philosophy, which believes that man has been thrown into the world, and is approaching death in an otherwise meaningless existence. He believes that the New Testament has the answer to man's meaningless existence. We find our meaning in the saving cross of Christ preached. Bultmann believed that we could be sure that Jesus existed, and died on the cross, but that's about all we can know about him. His existence and death are all that are required for Christian faith. ". . . people are not saved because Jesus died on the cross to pay for people's sins. People, according to Bultmann, are saved because they make an existential decision to die to themselves and live for Christ (though we can't know much of anything historically about Christ)" (Ingolfsland 20). Bultmann denied the possibility of miracles in the sense of the supernatural. Bultmann held to the idea that the historical Jesus did not matter, this is contrary to Paul's affirmation that "if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain" (I Corinthians 15:14). The person of Jesus Christ was very important to early church fathers and first generation Christians.

Closing out the Old Quest period Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) wrote *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* in 1906. This book critiqued previous scholars' theories about Jesus. "He argued that each new Testament scholar constructed a totally unhistorical view of Jesus, based not on the evidence, but on the scholar's philosophical presuppositions" (Ingolfsland 18). Schweitzer then went on to construct his own theory regarding Jesus' true identity. He believed that Jesus had an inner experience at his baptism, and after that experience, he began to think of himself as the Messiah. It wasn't until he was on the cross, that he realized he had been wrong, and so he cried out, "it is finished" in total, utter despair. This account does not account for the spread of Christianity and founding of the church. "The death of a 'messiah' was usually understood as

proof positive that the dead man was not a messiah at all! The Jesus' movement not only continued, but mushroomed because the people were convinced that he had actually done miracles and had risen from the dead" (Ingolfsland 19). Jesus of Nazareth was exactly who He said He was.

No Quest

After the Old Quest came a brief No Quest period. The dates of these divisions are not generally agreed upon, and are approximations. According to one estimate, the No Quest period was from approximately 1892 to the 1950's where the New Quest began (Boyd 38). The fact remains that there was a no quest period regardless of the dates associated with that period. Albert Schweitzer in his above-mentioned book wrote of some reasons why there may have been a no quest period. The first was that liberal scholars had a tendency to "find a Jesus after their own image." Much of the Old Quest was also optimistic in the reliability of Mark, scholars then moved toward less reliability of Mark, making it more theological than historical. William Wrede postulated just such a view in "The Messianic Secret", which describes Mark as a history of dogma, not historical record. Because Mark was so thoroughly discredited, the Old Quest was considered hopeless. Also, form criticism (attempts to investigate oral tradition behind the Gospels) focused on the process of oral transmission – oral Jesus tradition is a mixture of history and early Christian fabrications – and a naturalistic worldview which excludes miracles. Excluding miracles eliminates a great deal of material about Jesus. There was some doubt as to whether it was even necessary to have a historical quest for Jesus.

The New Quest

Despite questions of relevance, there was a second quest for the historical Jesus called the New Quest for the Historical Jesus (1959-1979). This second attempt was necessary because the Old Quest didn't produce much actual historical information about the Jesus of history that scholars claimed to be searching for. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 also renewed scholarly interest in the historical person of Jesus, and thereby became a catalyst for the New Quest. This second significant quest for the historical Jesus was fairly short lived. German scholar, Earnst Kasemann who believed that the historical Jesus could be uncovered by using critical analysis, is generally credited with inaugurating the New Quest for the historical Jesus. Gunther Borkamm was another New Quest German scholar, who emphasized the importance of Jesus' words and preaching. Borkamm believed that Jesus "brings people face to face with God, and therefore confronts them with the necessity of making an existential decision of what to do about the issue of God in their lives" (Ingolfsland 21). Then there was Earnst Fuchs, who suggested that the psychological motives behind Jesus' actions be examined. One of the first products of the New Quest was a 1956 book entitled Jesus of Nazareth which was heavily dependent on redaction criticism, and attempted to discern how individual authors of the Gospel accounts influenced how oral traditions worked into their respective writings. In the United States, James Robinson published A New Quest for the Historical Jesus in 1959. He was less concerned with the Jesus of history, and more concerned with the Christ of faith. The New Quest was founded primarily in the existential philosophy, and the emphasis of the movement was to have an existential encounter with the Christ of faith. The Jesus of history and the Christ of faith were seen as being two distinct people. We are presently in a Third Quest for the historical Jesus. This began in about the mid 1980's, and is characterized by a wide diversity as to who the Jesus of history was. Some scholars say

that we can know little if anything about Jesus, while others say that there is a great deal about him we can know. "If there is a common denominator, however, it seems to be that all parties are making a conscious effort to locate the Jesus of history firmly in his cultural, religious, political and social environment" (Ingolfslund 23). The present quest can be divided into two camps, 3rd Questers and post-Bultmannians. Post-Bultmannians operate under a number of assumptions, outlined by Troeltsch's "principle of analogy", which Third Questers say are defective. The assumptions are 1) that the universe is a closed system, and 2) the only way to judge the past is by the present (Boyd 48). Post-Bultmannians are also indebted to New Quest authenticity criteria, which is heavily existential in orientation.

The Jesus Seminar has dominated the post-Bultmannian search for the historical Jesus. This group is comprised of mostly post-Bultmannian oriented scholars, who hold to the stratification of Q and generally deny supernatural elements of the Gospel accounts. An explanation of the group and their methods follows.

The Jesus Seminar

Goals of the Jesus Seminar

The Jesus Seminar is a group of about thirty scholars founded in 1985 by Robert Funk. Funk has authored a number of books, among them are, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (1993) and *The Acts of Jesus: The Search for the Authentic Deeds* (1998) (both with the Jesus Seminar) and *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (1996). In his inaugurating address on March 24, 1985 in Berkeley California, Funk proclaimed the mission of the group; "We are about to embark on a momentous enterprise. We are going to inquire simply, rigorously after the voice of Jesus, after what he really said. . . Our basic plan is simple. We intend to examine every fragment of the traditions attached to the name of Jesus in order to determine what he really said—not his literal words, perhaps, but the substance and style of his utterances" (http://westarinstitute.org/Jesus_Seminar/Remarks/remarks.html). Funk also stated in an article in *US News and World Report*, that the goal of the Seminar is "to set Jesus free . . . from the scriptural and creedal and experiential prisons in which we have incarcerated him" (Sheler 55). The Jesus Seminar Website explains the methods used to rank authenticity of Jesus' sayings. "The scholars of the Seminar analyzed the likely authenticity of the more than 1,500 sayings attributed to Jesus in the gospels. The text of the sayings is color-coded red, pink, gray or black, according to the consensus of the scholars: red (Jesus undoubtedly said this or something like it), pink (Jesus probably said something like this), gray (Jesus did not say this, but the ideas are close to his own), black (Jesus did not say this; it represents the content of a later or different tradition)" (<http://westarinstitute.org/Polebridge/5Gospels/5gospels.html>).

Methods and findings of the Jesus Seminar

In 1993 the Jesus Seminar published a book of their findings titled *The Five Gospels: the Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. The four New Testament canonical Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are included, as is the apocryphal and heavily Gnostic Gospel of Thomas. The introduction of this book states plainly "The Christ of creed and dogma, who had been firmly in place in the Middle Ages, can no longer command the assent of those who have seen the heavens through Galileo's telescope. The old deities and demons were swept from the skies by that remarkable glass. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo have dismantled the mythological abodes of

the gods and Satan, and bequeathed us secular heavens"

(http://westarinstitute.org/Jesus_Seminar/Intro5G/intro5g.html).

After The Five Gospels' focus on the sayings of Jesus, the Jesus Seminar turned their attention to the acts of Jesus. They utilized the same voting method using different colored beads to determine authenticity. "For more than ten years, the Jesus Seminar has researched and debated the life and death of the historical Jesus. They have concluded that the Jesus of history is very different from the icon of traditional Christianity: Jesus did not walk on water, feed the multitude, change water into wine, or raise Lazarus from the dead. He was executed as a public nuisance, not for claiming to be the Son of God. And in the view of the Seminar, he did not rise bodily from the dead; the resurrection is based instead on visionary experiences of Peter, Paul, and Mary." (<http://westarinstitute.org/Polebridge/Acts/acts.html>).

Regarding Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus Seminar has concluded 1) that Jesus was non-apocalyptic, and probably a Hellenized Galilean 2) he taught and lived "subversive forms of social behavior" 3) he had a quick aphoristic wit 4) he had no consciousness of being God incarnate, and he probably didn't think of himself as Messiah 5) his concept of salvation was to share wisdom and knowledge that could usher one into the kingdom of God 6) it is clear that he never intended to form a following 7) his death was unfortunate, but neither he nor his followers saw any particular significance in it (Boyd 62). The Jesus Seminar has concluded in essence, that the Bible's portrayal of Jesus is wrong. Christians have been worshipping a lie for 2,000 years. There are a number of faults in the methods of the Jesus Seminar. One of the most blaring is that the Seminar begins from a perspective of skepticism. The Gospels are assumed to be inauthentic, until they can prove themselves trustworthy at every point. "From the very start, then, we see that the agenda of the Seminar is not disinterested scholarship, but a social mission against the way in which the church controls the Bible . . ." (Johnson 6). Another problem is that the Jesus Seminar do not apply their own criteria for authenticity consistently. These criteria are multiple attestation, dissimilarity and embarrassment and only short aphorisms can accurately be remembered. The Good Samaritan parable received an 81% approval rating by the Seminar (Johnson 25). This parable is not a short aphorism, and it is found only in, so two of the three criteria do not apply to this particular saying of Jesus, yet is judged by a majority to be authentic. If the Jesus Seminar does not even utilize its own criteria consistently how can they be trusted to give us an accurate, unbiased picture of "the real Jesus"?

Prominent Members of the Jesus Seminar examined

Let's examine some of the more outspoken members of the Jesus Seminar and their respective reconstructions of Jesus. First, John Dominic Crossan. Crossan concluded in his book *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, that Jesus was a peasant Jewish Cynic. He believes that there is a distinction between the real Jesus and the historical Jesus. The real Jesus is the Jesus of 2000 years of Christian faith, and the historical Jesus is an attempt to talk about the earthly Jesus, who lived in 1st century Palestine. Crossan uses metaphorical language to do a great deal of interpreting in his "scholarship", and he repeatedly uses non-canonical sources as opposed to canonical sources, consistently dating the non-canonical sources earlier than the canonical ones. He believes that the non-canonical sources are independent and early attestations of Jesus' life, while the canonical sources are dependent on these earlier non-canonical sources. Crossan created a complex methodology to rate the reliability of a particular text. Similar to the rest of the Jesus Seminar, a major part of his criteria are date and multiple attestation. In other words, the earlier a source and the more an event or saying is attested to in

other texts, the more reliable it can be considered. The problem with all this is that Crossan uses a number of hypothetical sources, such as Q, Secret Mark and the Cross-Gospel, as the basis for his reconstruction of Jesus. Crossan divides his sources into three strata classified by date. The first stratum is from 30-60AD and contains early Gospel of Thomas, triple redacted Q, Miracles Collection, Apocalyptic scenario, and the Cross-Gospel. These are all hypothetical sources. Hypothetical sources are sources for which no actual document has been recovered. The Q document is an example. The obvious disadvantage of using mainly hypothetical sources is that there is no original manuscript to refer back to, and there is little to no multiple attestation of the very existence of the hypothetical source in question. Crossan also includes 3 obscure fragments of papyrus texts, the Gospel of the Hebrews, I Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians, and Romans, to complete his first stratum (Boyd 80). Cutting off the first strata at 60 AD excludes about half of Paul's writings, Acts, John's Gospel, and others. Basically, in order to agree with Crossan's reconstruction, you must accept the existence and give priority to Q and early Gospel of Thomas and also accept that Paul, Mark and Acts are all unreliable sources. This is a lot to ask.

Burton Mack spends a great deal of time and effort in trying to expose that the author of Mark's Gospel (which may or may not have been John Mark as the Bible records) created Christianity as a result of the myths he created in his gospel. Mack explained this view in his book *Myth of Innocence*. After Jesus' death, a number of Jesus movements preceded him, but none saw any particular significance in his death, they certainly had no resurrection beliefs, and they didn't see Jesus as Lord. Kloppenborg's triple redacted Q is in full swing as an important part of Mack's theory, except Mack adds a pre Q-1 stage and a post Q-1/pre Q-2 stage. Once Q moves through to the third redaction, Mark transforms it into his mythmaking story – which is what we know as the Gospel According to Mark – after which Q ceases to exist as an independent document. For Mack, Mark is an example of high level mythmaking. Mack holds to Markan priority, so the implications for discrediting Mark should be obvious. The authorship and credibility of Mark is discussed in the next section of this paper under the origins of Christianity.

Marcus Borg's reconstruction of Jesus differs somewhat from Crossan and Mack. Borg believes that Jesus was just a man, a holy man, but just a man nonetheless. He does not believe in nature miracles, or a literal, bodily resurrection, yet he regularly attends church with his wife who is a priest in the Episcopalian church. He believes that Jesus had a deep relationship with God and invited his followers to have a similar relationship with God's Spirit (conversation on historical Jesus with Borg and Wright).

Origins of Christianity and the Synoptics

Authorship of Mark's Gospel

How do scholars account for the rapid and widespread growth of Christianity, if not for the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth? First century manuscript evidence tells us that Christianity spread quickly throughout the Middle East and even into Rome. What do we really know about the birth of Christianity from Judaism?

If Mark's Gospel is entirely mythical, the other Gospels cannot be trusted either, since they relied heavily on Mark – well, that's the theory anyway. According to Burton Mack, Mark had to create a new "myth of origins" to rationalize the social history of the Jesus movement (Boyd 206). What were Mark's motives for doing this? Considering Mark's Jewish background, it

seems difficult to believe that he would do this. We have to remember that the disciples were thoroughly Jewish and living in a thoroughly Jewish setting. They were deeply monotheistic, and not easily influenced by mythology. Plus, first century people weren't stupid or gullible. "What is even more difficult to understand, however, is how this fabrication could have been believed by the Jesus people in Mark's own generation, . . . how could his contemporaries have failed to recognize this Gospel for being what it was" (Boyd 213-214).

There are some scholars such as John Dominic Crossan and Burton Mack who believe that it was not John Mark at all who wrote Mark's Gospel, it was an unknown author writing after 70 AD.

This would serve to further discredit the accuracy and reliability of the Gospel of Mark.

Establishing John Mark's authorship lends credibility to the gospel that bears his name.

Most obviously, the Gospel contains the title "the Gospel According to Mark". Titles would have been required in order to establish the authority of the Gospel, and anonymous Gospels would not have continued in circulation for long. The Gospels received their titles within a relatively short period of time after their writing. There are also 2nd century quotations from Mark in ancient manuscripts, which means that the Gospel would have had to be well circulated and accepted as authentic so that it could be quoted. Papias, thought to be a disciple of John, quotes from Mark in 120 and 130 AD. Papias is confirmed by Justin; Irenaeus, Origen, as well as by Clement of Alexandria. With such early and widespread acceptance of the authenticity of Mark's Gospel, it is difficult to imagine such a work being penned by an anonymous author. Also, because Mark was not one of the original disciples, it seems implausible for anyone other than Mark himself to claim to write the Gospel bearing his name, after all, more prestigious, or authoritative persons such as Peter or John, could have been imitated. If someone was going to make up a Gospel account, why weren't their names invoked?

The authority of Mark's Gospel lies in large portion behind the fact that his writing was largely dependent on Peter's preaching and experiences as an original disciple of Jesus. There is some internal evidence for this, as Mark mentions Peter 25 times, more than any other Gospel author mentions him. In Mark's Gospel, Peter is constantly portrayed as being in Jesus' inner most circle, yet he is portrayed in a true to life manner, he is not perfect. For someone wanting to add authority and credibility to a mythical story, it is also difficult to understand why Mark would have included accounts of Jesus associating with women, especially ones with questionable purity and character. As far as mythmaking goes, the Gospel of Mark is not a prime example.

Dating Mark's Gospel

Liberal scholars, if they do accept Mark's authorship, will date his Gospel late, after 70 AD – the destruction of Jerusalem – since Jesus could not have predicted this event in advance. If Matthew and Luke were dependent on Mark, they must be dated ten to twenty years later, which places them in the 80's to 90's AD.

There is no substantial evidence to support a late date for any of the Gospels, other than the assumption that Jesus could not have predicted the fall of Jerusalem prior to its occurrence. One cannot date a text merely based on personal worldview or presuppositions. It was also entirely possible that a first century Jewish prophet could have looked back to Old Testament prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and apply those prophecies to the present day. The prophecy mentioned in Luke's Gospel is extremely vague, especially if the author is looking back at the event in retrospect. Josephus uses a great deal of detail in recounting the destruction of Jerusalem, whereas Luke does not mention the destruction at all in Acts. The destruction of Jerusalem also predicted in Mark's Gospel, Mark 13:1 indicates that the temple is still standing

at the writing of the Gospel. Jesus' prophecy has been associated with the end times in Mark's Gospel. Why would Mark have made this connection if he knew that this was not the case, and that Jesus was only speaking about the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem?

Evidence for an earlier dating of Mark includes references to figures in authority. He refers to Pilate without stating that he was governor, and also refers to "the high priest" without naming Caiaphas. Pilate was the governor until 36AD and Caiaphas was high priest until 37 AD. The fact that Mark did not need to name them indicates that he is writing very soon after the events have taken place.

Dating the book of Acts

Most scholars agree that Mark and Luke were written prior to Acts, therefore, assigning Acts with a late date would necessitate assigning late dates to the other Synoptic Gospels as well. The book of Acts provides us with a picture of the early church, as having spread throughout the land, into the Mediterranean, through present day Syria and Turkey, straight into the heart of the Roman empire. There is simply no evidence to support a post-70 AD date for Acts. The book should be dated early, at about the mid to late 60's AD for several reasons. First, there is no mention of Nero's persecution of Christians, the Jewish revolt, Paul's death, or the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple with it. All four would be significant to the author's audience, and would be worthy of inclusion. Perhaps more substantial evidence, is given by Paul in I Timothy chapter six, who quotes from material found only in Luke's Gospel, concerning greed and proper use of money. Paul also quotes Luke verbatim in the Greek in I Timothy 5:18 // Luke 10:7. Paul's use of Luke makes perfect sense if Luke is in fact a companion of Paul. Therefore if Luke wrote in the early sixties, it would have been entirely possible for Paul, who wrote I Timothy in the mid to late sixties, to quote from Luke's Gospel.

"We" sections in the book of Acts lend credence to the idea that the book was written by a companion of Paul. "Critics, however suggest that the "we" sections were simply a literary device used to liven up the story or to make the story more credible. If the writer, however, was trying to liven up the story or even the illusion of presenting a more credible eyewitness one might wonder why he chose to write himself into the picture in the middle of Paul's second journey. By that time he's already missed Pentecost, Paul's presence at the stoning of Stephen, Paul's conversion, his first missionary journey, the Jerusalem Council and part of the second missionary journey (Ingolfsland 84)! Paul's conversion is detailed in the book of Acts, written by Luke. The detail in the account, and the fact that no other New Testament author – except Paul himself – mentions the conversion, leads one to believe that the author of Acts had personal access to Paul.

The Historicity of the book of Acts

The writer of Acts uses incredible detail to describe places he has visited, and he records with proven accuracy historical details in the time period he was to have lived. Sherwin-White, a leading authority on the subject of Greco-Roman history had this to say about the historical reliability of Acts, "For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming. Yet Acts is, in simple terms and judged externally, no less of a propaganda narrative than the Gospels, liable to similar distortions. But any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted" (Sherwin-White 189). Further evidence to support Luke's reliability in the book of Acts is also evident in his knowledge of rulers in his time and location. "Among the New Testament writers only Luke ever

names a Roman emperor. His references give us in outline a framework for the events of the Gospels and Acts. Jesus was born in the time of Augustus (Luke 2:1). The preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-2) and the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus happened under Tiberius (AD 14-37). Paul's journeys occupied much of the reigns of Claudius (AD 41-54; mentioned in Acts 11:28 and 18:2) and Nero (54-68), the Caesar to whom Paul appealed. Paul reached Rome about 60 AD" (Hemer 571). Luke briefly refers to Pontius Pilate in Acts 3:13; 4:27; and 13:28. Pilate's existence also has been confirmed by archaeology. "In 1961 a stone slab was discovered at Caesarea bearing the name Pontius Pilatus" (Rowden 510). Still more archaeological evidence affirms Luke's credibility and accent his attention to detail, "The record of Acts notes the various local institutions with minute correctness: the 'town clerk' at Ephesus, the 'politarchs' (Authorized Version 'rulers of the city') at Thessalonica, the court of 'Areopagus' or 'Mars' Hill' at Athens. The pride of Philippi in its status as a 'colony' of Roman citizens comes over clearly and with an ironic humor (Acts 16:12, 20-21, 37-39; compare Philippians 3:20, Revised Version). The confirmation of many details of this kind is reserved for us on stone in contemporary inscriptions from these cities" (Hemer 573). The reliability of Acts and with it Luke as an author have both been firmly established. To call them into question is simply to ignore all evidence to the contrary.

John's Gospel

Differences in John's theology

John's Gospel is often set apart from historical Jesus study by scholars. Because John was written later than the other gospels, probably about 85-90 AD, it is believed that his gospel was too heavily corrupted by Christian mythologizing and embellishment. John's Jesus is much bolder in declaring Himself to be the Messiah, uttering such things as "Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:58), and I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6). Additionally, the order of events in Jesus' life seems to be contradictory when compared to the Synoptics, and some of the strongest language referring to Jesus' Deity is used. It is in John's Gospel that Jesus is referred to as God in the flesh. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). It is because of this strong supernatural language that scholars all but ignore John's Gospel. What accounts for these differences?

Discrepancies between John's Gospel and the Synoptics

The Gospel of John emphasizes the last week of Jesus' life, which he presents as chronology of that week. Other than a seemingly bolder Jesus, there are discrepancies when comparing John that seem to give contradicting accounts of events. Some of these discrepancies are contradictions in the chronological order of events when compared to the Synoptics, the feeding of 4,000 vs. 5,000, differences in the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple, the hour given for Jesus' crucifixion, the day of the Passover, and the account of Judas' death. While these may seem formidable obstacles to overcome, they are fairly easily dealt with, especially when examining the text in its proper context.

Now we will examine the chronological order of events in the Gospels. Unfortunately, the Synoptic Gospels do not contain a great deal of information regarding chronology in Jesus' ministry. Though we live in a very time-oriented society, the first century world was not like

this, the Synoptic gospel accounts were not meant to be a chronological timeline of Jesus' life, they predominately grouped information topically, this does not make them inaccurate. Given John's omission of some significant events in Jesus' life – Jesus' baptism, the calling of the 12, transfiguration, and the Lord's supper, – and his inclusion of events that are not in the Synoptics – Jesus turning water into wine, Lazarus' raising, Jesus' early ministry to Judea and Samaria, and His regular visits to Jerusalem – it is not surprising that we would find John dealing with the events in his gospel in a different order. The material that John deals with is simply much different than that covered by the Synoptics, probably due to the fact that John is writing later than the first three and so would not repeat much of what has already been said.

John's Gospel chronicles the feeding of 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6:1-14), but then Mark cites the feeding of four thousand with seven loaves and a few fish Mark 8:1-10. Which was it, four or five thousand? The other Synoptics seem to confirm that it was 5,000, not 4,000. (Luke 9:10-17; Matt 14:1-21.) So it appears that Mark was mistaken. Or does it? Mark records two miraculous feedings, one with 4,000 present, and one with 5,000 present Mark 6:30-44. So it appears that there were two distinct feedings, not conflicting accounts of one.

Did Jesus cleanse the Temple twice, or are there conflicting accounts of one event? "The Synoptists make it clear that Jesus' cleansing the temple proved to be 'the last straw' for the Jewish authorities, sealing his imminent doom (Mk. 11:18), so a convincing harmonization would require John to be the evangelist who has relocated the passage. . . . John 2:13-25 is the only passage in the opening four chapters of John which is not linked to what precedes or follows it by an explicit reference to chronological sequence" (Blomberg 171). If this is so, the Synoptics place the cleansing of the temple at the end of Jesus' ministry, and would see that event as a catalyst for Jesus' crucifixion. John's idea about Jesus' cleansing the temple is different. "In John's account the Jews reply with a reference to the rebuilding of the temple having begun 46 years ago (John 2:20), a figure which places this event in AD 27 or 28. But Jesus was probably not crucified until at least AD 30, and John would not have invented such an incidental confirmation of chronology if he were freely reshaping the Synoptic version with little concern for keeping the facts straight" (Blomberg 173). Gauging crowd reaction in the differing accounts, it is likely that there were two different incidents, one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, and then another at the end, which was a contributing factor in Jesus' crucifixion. In Mark 11:15-18 for instance, the priests begin plotting to destroy Him, and the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching. In John's account (2:14ff), the people ask for a sign of Jesus' authority, which would have been firmly established at the end of His ministry. It does not take long when comparing the Synoptics account of events to John's to conclude that two different events are being recounted.

Exactly what time of day was Jesus' crucifixion? "It was the third hour when they crucified Him" Mark 15:25. "it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King" (John 19:14)! Do John and Mark contradict each other? "When one recognizes that the widespread lack of precise timekeeping devices in the ancient world led to the practice of dividing the day into fourths so that people often did not worry about speaking any more specifically than this, it becomes plausible to interpret Mark's 'third hour' to mean anywhere between 9.am. and noon. John's 'about the sixth hour' would also then refer to sometime before midday, perhaps within an hour or so" (Blomberg 180). There is enough overlap in the two different statements so that there is no contradiction. The crucifixion probably therefore began at sometime between 11 am and 12 noon.

What day did Jesus celebrate the Passover with His disciples? The Synoptic Gospels recount that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, and that Passover fell on a Thursday, rather than Friday as John's Gospel seems to recount. "Now before the Feast of the Passover, . . ." (John 13:1), and in the next verse, they are eating dinner. The implications being that the day before the Passover, Passover being on a Friday, they ate a Passover dinner together. "If Jesus was crucified on the fifteenth day of the Jewish month Nisan as this reconstruction requires, rather than on the fourteenth day, before the Passover had been eaten by most of the Jews, as the other proposed harmonizations require, then the only year close to the time of Christ's ministry in which he could have been crucified would have been AD 30. In all other years immediately before and after, 15 Nisan did not fall on a Friday" (Blomberg 178).

How did Judas Iscariot die? "(1) Judas hanged himself (Mt.), but the rope broke and his body was ruptured by the fall (possibly after he was already dead and beginning to decompose); (2) What the priests bought with Judas's money (Mt.) could be regarded as his purchase by their agency (Acts); (3) the field bought by the priests (Mt.) was the one where Judas died (Acts)" (Blomberg 192).

Paul

What can we know about Jesus from Paul?

Many historical Jesus scholars do not give much attention to Paul's writings as they consider who Jesus of Nazareth was. We must remember that the Gospels were for the most part in a narrative format, and Paul's epistles were not meant to tell stories about Jesus' life in quite the same way. They were written with the purpose of teaching or correcting something that was going on in those to whom Paul was writing. "And since most, if not all of Paul's letters predate the composition of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the awareness of these details is a significant confirmation of the early existence of the traditions that went into the formation of the gospels" (Blomberg 222). What can we learn about Jesus from Paul?

Paul provides us with a great deal of biographical information about Jesus. We know that Jesus was a descendent of Abraham (Galatians 3:16, 29) and also of the line of David (Romans 1:3). He was a poor man (II Corinthians 8:9) who was born of a woman under the law (Galatians 4:4). Jesus had a brother, James (Galatians 1:19), and gathered together disciples including James, Cephas, and John (Galatians 2:9). Jesus, on the night that He was betrayed instituted the Lord's Supper, which was to be done in remembrance until He returns again (I Corinthians 11:23ff). Jesus was remembered as a man of outstanding moral character, and led a life which showed this character (Philippians 2:6-8; Romans 15:3,8; Romans 5:19; I Cor. 11:1; I Timothy 1:16, 6:3 etc.). He came as a suffering servant II Corinthians 1:5; II Cor. 10:1. Pontius Pilate as Jesus' judge is confirmed in I Timothy 6:13, as is His death by crucifixion under the Romans (I Corinthians 1:23; I Corinthians 2:2; I Corinthians 2:8; II Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 3:1), but Paul does not exonerate the Jews of Jesus' death (I Thessalonians 2:15). There are also various details concerning Jesus' death, burial, and subsequent resurrection (I Corinthians 15:4-8).

Paul not only has a great deal of background information about Jesus' life, he also demonstrates a great deal of knowledge regarding the teachings of Christ, especially in the book of Romans, which has come to be regarded as a kind of book of Christian doctrine. We can learn a great deal about Jesus from Paul's writings.

"Romans 12:14 commands one to 'bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse (cf. Lk. 6:27b-28a par.); 12:17, to 'repay no evil for evil (cf. Mt. 5:39); and 13:7, to pay 'tribute to whom tribute is due, tax to whom tax is due, reverence to whom reverence is due, honour to whom honour is due' (cf. Mk. 12:17 pars.). In 13:8-9 Paul sums up the whole of the Law in the commandment to love one's neighbour (cf. Gal. 5:14; Mk. 12:31 pars.); in 14:10 he condemns judging one's brother since all will be judged (cf. Mt. 7:1-2a par.); and in 14:14 he declares, 'I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean by itself' (cf. Lk. 11:41; Mk. 7:19b). Finally in 16:19 he encourages wisdom concerning the good and innocence as to evil, an apparent illusion to Matthew 10:16b" (Blomberg 223). Paul's writings are saturated with Jesus' teachings, and often echo His words as found in the Gospel accounts.

It must have taken something rather dramatic in order for Paul to become a professing Christian. After all, Paul was a Pharisee who persecuted Christians. He was on his way to continue doing this when he was miraculously converted on the road to Damascus. Paul talks about his change in priorities, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Who do you say that I am?

What did Jesus say about Himself?

We have looked a great deal at what other people have said about who Jesus is, but what did Jesus say about Himself during His lifetime? Fortunately (or unfortunately depending on your view) the New Testament is our best record of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The way in which He spoke about Himself is important, because we must understand what it was about this first century Jewish man that led some people who saw Him to believe He was Divine, and some to think that He was worthy of execution as a criminal. "The resurrection can only be understood as the Divine vindication of the man that was rejected as a blasphemer" (Craig; will the real Jesus stand up?). Jesus did make some extraordinary claims about himself, and He made the issue of His identity a very personal one, one that we must even ask ourselves today. Jesus asked His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13)

One thing many scholars agree on, Jesus used parables a great deal in his teaching ministry. One particular piece of imagery Jesus came back to again and again was that of a shepherd. He said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" John 10:11(see also verses following through verse 16). He talks of leaving 99 sheep behind to search for one, he tells Peter to feed his sheep, and so on. Shepherd imagery is prevalent throughout the Gospel accounts, and even other New Testament authors pick up on it in reference to Jesus (I Peter 5:4 and Hebrews 13:20 for example).

The significance of the shepherd imagery lies in the parallels between this imagery Jesus uses of himself as a shepherd, and a prophecy in Ezekiel 34. Verses 11-31 describe the true shepherd as one who will care for the flock, feed them, bring them together when they are scattered, and judge between the sheep and the goats. Jesus fits this model perfectly, and the shepherd imagery he uses does parallel to this Ezekiel passage. The main significance of the Ezekiel passage is the fact that it is YHWH himself that is doing all of these things. In Jesus using this imagery, he is reminding the people that it is Israel's God that has been prophesied to do these things. See also II Samuel 24:17, Zechariah 13:7, I Kings 22:17, Isaiah 44:28, Micah 5:4, and Isaiah 40:11 for similar Old Testament Shepherd imagery.

Jesus places Himself in the position of speaking for God on numerous occasions. He commonly used the phrase, "You have heard it said to you (and would then quote from the Old Testament) but I say to you (and would then add something to His reference). A good example of this is Jesus' preaching on divorce. "It was said, 'whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces His wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32). This formula places Jesus' words on an equal level with God's words.

Jesus refers to the things belonging to and referring to God as belonging and referring to Him. An example is in Matthew 13:41-42, where Jesus says, "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them in the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus equates His kingdom with God's kingdom, and His angels with God's angels.

What do first and second century sources say about Jesus?

What can we know about Jesus from non-canonical Christian and even non-Christian sources? First, it is difficult to hold to a view that Jesus of Nazareth never existed. Even some of the most liberal scholars have had to concede that much. Beginning with non-Christian sources, Tacitus, a historian from ancient Rome, wrote "Annals" in 115 AD,

But neither human resources, nor imperial munificence, nor appeasement of the gods, eliminated sinister suspicions that the fire had been instigated. To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats – and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus. But in spite of this temporary setback the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judea (where the mischief had started) but even in Rome. All degraded and shameful practices collect and flourish in the capital.

First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned – not so much for incendiarism as for their anti-social tendencies. Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as a substitute for daylight (Grant 365).

Suetonius and Pliny the younger refer to Christians in their respective writings. "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from the city" (Graves 202).

. . . that on a fixed day they were accustomed to come together before daylight and to sing by turns a hymn to Christ as a god, and that they bound themselves by oath, not for some crime but that they would not commit robbery, theft, or adultery, that they would not betray a trust nor deny a deposit when called upon. After this it was their custom to disperse and to come together again to partake of food, of an ordinary and harmless kind. . . (Translations and Reprints . . . 9).

There is enough manuscript evidence to support early Christian gatherings, as well as Christ's central role in worship. And this from non-Christians. First century Christian sources also confirm early Christian doctrine. Justin Martyr (100-163 A.D.) for example says that Jesus was, "crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the times of Tiberius Caesar" (Donaldson and Roberts 166). Ignatius (50-100 A.D) talks of "God existing in the flesh", and coming from "both of Mary and of God" (Donaldson and Roberts 52). This is a very clear statement of

Christ's Deity, and it is within the first generation of Christianity. Such a statement in this early date dispels the idea that Christians over time mythologized Christ and He became elevated to the position of God over the centuries. Clement of Rome (writing in the 80's and 90's), has been linked to Paul through Philippians 4:3 ". . . together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life". He writes, "the apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God and the apostles by Christ"(Donaldson and Roberts 16).

There is plenty of evidence to support the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was other than just a man, and that early Christians were concerned with the accuracy of their accounts.

Resurrection of Jesus

The last topic to be dealt with is one of the most significant for the Christian faith; it is the issue concerning Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Was this resurrection literal or spiritual in nature? Paul's theology, recorded in I Corinthians 15:17 indicates a literal, bodily resurrection "and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins". Paul affirms the resurrection elsewhere in his writings as well, (I Thessalonians 4:14, Romans 4:24; 6:4; 10:9 for example). This next section will be indebted to a debate between John Dominic Crossan and William Lane Craig titled "Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?" in which Dr. Craig presents evidence for a bodily, literal resurrection while Dr. Crossan argues the liberal position that has already been discussed thus far.

Dr. Craig based the rest of the debate on two contentions. "1. The real Jesus rose from the dead in confirmation of his radical personal claims to divinity. 2. If #1 is false . . . then Christianity is a fairy tale which no rational person should believe" (Craig, will the real Jesus please stand up). That is a powerful set of statements which places a great deal of importance on the facts surrounding the resurrection. The four basic points he follows with are that Jesus was buried by Joseph of Aramethia in his own personal tomb, the Sunday following the crucifixion of Jesus, the tomb was found empty by a group of women followers, multiple occasions and different individuals and groups saw Jesus alive after His death, and the original disciples believed that Jesus had risen from the dead despite the fact that they had every reason not to.

Breaking down each point into sub-points, the burial story is attested to by Paul in I Corinthians, and is found in old source material used by Mark. Joseph of Aramethia being a member of the Sanhedrin, which had condemned Jesus, would be unlikely to have been made up by later Christian authors. Lastly, quite simply, the story is simple, without legendary exaggerations, and there is no other burial story.

Regarding the empty tomb, Paul cites this in I Corinthians, and the story is also part of Mark's source material, the empty tomb explanation is simple and not embellished. Early rationalizations to counter the idea that Jesus was raised from the dead included stories that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body, which would presuppose that the tomb was empty. Lastly, women could not even testify in court as a witness, and so, for them to be the first at the tomb would lead one to believe that was the way the events actually unfolded.

Multiple attestation of post-crucifixion sightings are listed in Paul's writings as, appearances to the 500 brethren, Peter, James and the 12 disciples. Jesus was seen by multiple persons, and independently of each other. The sightings are also placed in proper historical settings; the disciples are fishing, when Jesus unexpectedly appears to them. Had the story been made up, further embellishment would be expected.

Probably the most significant part of Craig's argument comes in his dissection of his last point,

which examines the worldview of the disciples of Jesus. He states that the disciples had every reason NOT to believe in a resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, yet they were STILL convinced. First, the Jews did not have a concept of a dying much less risen Messiah. The fact that having no frame of reference to draw from, they still witnessed appearances of Jesus. This refutes the idea that the disciples hallucinated seeing Jesus, because they would not have expected to see Him again. Second, "according to Jewish law, Jesus' execution as a criminal showed Him out to be a heretic, a man literally under the curse of God." Why would the disciples believe that a man cursed by God could be then raised from the dead? This would explain why the disciples went back to their previous occupations, and were caught off guard when He appeared to them. Lastly, "Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead before the general resurrection at the end of the world." Plain and simple, the disciples' Jewish worldview was hostile to the idea that Jesus would be raised from the dead. In hindsight, looking at the events surrounding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, Paul and the disciples recognize the importance of this event, but before it actually happened, they did not understand. Jesus rose bodily from the dead on the third day, just as he foreshadowed in the Gospel accounts of His life. This is the simplest explanation and the one, which takes as much of the evidence as possible into consideration.

Conclusion

This has by no means been an exhaustive study in the historical Jesus. Such a study would be impossible. Major points of contention have been addressed, and given various forms of evidence in order to back up a Biblical portrait of Jesus.

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[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Deciphering the Errors in the Da Vinci Code

<http://y-jesus.com/monalisa.php>

MONA LISA'S SMIRK:

Was there a Da Vinci Conspiracy?

The Da Vinci Code is not to be ignored as a fictional plot. Its premise, that Jesus Christ has been reinvented for political purposes, attacks the very foundation of Christianity. Its author, Dan Brown, has stated on national TV that, even though the plot is fictional, he believes its account of Jesus' identity is true. So what is the truth? Let's take a look.

- Did Jesus have a secret marriage with Mary Magdalene?
- Was Jesus' divinity invented by Constantine and the church?
- Were the original records of Jesus destroyed?
- Do recently discovered manuscripts tell the truth about Jesus?

Has a gigantic conspiracy resulted in the reinvention of Jesus? According to the book and movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, that is exactly what happened. Several of the book's assertions regarding Jesus smack of conspiracy. For example, the book states:

"Nobody is saying Christ was a fraud, or denying that He walked the earth and inspired millions to better lives. All we are saying is that Constantine took advantage of Christ's substantial influence and importance. And in doing so, he shaped the face of Christianity as we know it today."¹

Could this shocking assertion from Dan Brown's best-selling book be true? Or is the premise behind it just the stuff of a good conspiracy novel--on a par with a belief that aliens crash-landed at Roswell, New Mexico, or that there was a second gunman on the grassy knoll in Dallas when JFK was assassinated?

Either way, the story is compelling. No wonder Brown's book has become one of the best-selling stories of the decade.

The Jesus Conspiracy

The Da Vinci Code begins with the murder of a French museum curator named Jacques Sauniere. A scholarly Harvard professor and a beautiful French cryptologist are commissioned to decipher a message left by the curator before his death. The message turns out to reveal the most profound conspiracy in the history of humankind: a cover-up of the true message of Jesus Christ by a

secret arm of the Roman Catholic Church called Opus Dei.

Before his death, the curator had evidence that could disprove the deity of Christ. Although (according to the plot) the church tried for centuries to suppress the evidence, great thinkers and artists have planted clues everywhere: in paintings such as the *Mona Lisa* and *Last Supper* by da Vinci, in the architecture of cathedrals, even in Disney cartoons. The book's main claims are these:

- The Roman emperor Constantine conspired to deify Jesus Christ.
- Constantine personally selected the books of the New Testament.
- The Gnostic gospels were banned by men to suppress women.
- Jesus and Mary Magdalene were secretly married and had a child.
- Thousands of secret documents disprove key points of Christianity.

Brown reveals his conspiracy through the book's fictional expert, British royal historian Sir Leigh Teabing. Presented as a wise old scholar, Teabing reveals to cryptologist Sophie Neveu that at the Council of Nicaea in a.d. 325 "many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted upon," including the divinity of Jesus.

"Until that moment in history," he says, "Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless."

Neveu is shocked. "Not the Son of God?" she asks.

Teabing explains: "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea."

"Hold on. You're saying Jesus' divinity was the result of a vote?"

"A relatively close vote at that," Teabing tells the stunned cryptologist.²

So, according to Teabing, Jesus was not regarded as God until the Council of Nicaea in a.d. 325, when the real records of Jesus were allegedly banned and destroyed. Thus, according to the theory, the entire foundation of Christianity rests upon a lie.

The Da Vinci Code has sold its story well, drawing comments from readers such as "If it were not true it could not have been published!" Another said he would "never set foot in a church again." A reviewer of the book praised it for its "impeccable research."³ Pretty convincing for a fictional work.

Let's accept for the moment that Teabing's proposal might be true. Why, in that case, would the Council of Nicaea decide to promote Jesus to Godhood?

"It was all about power," Teabing continues. "Christ as Messiah was critical to the functioning of Church and state. Many scholars claim that the early Church literally stole Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power."⁴

In many ways, *The Da Vinci Code* is the ultimate conspiracy theory. If Brown's assertions are correct, then we have been lied to—by the church, by history, and by the Bible. Perhaps even by those we trust most: our parents or teachers. And it was all for the sake of a power grab.

Although *The Da Vinci Code* is fictional, it does base much of its premise upon actual events (the Council of Nicaea), actual people (Constantine and Arius), and actual documents (the Gnostic gospels). If we are to get to the bottom of the conspiracy, our project must be to address Brown's accusations and separate fact from fiction.

Constantine and Christianity

In the centuries prior to Constantine's reign over the Roman Empire, Christians had been severely persecuted. But then, while entrenched in warfare, Constantine reported to have seen a bright image of a cross in the sky inscribed with the words "Conquer by this." He marched into battle under the sign of the cross and took control of the empire.

Constantine's apparent conversion to Christianity was a watershed in church history. Rome became a Christian empire. For the first time in nearly 300 years it was relatively safe, and even cool, to be a Christian.

No longer were Christians persecuted for their faith. Constantine then sought to unify his Eastern and Western Empires, which had been badly divided by schisms, sects, and cults, centering mostly around the issue of Jesus Christ's identity.

These are some of the kernels of truth in *The Da Vinci Code*, and kernels of truth are a prerequisite for any successful conspiracy theory. But the book's plot turns Constantine into a conspirator. So let's address a key question raised by Brown's theory: did Constantine invent the Christian doctrine of Jesus' divinity?

Deifying Jesus

To answer Brown's accusation, we must first determine what Christians in general believed before Constantine ever convened the council at Nicaea.

Christians had been worshiping Jesus as God since the first century. But in the fourth century, a church leader from the east, Arius, launched a campaign to defend God's oneness. He taught that Jesus was a specially created being, higher than the angels, but not God. Athanasius and most church leaders, on the other hand, were convinced that Jesus was God in the flesh.

Constantine wanted to settle the dispute, hoping to bring peace to his empire, uniting the east and west divisions. Thus, in 325 A.D., he convened more than 300 bishops at Nicaea (now part of Turkey) from throughout the Christian world. The crucial question is, did the early church think Jesus was the Creator or merely a creation—Son of God or son of a carpenter? So, what did the apostles teach about Jesus? From their very first recorded statements, they regarded him as God. About 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, Paul wrote the Philippians that Jesus was God

in human form (Philippians 2:6-7, NLT). And John, a close eye-witness, confirms Jesus' divinity in the following passage:

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn't make. Life itself was in him..So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us (John 1: 1-4, 14, NLT).

This passage from John 1, has been discovered in an ancient manuscript, and it is carbon-dated at 175-225 A.D. Thus Jesus was clearly spoken of as God over a hundred years before Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea. We now see that forensic manuscript evidence contradicts The Da Vinci Code's claim that Jesus' divinity was a fourth century invention. But what does history tell us about the Council of Nicaea? Brown asserts in his book, through Teabing, that the majority of bishops at Nicaea overruled Arius's belief that Jesus was a "mortal prophet" and adopted the doctrine of Jesus' divinity by a "relatively close vote." True or false?

In reality, the vote was a landslide: only two of the 318 bishops dissented. Whereas Arius believed that the Father alone was God, and that Jesus was His supreme creation, the council concluded that Jesus and the Father were of the same divine essence.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were deemed to be distinct, coexistent, coeternal Persons, but one God. This doctrine of one God in three Persons became known as the Nicene Creed, and is the central core of the Christian Faith. Now, it is true that Arius was persuasive and had considerable influence. The landslide vote came after considerable debate. But in the end the council overwhelmingly declared Arius to be a heretic, since his teaching contradicted what the apostles had taught about Jesus' divinity.

History also confirms that Jesus had publicly condoned the worship he received from his disciples. And, as we have seen, Paul and other apostles clearly taught that Jesus is God and is worthy of worship.

From the first days of the Christian church, Jesus was regarded as far more than a mere man, and most of his followers worshiped him as Lord-the Creator of the universe. So, how could Constantine have invented the doctrine of Jesus' divinity if the church had regarded Jesus as God for more than 200 years? The Da Vinci Code doesn't address this question.

Firing on the Canon

The Da Vinci Code also states that Constantine suppressed all documents about Jesus other than those found in our current New Testament canon (recognized by the church as authentic eyewitness reports of the apostles). It further asserts that the New Testament accounts were altered by Constantine and the bishops to reinvent Jesus. Another key element of *The Da Vinci Code* conspiracy is that the four New Testament Gospels were cherry-picked from a total of "more than 80 gospels," most of which were supposedly suppressed by Constantine.⁵

There are two central issues here, and we need to address both. The first is whether Constantine altered or biased the selection of the New Testament books. The second is whether he barred

documents that should have been included in the Bible.

Regarding the first issue, letters and documents written by second century church leaders and heretics alike confirm the wide usage of the New Testament books. Nearly 200 years before Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea, the heretic Marcion listed 11 of the 27 New Testament books as being the authentic writings of the apostles.

And about the same time, another heretic, Valentinus, alludes to a wide variety of New Testament themes and passages. Since these two heretics were opponents of the early church leadership, they were not writing just what the bishops wanted. Yet, like the early church, they still referred to the same New Testament books we read today.

So, if the New Testament was already widely in use 200 years before Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, how could the emperor have invented or altered it? By that time the church was widespread and encompassed hundreds of thousands if not millions of believers, all of whom were familiar with the New Testament accounts.

In his book *The Da Vinci Deception*, an analysis of *The Da Vinci Code*, Dr. Erwin Lutzer remarks,

"Constantine did not decide which books would be in the canon; indeed, the topic of the canon did not even come up at the Council of Nicaea. By that time the early church was reading a canon of books it had determined was the Word of God two hundred years earlier."⁶

Although the official canon was still years from being finalized, the New Testament of today was deemed authentic more than two centuries before Nicaea.

This brings us to our second issue; why were these mysterious Gnostic gospels destroyed and excluded from the New Testament? In the book, Teabing asserts that the Gnostic writings were eliminated from 50 authorized Bibles commissioned by Constantine at the council. He excitedly tells Neveu:

"Because Constantine upgraded Jesus' status almost four centuries after Jesus' death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history. ... Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned."⁷

Are these Gnostic writings the real history of Jesus Christ? Let's take a deeper look to see if we can separate truth from fiction.

Secret "Knowers"

The Gnostic gospels are attributed to a group known as (big surprise here) the Gnostics. Their name comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.” These people thought they had secret, special knowledge hidden from ordinary people.

Of the 52 writings, only five are actually listed as gospels. As we shall see, these so-called gospels are markedly different from the New Testament Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

As Christianity spread, the Gnostics mixed some doctrines and elements of Christianity into their beliefs, morphing Gnosticism into a counterfeit Christianity. Perhaps they did it to keep recruitment numbers up and make Jesus a poster child for their cause. However, for their system of thought to fit with Christianity, Jesus needed to be reinvented, stripped of both his humanity and his absolute deity.

In *The Oxford History of Christianity* John McManners wrote of the Gnostics’ mixture of Christian and mythical beliefs.

"Gnosticism was (and still is) a theosophy with many ingredients. Occultism and oriental mysticism became fused with astrology, magic. ... They collected sayings of Jesus shaped to fit their own interpretation (as in the Gospel of Thomas), and offered their adherents an alternative or rival form of Christianity."⁸

Early Critics

Contrary to Brown’s assertions, it was not Constantine who branded the Gnostic beliefs as heretical; it was the apostles themselves. A mild strain of the philosophy was already growing in the first century just decades after the death of Jesus. The apostles, in their teaching and writings, went to great lengths to condemn these beliefs as being opposed to the truth of Jesus, to whom they were eyewitnesses.

Check out, for example, what the apostle John wrote near the end of the first century:

"Who is the great liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son." (1 John 2:22)

Following the apostles’ teaching, the early church leaders unanimously condemned the Gnostics as a cult. Church father Irenaeus, writing 140 years before the Council of Nicaea, confirmed that the Gnostics were condemned by the church as heretics. He also rejected their “gospels.” However, referring to the four New Testament Gospels, he said, “It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are.”⁹

Christian theologian Origen wrote this in the early third century, more than a hundred years before Nicaea:

I know a certain gospel which is called “The Gospel according to Thomas” and a “Gospel according to Matthias,” and many others have we read—lest we should in any way be

considered ignorant because of those who imagine they possess some knowledge if they are acquainted with these. Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only four gospels should be accepted.¹⁰

There we have it in the words of a highly regarded early church leader. The Gnostics were recognized as a non-Christian cult well before the Council of Nicaea. But there's more evidence calling into question claims made in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Who's Sexist?

Brown suggests that one of the motives for Constantine's alleged banning of the Gnostic writings was a desire to suppress women in the church. Ironically, it is the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas that demeans women. It concludes (supposedly quoting Peter) with this eye-popping statement: "Let Mary go away from us, because women are not worthy of life" (114). Then Jesus allegedly tells Peter that he will make Mary into a male so that she may enter the kingdom of heaven. Read: women are inferior. With sentiments like that on display, it's difficult to conceive of the Gnostic writings as being a battle cry for women's liberation.

In stark contrast, the Jesus of the biblical Gospels always treated women with dignity and respect. Revolutionary verses like this one found within the New Testament have been foundational to attempts at raising women's status:

"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians-you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, NLT).

Mystery Authors

When it comes to the Gnostic gospels, just about every book carries the name of a New Testament character: the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Mary, The Gospel of Judas, and so on. (Sounds a little like roll call at a parochial school.) These are the books that conspiracy theories like *The Da Vinci Code* are based upon. But were they even written by their purported authors?

The Gnostic gospels are dated about 110 to 300 years after Christ, and no credible scholar believes any of them could have been written by their namesakes. In James M. Robinson's comprehensive *The Nag Hammadi Library*, we learn that the Gnostic gospels were written by "largely unrelated and anonymous authors."¹² Dr. Darrell L. Bock, professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote,

"The bulk of this material is a few generations removed from the foundations of the Christian faith, a vital point to remember when assessing the contents."¹³

New Testament scholar Norman Geisler commented on two Gnostic writings, the Gospel of Peter and the Acts of John. (These Gnostic writings are not to be confused with the New Testament books written by John and Peter.):

“The Gnostic writings were not written by the apostles, but by men in the second century (and later) pretending to use apostolic authority to advance their own teachings. Today we call this fraud and forgery.”¹⁴

The Gnostic gospels are not historical accounts of Jesus' life but instead are largely esoteric sayings, shrouded in mystery, leaving out historical details such as names, places, and events. This is in striking contrast to the New Testament Gospels, which contain innumerable historical facts about Jesus' life, ministry, and words.

Mrs. Jesus

The juiciest part of the Da Vinci conspiracy is the assertion that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had a secret marriage that produced a child, perpetuating his bloodline. Furthermore, Mary Magdalene's womb, carrying Jesus' offspring, is presented in the book as the legendary Holy Grail, a secret closely held by a Catholic organization called the Priory of Sion. Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo Da Vinci were all cited as members.

Romance. Scandal. Intrigue. Great stuff for a conspiracy theory. But is it true? Let's look at what scholars say.

A *Newsweek* magazine article, that summarized leading scholars' opinions, concluded that the theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were secretly married has no historical basis.¹⁵ The proposal set forth in *The Da Vinci Code* is built primarily upon one solitary verse in the Gospel of Philip that indicates Jesus and Mary were companions. In the book, Teabing tries to build a case that the word for companion (koinonos) could mean spouse. But Teabing's theory is not accepted by scholars.

There is also a single verse in the Gospel of Philip that says Jesus kissed Mary. Greeting friends with a kiss was common in the first century, and had no sexual connotation. But even if *The Da Vinci Code* interpretation is correct, there is no other historical document to confirm its theory. And since the Gospel of Philip is a forged document written 150-220 years after Christ by an unknown author, its statement about Jesus isn't historically reliable.

Perhaps the Gnostics felt the New Testament was a bit shy on romance and decided to sauce it up a little. Whatever the reason, this isolated and obscure verse written two centuries after Christ isn't much to base a conspiracy theory upon. Interesting reading perhaps, but definitely not history.

As to the Holy Grail and the Priory of Sion, Brown's fictional account again distorts history. The legendary Holy Grail was supposedly Jesus' cup at his last supper, and had nothing to do with Mary Magdalene. And Leonardo da Vinci never could have known about the Priory of Sion, since it wasn't founded until 1956, 437 years after his death. Again, interesting fiction, but phony history.

The "Secret" Documents

But what about Teabing's disclosure that "thousands of secret documents" prove that Christianity is a hoax? Could this be true?

If there were such documents, scholars opposed to Christianity would have a field day with them. Fraudulent writings that were rejected by the early church for heretical views are not secret, having been known about for centuries. No surprise there. They have never been considered part of the authentic writings of the apostles.

And if Brown (Teabing) is referring to the apocryphal, or infancy Gospels, that cat is also out of the bag. They are not secret, nor do they disprove Christianity. New Testament scholar Raymond Brown has said of the Gnostic gospels,

"We learn not a single verifiable new fact about the historical Jesus' ministry, and only a few new sayings that might possibly have been his."¹⁸

Unlike the Gnostic gospels, whose authors are unknown and who were not eyewitnesses, the New Testament we have today has passed numerous tests for authenticity. The contrast is devastating to those pushing conspiracy theories. New Testament historian F. F. Bruce wrote:

"There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."¹⁹

New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger revealed why the Gospel of Thomas was not accepted by the early church:

"It is not right to say that the Gospel of Thomas was excluded by some fiat on the part of a council: the right way to put it is, the Gospel of Thomas excluded itself! It did not harmonize with other testimony about Jesus that early Christians accepted as trustworthy."¹⁷

History's Verdict

So, what are we to conclude regarding the various conspiracy theories about Jesus Christ? Karen King, professor of ecclesiastical history at Harvard, has written several books on the Gnostic gospels, including *The Gospel of Mary of Magdala* and *What Is Gnosticism?* King, though a strong advocate of Gnostic teaching, concluded, "These notions about the conspiracy theory ... are all marginal ideas that have no historical basis."²⁰

In spite of the lack of historical evidence, conspiracy theories will still sell millions of books and set box office records. Scholars in related fields, some Christians and some with no faith at all, have disputed the claims of *The Da Vinci Code*. However, the easily swayed will still wonder; Could there be something to it after all?

Award-winning television journalist Frank Sesno asked a panel of historical scholars about the fascination people have with conspiracy theories. Professor Stanley Kutler from the University of Wisconsin replied, "We all love mysteries-but we love conspiracies more."²¹

So, if you want to read a great conspiracy theory about Jesus, Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, may be just the ticket for you. But if you want to read the true accounts of Jesus Christ, then Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will get you back to what the eyewitnesses saw, heard, and wrote. Who would you rather believe?

Did Jesus Really Rise From The Dead?

The greatest question of our time is “Who is the real Jesus Christ?” Was he just an exceptional man, or was he God in the flesh, as Paul, John, and his other disciples believed?

The eyewitnesses to Jesus Christ actually spoke and acted like they believed he physically rose from the dead after his crucifixion. If they were wrong then Christianity has been founded upon a lie. But if they were right, such a miracle would substantiate all Jesus said about God, himself, and us.

But must we take the resurrection of Jesus Christ by faith alone, or is there solid historical evidence? Several skeptics began investigations into the historical record to prove the resurrection account false. What did they discover?

BODY COUNT:

Did Jesus rise from the dead?

We all wonder what will happen to us after we die. When a loved one dies, we long to see him or her again after our turn comes. Will we have a glorious reunion with those we love or is death the end of all consciousness?

Jesus taught that life does not end after our bodies die. He made this startling claim: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again.”[According to the eyewitnesses closest to him, Jesus then demonstrated his power over death by rising from the dead after being crucified and buried for three days. It is this belief that has given hope to Christians for nearly 2000 years.

But some people have no hope of life after death. The atheistic philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote, “I believe that when I die I shall rot, and nothing of my own ego will survive.”[1] Russell obviously didn’t believe Jesus’ words.

Jesus’ followers wrote that he appeared alive to them after his crucifixion and burial. They claim not only to have seen him but also to have eaten with him, touched him, and spent 40 days with him.

So could this have been simply a story that grew over time, or is it based upon solid evidence? The answer to this question is foundational to Christianity. For if Jesus did rise from the dead, it would validate everything he said about himself, about the meaning of life, and about our destiny after death.

If Jesus did rise from the dead then he alone would have the answers to what life is about and what is facing us after we die. On the other hand, if the resurrection account of Jesus is not true, then Christianity would be founded upon a lie. Theologian R. C. Sproul puts it this way:

The claim of resurrection is vital to Christianity. If Christ has been raised from the dead by God, then He has the credentials and certification that no other religious leader possesses. Buddha is dead. Mohammad is dead. Moses is dead. Confucius is dead. But, according to Christianity, Christ is alive.[2]

Many skeptics have attempted to disprove the resurrection. Josh McDowell was one such skeptic who spent more than seven hundred hours researching the evidence for the resurrection. McDowell stated this regarding the importance of the resurrection:

I have come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the most wicked, vicious, heartless hoaxes ever foisted upon the minds of men, OR it is the most fantastic fact of history.[3] McDowell later wrote his classic work, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, documenting what he discovered.

So, is Jesus' resurrection a fantastic fact or a vicious myth? To find out, we need to look at the evidence of history and draw our own conclusions. Let's see what skeptics who investigated the resurrection discovered for themselves.

Cynics and Skeptics

Sadly, not everyone is willing to fairly examine the evidence. Bertrand Russell admits his take on Jesus was "not concerned" with historical facts.[4] Historian Joseph Campbell, without citing evidence, calmly told his PBS television audience that the resurrection of Jesus is not a factual event.[5] Other scholars, such as John Dominic Crossan of the Jesus Seminar, agree with him.[6] None of these skeptics present any evidence for their views.

True skeptics, as opposed to cynics, are interested in evidence. In a *Skeptic* magazine editorial entitled "What Is a Skeptic?" the following definition is given: "Skepticism is ... the application of reason to any and all ideas - no sacred cows allowed. In other words ... skeptics do not go into an investigation closed to the possibility that a phenomenon might be real or that a claim might be true. When we say we are "skeptical," we mean that we must see compelling evidence before we believe." [7]

Unlike Russell and Crossan, many true skeptics have investigated the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. We will hear from some of them and see how they analyzed the evidence for what is perhaps the most important question in the history of the human race: Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Self-Prophecy

In advance of his death, Jesus told his disciples that he would be betrayed, arrested, and crucified and that he would come back to life three days later. That's a strange plan! What was behind it?

Jesus was no entertainer willing to perform for others on demand; instead, he promised that his death and resurrection would prove to people (if their minds and hearts were open) that he was indeed the Messiah.

Bible scholar Wilbur Smith remarked about Jesus:

When he said that He himself would rise again from the dead, the third day after He was crucified, He said something that only a fool would dare say, if He expected longer the devotion of any disciples - unless He was sure He was going to rise. No founder of any world religion known to men ever dared say a thing like that.[8]

In other words, since Jesus had clearly told his disciples that he would rise again after his death, failure to keep that promise would expose him as a fraud. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. How did Jesus die before he (if he really did die) rose again?

A Horrific Death and Then . . . ?

You know what Jesus' last hours of earthly life were like if you watched the movie by road warrior/braveheart Mel Gibson. If you missed parts of *The Passion of the Christ* because you were shielding your eyes (it would have been easier to simply shoot the movie with a red filter on the camera), just flip to the back pages of any Gospel in your New Testament to find out what you missed.

As Jesus predicted, he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, Judas Iscariot, and was arrested. In a mock trial under the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, he was convicted of treason and condemned to die on a wooden cross. Prior to being nailed to the cross, Jesus was brutally beaten with a Roman cat-o'-nine-tails, a whip with bits of bone and metal that would rip flesh. He was punched repeatedly, kicked, and spat upon.

Then, using mallets, the Roman executioners pounded the heavy wrought-iron nails into Jesus' wrists and feet. Finally they dropped the cross in a hole in the ground between two other crosses bearing convicted thieves.

Jesus hung there for approximately six hours. Then, at 3:00 in the afternoon - that is, at exactly the same time the Passover lamb was being sacrificed as a sin offering (a little symbolism there, you think?) - Jesus cried out, "It is finished" (in Aramaic), and died.[9] Suddenly the sky went dark and an earthquake shook the land.[10]

An even greater darkness of depression annihilated the dreams of those who had become infatuated with his charisma and joyful vitality. Former Lord High Chancellor of Britain, Lord Hailsham, notes, "The tragedy of the Cross was not that they crucified a melancholy figure, full of moral precepts, ascetic and gloomy ... What they crucified was a young man, vital, full of life and the joy of it, the Lord of life itself ... someone so utterly attractive that people followed him for the sheer fun of it." [11]

Pilate wanted verification that Jesus was dead before allowing his crucified body to be buried. So a Roman guard thrust a spear into Jesus' side. The mixture of blood and water that flowed out was a clear indication that Jesus was dead. "The dead do not bleed, ordinarily, but the right auricle of the human heart holds liquid blood after death, and the outer sac hold a serum called hydropericardium." [12] Once his death was certified by the guards, Jesus' body was then taken down from the cross and buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. Roman guards next sealed the tomb, and secured it with a 24-hour watch.

Meanwhile, Jesus' disciples were in shock. Dr. J. P. Moreland explains how devastated and confused they were after Jesus' death on the cross. "They no longer had confidence that Jesus had been sent by God. They also had been taught that God would not let his Messiah suffer death. So they dispersed. The Jesus movement was all but stopped in its tracks." [13]

All hope was vanquished. Rome and the Jewish leaders had prevailed - or so it seemed.

Something Happened

But it wasn't the end. The Jesus movement did not disappear (obviously), and in fact Christianity exists today as the world's largest religion. Therefore, we've got to know what happened after Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb.

In a *New York Times* article, Peter Steinfelds cites the startling events that occurred three days after Jesus' death: "Shortly after Jesus was executed, his followers were suddenly galvanized from a baffled and cowering group into people whose message about a living Jesus and a coming kingdom, preached at the risk of their lives, eventually changed an empire. Something happened ... But exactly what?" [14] That's the question we have to answer with an investigation into the facts.

There are only five plausible explanations for Jesus' alleged resurrection, as portrayed in the New Testament:

1. Jesus didn't really die on the cross.
2. The "resurrection" was a conspiracy.
3. The disciples were hallucinating.
4. The account is legendary.
5. It really happened.

Let's work our way through these options and see which one best fits the facts.

Was Jesus Dead?

"Marley was deader than a doornail, of that there was no doubt." So begins Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the author not wanting anyone to be mistaken as to the supernatural character of what is soon to take place. In the same way, before we take on the role of CSI and piece together evidence for a resurrection, we must first establish that there was, in fact, a corpse. After

all, occasionally the newspapers will report on some “corpse” in a morgue who was found stirring and recovered. Could something like that have happened with Jesus?

Some have proposed that Jesus lived through the crucifixion and was revived by the cool, damp air in the tomb. But that theory doesn’t square with the medical evidence. An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association explains why this so-called “swoon theory” is untenable: “Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicated that Jesus was dead. The spear, thrust between His right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung, but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured His death.”[15] But skepticism of this verdict may be in order, as this case has been cold for 2,000 years. At the very least, we need a second opinion.

One place to find that is in the reports of non-Christian historians from around the time when Jesus lived. Three of these historians mentioned the death of Jesus.

- Lucian (c.120 - after c.180) referred to Jesus as a crucified sophist (philosopher).[16]
- Josephus (c.37 - c.100) wrote, “At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, for he was a doer of amazing deeds. When Pilate condemned him to the cross, the leading men among us, having accused him, those who loved him did not cease to do so.”[17]
- Tacitus (c. 56 - c.120) wrote, “Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty ... at the hands of our procurator, Pontius Pilate.”[18]

This is a bit like going into the archives and finding that on one spring day in the first century, *The Jerusalem Post* ran a front-page story saying that Jesus was crucified and dead. Not bad detective work, and fairly conclusive.

In fact, there is no historical account from Christians, Romans, or Jews that disputes either Jesus’ death or his burial. Even skeptical scholars who deny the resurrection agree Jesus was dead. Noted skeptic James Tabor stated, “I think we need have no doubt that given Jesus’ execution by Roman crucifixion he was truly dead.”[19] John Dominic Crossan, co-founder of the notoriously skeptical Jesus Seminar, agrees that Jesus really lived and died. He states, “That he was crucified is as sure as anything historical can ever be.”[20]

In light of such historical and medical evidence, we seem to be on good grounds for dismissing the first of our five options. Jesus was clearly dead, "of that there was no doubt."

The Matter of An Empty Tomb

No serious historian really doubts Jesus was dead when he was taken down from the cross. However, many have questioned how Jesus’ body disappeared from the tomb. English journalist Dr. Frank Morison initially thought the resurrection was either a myth or a hoax, and he began research to write a book refuting it.[21] The book became famous but for reasons other than its original intent.

Morison began by attempting to solve the case of the empty tomb. The tomb belonged to a member of the Sanhedrin Council, Joseph of Arimathea. In Israel at that time, to be on the council was to be a rock star. Everyone knew who was on the council. Joseph must have been a

real person. Otherwise, the Jewish leaders would have exposed the story as a fraud in their attempt to disprove the resurrection. Also, Joseph's tomb would have been at a well-known location and easily identifiable, so any thoughts of Jesus being "lost in the graveyard" would need to be dismissed.

Morison wondered why Jesus' enemies would have allowed the "empty tomb myth" to persist if it weren't true. The discovery of Jesus' body would have instantly killed the entire plot.

And what is known historically of Jesus' enemies is that they accused Jesus' disciples of stealing the body, an accusation clearly predicated on a shared belief that the tomb was empty.

Dr. Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, similarly stated, "If all the evidence is weighed carefully and fairly, it is indeed justifiable ... to conclude that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was actually empty on the morning of the first Easter. And no shred of evidence has yet been discovered ... that would disprove this statement." [22]

The Jewish leaders were stunned. They accused the disciples of stealing Jesus' body. But the Romans had assigned a 24-hour watch at the tomb with a trained guard unit (from four to 16 soldiers). Josh McDowell notes that these were not ordinary soldiers. "When that guard unit failed in its duty - if they fell asleep, left their position, or failed in any way - there are a number of historical sources that go back and describe what happens. Many of them are stripped of their own clothes, they are burned alive in a fire started with their own garments or they are crucified upside down. The Roman Guard unit was committed to discipline and they feared failure in any way." [23]

It would have been impossible for anyone to have slipped by the Roman guards and to have moved a two-ton stone. Yet the stone was moved away and the body of Jesus was missing.

If Jesus' body was anywhere to be found, his enemies would have quickly exposed the resurrection as a fraud. Tom Anderson, former president of the California Trial Lawyers Association, summarizes the strength of this argument:

With an event so well publicized, don't you think that it's reasonable that one historian, one eye witness, one antagonist would record for all time that he had seen Christ's body? ... The silence of history is deafening when it comes to the testimony against the resurrection. [24]

So, with no body of evidence, and with a known tomb clearly empty, Morison accepted the evidence as solid that Jesus' body had somehow disappeared from the tomb.

Grave Robbing?

As Morison continued his investigation, he began to examine the motives of Jesus' followers. Maybe the supposed resurrection was actually a stolen body. But if so, how does one account for all the reported appearances of a resurrected Jesus? Historian Paul Johnson, in *A History of the*

Jews, wrote, “What mattered was not the circumstances of his death but the fact that he was widely and obstinately believed, by an expanding circle of people, to have risen again.”[25]

The tomb was indeed empty. But it wasn’t the mere absence of a body that could have galvanized Jesus’ followers (especially if they had been the ones who had stolen it). Something extraordinary must have happened, for the followers of Jesus ceased mourning, ceased hiding, and began fearlessly proclaiming that they had seen Jesus alive.

Each eyewitness account reports that Jesus suddenly appeared bodily to his followers, the women first. Morison wondered why conspirators would make women central to its plot. In the first century, women had virtually no rights, personhood, or status. If the plot were to succeed, Morison reasoned, the conspirators would have portrayed men, not women, as the first to see Jesus alive. And yet we hear that women touched him, spoke with him, and were the first to find the empty tomb.

Later, according to the eyewitness accounts, all the disciples saw Jesus on more than ten separate occasions. They wrote that he showed them his hands and feet and told them to touch him. And he reportedly ate with them and later appeared alive to more than 500 followers on one occasion.

Legal scholar John Warwick Montgomery stated, “In 56 A.D. [the Apostle Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive (1 Corinthians 15:6ff.). It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus.”[26]

Bible scholars Geisler and Turek agree. “If the Resurrection had not occurred, why would the Apostle Paul give such a list of supposed eyewitnesses? He would immediately lose all credibility with his Corinthian readers by lying so blatantly.”[27]

Peter told a crowd in Caesarea why he and the other disciples were so convinced Jesus was alive.

We apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Israel and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by crucifying him, but God raised him to life three days later ... We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. (Acts 10:39-41)

British Bible scholar Michael Green remarked, “The appearances of Jesus are as well authenticated as anything in antiquity ... There can be no rational doubt that they occurred.”[28]

Consistent to the End

As if the eyewitness reports were not enough to challenge Morison’s skepticism, he was also baffled by the disciples’ behavior. A fact of history that has stumped historians, psychologists, and skeptics alike is that these eleven former cowards were suddenly willing to suffer humiliation, torture, and death. All but one of Jesus’ disciples were slain as martyrs. Would they have done so much for a lie, knowing they had taken the body?

The Islamic terrorists on September 11 proved that some will die for a false cause they believe in. Yet to be a willing martyr for a known lie is insanity. As Paul Little wrote, “Men will die for what they believe to be true, though it may actually be false. They do not, however, die for what they know is a lie.”[29] Jesus’ disciples behaved in a manner consistent with a genuine belief that their leader was alive.

No one has adequately explained why the disciples would have been willing to die for a known lie. But even if they all conspired to lie about Jesus’ resurrection, how could they have kept the conspiracy going for decades without at least one of them selling out for money or position? Moreland wrote, “Those who lie for personal gain do not stick together very long, especially when hardship decreases the benefits.”[30]

Chuck Colson, implicated in the Watergate scandal during President Nixon’s administration, pointed out the difficulty of several people maintaining a lie for an extended period of time.

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, and then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren’t true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world - and they couldn’t keep a lie for three weeks. You’re telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”[31]

Something happened that changed everything for these men and women. Morison acknowledged, “Whoever comes to this problem has sooner or later to confront a fact that cannot be explained away ... This fact is that ... a profound conviction came to the little group of people - a change that attests to the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave.”[32]

Were the Disciples Hallucinating?

People still think they see a fat, gray-haired Elvis darting into Dunkin Donuts. And then there are those who believe they spent last night with aliens in the mother ship being subjected to unspeakable testing. Sometimes certain people can “see” things they want to, things that aren’t really there. And that’s why some have claimed that the disciples were so distraught over the crucifixion that their desire to see Jesus alive caused mass hallucination. Plausible?

Psychologist Gary Collins, former president of the American Association of Christian Counselors, was asked about the possibility that hallucinations were behind the disciples’ radically changed behavior. Collins remarked, “Hallucinations are individual occurrences. By their very nature, only one person can see a given hallucination at a time. They certainly aren’t something which can be seen by a group of people.”[33]

Hallucination is not even a remote possibility, according to psychologist Thomas J. Thorburn. “It is absolutely inconceivable that ... five hundred persons, of average soundness of mind ... should

experience all kinds of sensuous impressions - visual, auditory, tactual - and that all these ... experiences should rest entirely upon ... hallucination.”[34]

Furthermore, in the psychology of hallucinations, the person would need to be in a frame of mind where they so wished to see that person that their mind contrives it. Two major leaders of the early church, James and Paul, both state forcefully that they encountered a resurrected Jesus, neither expecting, or hoping for the pleasure. The apostle Paul, in fact, led the earliest persecutions of Christians, and his conversion remains inexplicable except for his own testimony that Jesus appeared to him, resurrected.

The hallucination theory, then, appears to be another dead end. What else could explain away the resurrection?

From Lie to Legend

Some unconvinced skeptics attribute the resurrection story to a legend that began with one or more persons lying or thinking they saw the resurrected Jesus. Over time, the legend would have grown and been embellished as it was passed around.

On the surface this seems like a plausible scenario. But there are three major problems with that theory.

First, legends simply don’t develop while multiple eyewitnesses are alive to refute them. One historian of ancient Rome and Greece, A. N. Sherwin-White, argued that the resurrection news spread too soon and too quickly for it to have been a legend.[35]

Second, legends develop by oral tradition and don’t come with contemporary historical documents that can be verified. Yet the Gospels were written within three decades of the resurrection.[36]

Third, the legend theory doesn’t adequately explain either the fact of the empty tomb or the historically verified conviction of the apostles that Jesus was alive.[37]

Therefore, the legend theory doesn’t seem to hold up any better than other attempts to explain away this amazing claim. Furthermore, the resurrection account of Jesus Christ actually altered history, beginning with the Roman Empire. How could a legend make such an enormous historical impact within such a short time period?

Why Did Christianity Win?

Morison was bewildered by the fact that “a tiny insignificant movement was able to prevail over the cunning grip of the Jewish establishment, as well as the might of Rome.” Why did it win, in the face of all those odds against it?

He wrote, “Within twenty years, the claim of these Galilean peasants had disrupted the Jewish church ... In less than fifty years it had begun to threaten the peace of the Roman Empire. When

we have said everything that can be said ... we stand confronted with the greatest mystery of all. Why did it win?"[38]

By all rights, if there were no resurrection, Christianity should have died out at the cross when the disciples fled for their lives. But the apostles went on to establish a growing Christian movement.

J. N. D. Anderson wrote, "Think of the psychological absurdity of picturing a little band of defeated cowards cowering in an upper room one day and a few days later transformed into a company that no persecution could silence - and then attempting to attribute this dramatic change to nothing more convincing than a miserable fabrication ... That simply wouldn't make sense."[39]

A Surprise Conclusion

With myth, hallucination, and a flawed autopsy ruled out, with incontrovertible evidence for an empty tomb, with a substantial body of eyewitnesses to his reappearance, and with the inexplicable transformation and impact upon the world of those who claimed to have seen him, Morison became convinced that his preconceived bias against Jesus Christ's resurrection had been wrong. He began writing a different book - entitled *Who Moved the Stone?* - to detail his new conclusions. Morison simply followed the trail of evidence, clue by clue, until the truth of the case seemed clear to him. His surprise was that the evidence led to a belief in the resurrection.

In his first chapter, "The Book That Refused to Be Written," this former skeptic explained how the evidence convinced him that Jesus' resurrection was an actual historical event. "It was as though a man set out to cross a forest by a familiar and well-beaten track and came out suddenly where he did not expect to come out."[40]

Morison is not alone. Countless other skeptics have examined the evidence for Jesus' resurrection, and accepted it as the most astounding fact in all of human history. C. S. Lewis, who once had even doubted Jesus' existence, was also persuaded by the evidence for Jesus' resurrection. He writes, "Something perfectly new in the history of the Universe had happened. Christ had defeated death. The door which had always been locked had for the very first time been forced open." [41]

Let's consider just one more skeptic who was persuaded by the evidence.

A Stunned Professor

One of those who originally thought the resurrection was simply a myth, only to reverse his position like Morison, was one of the world's leading legal scholars, Dr. Simon Greenleaf. Greenleaf helped to put the Harvard Law School on the map. He wrote the three-volume legal masterpiece *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence*, which has been called the "greatest single authority in the entire literature of legal procedure." [42] The U.S. judicial system today still relies on rules of evidence established by Greenleaf.

While teaching law at Harvard, Professor Greenleaf stated to his class that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was simply a legend. As an atheist, he thought miracles to be impossible. In a rebuttal, three of his law students challenged him to apply his acclaimed rules of evidence to the resurrection account.

After much prodding, Greenleaf accepted his students' challenge and began an investigation into the evidence. Focusing his brilliant legal mind on the facts of history, Greenleaf attempted to prove the resurrection account was false.

Yet the more Greenleaf investigated the record of history, the more stunned he was at the powerful evidence supporting the claim that Jesus had indeed risen from the tomb. Greenleaf's skepticism was being challenged by an event that had changed the course of human history.

Greenleaf was unable to explain several dramatic changes that took place shortly after Jesus died, the most baffling being the behavior of the disciples. It wasn't just one or two disciples who insisted Jesus had risen; it was all of them. Applying his own rules of evidence to the facts, Greenleaf arrived at his verdict.

In a shocking reversal of his position, Greenleaf accepted Jesus' resurrection as the best explanation for the events that took place immediately after his crucifixion. To this brilliant legal scholar and former atheist, it would have been impossible for the disciples to persist with their conviction that Jesus had risen if they hadn't actually seen the risen Christ.[43]

In his book *The Testimony of the Evangelists*, Greenleaf documents the evidence that caused him to change his mind. In his conclusion he challenges those who seek the truth about the resurrection to fairly examine the evidence.

Greenleaf was so persuaded by the evidence that he became a committed Christian. He believed that any unbiased person who honestly examines the evidence as in a court of law will conclude what he did - that Jesus Christ has truly risen.[44]

But the resurrection of Jesus Christ raises the question: What does the fact that Jesus defeated death have to do with my life? The answer to that question is what New Testament Christianity is all about.

Endnotes

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[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The Truth or Falsehood of 11 Statements from *The Da Vinci Code*

<http://www.kentcrockett.com/davincitruefalse.html>

Kent Crockett

The Da Vinci Code--True or False?

Dan Brown's novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, is a mixture of fact and fiction, leaving the reader to wonder which parts are true. Some people ask, "Why get so bent out of shape over a fiction book?" Simply because Brown asserts that it's a fiction book based completely on facts. In an interview on NBC's *Today Show*, Matt Lauer asked author Dan Brown, "How much of this is based on reality in terms of things that actually occurred?" Brown answered, "Absolutely all of it."

Brown claims that his scenario exposes the greatest cover-up in the history of mankind. But the fact is, he has rewritten history and is trying to cover up his shoddy research, discredited sources, and distortion of facts. When asked how much of *The Da Vinci Code* is true, Dr. Paul Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, replied, "I would say 20 percent truth, 80 percent falsehood." (Strobel, p.25) The following true-false test will erase the question marks from your mind.

True or False? The Priory of Sion is a secret society that began in 1099, when the Knights of Templar discovered long-lost documents beneath the ruins of Solomon's Temple.

False. The Priory of Sion is a hoax. Pierre Plantard and three other men started a social club in 1954 called the Priory of Sion. It never existed "prior" to that.

True or False? Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married, and their offspring can be traced through the kings of France to people living on earth today.

False. This false idea can be traced back to Pierre Plantard, who created the hoax. In the 1960's and 1970's, Plantard manufactured the documents making this ridiculous claim. When called into court to testify, Plantard admitted under oath that he had made up the scheme. Furthermore, not one of the non-biblical books that Dan Brown references ever mentions Jesus being married--not even "The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene."

True or False? Constantine was a Roman emperor who claimed to convert to Christianity.

True.

True or False? The Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea "deified" the man Jesus in 325 A.D.

False. This assertion by Brown is pitiful, with not one shred of evidence to support it. Dr. Maier says, "The deity of Christ was never under discussion at the Council of Nicaea. What was under discussion was whether Jesus was coeternal with the Father or not. And this was what was decided." (Strobel, p. 25)

Many documents, dated centuries before the Council met, prove that the early church believed

that Jesus was God in a human body. First century documents repeatedly taught the deity of Christ. The apostle Paul, who was an eye-witness of the resurrected Jesus, declared in his letter to the Colossians (60-62 A.D.) that "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). The Gospel of John states at the beginning of the book that The Word (Jesus) was God and He became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:1,14). In the Gospel of Matthew (approximately 63 A.D.) we discover that Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of God (see Matthew 16:13-16)

True or False? At the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D, Constantine determined which books would go into the New Testament.

False. Dr. Maier states, "The Council of Nicaea did not decide which books should go into the canon (New Testament) and which should not. Nothing of that is true. Not one of the decrees of the Council of Nicaea deals with the canon. So, again, you have a falsehood (by Brown) multiplied here." (Stobel, p.25) The canon (the standard biblical books) was already known a century and half to two hundred years before Constantine.

True or False? Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned. (Brown 234)

False. There is no evidence that the text of the original gospels was "embellished" in the fourth century. Scores of copies of the Gospels already existed in the second century. There was no way that the texts could have been altered. No one had the authority to call in all the copies scattered throughout the Empire to make alterations. (Garlow, p. 147). Brown's claim is pure mythology.

True or False? At the Council of Nicaea, Jesus was established as the Son of God by "a very close vote."

False. Councils were called to maintain an orthodox faith and prevent the spread of false teaching. Over 300 bishops traveled thousands of miles to attend this conference in Constantinople. The church held from its inception that Jesus was divine (see Matthew 16:13-16), but Arius taught in 318 A.D. that Jesus was a created being. The vote wasn't even close--316 bishops affirmed that Jesus was coequal with the Father, while only 2 bishops denied it.

True or False? Since the beginning of recorded time, history has been written by "winners."

False. On the contrary, many of our historical documents were penned by those who were intensely hated during their time. Most of the biblical texts we possess were written by those who we persecuted, tortured, and eventually killed for their beliefs. They certainly weren't viewed as winners at the time of their writings. *Foxes Book of Martyrs* (Marie King, editor) and *Documents of the Christian Church* (Henry Bettenson, editor) are two books that document historical events by those who would be considered "losers."

True or False? The Nag Hammadi scrolls were discovered in 1945 near an Egyptian village.

True.

True or False? The Nag Hammadi Gnostic texts have been dated earlier than the New Testament writings.

False. The apostle Paul wrote 13 books of the New Testament between the 48 A.D. to around 60 A.D. He was executed for his faith by Nero in 66 A.D. (Garlow, p.89). All the books of the New Testament can be plausibly dated prior to 70 A.D. The earliest date for the Nag Hammadi scrolls is around A.D. 150 and later when Gnosticism as a system began to flourish. The earliest date for the "Gospel of Philip" is around 175 A.D. The official translator of the "Gospel of Phillip" in the Nag Hammadi collection suggests a date about 250 A.D. (Garlow, p.186). In addition, many copies of the New Testament writings have been discovered and preserved by historians. The Nag Hammadi texts are miniscule in comparison.

True or False? More than 80 gospels were considered for the New Testament.

False. No one knows how Dan Brown came up with the number 80. He simply made up that statistic to embellish his fictional story. Not one shred of evidence supports it.

Sources and Recommended Books:

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Exploring the Da Vinci Code, Lee Strobel and Garry Poole, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction? Hank Hanegraaff and Paul Maier, Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2004.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

How reliable is the account of Emperor Constantine in *The Da Vinci Code*?

<http://www.leestrobels.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=strobelsT1028>

Transcript:

Lee Strobel: Dr. Maier, there are a lot of claims that Dan Brown makes about Constantine. He says that he was a pagan who only reluctantly converted on his deathbed; he says that he eliminated goddess worship in the Roman Empire; that he's the one that decided what Gospels went into the Bible and what didn't; that he destroyed documents that said that Jesus was merely human; and only put in for his own nefarious purposes the Gospels into the Bible that said that He's the Son of God. Now you're an historian, is this historically reliable information?

Dr. Maier: I think it's the greatest character assassination I've ever seen in either fact or fiction in my life. And this flies in the face of all the historical evidence we have. He was a true convert to Christianity after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge; the next year he announced the Edict of Toleration for the faith; he had a very pious mother Helena; he built cathedrals, basilicas as though there were no tomorrow; all the main identification spots associated with Jesus in Palestine, are Constantinian construction: Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem; he couldn't do enough for the Church. He reimbursed the Church for all the damages it had suffered in the persecutions; he had the clergy in regularly for dinner; he called himself the bishop of those outside the Church to bring them into the Church, he felt that God had appointed him to convert the Roman Empire to Christianity- he actually told the bishops that. And he was active in Church affairs: he exempted the clergy from taxation; he called the first great ecumenical council into session: the Council of Nicea, and I could go on into the afternoon. This is ridiculous to say he was a lifelong pagan- it's simply a bald lie.

Lee: Is it true that he's the one that collated the Bible; that he's the one that chose what Gospels went in and what got eliminated?

Dr. Maier: Yeah, Dan Brown almost makes him the universal editor of the earliest Bible which is just pathetic. Simply because the Canon- that is all the standard Biblical books were known already a century and a half to two hundred years before

Constantine. Eusebius tells us, the earliest Christian Church historian, of the Canon at its core and how other books were added later on. But by Constantine's time it was very, very definite- there's no question about that. And the Council of Nicea in 325 did not decide which books should go in the Canon or which should not under Constantine's advice- nothing of that is true. Not one of the canons or decrees of the Council of Nicea deals with the Canon for example. So again, you have simply a falsehood multiplied here.

Lee: What about this idea- you mentioned the Council of Nicea that took place in 325- what about this idea that that's where Jesus was deified?

Dr. Maier: This is virtually what Dan Brown says, that they decided He was God and so forth. The Deity of Jesus was never under discussion at the Council of Nicea. What was under discussion was, "Was Jesus coeternal with the Father or not?" And this is what was decided. And by the way, Dan Brown says it was by a very close vote. Well let me tell you what the "close vote" was. In round numbers about three hundred to two. Not too close as far as I can see.

Lee: Well, if you could then sum up in one word- a one word reaction to how reliable *The Da Vinci Code* is in terms of recording what Constantine actually did, what would that one word be?

Dr. Maier: I would say twenty percent truth, eighty percent falsehood. That's more than one word but...

Lee: That sums it up. Now some people scoff at *The Da Vinci Code* and they say, "Well, you know, come on, Dr. Maier, it's just a novel. Would you just lighten up? He wrote a story, he had fun with it, people enjoy reading it, why do you get so upset about a mere novel?" What do you say to that?

Dr. Maier: Lee, whenever I give a lecture on this, or whatever else, and *The Da Vinci Code* comes up, this is the commonest reaction I get, "C'mon, chill out Maier, it's a novel"- and it's a good challenge. And of course the answer is simply this. In a novel you have foreground characters and you have background setting. Now the foreground characters- do with them what you want! I would never criticize Dan Brown for whatever he might say about his fictional characters. That's his privilege as a novelist. I'm not knocking that at all. But the setting, the background- the rear episodes that are well known from history should not be tampered with in the interest of credibility. Let me give you an illustration.

Have there been any novels written about World War II? Of course there have- hundreds, thousands. Well, what do you know? In every one of these novels you have

foreground characters who never lived and so forth, but in the background- surprise, surprise- the Allies always win and the Nazi's always lose, don't they? Why? Because it happened- that's why!

Okay, now what Dan Brown has done is to fictionalize his foreground characters- fine! Help himself! But he's also falsified the background- and that is what is absolutely unacceptable. In other words, parallel is this, if Dan Brown were using the same rules that he used for *The Da Vinci Code* to write a novel about World War II, he would have Hitler winning the war and putting Roosevelt on trial in Washington, D.C. and Churchill on trial in London. That's how bad it is. And people who don't know history, who aren't aware of the past might think, "Well, what do you know? That must have happened! It's in print." That's the danger.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Who decided what books became part of the New Testament?

<http://www.leestrobels.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=strobelsT1090>

Transcription:

Peter Jones: The books in the New Testament are actually canonical- that is, divinely inspired, authoritative books the moment they were written. Churches don't make canons, churches don't make books inspired. God makes books inspired, and He does that at the moment when He inspires them.

Narration: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17.)

Peter Jones: Constantine did not create the Canon. What the Church recognized as canonical is intrinsic to what the books are.

Narrator: In other words, a book is considered to be part of the Canon because it is inspired, or as it says in the Greek, "God-breathed." Contrary to the thesis of *The Da Vinci Code*. Scholars believe that the vast majority of the New Testament was recognized by the Church as authoritative as far back as the First Century.

Peter Jones: By the end of the First Century, four-fifths of the New Testament was already being cited as Scripture. There was one-fifth of the New Testament where some people in one corner of the Empire held to some books and some people in the other corners of the Empire to others. And it slowly became clear for the Church which of these questionable books really were written by the Apostles.

Narrator: The final fifth of the Canon was made formal in Constantine's era. But not because of political pressure from the emperor, but rather because in the new Christianized empire, Christians could more safely come together.

Darrell Bock: Those books that ended up in the Canon ended up in the Canon because they were recognized over a period of time, by a variety of congregations, including a variety of geographic regions, in part because of their Apostolic roots.

And so what you get is the testimony of centuries at work in the recognition of the Canon as opposed to a particular moment when this took place. It was something the Church was really careful about.

Dr. Paul Maier: Dan Brown often says that Constantine created the Canon of the Bible- not so. Neither did the Council of Nicea. The Canon wasn't even brought up. Brown says that he collated or edited, was the redactor for the various documents got in the Old and New Testament- totally false- he had nothing to do with it.

Narrator: What about this claim that Constantine, with the aid of the Church, destroyed competing Gospels in forming the Canon?

Dr. Gary Habermas: There is a segment of our population today- and the book *The Da Vinci Code* is an example, that criticizes the New Testament as a product of "Survival of the Fittest". By "Survival of the Fittest" the implication is all the other stuff was weeded, all that remained was orthodoxy. If we're dealing with data from 70 to 95 A.D.- the Gospels- and some would say earlier, but if we're dealing with data from the last third of the First Century, is it a surprise that we don't want competing Gospels to be as authoritative when they were written a hundred years later?

Narrator: The evidence shows that there were writings that were suppressed. But the key point is that the vast majority of these documents were written much later than the New Testament material. Long after the times of the eye-witnesses.

Darrell Bock: There's no doubt that when Christians came onto the scene and the forces that represented orthodoxy did win a political, sociological battle- there's no doubt that that's part of what these councils were about was to affirm what Christianity was and to make clear what Christianity was not. And that did include with it some effort to suppress the circulation of documents that fell outside the bounds of orthodoxy. But that doesn't change the nature of the record that we have in the earlier centuries. And the key part of this discussion is not about what happened in the 4th Century, the key part of this discussion is what happened in the 1st and 2nd Centuries.

Narrator: Furthermore, we have historical assurance that the books in the New Testament contain the earliest teachings of the Christian Church. One example is the conversion of the Apostle Paul from Christ-hater to Christ-worshiper.

Darrell Bock: The earliest writings that we have from a Christian are from Paul. He's writing in the 50's. Not only that, but he relates his experience in the 30's.

Narrator: Biblical scholars believe that Paul, writing in the 50's A.D. passes on a saying that had already attained the status of a Church creed in 1 Corinthians 15.

Darrell Bock: He says, "I pass on to you what also was passed on to me..." The language of passing on is the language of tradition, passing on tradition...

Narration: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

Darrell Bock: All the essential elements of what is Christianity that he writes about in the 50's, within twenty years of the events of Jesus, have to be in place for that conversion to take place. So we know that we're backed up right up against the time when Jesus actually came.

Narrator: Because of the direct connection between the New Testament books and the Apostles, as well as their early dating and correspondence with what the living eyewitnesses knew to be true about Jesus Christ, many scholars believe we can be confident that the Bible we have contains the best, most accurate material, all of the books that God inspired to testify to Jesus Christ and His mission.

Darrell Bock: We ended up with the collection of what best represents a summation of the faith once and for all delivered to the saints as one of the books in the New Testament puts it.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

What does history reveal about the claims of *The Da Vinci Code*?

<http://www.leestrobels.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=strobelsT1096>

Transcript:

Lee Strobel: Now Paul, some people say, “Hey, c’mon, this is only a novel, lighten up. So Paul, why do you think this book is so dangerous?”

Dr. Paul Maier: Lee, I get this all the time. They say, “Hey Maier, chill out, this is fiction after all. Well, what Dan Brown has done is taken normal fiction where you have fictional characters in the foreground, but then he’s also falsified the background and you don’t do that in fiction. In the name of reality you have a context which is believable.

Lee: Amy, if this book had been written, a similar book that looked at Islam or Judaism and made such distorted claims about the origins of those faiths, people would be up in arms. But it seems like Christianity’s fair game for a lot of this stuff. Do you think this book’s anti-Catholic? You’re a Catholic, do you see it as an anti-Catholic work?

Amy Welborn: I am Catholic and I guess you could make a strong case that it is an anti-Catholic work, however I don’t like to really focus on that aspect of it. I just like to focus on issues of truth. And the fact is, as Dr. Maier has said, this book is full of historical lies- laughable historical lies. And I think that we’re well served in just trying to focus on that point.

Lee: Well let’s just walk through some of the claims in this book so we can set the record straight, just based on the historical data that we have. Paul, let me start with you. The book claims that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, true or false?

Dr. Maier: (laughter) That’s not even original with Dan Brown. There have been a lot of books that have come out posing Jesus as the one who married Mary Magdalene and they had a daughter Sarah and so on into the night. It’s simply not true. The argument they usually use is every Jewish man should be married. Okay, fine, but what about the exceptions that never got married- and there were plenty of those.

And besides all of which, the so called “proof” that Dan Brown brings out, for example *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, or *The Gospel of Philip*, which supposedly proves that Jesus was married does nothing of the kind.

Lee: And those gospels are in no way considered historically accurate anyway, right?

Dr. Maier: No, they’re derivative 3rd Century Gnostic gospels. They are totally unreliable, they are apocryphal in the original sense of the term- unreliable, hidden and worthless in effect.

Lee: Okay Amy, would there be anything intrinsically wrong if Jesus had gotten married?

Amy Wilborn: Oh, I don’t know from a theological perspective if that would- if theologians think that that would impact His divine status or how people think of that, but I think another point to be made is that the Gospels don’t shy away from discussing Jesus’ other relationships. They discuss His family members, the people of His town of Capernaum and Nazareth and so on. And they describe His relationships with these people, they name these people. If He had a wife she would have been mentioned.

Dr. Maier: In terms of the theological problem could Jesus have gotten married- well marriage was invented by God, it’s good for all. But the problem is one of the functions of marriage of course is to bear children. Now we would have an enormous theological problem. You know, what would F1 generation offspring be like? Would they be one quarter God, three quarters man? And there’d be no end of theological debate. So I think it’s good for the future of the faith that Jesus did not get married.

Lee: Okay Paul, what about the claim in the book that Jesus was a mere man who was deified three hundred years later by the Council of Nicea, true or false?

Dr. Maier: Well, the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. had absolutely nothing to do with the question of which books for example were to be admitted in the Canon, and that’s another claim that Dan Brown falsely makes in the debate there was not whether or not Jesus was God, but was He coeternal with the Father or not.

Lee: So Amy, this idea that Jesus became God only because three hundred years later this council got together and said He was is just historically absurd.

Amy Welborn: It is absurd and all you have to do to know how absurd it is, is to read the New Testament. The New Testament, the books of which date from the First

Century, are the documents that are closest to the life of Jesus, closest to the experience of early Christians. So if we want to know what early Christians believed about Jesus, we need to go to the New Testament. A book- a source of course that Dan Brown cites never, not once in his novel. And he can't because if he did it would confound his own theories because you can't read Paul's letters, you can't read Philippians chapter two, you can't read the Gospel of John, or people questioning how Jesus had the authority to forgive sins without admitting that early Christians did view Jesus as Lord.

Lee: Okay, what about this Amy, the Priory of Sion that the book talks about. Brown says this is the organization that guards the secret that Jesus and Mary were married.

Amy Welborn: Right, and the Priory of Sion is a fictitious organization in the sense that Brown describes it and I think it's really important for listeners to know this because once you understand that the Priory of Sion- if it exists at all- is a creation of a late twentieth century right-wing Frenchman who forged documents and planted them in French archives and libraries to prove his point. If you understand this- that it has no Medieval roots or has nothing to do with the bloodline of Jesus then the whole argument of *The Da Vinci Code* falls right there and you don't really have to go any further.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

What are the major errors in *The Da Vinci Code*?

<http://www.leestrobels.com/videoserver/video.php?clip=strobelt1097>

Transcript:

Lee Strobel: Amy, the book also says that the New Testament is based on fabrications and that actually there were gospels about Jesus that really show that He was only a man and they were squelched by the Church. In fact, the book claims there were eighty gospels that sort of vied for inclusion in the Canon of the New Testament. What about that?

Amy Welborn: The process by which what we call the Canon of Scripture was established is very above board, it's known, historians discuss it, the documents are available, the discussions are available, and there were not eighty gospels. By the early second century, certainly by the middle of the second century the four Gospels that we have in our New Testament today were seen as authoritative. So there was no great conspiracy to suppress any truth about Jesus, and there is no evidence that these documents exist. I don't know what he's talking about.

Lee: Okay. Paul, I want to ask you a question. I hesitate to ask this question because it's distasteful frankly to ask it, but I have to because in the book the book claims that there are early Jewish traditions involving ritualistic sex in the temple. I mean did Jews really have a female goddess? And did this kind of stuff take place?

Dr. Paul Maier: Well it's an almost blasphemous assertion Lee. There's no question that I think all good Jews around the world ought to be as furious against this book as Christians are. Because that's simply a dirty lie. The glory of Judaism was its monotheism- one God and one God only. And there wasn't a counterpart goddess named Shekina which is a mistranslation of course. This just doesn't fly at all. I haven't heard enough really protests from the synagogue. I think there should be massive protest at what is really nothing less than blasphemy.

Amy Welborn: One of the interesting things to me about this book is that it completely cuts Jesus off from His Jewish roots. If you were getting all your information about Jesus from *The Da Vinci Code* you really wouldn't know He was Jewish except for this whole bloodline nonsense.

Lee: Paul, another allegation made in the book is that the Vatican tried to suppress the Dead Sea Scrolls because they included gospels that Constantine tried to eradicate. I mean that is so convoluted and so basically wrong to any historian it's laughable and yet these are the assertions that are made.

Dr. Maier: Don't they have fact checkers at Doubleday the publisher? I don't understand that. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 and they have nothing to do with Christianity other than to support the accuracy of the manuscript tradition which regarded sacred Scriptures as so untouchable that if you made one mistake in a two page segment you had to start over.

Lee: Amy, this whole thing, you'd think that he would get the stuff about Leonardo Da Vinci right! But he didn't, did he?

Amy Welborn: He doesn't get anything about Leonardo right including the descriptions of works, of paintings. He characterizes Leonardo as an artist who is primarily engaged in creating hundreds of paintings through Vatican commissions on Christian themes when the fact is that Leonardo's work was primarily scientific, experimental drawing and so on. He produced a few paintings, a handful of paintings on Christian themes- they are great paintings. He had one commission from the Vatican and during that time that he had that commission he spent most of that time doing scientific experimentation. And when you look at the individual paintings that he describes from the Mona Lisa, which he says the name of which is derived from an anagram related to male and female Egyptian gods- well the fact is that Leonardo did not name that painting himself. He cannot be given that responsibility for trying to encode issues about the sacred feminine in his work because he didn't even name the painting- it was named decades after he died.

Dr. Maier: Let me just interject at this point- if a person can count to fourteen, he's able to disprove the entire thesis in *The Da Vinci Code*. You have to be able to count to fourteen however. Okay, we have Jesus and the twelve disciples in the famous Leonardo painting of the Last Supper, right? Okay, twelve plus one- how much is that? Thirteen. Okay. But Dan Brown says that the person leaning to the right of Jesus is indeed Mary Magdalene and not John. Well okay, if we now have the twelve disciples, Jesus and Mary Magdalene- how many are in the room? Fourteen. Okay, next time you see a painting of the Last Supper, count the number of heads- thirteen. So the whole thing is shot right there!

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Article 8 of the Mormon Articles of Faith

<http://lds.org/scriptures/pgp/a-of-f/1.8?lang=eng#7>

The Articles of Faith

of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

History of the Church, Vol. 4, pp. 535–41

1 We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2 We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3 We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4 We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5 We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6 We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

7 We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8 We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9 We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10 We believe in the literal ^agathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ^bTen Tribes; that ^cZion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will ^areign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be ^erenewed and receive its ^aparadisiacal ^aglory.

11 We claim the ^aprivilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the ^bdictates of our own ^econscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them ^aworship how, where, or what they may.

12 We believe in being ^asubject to ^bkings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in ^eobeying, honoring, and sustaining the ^alaw.

13 ^aWe believe in being ^bhonest, true, ^echaste, ^abenevolent, virtuous, and in doing ^egood to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we ^ehope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to ^eendure all things. If there is anything ^bvirtuous, ⁱlovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

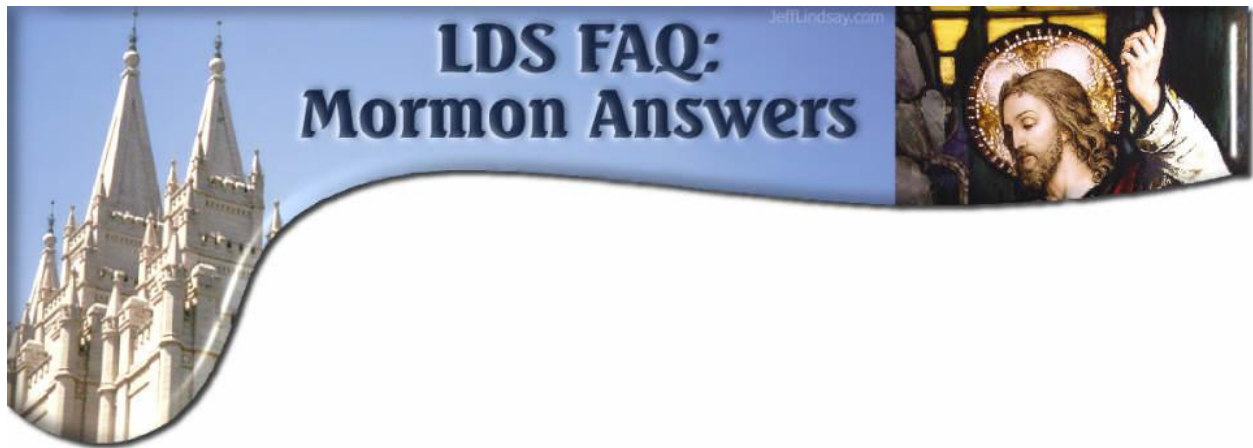
Joseph Smith.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Changes in the Book of Mormon

http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_changes.shtml



Have There Been Thousands of Changes in the Book of Mormon?

Many critics contend that the Book of Mormon is a fraud because of the changes that have been made in its various editions. I respond to these arguments here, offering my perspective as a believer in the Book of Mormon. This is one of several pages in a suite of "Frequently Asked Questions about Latter-day Saint Beliefs." This work is solely the responsibility of Jeff Lindsay and is not an official source LDS doctrine. While I strive to be accurate, my writings reflect my personal understanding and are subject to human error and bias.

Have there been thousands of changes in the Book of Mormon?

A popular charge of anti-Mormons is that the Church is guilty of fraud because of changes in the Book of Mormon, or that the Book of Mormon can't be true and divine because corrections have been made. The arguments are rather weak but need to be dealt with - that's the purpose of this page. It is one of several pages in a suite of "Frequently Asked Questions about Latter-day Saint Beliefs." This work is solely the responsibility of Jeff Lindsay and is not an official source LDS doctrine.

For some thought-provoking analysis and evidence, see Hugh Nibley's essay, ". . . There Can Be No More Bible," chapter 1 in his book, *Since Cumorah*. Another useful resource on this topic is "Early Texts of The Book of Mormon," an article by Stan Larson printed in the *Ensign*, September 1976, pp. 77-82, now available at Mike Parker's LDS Library. My Introduction to the Book of Mormon or the Book of Mormon Evidences Page should also be consulted.

Changes in the Book of Mormon

Overview

Critics of the Church have charged that the Book of Mormon is a fraud because thousands of changes have been made in it over the years, as if the Church were trying to cover up blunders in Joseph Smith's work. Certainly there have been many minor changes in the text of the Book of Mormon, as there have been in the text of the King James Version of the Bible (and other translations as well) over the years. These changes have been minor, usually trivial, primarily dealing with punctuation, correction of typographical errors, and modification of awkward grammar for clarity. I have examined the allegedly most "serious" changes pointed to by critics and have not seen anything representing a real change in doctrine or anything that would cast doubt on the origins of the Book of Mormon. I'll discuss major examples below.

In the early 1800s, spelling and grammar were not yet standardized. Joseph dictated the translation to scribes who spelled many words in ways that are nonstandard today. Hundreds of spelling variants had to be corrected in the first edition and in subsequent editions of the printed text. For example, "ware sorraful" in 1 Nephi 7:20 was changed to "were sorrowful." Likewise, we should not be outraged to find Nephi writing on "plates" today when Joseph's scribes had him writing on "plaits" in 1 Nephi 13:23. Hundreds of such changes have been necessary.

Years ago, Jerald and Sandra Tanner published a book claiming to identify 3,000 changes between the original 1830 edition and the then present version. Now I've heard the number of 4,000 mentioned in e-mail. Whatever the number, critics are trying to create the impression that the Church has something to hide about the Book of Mormon. The critics often charge that there is a great cover-up about the changes in the text compared to the original Book of Mormon, completely ignoring the fact that anybody can buy reprints of the 1830 edition from LDS bookstores and that LDS scholars freely and openly discuss and write about the nature of these changes. Changes in the text have been discussed in official Church publications like the

Ensign magazine and by widely respected, private LDS groups like the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. The critics infer that the Church is embarrassed about the original Book of Mormon and has had to make changes in it to "improve" the doctrine or resolve blunders. Such arguments are truly dishonest. The driving force for virtually all changes has been to (1) ensure that the printed text is faithful to the **original manuscript** and (2) to ensure that the text is accessible and readable. Alleged departures from the original text generally turn out to be simple clarifications or reworkings of awkward grammar rather than doctrinal changes.

The many changes that critics are so indignant over are corrections of the very kind one would expect in putting a hand-written document into type with crude technology and under difficult circumstances - and in a time with many varying spelling practices. Many of the changes are due to the fact that the Book of Mormon was dictated to scribes without punctuation and without division between verses and chapter - just as one might expect from a fairly direct translation of an ancient Hebraic or Semitic text, written without punctuation. The lack of punctuation in the original required much work after dictation to put it in a presentable form - but that work was not done to cover up mistakes in the original and did not involve changing stories, doctrine, or anything else of substance. Numerous minor errors were printed in the original 1830 edition because of errors in preparing handwritten printer's manuscripts from the original manuscript, and because of additional printing errors. Again, many of the changes in the Book of Mormon over the years have been necessary to make the text correspond more perfectly with the original manuscript. It's simply untrue to say that the Church has departed from the original or that there were gross blunders in the original manuscript that needed to be fixed because they showed the Book to be a fraud.

In fact, many of the changes, including the need to add punctuation and chapter breaks, reflect the Semitic origins of the Book of Mormon. In several cases, sentences that showed classic Hebraic constructions and phrases made very poor English, and these needed modification to ensure readability. Many of the changes made involved deleting redundant "and it came to pass" phrases, a phrase which has also been deleted many times in the King James Version and other English translations of the Old Testament. Numerous deletions of "and it came to pass" in English translations of both the Bible and the Book of Mormon are not because of any cover up on the part of the translators, but because that commonly used Semitic phrase becomes overly awkward in English. Below, I'll discuss other evidences of Hebraic origins in the required changes.

The Printed Editions and the Original Manuscripts

I already mentioned the original 1830 edition, but there were actually a variety of 1830 editions with extremely minor, generally typographical differences introduced in printing. The 1830 editions were produced under difficult circumstances including time pressure, persecution, poverty, and crude technology, factors that would make minor errors hard to avoid. For example, in the process of going from verbal dictation to an original written manuscript, then to a separate, handwritten Printer's manuscript and finally to the typeset version of the Book, there were many opportunities for typographical errors and other minor mistakes. One difficult circumstance was the fact that the publisher himself was unfriendly to the Church. This did little to ensure that the text was treated with great care and respect during the publishing process. As Joseph Fielding Smith explained (Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.2, p.200), "Being unfriendly, it would have been a natural thing for [the publisher] to permit some errors to appear. A careful check of the list of changes submitted by ... critics shows there is not one change or addition that is not in full harmony with the original text. Changes have been made in punctuation and a few other minor matters that needed correction, but never has any alteration or addition changed a single original thought. As it appears to us, the changes mentioned are such that make the text clearer and indicate that they were omitted. I am sure that the mistakes or omissions in the first edition were in large measure the fault of the compositor or the printer. Many of these mistakes which were in the first proofs were caught by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself, and he made the corrections."

The printer has even been quoted as saying that he allowed many "ungrammatical" errors to be printed.

A good overview of the various editions of the Book of Mormon that have been published since 1830 is found in an article by Royal Skousen in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.1, entitled "Book Of Mormon Editions (1830-1981)," from which I quote:

Four editions were published during Joseph Smith's lifetime:

1. 1830: 5,000 copies; published by E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York. In general, the first edition is a faithful copy of the printer's manuscript (although on one occasion the original manuscript rather than the printer's was used for typesetting). For the most part, this edition reproduces what the compositor, John H. Gilbert, considered grammatical "errors." Gilbert added punctuation and determined the paragraphing for the first edition.... In this and all other early editions, there is no versification.

2. 1837: Either 3,000 or 5,000 copies; published by Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson, Kirtland, Ohio. For this edition, hundreds of grammatical changes and a few emendations were made in the text. The 1830 edition and the printer's manuscript were used as the basis for this edition.

3. 1840: 2,000 copies; published for Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith (by Shepard and Stearns, Cincinnati, Ohio), Nauvoo, Illinois. Joseph Smith compared the printed text with the original manuscript and discovered a number of errors made in copying the printer's manuscript from the original. Thus the 1840 edition restores some of the readings of the original manuscript.

4. 1841: ... essentially a reprinting of the 1837 edition with British spellings.

Two additional British editions, one in 1849 (edited by Orson Pratt) and the other in 1852 (edited by Franklin D. Richards), show minor editing of the text. In the 1852 edition, Richards added numbers to the paragraphs to aid in finding passages, thereby creating the first--although primitive--versification for the Book of Mormon.

Three other important LDS editions have involved major changes in format as well as minor editing:

1. 1879: Edited by Orson Pratt. Major changes in the format of the text included division of the long chapters in the original text, a true versification system (which has been followed in all subsequent LDS editions), and footnotes (mostly scriptural references).

2. 1920: Edited by James E. Talmage. Further changes in format included introductory material, double columns, chapter summaries, and new footnotes. Some of the minor editing found in this edition appeared earlier in the 1905 and 1911 editions, also under the editorship of Talmage.

3. 1981: Edited by a committee headed by members of the Quorum of the Twelve. This edition is a major reworking of the 1920 edition: The text appears again in double columns, but new introductory material, chapter summaries, and footnotes are provided. About twenty significant textual errors that had entered the printer's manuscript are corrected by reference to the original manuscript. Other corrections were made from comparison with the printer's manuscript and the 1840 Nauvoo edition.

To understand the history of some of the editions given above, it is useful to understand the relationship between the two handwritten manuscripts of the Book of Mormon. Royal Skousen

again provides useful information in his article, "Book Of Mormon Manuscripts," in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol.1:

The printed versions of the Book of Mormon derive from two manuscripts. The first, called the original manuscript (O), was written by at least three scribes as Joseph Smith translated and dictated. The most important scribe was Oliver Cowdery. This manuscript was begun no later than April 1829 and finished in June 1829.

A copy of the original was then made by Oliver Cowdery and two other scribes. This copy is called the printer's manuscript (P), since it was the one normally used to set the type for the first (1830) edition of the Book of Mormon. It was begun in July 1829 and finished early in 1830.

The printer's manuscript is not an exact copy of the original manuscript. There are on the average three changes per original manuscript page. These changes appear to be natural scribal errors; there is little or no evidence of conscious editing. Most of the changes are minor, and about one in five produce a discernible difference in meaning. Because they were all relatively minor, most of the errors thus introduced into the text have remained in the printed editions of the Book of Mormon and have not been detected and corrected except by reference to the original manuscript. About twenty of these errors were corrected in the 1981 edition.

The compositor for the 1830 edition added punctuation, paragraphing, and other printing marks to about one-third of the pages of the printer's manuscript. These same marks appear on one fragment of the original, indicating that it was used at least once in typesetting the 1830 edition.

In preparation for the second (1837) edition, hundreds of grammatical changes and a few textual emendations were made in P. After the publication of this edition, P was retained by Oliver Cowdery. After his death in 1850, his brother-in-law, David Whitmer, kept P until his death in 1888. In 1903 Whitmer's grandson sold P to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which owns it today....

The original manuscript was not consulted for the editing of the 1837 edition. However, in producing the 1840 edition, Joseph Smith used O to restore some of its original readings. In October 1841, Joseph Smith placed O in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. Over forty years later, Lewis Bidamon, Emma Smith's second husband, opened the cornerstone and found that water seepage had destroyed most of O. The surviving pages were handed out to various individuals during the 1880s.

Today approximately 25 percent of the text of O survives: 1 Nephi 2 through 2 Nephi 1, with gaps; Alma 22 through Helaman 3, with gaps; and a few other fragments. All but one of the authentic pages and fragments of O are housed in the archives of the LDS Historical Department; one-half of a sheet (from 1 Nephi 14) is owned by the University of Utah.

Based on an examination of the 25% or so of the Original Manuscript which has survived, one can conclude that "Joseph Smith, as he translated, apparently never went back to cross out, revise, or modify. The manuscript pages contain the words written by Joseph's scribes (primarily Oliver Cowdery) as the Prophet spoke the translation" (*Reexploring The Book Of Mormon*, p. 10).

The Nature of the Changes

"Fixing" Hebraisms: The Apparent Influence of Semitic Origins

The LDS position is that the Book of Mormon was translated into English by Joseph Smith. The original record was written in an ancient language derived from Hebrew. Interestingly, many of the expressions in the original manuscript are uncharacteristic of English but are typical of Hebrew or other Semitic languages, suggesting that some aspects of the translation were rather direct. Many of the changes made in the Book of Mormon were due to the need to make Hebrew-like structures conform better to English idioms. Deleting seemingly redundant "and it came to pass" expressions is one example.

More interesting is the correction of an awkward phrase in Alma 46:19 where Moroni waves the "rent of his garment." This was later corrected to the "rent part of his garment," which makes much more sense. Some people have objected that this change was an attempt to hide an obvious blunder in the original text. After all, how can one wave a rip or a rent or a tear? But in Hebrew, that's a correct expression. (Interestingly, the odd practice of waving a rent garment in the air is attested in other Middle Eastern documents [see the footnote below].) John Tvedtnes explains in *BYU Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Autumn 1970), p.50 :

[In] the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, we read that "when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air." (p. 351.) When the word "rent" is used as a noun in English, it may refer to a hole caused by rending, but not, to my knowledge, to a portion of rent cloth; the unlikely usage of "rent" in English as a noun no doubt contributed to the fact that, in subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon, it was changed to read "rent part" (Alma 46:19). But the Hebrews would, in this instance, use but one word, qera', "rent (part)," coming from qara', "he rent, tore," for nouns, in Hebrews, are derived from roots--

as are Hebrews verbs--by the addition of certain vowel patterns that distinguish them from other parts of speech.

Also noteworthy is the occurrence of a conditional clause that is typical of Hebrew but not found in English, Royal Skousen explains in "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon: Upstate New York Dialect, King James English, or Hebrew?," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p.34:

In English, we have conditional clauses like "if you come, then I will come," with then being optional. In Hebrew this same clause is expressed as "if you come and I will come." In the original text of the Book of Mormon, there were at least fourteen occurrences of this non-English expression. One occurrence was accidentally removed in 1 Nephi 17:50 as Oliver Cowdery was producing the printer's manuscript (P) by copying from the original manuscript (O):

"if he should command me that I should say unto this water be thou earth and it shall be earth" (O) [this now reads "If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth...."]

The remaining thirteen occurrences were all removed by Joseph Smith in his editing for the second edition [1837], including this one from the famous passage in Moroni 10:4:

"and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart with real intent having faith in Christ and he will manifest the truth of it unto you" [this now reads "and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you" - an "and" having been deleted]

This use of "and" is not due to scribal error, especially since this if-and expression occurs seven times in one brief passage, Helaman 12:13-21 [original manuscript]:

13 yea and if he sayeth unto the earth move and it is moved...

14 yea if he sayeth unto the earth thou shalt go back that it lengthen out the day for many hours and it is done...

16 and behold also if he sayeth unto the waters of the great deep be thou dried up and it is done...

17 behold if he sayeth unto this mountain be thou raised up and come over and fall upon that city that it be buried up and behold it is done...

19 and if the Lord shall say be thou accursed that no man shall find thee from this time henceforth and forever and behold no man getteth it henceforth and forever...

20 and behold if the Lord shall say unto a man because of thine iniquities thou shalt be accursed forever and it shall be done...

21 and if the Lord shall say because of thine iniquities thou shalt be cut off from my presence and he will cause that it shall be so...

[All of these instances were changed in the 1837 edition to be more grammatical in English by removing the extra "and" and adding appropriate punctuation.]

Skousen also explores the original Book of Mormon use of "and it came to pass," finding many parallels with the Hebrew use of the term "way'hi" meaning "and it happened." He finds that odd-sounding usages of the phrase in the original text which have since been deleted are consistent with Hebraic usage and have parallels in the Bible where the King James translators deleted that expression in similar cases for better English grammar. Skousen concludes (p. 38): What is important here is to realize that the original text of the Book of Mormon apparently contains expressions that are not characteristic of English at any place or time, in particular neither Joseph Smith's upstate New York dialect nor the King James Bible. Subsequent editing of the text into standard English has systematically removed these non-English expressions from the text-the very expressions that provide the strongest support for the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon is a literal translation of a non-English text. Further, the potential Hebraisms found in the original text are consistent with the belief, but do not prove, that the source text is related to the language of the Hebrew Bible.

Changes for Clarity of Meaning

Only a handful of changes can be said to have any potential significance, yet these can be explained as justified editorial additions to improve understanding of the text.

God or Son of God?

The most commonly criticized changes involve thrice clarifying which member of the Godhead was meant in a passage (1 Nephi 11) describing the future ministry of Christ and the "condescension of God." Robert L. Millet explains what was changed in *The Power Of The Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company (1994), pp. 11-12:

The condescension of God the Son consists in the coming to earth of the great Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent, the God of the ancients. The 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon contains the following words from the angel to Nephi: "Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of *God*, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Nephi 11:18; italics added). The angel later said

unto Nephi regarding the vision of the Christ child, "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, *the Eternal Father!*" (1 Nephi 11:21; italics added; compare 1 Nephi 13:40, 1830 edition). Later in the same vision of the ministry of Christ, the angel spoke, saying, "Look! And I looked," Nephi added, "and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, *the everlasting God* was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record" (1 Nephi 11:32; italics added). In the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith the Prophet changed these verses to read "the mother of *the Son of God*," "*the Son of the Eternal Father*," and "*the Son of the everlasting God*," respectively (italics added). It would appear that the Prophet made these textual alterations to assist the Latter-day Saints in fully understanding the meaning of the expressions.

It may also be that Joseph Smith altered these verses to make certain that no reader - member or nonmember - would confuse the Latter-day Saint understanding of the Father and the Son with that of other Christian denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. See an article by Oliver Cowdery, "Trouble in the West," in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, I (April 1835), p. 105. [This paragraph is a footnote to the preceding paragraph in Millet's book.]

Hugh Nibley also discusses these changes (*Since Cumorah*, p. 6):

In the first edition Mary is referred to as "the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Nephi 11:18); the insertion in later editions of "the Son of God" is simply put in to make it clear that the second person of the godhead is meant, and thereby avoid confusion, since during the theological controversies of the early Middle Ages the expression "mother of God" took on a special connotation which it still has for many Christians.

Three verses later (1 Nephi 11:21), the declaration of the angels, "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!" has been augmented in later editions to "even the Son of the Eternal Father!" to avoid confusion: in this passage the Eternal Father is possibly in apposition not to "Lamb" but to "God" -- he is the Lamb of God-the-Eternal-Father. But that might not be obvious to most readers, and so to avoid trouble, and without in the least changing the meaning of the text, the Lamb of God is made equivalent to the Son of the Eternal Father. Both ideas are quite correct, and there is no conflict between them.

Many critics have tried to say that Joseph originally believed in the Trinitarian concept of God when he wrote the Book of Mormon, but later changed his mind and changed the text to indicate that God and the Son of God are distinct persons. This argument is without foundation. The original manuscript (O) and every printed version of the Book of Mormon makes it clear in

multiple places that Christ and God are distinct beings (e.g., 2 Nephi 25 and 2 Nephi 31). Even in the very chapter where Joseph Smith made the changes, the Original Manuscript and the present Book of Mormon speak of the Messiah as the Son of God, for verse 24 of 1 Nephi 11 reads: "And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him." This is consistent with the alterations made by Joseph. There is no change in meaning, only a helpful clarification for modern readers.

Though God the Father and Christ are distinct beings, Christ as a member of the perfectly united Godhead can bear the title of "God" as well as "Eternal Father." Book of Mormon writers lived long before the confusing post-Biblical, Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Trinity had been formulated. They could use the various titles for Christ without misunderstanding what is meant (compare Mosiah 15:4; 16:15; Alma 11:38-39). For the benefit of modern readers, however, the changes noted above in the Book of Mormon help eliminate potential confusion.

Waters of Baptism

Another arguably significant change occurs in 1 Nephi 20:1, where Isaiah is quoted. After the reference to Israel coming "out of the waters of Judah," Joseph Smith later inserted the phrase "or out of the waters of baptism" to clarify, not change what the text meant.

King Benjamin or Mosiah: An Error Corrected?

One change appears to correct an error in a name given in the 1830 edition. In the modern version of Mosiah 21:28 (and in every version since 1837), we read:

And now Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon that king Mosiah had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings; yea, and Ammon also did rejoice.

But the 1830 edition and the printer's manuscript said it was King Benjamin, not Mosiah. A similar change occurred in Ether 4:1, which now refers to King Mosiah but in 1830 referred to King Benjamin:

And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.

Ammon's discussion with Limhi and the bringing of the Jaredite record to the king of Zarahemla occurred three years after King Mosiah took the throne, which was also the year that King

Benjamin died. It is possible that King Benjamin was still functioning as seer and did receive the Jaredite record and keep part of it from the people, making the reference to Benjamin correct, but perhaps Mosiah is the one referred to.

Critics mock the change as a way of cover-up of a contradiction. It is possible that the change was not needed and that the original text was correct. Alternatively, it is possible that an ancient scribal error existed in the original text, which was conveyed through the translation but later corrected.

Ara Norwood gave a recent presentation on this subject, which has been summarized by J. Cooper Johnson in his article, "King Benjamin or Mosiah: A Look at Mosiah 21:28," available online at FAIRLDS.org. An excerpt follows:

Brother Norwood begins with the following critical foundation:

The first thing that needs to be pointed out is the fact that Mosiah 21:28 is one of two passages that chronicles the same historical data. The parallel passage is found in Mosiah 8:13-14. The presence of parallel passages of the same event is consistently lost on our critics. Yet it is crucial in making sense of the scope of the problem.

Brother Norwood addresses the obvious questions as to the source and nature of these two different passages, or records. Why are there two different renditions of the same story, in the same book, that of Mosiah, for example? The answer is quite simple.

The book of Mosiah does not follow a seamless and sequential chronology. It is a "composite record," containing records within the record, full of "flashback" accounts and records. Norwood identifies three separate chronicles within the book of Mosiah.

Now, let's take a look at Mosiah 8:13-14.

And Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer.

And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this high gift from God.

Brother Norwood correctly identifies two items that are important to note. First, no name is given to identify the King of Zarahemla. We aren't told here whether Ammon was talking about Mosiah or Benjamin. The second item to note is that this passage is a first-hand account, the words out of the mouth of Ammon.

In contrast, while Mosiah 8 is a direct quote, the Mosiah 21 account is a narrative history and as Norwood points out, is part of a Zeniffite record, which is included in our book of Mosiah. So the two accounts are from two separate records, one a direct quote and one a narrative, written by a Zeniffite scribe or interpolated by Mormon.

Brother Norwood again repeats his view, stated in his FARMS Review of Books article, of the possibility that "Ammon departed on his expedition prior to the death of King Benjamin. And, if this is the case, it is very possible that Ammon would have mentioned King Benjamin by name." And if this is the case, then it is quite possible, and even likely, according to Brother Norwood, that Ammon would have used the name Benjamin, instead of Mosiah. Mosiah 8:3 supports this hypothesis:

And he also rehearsed unto them the last words which king Benjamin had taught them, and explained them to the people of king Limhi, so that they might understand all the words which he spake.

So, ten verses later when Ammon tells Limhi of Zarahemla's king who has the gift to translate, yet doesn't mention a name, it isn't any surprise that the Zeniffite scribe or Mormon "inserted the name Benjamin." It is Benjamin who Ammon was referring to a few verses earlier in Mosiah 8:3, and it would also be reasonable to understand Moroni's like-interpolation of the Ether 4:1 passage. . . .

While we are unable to be sure as to the reason for the change in Mosiah 21:28, we can be sure that several hypotheses exist, not recognized by the anti-Mormon authors. It is very possible, indeed very likely, that Joseph Smith translated this correctly and should not have been changed. It is also very possible that Joseph translated this correctly, yet needed to be changed to correct a scribal error.

And remember, as Brother Norwood reminds us in a footnote,

It is important to remember that Book of Mormon authors, including Moroni himself, cautioned us to not expect an inerrant or infallible book: "And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes

of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ" (Title Page.) See also Mormon 9:33, 1 Nephi 19:6.

The above views add depth to previous discussions, such as that of Hugh Nibley from many years ago:

[W]as it necessary to change the name of Benjamin (in the first edition) to Mosiah in later editions of Ether 4:1? Probably not, for though it is certain that Mosiah kept the records in question, it is by no means certain that his father, Benjamin, did not also have a share in keeping them. It was Benjamin who displayed the zeal of a life-long book lover in the keeping and studying of records; and after he handed over the throne to his son Mosiah he lived on and may well have spent many days among his beloved records. And among these records could have been the Jaredite plates, which were brought to Zarahemla early in the reign of Mosiah when his father could still have been living (Mosiah 8:9-15).

The change in Ether 4:1 is the most problematic one that I am aware of, for it points to a genuine factual error. The error could be on the part of a later editor (an unnecessary change of names? why change it, even if it seemed wrong?), of Joseph Smith (dictated the wrong name?), or Moroni (a slip?), but in any event, a mistake may have occurred - just as the title page of the Book of Mormon indicates as a possibility: "And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God...." Though I consider this change to be problematic, it is still entirely trivial. The name mentioned in Ether 4:1 is a minor detail of no significance. It does not change anything about the message of the book nor does it change our understanding of the history of Benjamin and Mosiah. It shows that the Book of Mormon is not utterly infallible, but no one ever said it was. A slip of the tongue, pen or stylus does not invalidate a sacred book. In my opinion, the greatest issue raised by the apparent error in Ether 4:1 is what King Benjamin was doing after Mosiah translated the Jaredite record: was he dead or convalescing, or was he actively working with the sacred records, including the Jaredite text, while his son took over the throne? (Personally, I suspect Ether 4:1 should have said Mosiah rather than Benjamin, but if it was Benjamin in the original manuscript, I would have preferred to leave it as Benjamin.)

The question about Mosiah and Benjamin in Ether 4:1 was also recently addressed by John Tvedtnes in his article, "The Mistakes of Men: Can the Scriptures be Error-Free?" at FairLDS.org (Dec. 10, 2003). He finds an interesting parallel to the Bible:

King Benjamin's death is recorded in Mosiah 6:5, but critics claim that when writing the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith forgot that he had made Benjamin die, and wrote of him living at a later time. [See Mosiah 21:28 and Ether 4:1.] The 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon shows this

error, though subsequent editions, in an attempt to remove the problem, changed the name to King Mosiah in the later references.

Our normal response to this is that King Benjamin lived three years after his son Mosiah₂ was made king. It was at the end of these three years that the expedition was sent to the Land of Nephi, where the plates of Ether were found. After relinquishing his kingship, Benjamin may have continued to act as a seer for the three-year interval. The chronology in this part of the Book is not all that clear and we do not know how long Ammon and his brethren were in the Land of Nephi. It could have been only a matter of weeks or months. It is not inconceivable then, that Benjamin passed away shortly after their return, which still would have been "after three years." [Mosiah 6:5.] It is certainly possible that the keeper of the record of Zeniff or Mormon and Moroni [Ether 4:1] may have erred in compiling the records. After all they were mortals, capable of making mistakes. It is also possible that this was an example of a scribal error, later corrected by Joseph Smith the translator.

It is interesting that the Bible has a situation similar to that found in the Book of Mormon. We read in 1 Kings 15:31-15:5 that Abijam (also called Abijah, as in the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 12:16) became king of Judah after the death of his father Rehoboam and that, despite his sins, the Lord preserved his kingship for the sake of his ancestor David. Then, in 1 Kings 15:6-7, we read,

And there was war between *Rehoboam* and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

The name Rehoboam is anachronistic, since he was dead and the passage was intended to describe events in the days of his son Abijam. The error is actually corrected in a few Hebrew manuscripts and in the Peshitta (Christian Aramaic) version to read, "And there was war between *Abijah the son of Rehoboam*." The parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 13:2 reads, "And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam."

This perspective is also shared in the insightful article at FAIRLDS.org on changes in the Book of Mormon, "The Book of Mormon vs. the Critics: Nit-Picking for Fun and Profit" by D.E. Neighbors (Jan. 31, 2006).

Summing up, there are several possibilities to be considered that are consistent with the concept of an inspired ancient record translated by the power of God but still subject to human

error, even human error that might occur after the original publication in an a possibly unnecessary attempt to fix what initially seems like an obvious error.

Joy or Foes: The Problem of Handwriting

Alma 57:25 speaks of the miracle that occurred as 2060 faithful young Lamanite men were protected during a terrible battle. It says, "And to our great astonishment, and also the **joy** of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish." The word "joy" was added in 1981, replacing the word "foes" which had been in every previous version of the Book of Mormon. Critics of the Church cry foul, but the handwriting on the printer's manuscript is difficult to read at that point and early typesetters and proofreaders apparently thought it said "foes." Careful examination of the manuscript, however, has shown that the word is actually "joy." (Robert J. Matthews, "Why Have Changes Been Made in the Printed Editions of the Book of Mormon?," *The Ensign*, March 1987, pp. 47-48). The word "foes" made sense, but "joy" makes even more sense in that passage. I've seen old handwriting where "j" looked like "f" and "y" looked quite strange, so I can imagine how the problem arose.

Changes between the Printer's MS and the Original MS

While changes in the printed versions of the Book of Mormon have received most attention, there are some differences between the Printer's Manuscript (P) and the Original Manuscript (O). An overview of the differences is given in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, pp. 10 -11: Several dozen differences between the Original Manuscript and the Printer's Manuscript, never before noted, have been detected. For example, Zenock is spelled "Zenoah" in the Original Manuscript (this spelling compares with that of Enoch). In Alma 51:15, the Original Manuscript reports that Moroni sent a petition to the governor "desiring that he should heed it." The 1830 edition typeset this phrase as "desiring that he should read it." In Alma 54:17, the Original Manuscript asserted that the Lamanites claimed that the government "rightfully belonged unto them." In the Printer's Manuscript, this word became "rightly." In other instances, "pressing their way" became "feeling their way" (1 Nephi 8:31), a "were" became a "was" (1 Nephi 13:12), and a "shall" became a "should" (1 Nephi 17:50). "Heard and seen" became "seen and heard" (1 Nephi 20:6), and the "poorer class of the people" became the "poor class of people" (Alma 32:2).

Analyzing the changes yields some important observations about the manuscripts:

1. The differences between the Original Manuscript and the Printer's Manuscript are few. Only about one difference per manuscript page exists-far fewer than one might have expected.

2. The differences between the Printer's Manuscript and the Original Manuscript are minor, and most of the errors are natural transcription errors. The Printer's Manuscript shows no sign of any conscious editing on Oliver Cowdery's part. These manuscripts show that he was careful to reproduce exactly what had been hurriedly written in the Original Manuscript.

3. As good as the Printer's Manuscript is, the Original Manuscript is even better. Of the thirty-seven differences in transcription noted so far, seventeen show that the reading in the Printer's Manuscript became more awkward or grammatically improper or unusual. In only seven cases was the Original Manuscript harder to understand, due for example to atypical spellings or awkward grammar (like Hebraisms).

4. Surprisingly, the copying errors in the Printer's Manuscript tend to make the text shorter rather than longer. Of the thirty-seven differences, only two changed a shorter word to a longer one, while in seven cases a longer word was contracted to a shorter one. This is intriguing because people working with biblical manuscripts generally assume that texts tend to grow as scribal transmission changes them. The experience of Oliver Cowdery manifests the opposite tendency.

Above all, close examination of these manuscripts yields solid evidence that Oliver Cowdery was true to his calling as a scribe. Though much of the Original Manuscript has not survived, we can reasonably estimate that Oliver copied the entire Book of Mormon onto the Printer's Manuscript with only about 140 differences—all of them apparently simple slips of the hand or eye. Considering the task of writing with a quill pen and the magnitude of the labor, the accuracy of Oliver's transcription seems almost phenomenal.

Based on research by Royal Skousen, December 1988. Work on the Book of Mormon manuscripts continues. For the latest detailed report, see Royal Skousen, "Towards a Critical Edition of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30 (Winter 1990): 41-69. For information about the more recent discovery of several fragments of the Original Manuscript, see the F.A.R.M.S. newsletter, *Insights* (January 1991).

Hugh Nibley provides an overview to the changes introduced in printing the Book of Mormon in *Since Cumorah*, pp. 3-5:

Why, then, have the critics been scandalized and delighted to discover that the second edition of the Book of Mormon corrected many mistakes in the first? For years this writer used only the first edition in his classes, and it is still by far the best. It is full of mistakes, but they are obvious

ones. According to the printer, J.H. Gilbert, Joseph Smith told him to leave the grammar unaltered, since "the Old Testament is ungrammatical." [Gilbert's statement is found in 'The First Printing of the Book of Mormon' p. 2, a memorandum made by John H. Gilbert, September 8, 1892; original in the LDS Church Archives; reprinted in Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1958), 1: [xxviii].] As we shall see, recent studies of the Old Testament prophets show that they often mix up their persons, numbers, and tenses in impassioned discourse, just as Abinadi does in the first edition of the Book of Mormon pages 182-83. On the other hand, the Prophet gave Gilbert a free hand with punctuation and spelling: "The manuscript," says the printer, "was one solid paragraph, without a punctuation mark, from beginning to end." Imagine six hundred pages of that! How is it to be explained except on the assumption that the text was actually dictated word for word by one uneducated man to another? It was no ruse or trick, since nobody but the printer ever mentioned it, and he was authorized to correct the manuscript where he thought necessary. The manuscript used by the printer is now available, and it shows that Mr. Gilbert did take liberties with the text. Are we to believe that Joseph Smith is responsible when we read in the first edition on page 69 five lines from the bottom, "For my soul deliteth in the Scriptures" and just two lines below that, "Behold my soul delighteth in the Scriptures"? Since by his own admission the printer was authorized to correct the spelling, isn't he to blame for putting in the fifth line from the bottom of page 180: "Lamoni rehearst unto him" and on the bottom line "now when Lamoni had rehearsed unto him." Or who is accountable for the "peeple" on page 127, after the word had been spelled properly a hundred times? If the printer was correcting Oliver Cowdery's spelling he should have corrected these mistakes; if not, Cowdery himself had obviously slipped up and any editor was not only free to correct the slip but bound to. Whether the printer chooses to use or omit a hyphen or a comma is a matter of punctuation and entirely up to him. "There were some printing errors," Joseph Smith wrote, and people still throw up their hands in horror, as if there are not printing errors to be found in almost any edition of the Bible.

An occasional printing error in a Bible disturbs no one, both because it is to be expected and is easy to correct. Changes in wording to clarify the English also cause little offense. "A-going" and "a-journey" (Book of Mormon first edition, page 249) were perfectly accepted usage in Joseph Smith's time and place, but not anymore: consequently we change them in today's editions lest they confuse the young, though to this writer "a-going" and "a-journey" have a nice swing and color-his grandmother always spoke that way. In your English Bible you will find many words in italics; these are all words not found in the original, and they vary from edition to edition: they are put there by the various translators in attempt to convey as clearly as possible what they

thought the original writers had in mind. Thus you will find in the very second verse of your King James Bible the word "was" in italics-because in the Hebrew texts the word "was" is simply not there, but to make good English it has to be put in. If men can take such liberties with the Bible, while holding it to be an infallible book, why should we not be allowed the same freedom with the Book of Mormon which nobody claims to be infallible?

Were There Hundreds of Changes in the Book of Commandments (Doctrine and Covenants)?

Yes, of course. Editing documents to prepare them for publication is perfectly acceptable. The many documented changes in the Book of Commandments (now the Doctrine and Covenants) may come as a surprise to some Latter-day Saints, but it's not anything shocking or deceptive. Joseph made substantial edits in some passages to prepare the text for publication. This included many changes involving grammar and punctuation, making some sections more complete, or removing material that was no longer needed or appropriate. The anti-Mormons make a great deal out of this, but they grossly misunderstand the reality of publishing and of editing. Jeremiah made editorial additions in a second version of his writings (discussed below), and I have no problem with Joseph Smith doing the same. The fact that there has been significant editing of the Bible is no reason to throw it out.

For excellent information on the nature of the changes in the Book of Commandments, see *Changes in the Book of Commandments: Editing to Prepare Revelations for Publication*, an essay by Melvin J. Petersen that deals with the kinds of changes made to prepare the Book of Commandments (now the Doctrine and Covenants) for publication. Yes, of course there were changes. This is nothing to cause anger or loss of faith.

Changes in the Word of God? A Biblical Perspective

Many of the arguments used to reject the Book of Mormon would also reject the Bible. My advice: beware of rejecting something from God because of the arguments of men. Are there scribal errors in the Bible? Have there been changes in Biblical translations? Have there been typographical errors? Are there apparent contradictions in the text? The answer is yes - but the answer is also that they are not serious problems. Errors of copyists, errors of translators, errors of printers are inadequate reason for rejecting the Bible. It is difficult to accept the Bible as infallible - as utterly correct in every word of every verse - but the Bible makes no such claim! The foundation of the Church is not inerrant texts, but divine revelation that serves as the rudder to steer the Church in God's direction (Ephesians 4:11-14). Latter-day Saints do not believe in

infallible texts and recognize that errors may exist. If so, they are the errors of men, not of God. God can fix any damage caused by men by providing appropriate revelation when needed.

Joseph Fielding Smith put it well:

There have been thousands of changes in the Bible in recent years, but people do not seem to complain about that. We have books in our library written by an atheist who treats the Bible in the same spirit which these critics treat the Book of Mormon, but his criticism does not prove the Bible false. We all know that there are contradictions in the Bible and many misinterpretations, but we do not go about finding fault and condemning the Bible because these things occur. There are places where the writers of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, relate the same stories differently in their interpretations, or their details in relation to important events. Shall we throw the Bible away because of this? Verily no!

(Answers To Gospel Questions , Vol 2, p. 200)

Typographical errors have occurred in many Bible texts, especially in the early days of typesetting by hand. British scholars have made many corrections and revisions to the King James Bible since its first printing in 1611. One obvious but little-known result is that many more words are now in italics, indicating that the word was "added" to the text to clarify meaning or help with the flow of thought. For example, in 1611, there were 43 words in italics in the Gospel of Matthew, but by the year 1870 editorial revisions to the text resulted in 583 italicized words in Matthew (P. Marion Simms, *The Bible in America*, New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1936, p. 97, as cited by Robert J. Matthews, "Why Have Changes Been Made in the Printed Editions of the Book of Mormon?," *The Ensign*, March 1987, pp. 47-48). Has anyone seen the Tanners or other LDS critics express indignation over such changes in the Bible? Further, if we had any of the ORIGINAL texts by the authors of the Bible, we would surely see many small changes relative to the various Biblical manuscripts that we have today, for there are plenty of obvious differences already among the multiple existing documents. If we did find original manuscripts and could make the required, hopefully minor changes in the text to bring it closer to the original, the world should rejoice - not get bent out of shape as some critics do over the corrections in the Book of Mormon.

There is plenty of evidence that Biblical authors and scribes significantly edited the text of the Bible. As one example, consider the writings of Jeremiah as recorded by Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch. See Jeremiah 36, where we learn that Baruch wrote all the words from Jeremiah that

were recorded in a book (vs. 4, 17, 18) Unfortunately, King Jehoiakim of Judah burned the book that contained the words of Jeremiah (vs. 21-25). The Lord commanded Jeremiah to prepare his document again, writing "all the former words that were in the first roll" (v. 28). In verse 32, Jeremiah then commanded his scribe, Baruch, to write on another roll the words of Jeremiah, "and there were added besides unto them *many like words*." Many like words *added*? This doesn't sound like original dictation straight from the mouth of God, perfectly preserved and unchangeable. Prophets speak or dictate by inspiration, but there can be later changes and additions.

Finally, let me close with another quote from Nibley (*Since Cumorah*, p. 7):

The first edition of the Book of Mormon, though the most readable, is not the standard version today. That is because it is hard to use, with its long chapters and lack of numbered verses, and the grammar is sometimes disturbing to us. Disturbing, but never misleading - that is the point. Much of the New Testament is in barbaric Greek, and the ancient pagans often jeered at the illiteracy and bad grammar of the Disciples; yet in our English Bible their grammar is meticulously correct. Is that an indication of skullduggery? No more than the poor grammar of the ancient Apostles was proof that they were not inspired. If anything, Joseph Smith's poor grammar serves the purpose of proving, as did theirs, that the inspired words of the prophets were no product of the schools or the invention of cunning and clever men.

Footnote on Waving Rent Garments

The following is a citation from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol.1, "Book of Mormon Near Eastern Background:"

Among lengthier connected accounts, Moroni [the first Moroni] (c. 75 B.C.), leading an uprising against an oppressor, "went forth among the people waving the rent part of his garment" to show the writing on it (Alma 46:19-20). The legendary Persian hero Kaveh did the same thing with his garment. The men of Moroni "came running. . . . rending their garments. . . as a covenant [saying]. . . may [God] cast us at the feet of our enemies. . . to be trodden underfoot" (Alma 46:21-22). Both the rending of and the treading on the garments were ancient practices (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, 6:216-18; 7:198-202; 8:92-95). The inscription on the banner, "in memory of our God, our religion, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12), is similar to the banners and trumpets of the armies in the Dead Sea Battle Scroll ([IQM] iii. 1-iv.2). Before the battle Moroni goes before the army and dedicates the land southward as Desolation, and the rest he named "a chosen land, and the land of liberty" (Alma 46:17). In the

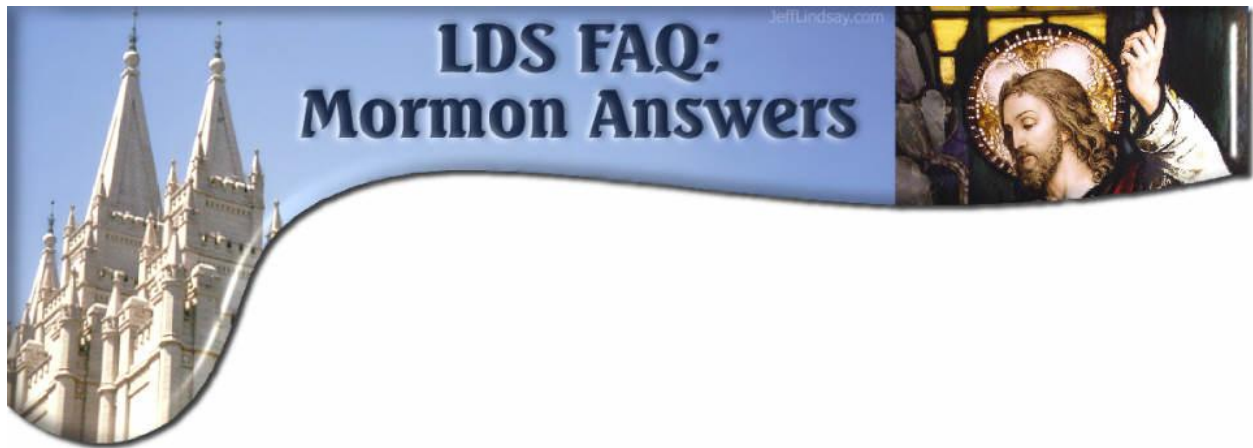
Battle Scroll ([1QM] vii.8ff.) the high priest similarly goes before the army and dedicates the land of the enemy to destruction and that of Israel to salvation (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 6:213-16). Moroni compares his torn garment-banner to the coat of Joseph, half of which was preserved and half decayed: "Let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death. . . as this remnant of [the coat] hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of [Joseph] be preserved." So Jacob had both "sorrow . . . [and] joy" at the same time (Alma 46:24-25). An almost identical story is told by the tenth-century savant Tha'labi, the collector of traditions from Jewish refugees in Persia (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 6:209-21; 8:249, 280-81).

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

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http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_Bible.shtml#lds



Have There Been Thousands of Changes in the Book of Mormon?

Many critics contend that the Book of Mormon is a fraud because of the changes that have been made in its various editions. I respond to these arguments here, offering my perspective as a believer in the Book of Mormon. This is one of several pages in a suite of "Frequently Asked Questions about Latter-day Saint Beliefs." This work is solely the responsibility of Jeff Lindsay and is not an official source LDS doctrine. While I strive to be accurate, my writings reflect my personal understanding and are subject to human error and bias.

Background

The Bible and LDS Scriptures

Latter-day Saints accept and revere the Bible as the word of God. We use both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and find tremendous value in both, for both testify of Christ, the Messiah, and teach us precious truths about God. Latter-day Saints learn Bible stories and

scriptures from their childhood and throughout their lives. The Bible is used and studied in our Sunday School classes, our youth classes, our daily seminary program, college classes sponsored by the Church (Institute) and on Church campuses such as BYU.

A passage from the Bible, James 1:5, was the catalyst that moved Joseph Smith to inquire of God which church he should join, leading to his remarkable First Vision that initiated the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith and all subsequent prophets have used the Bible heavily in their teachings. Joseph quoted from it more than any other scripture in his sermons and writings, and said the reader of the Bible could "see God's own handwriting in the sacred volume, and he who reads it oftenest will like it best" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 56). Even angelic messengers sent to Joseph Smith as part of the process of the Restoration quoted heavily from the Bible.

As part of a long history of encouraging people to study the Bible, the First Presidency of the Church in 1983 issued a statement encouraging the entire world to turn to the Bible: "We commend to all people everywhere the daily reading, pondering and heeding of the divine truths of the Holy Bible." They said the Church "accepts the Holy Bible as essential to faith and doctrine," explaining that when "read reverently and prayerfully, the Holy Bible becomes a priceless volume, converting the soul to righteousness. Principal among its virtues is the declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, through whom eternal salvation may come to all."

Unlike many other Christian churches, Latter-day Saints believe that revelation from God has not ceased and that the canon of God's revelations is not closed. We believe that we should live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4) and that God continues to reveal His words and to make sacred scripture available today as in days of old. One precious example of this is The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, an inspired translation of an ancient document from people in the New World who knew of the Messiah and had prophets of God among them. The Book of Mormon and the Bible together are part of the sacred writings accepted by Latter-day Saints. They are both part of the word of God, and we believe that God will yet reveal many other great things in the future. (The common objection

about not adding to the word of God is dealt with below in detail - I'll just note that while no man has the right to add anything to God's word, God can speak as often as He wants and has historically added to His word whenever He has had prophets and apostles on the earth, as He does today.)

According to the Eighth Article of Faith, written by Joseph Smith to summarize LDS doctrine, Latter-day Saints "believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." Though we revere the Bible as the word of God, there is no doubt that human errors are possible in the translations we have today. In some cases, differing translations directly contradict each other. Since none of the original manuscripts are available, it is also possible that some parts of the original text may have been lost or otherwise altered, though the good agreement between the available ancient manuscripts suggests that most of the early manuscripts we have are generally reliable. Still, the Bibles we have today are the result of many human interventions with room for error. Thus, relying on any text "as far as it is translated [and transmitted] correctly" is a reasonable approach. But the Bible remains inspired, holy, and highly reliable, in spite of some minor problems.

On the other hand, the original compilation, transmission and translation of the Book of Mormon was a process entirely under the direction of inspired prophets of God, not of committees of men over the ages. While the translation process was divinely inspired, there is still the possibility of human errors in the text due to factors such as printing errors, typos on the original engravings on gold plates, spelling and grammatical difficulties during the translation, etc., some of which have resulted in the need for updated versions and truly minor changes in the Book of Mormon.

A very useful article on the possibility of errors in both volumes of scripture is John Tvedtnes, "The Mistakes of Men: Can the Scriptures be Error-Free?" at FairLDS.org, as of Dec. 10, 2003.

In addition to the Bible and the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints also accept as scripture two smaller volumes containing revelations primarily given to Joseph Smith. The Doctrine and Covenants is a compilation of revelations given largely in the early

days of the Church as part of the Restoration of the Gospel, with many details relevant to the operation of the Church in this era. The Pearl of Great Price contains the small Book of Abraham and Book of Moses given through the power of revelation to Joseph Smith, and also contains the History of Joseph Smith, an inspired translation of Mathew 24, and the LDS Articles of Faith.

Since we have the Book of Mormon and other writings in addition to the Bible, it should be obvious that we don't accept the Bible as the complete, ultimate, infallible revelation of God and the final authority on all matters. In fact, **the final, ultimate, infallible authority on all matters is God Himself**, not any finite work printed by human hands and translated by human minds, however inspired. No one volume can give God's answer on every future issue. A primary tenet of our faith, and of the faith of the earliest Christians, is that **continuing revelation is essential** for the operation of God's Church. God gave apostles and prophets to guide His Church through revelation (Eph. 4:11-14; Eph. 2:18-20), and we need the same today.

To understand our reservations about relying on the Bible or any other book apart from ongoing prophecy and revelation from God, let's assume for a moment that the Bible really is an infallible and complete revelation from God. If so, then we must ask: Which Bible? Grasping the importance of this question requires some additional reflection about the origins of the Bible, as set forth below.

The Origins of the Bible, or, A Bible? Which Bible?

Many Christians assume that Paul referred to the whole Bible, with both the Old and New Testament, when he said that "all scripture is inspired of God" in 2 Timothy 3:16. However, there was no such thing as the New Testament at that time. In fact, the term "New Testament" was first used by Tertullian in A.D. 200 - long after the books of the New Testament were written. Even the Old Testament was not a settled compilation but was still being formulated. The definitive canon of the Old Testament would not be selected by the Jews until later, but the early Christians generally used the Greek Septuagint which contained many Apocryphal (or "deuterocanonical") books not in the Protestant Bibles of today. If Paul was referring to a specific existing collection of

writings, it would likely have been the Septuagint. However, I think Paul referred to scripture in general in 2 Timothy 3:16: that which is scripture is inspired of God - true of past, present, and future scripture. In no way did he mean that there was a finished and complete New Testament canon at the time of his writing. In fact, if that is what he meant, one wonders why he kept writing after verse 16.

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. No original manuscripts exist, and there are distinct differences - though often minor - between the various manuscripts that have survived. Mike Parker, in e-mail from 2002, has suggested several references on the issue of these variants in the Bible, which point to changes over time. A book on the doctrinal tampering of the New Testament is *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (Oxford University Press, 1993, ISBN 0195102797) by Dr. Bart Ehrman, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. According to Dr. Ehrman, "My thesis can be stated simply: scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make the more patently orthodox and to prevent their misuse by Christians who espoused aberrant views" (p. xi). There is abundant evidence for this unfortunate fact. A book showing many variants in Old Testament passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls is *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, San Francisco: Harper, 1999 (ISBN: 0060600632). See also Emmanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edition, Fortress Press, 2001 (ISBN: 0800634292), which shows hundreds of examples of textual variants between the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Old Testament sources.

In fact, there are many Bibles which differ not only because of different translations but also because they include different selections of writings (e.g., apocryphal books or other books that are not considered canonical by everyone). It therefore becomes difficult to accept the idea that the Bible is an infallible, perfect document when it is not clear which documents really belong in the Bible or which varying manuscripts should be used in the translation, not to mention the inherent uncertainties and problems that arise in translating any of the existing early manuscripts. The Bible is inspired, but there is no denying that it has been touched by human hands!

If the Bible is the ultimate authority, then which Bible? Might it be the Armenian Bible, which includes books such as Aseneth and Joseph that are not found in most European Bibles? Will it be the Catholic Bible with its many apocryphal books not found in Protestant Bibles? Perhaps we should use the Ethiopic Bible or other versions that have other books not familiar to most Americans and Europeans? (I hope it's not the first modern Hmong Bible that I purchased, which is missing quite a few chapters from a number of books - perhaps due to translator fatigue.)

To understand the large variety in canons, we need to look back in history. For example, the Codex Sinaiticus, which is the oldest New Testament collection available, a fourth century manuscript found in a monastery on Mount Sinai, contains two writings which are excluded in the modern New Testament, the Shepherd of Hermas and Barnabas. And yet even in the other books of that Codex, there appears to be a tendency to omit passages, leading to some shorter versions of Bible verses than we have in the King James text (J. M. Ross, "Some Unnoticed Points in the Text of the New Testament," *Novum Testamentum* Vol. 25, 1983, pp. 59-60, as cited by John Gee, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1994, pp.68-70).

In A.D. 200, a Christian in Rome wrote a list of books considered to be canonical (see Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?*, Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Utah, 1991, p. 51). This list is now known as the Muratorian Canon, named after the man who discovered it in Milan. The list does not include Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, or 2 Peter, and includes only two of the letters of John. The canonical works did include the Apocalypse of Peter and the Wisdom of Solomon.

The earliest Christians had no New Testament canon. As the Protestant scholar David F. Payne explains:

"Their Bible, and that of the Jews to this day, consisted of the Old Testament; this was the Canon of Holy Writ accepted by Jesus Himself, and referred to simply as 'the scriptures' throughout the New Testament writings. It was not until A.D. 393 that a church council first listed the 27 New Testament books now universally recognized. There was thus a period of about 350 years during which the New Testament Canon was in process of being formed." (David F. Payne, "The Text and Canon of the New Testament," in *The International Bible*

Commentary, ed. by F.F. Bruce, Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, p. 1005.)

Excellent information on the origins of the Bible was summarized by Father A. James Bernstein in "Which Came First: The Church or the New Testament," *The Christian Activist*, Vol. 9, Fall/Winter 1996, p. 1,4-7. Father Bernstein discusses his discoveries as he explored Biblical origins, many of which surprised him and challenged his old views about scripture. For example, he explains how the canon we accept today differs in some ways from the writings used by early Christians:

"[T]he early Christians used a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. This translation . . . contained an expanded canon which included a number of the so-called "deuterocanonical" (or "apocryphal") books. Although there was some initial debate over these books, they were eventually received by Christians into the Old Testament canon.

In reaction to the rise of Christianity, the Jews narrowed their canons and eventually excluded the deuterocanonical books - although they still regarded them as sacred. The modern Jewish canon was not rigidly fixed until the third century A.D. Interestingly, it is this later version of the Jewish canon of the Old Testament, rather than the canon of early Christianity, that is followed by most modern Protestants today.

When the Apostles lived and wrote, there was no New Testament and no finalized Old Testament. . . .

[T]he first complete listing of New Testament books as we have them today did not appear until over 300 years after the death and resurrection of Christ. (The first complete listing was given by St. Athanasius in his Paschal Letter in A.D. 367.) . . . Most [early Christian] churches only had parts of what was to become the New Testament. . . .

During the first four centuries A.D. there was substantial disagreement over which books should be included in the canon of Scripture. The first person on record who tried to establish a New Testament canon was the second-century heretic, Marcion. He wanted the Church to reject its Jewish heritage, and therefore he dispensed with the Old Testament entirely. Marcion's canon included only one gospel, which he himself edited, and ten of Paul's epistles. Sad but true, the first attempted New Testament was heretical.

While Marcion was excluding many books he did not like, many early Christians accepted other New Testament books that most modern churches no longer have or no longer accept. For example, there were many competing "gospels" besides Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Before the Gospel of John had been written, Saint Luke wrote that there were **many** others writing related accounts, saying "Inasmuch as **many** have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us . . . it seemeth good to me also . . . to write to you an orderly account." (Luke 1:1,3). There would later be controversy over which of the Gospels to use, including controversy concerning the Gospel of John. The Roman Church resisted John, while the church in Asia Minor embraced John. The Syrian Church did not accept all four Gospels of the modern Bible until the fifth century, and "also ignored for a time the Epistles of John, 2 Peter, and the Book of Revelation" [Bernstein, p. 5]. As Stephen Robinson notes (pp. 52-53),

One of the most important of the Greek new Testament manuscripts, known as D or Codex Claramontanus, contains a canon list for both the Old and New Testaments. The manuscript itself is a product of the sixth century, but most scholars believe the canon list originated in the Alexandrian church in the fourth century. This canon omits Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Hebrews, but includes the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Acts of Paul (not our Acts), and, like the Muratorian Canon, the Apocalypse of Peter. . . .

Before the fifth century the Syrian Christian canon included 3 Corinthians and Tatian's Diatessaron. . . .

The Abyssinian Orthodox church has in its canon the twenty-seven books of the modern New Testament, but adds the Synodos of Qalementos (both attributed to Clement of Rome), the Book of the Covenant (which includes a post-resurrection discourse of the Savior), and the Ethiopic Didascalia. To the Old Testament the Abyssinian canon adds the book of Enoch (cited as prophetic by the canonical book of Jude) and the Ascension of Isaiah.

Part of the problem may have been the rarity of authoritative writings, which had to be copied by hand. Few churches had a complete set of apostolic letters, and it was undoubtedly difficult to tell a correctly written copy from a forgery or an errant copy. Many members might be unfamiliar with a given work cherished by other saints in a

different area. New or unfamiliar writings might have been rejected or questioned, and many controversies are easy to imagine.

Eusebius, known as the Father of Church History, was a fourth century bishop of Caesarea who disputed the books of James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 John and 3 John [Bernstein, p. 5]. He absolutely rejected the book of Revelation. Origen in the third century questioned the authenticity of 2 Peter and 2 John. Here was a respected Christian leader who accepted a different canon than many modern Christians. Does that make him unchristian? An apostate? A cultist? Was he subtracting from the Word of God? Some modern Protestants condemn Latter-day Saints for such reasons. Ironically, that logic would not only condemn respected early Christians like Eusebius, but the father of Protestantism himself, Martin Luther.

Martin Luther called the Epistle of James "a right strawy epistle" (ein rechte stroern Epistel) because it has "no Gospel quality to it" [*D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1929), Ser.3:6:10, as cited by Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints*, Aspen Books, Salt Lake City, UT, 1992, p. 125; see also T. Carson, "James," in *The International Bible Commentary*, ed. by F.F. Bruce, Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, p. 1533]. Elsewhere he branded it as worthless [Luther (1906): Ser.1:32:299]. In the forward to his early translations, he challenged the apostolic origin of James and also said that Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation did not belong among "the true and noblest books of the New Testament" [see W.G. Kümmel, "The Continuing Significance of Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 37 (1966): 573-581, as cited by Robinson, p. 53]. Some later editions of Luther's translations even labeled Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation as apocryphal or noncanonical. Even more surprising, Luther was unhappy with the Sermon on the Mount, calling it a masterpiece of the devil: "Das heist ein meister stuck des Teuffels [sic]" [Luther (1906): Ser.1:32:299] since it gives so much emphasis on works and behavior rather than Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Martin Luther, like many Christians before him, had his own opinions about what the proper Biblical canon should be. Those opinions differed from many before him and

many after him. This does not make Luther a non-Christian cultist, but shows that there has long been uncertainty about what the canon should be.

Interestingly, when Luther and other Protestants rejected the Septuagint text and its Latin translation in the Vulgate, thus rejecting the Apocrypha, and instead used a smaller collection of Old Testament books from the Masoretic Hebrew text, they diverged from centuries of Christian tradition. As a result, the Roman Catholic Bible now has about twelve books more than the Protestant Bible, meaning that about 200 pages of text have been "subtracted" - one could say - from the Protestant Bible relative to the "traditional" Catholic Bible. Though there was a time when many Protestants and Catholics accused each other of being anti-Christian, they now generally accept the right of the other to have a different canon. Shouldn't the same privilege be extended to their fellow-Christians, the Latter-day Saints, who have the Protestant Bible plus the Book of Mormon and two other books in their canon?

The popular concept of Biblical inerrancy and sufficiency (in which it is asserted that the Bible as is contains no flaws and is a complete and perfect canon) is hard to square with the centuries-old uncertainty and controversy over what should be in the Biblical canon in the first place. If Martin Luther openly attacked the canonical status of some books in the Protestant Bible, it seems odd that his followers would later claim that the Bible is infallible, complete, and perfect. The Bible makes no such claim for itself.

Technically, the concept of Biblical inerrancy should mean that the words originally written by prophets and apostles under inspiration of God are correct. Most Latter-day Saints would agree with that. However, when many people speak of biblical inerrancy, they have extended a rather reasonable concept to mean that a particular modern translation (esp. the King James Bible) is absolutely perfect and infallible, a proposition that is simply untenable. Unfortunately, since we have absolutely none of the original scriptures as penned by the prophets and apostles, the possibility of inerrancy in the original texts has only limited bearing on the accuracy of what we now have, though it appears that a great deal has been preserved accurately.

Where did the popular concept of the inerrancy of modern Bibles come from, if not the Bible? If Luther questioned the Sermon on the Mount and other parts of the Bible, it obviously was not from him (though he did teach that the scriptures were sufficient for salvation). The Protestant writer Lloyd Averill argues that the modern "fundamentalist" view of Biblical inerrancy does not derive from the great Reformers, but is a more modern development:

"It is clear that Calvin cannot be credited with the scriptural literalism affirmed by present-day fundamentalists. Nor, indeed, can any other major figure in the history of Christian thought prior to 1800. Contrary to fundamentalists claims, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy as they have formulated it is not a return to primitive Christianity or to Christian orthodoxy. Rather, it was an innovation fashioned scarcely more than a hundred years ago as a weapon to be used against the modernist movement." [Lloyd J. Averill, *Religious Right, Religious Wrong: A Critique of the Fundamentalist Phenomenon*, Pilgrim Books, New York, 1989, pp. 73-74, as cited by Peterson and Ricks, p. 127.]

My point is not to attack the Bible or the canons that are accepted today, but to point out that there is much room for uncertainty and little ground to claim that what we have now is the only acceptable, infallible, complete canon of scripture. Some argue that to be a Christian, one must accept only one particular canon and no other, but such a requirement would exclude Christ and the early Christians who did not have the Bible as we know it today, and who used Old Testament writings differing from those deemed authoritative by modern Protestants. In addition to the early Christian use of the Septuagint with its Apocryphal writings, the Bible itself mentions many other sacred writings which appear to have been lost, or, in some cases, removed from the modern canon. A partial list of these "lost scriptures" is given below.

Once we understand that there is not just a single, original manuscript to work with, but many different ancient texts, all of which are removed from the originals by many years, then it is easier to understand the genuine complications that we face in dealing with the Bible as a divine document that still has been through human hands. We can understand that outright contradictions might exist between the different ancient sources we have for the Bible. For example, there are contradictions about the ages of the Patriarchs at the birth of their successors when we compare the Masoretic Text, the

Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. We find that the Masoretic Text offers 720 years as the length of time from Abraham's birth to the Exodus, while the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch give 505 years. There are many similar examples, all pointing to the obvious fact that different ancient Bibles don't all give the same text. And even different translations from a common ancient manuscript will differ in many ways. So if the Bible is to be infallible, then we must begin with the question, "Which Bible?" And then we must ask, is that really all there is?

More information is provided by John Tvedtnes in "A Bible! A Bible! The Canon and Ongoing Revelation," a book review at SHIELDS-research.org. Also see Barry Bickmore, "Does the Bible Claim to Be Inerrant?" at FAIRLDS.org.

We agree with Paul that all scripture is profitable and inspired of God. of that set of "all scripture" includes the divinely-inspired, Christ-centered Book of Mormon. I make no excuses for that, for it is unmistakably and truly the Word of God, as is the Bible. If you haven't read the Book of Mormon, please do so. Call 1-888-537-7111 to receive your free copy.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon go hand in hand, the latter being a second witness of the former, but offering further rich and powerful insight into the Atonement of Christ, the relationship between mercy and justice, the nature of the resurrection, the salvation of little children, and many other precious Gospel truths. The Book of Mormon confirms the divinity of the Bible and is a "must-read" for those who rejoice in the words of Christ. As the seventh Church president, Heber J. Grant, said, "All my life I have been finding additional evidences that the Bible is the Book of books, and that the Book of Mormon is the greatest witness for the truth of the Bible that has ever been published" [*Improvement Era*, 39 (Nov. 1936):660].

Bible, A Bible: Which Translation?

Even apart from the little-appreciated problem of uncertainties in the canon, the uncertainties in translating any passage of Biblical scripture raises serious problems for those claiming Biblical inerrancy for existing translations. There is no single original Hebrew or Greek manuscript available, but we have hundreds of copied documents with

slight variations (typically minor, but variations all the same). Translators must deal with these varying manuscripts and decide which sources are most reliable, often picking and choosing between the various manuscripts. Even if all translators agreed to use the same manuscripts, there would still be significant uncertainties in the translation - sometimes because the text in the available documents is unclear or corrupted, or because there are numerous possibilities in translating Biblical language.

In the following table, I present three respected translations of one of my favorite passages, Job 19:23-29. Job 19:25,26 is a favorite scripture among LDS missionaries, showing the reality of a physical resurrection and indicating that "in our flesh" we will see God. When I tried to use that scripture in a teaching opportunity on my mission in Switzerland, I was shocked as I read from my German Bible a verse that seemed to contradict what I had learned from the King James Version. The German verse said that while our flesh would vanish, we would see God, with no mention of being in our flesh when we see Him. That experience taught me that human translation offers many possibilities for weakness and error in our modern Bibles. The many differences between the following English translations of Job 19 raise the important question: just which Bible is inerrant?

Three Translations of Job 19:23-29 - Can You Pick the Inerrant One?

King James Version	New English Bible	Jerusalem Bible
23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!	23 O that my words might be inscribed, O that they might be engraved in an inscription,	23 Ah, would that these words of mine were written down, inscribed on some monument
24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!	24 cut with an iron tool and filled with lead to be a witness in hard rock!	24 with iron chisel and engraving tool, cut into the rock for ever.
25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:	25 But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court;	25 This I know: that my Avenger lives, and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth.
		26 After my awaking, he will set me close to him, and from my

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me. 28. But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? 29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.	26 and I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself, 27 whom I shall see with my own eyes, I myself and no other. 28 My heart failed me when you said, 'What a train of disaster he has brought on himself! The root of the trouble lies in him.' 29 Beware of the sword that points at you, the sword that sweeps away all iniquity; then you will know that there is a judge.	flesh I shall look on God. 27 He whom I shall see will take my part: these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof. My heart within me sinks . . . 28 You, then, that mutter, "How shall we track him down, what pretext shall we find against him?" 29 may well fear the sword on your own account. There is an anger stirred to flame by evil deeds; you will learn that there is indeed a judgment.

A Bible, a Bible - But Which Edition?



What's In Your Bible? Click for a Chart Comparing Several Canons, Courtesy of BibleStudyMagazine.com.

Even with inspired translators, human errors in printing generally result in errors in printed texts, especially for printed editions before the days of computerized proofreading tools. Numerous printer's errors affected not only the Book of Mormon, but also the King James Bible. Thus, some details of the text could differ among printed editions. This important fact is explained in some detail by Alister F. McGrath, Professor

of Historical Theology at Oxford University, in *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How it Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001, pp. 213-214):

The early printings of the King James Bible included many errors. Many of these arose from weaknesses in the book production processes of the period. Proofing was often a haphazard business. From what we know of the book production methods of this period, it seems that the greatest effort was put into the process of typesetting. . . . Most printers had only or two presses at their disposal, and were reluctant to waste too much time by checking for typographical errors. It seems that the first printed sheet to be "pulled" from the press was checked for such errors, while printing continued.

Contemporary sources suggest that a "reading-boy" would then read the proof copy aloud to the compositor, who would check it against the original copy. Errors could arise in all kinds of ways - such as homophones (words that are pronounced identically, yet have different meanings and are spelled differently - such as "there" and "their"). It is thus little cause for surprise that Bibles should contain at least some errors, despite the best standards of the day being employed in an attempt to eliminate them.

A further factor contributing to the large number of errors in English Bibles was the constant pressure to reduce their production costs. . . .

McGrath goes on to note some examples of printing errors, including the confusing of Jesus and Judas in Matthew 26:36. He also points out that printing errors could not be easily corrected due to the nature of the printing process, but as hard as they were to repair, they were viewed as "scandalous by some." According to McGrath (pp. 215-216):

William Kilburne issued a vigorous denunciation of these in 1659, when he published his *Dangerous Errors in Several Late Printed Bibles to the Great Scandal and Corruption of Sound and True Religion*. Kilburne claimed to have identified as many as twenty thousand errors in various recent printings. Some of these errors were bizarre.

For example, a warning to the Israelites about the devious ways of the Midianites took an unusual turn, thanks to an amusing misprint in one edition (Numbers 25:17-18): "Vex the Midianites, and smite them: For they vex you with their wives." The possibilities suggested

by this passage are immense and intriguing, to say the least. Yet "wives" was merely a misprint for "wiles."

More serious was the misprint in an edition of 1631, which rendered Exodus 20:14 as follows: "Thou shalt commit adultery." The omission of the word "not" was speedily corrected, but not before this had caused some consternation among the Bible's readers. Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, the printers of this "Wicked Bible" - as it came to be known - were fined severely for this unfortunate lapse.

The first edition of the King James Bible to be published by Oxford University Press appeared in 1675; this was followed in 1682 by a sumptuous edition prepared by the Oxford printer John Baskett. The value of the edition was greatly reduced by its many printing errors. For example, it made reference to the "Parable of the Vinegar" instead of the "Parable of the Vineyard" - an error which led it to being nicknamed the "Vinegar Bible." Its amused critics panned it as "a Bastkett-full of Printer's Errors." Such printing errors were perhaps inevitable, given both the complexity of the text being produced, and the generally poor quality of English printing and proofing methods during the seventeenth century.

Other corrections to the text were introduced later to avoid possible misunderstandings. For example, the original printing of Acts 24:24 in 1611 referred to Drusilla, the wife of the Roman governor Felix, as a Jew; in 1629, this was altered to "Jewess." The original translation of Mark 10:18 read thus: "there is no man good, but one, that is, God." This could be misunderstood as implying that God was a human being. A small alteration was introduced in 1638, avoiding this implication: the text now read "there is none good but one, that is, God."

So if you wish to maintain that the Bible is infallible and error free, I'd like to know not only which translation, but also which printed edition. But heaven help you if you're going to claim a 1631 edition of the King James Version as your inerrant text.

Questions and Answers

How dare you add to the word of God? Revelation 22:18-19 forbids this!

The prohibition against adding or subtracting from the word of God actually goes all the back to the time of Moses, who wrote the following in Deuteronomy 4:2:

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it...."

In Rev. 22:18-19, John echoed the words of Moses as he concluded writing the Book of Revelation:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Moses and John were absolutely correct: no man has authority to add or subtract from the word of God. But Deut. 4:2 did not keep Moses from writing additional chapters, nor did it prohibit Isaiah, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Paul, and even John from writing later scripture as directed by God. It did not mean that God could give no more revelation or scripture, but that the inspired words of God given to his apostles and prophets should not be altered by men.

As one simple illustration, consider the writings of Jeremiah as recorded by Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch. See Jeremiah 36, where we learn that Baruch wrote all the words from Jeremiah that were recorded in a book (vss. 4, 17, 18) Unfortunately, King Jehoiakim of Judah burned the book that contained the words of Jeremiah (vss. 21-25). The Lord commanded Jeremiah to prepare his document again, writing "all the former words that were in the first roll" (vs. 28). In verse 32, Jeremiah then commanded his scribe, Baruch, to write on another roll the words of Jeremiah, "and there were added besides unto them *many like words*." Many like words *added*? This doesn't sound like original dictation straight from the mouth of God, perfectly preserved and unchangeable. Prophets speak or dictate by inspiration, but there can be later changes and additions.

Robert Boylan kindly sent me further information on this topic in 2006:

You might also like to know that Jeremiah 36:32 is not the only example of prophets revising their prior revelations. Moses revised the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), as seen when one examines Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. In addition, Isaiah 36-39 is a revision of 2 Kings 18:13 - 20:19, and Jeremiah 52 is a revision of 2 Kings 24-25. Joseph Smith's actions, contra critics (e.g., chapter 3 of "Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?") are entirely consistent with the actions of Biblical Prophets.

Read the text carefully of Revelation 22:18-19 and ponder what John is talking about. At the time, there was no Bible as we know it. The new Christians had the Septuagint (which included the Apocrypha) and scattered writings of some of the apostles, but there had not yet been any known attempt to establish a New Testament canon or to bring the Gospels and epistles into a single volume. John, who was in exile on the Isle of Patmos, is obviously referring to the newly written text before him when he speaks of "this book," the Book of Revelation. He refers to the unique contents of his book: its prophecies, its descriptions of plagues, its discussion of the holy city, and urges that no one change what he has written. Even though the Book of Revelation has been placed last in our Bible, it was not necessarily the last book written, but may have preceded other writings of John himself by a couple of years. In fact, many Christian canons over the centuries did not include the Book of Revelation at all, and even Martin Luther questioned its status. The first church council that listed most of the canonical books in our present Old and New Testaments, the Council of Laodicea that met in A.D. 363, still did not include the Apocalypse of Saint John [Bernstein, p.5]. The common idea that this was the last book added to an existing canon of New Testament scripture by John is erroneous, as is the idea that John meant that there could never be any more scripture.

Latter-day Saints fully agree with John: no man should change what God has spoken. However, God has the authority to speak what and when He wants. God spoke to other prophets after Moses and many of their divinely commissioned writings have been preserved in the Bible. God also speaks today to living apostles and prophets in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we should be willing to accept those whom God has sent and hear their inspired words.

When God speaks to prophets, they write words that become scripture. Moses, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, John, and many others **all added scripture**. One of the surest signs that the Church of Jesus Christ has really been restored is that new scripture has been added! The Jews at the time of Christ claimed to revere dead prophets but rejected living ones and rejected newly added scripture. They were in apostasy. Those who reject new prophets and new scripture from God in our day are likewise in apostasy and need to repent and come unto Christ more fully.

To the evangelical ministers who rail against us for "adding to the word," I am tempted ask - with tongue in cheek - by what authority they use a Bible from which many books of scripture accepted by the early Christians have been subtracted? Where is the Book of Enoch, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocryphal writings of the Septuagint, Psalm 151 of the Septuagint, or other missing scriptures? They may insist that their Bible is complete and perfect, but where is the missing scripture from which Paul quotes the words of Christ in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? Where is the scripture that contains the prophecy that Christ would be a Nazarene, which is cited as fulfilled in Matt. 2:23? If God restored those missing writings, would our critics accept the new scripture with gratitude, or reject it because it offends their sensibilities? Ask this question and you may be surprised, as I have been, at the answer. One devout man told me that he would have to reject any new writing, no matter how authentic, even if it had been written by an ancient apostle under inspiration from God, was perfectly preserved and unmistakably contained directly quoted words of Christ, because to admit the possibility of additional scripture would mean that we could not accept the existing Bible as the perfect, complete, and infallible final authority. (I almost wonder if some people worship the Bible rather than God.) On the other hand, Latter-day Saints are taught to anxiously accept every word that comes from God, and to look forward to many future revelations and the discovery of other ancient volumes of sacred scripture. The word of God is not finished yet!

By the way, some modern Christians seem to think that the Apocrypha was never seriously accepted by Christians of the past, in spite of being included in their canons. However, "the conciliar decree *De canonicis scripturas*, issued on 8 April 1546 by Session IV of the Catholic Council of Trent, declares all who do not accept the Apocrypha as Christian scripture - in other words, the Protestants - to be anathema or accursed" [Peterson and Ricks, p. 118]. If Latter-day Saints are to be condemned for adding to scripture, can the Protestants justify themselves in subtracting from scripture? But clearly there is not yet a single, universal, indisputable standard for what the Christian canon should be, so I suggest we stop the condemnation and allow different groups to use different canons. The ideal, of course, is that we would "all come to a

unity of the faith" - a process which requires receiving and following revelation from God (Eph. 4:11-14) and accepting His inspired additions to scripture.

Remember, the Bible says nothing about itself to imply that the canon is complete. As one of many passages implying incompleteness, consider John 21:25, which states:

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

John understood that there could have been many other books written to describe all the words and deeds of Christ. What he and others offered was limited to a minute fraction of what could have been written. It is a purely human assumption that all of the truly important material has been recorded and preserved, and an even more ridiculous assumption that we have no need for anything more. We must live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4), and as long as He lives, He will have words to speak, if only we are willing to listen. As we read in Acts 11:26,27, one of the only places in the Bible that uses the word "Christian," the people that were first called Christians had the benefit of having prophets among them. Doesn't it make sense that modern Christians ought to accept every word of God, including those of modern revealed scripture and those provided through God's living prophets and apostles?

Why can't you be like me and just take your doctrines straight from the Bible? Pure Biblical Christianity is what I believe!

Ah, this claim of so many Christians - and from so many different, contradicting churches - is based on genuine ignorance of Christian history. Those making this claim have often grown up steeped in views and philosophies that have developed for centuries, views such as the Trinity or original sin, which guide and inform their reading of the Bible, when those views themselves are not at all "straight from the Bible."

The history of modern "mainstream" doctrine needs to be better understood by its adherents. After the Apostolic Era, when the Church had lost the Biblically mandated organization lead by prophets and apostles (see Eph. 4:11-14; Eph. 2:18-20; 1 Cor.

12:28; Acts 1), a variety of doctrinal changes occurred. Much was fueled by the effort to make Christianity seem more acceptable to intellectuals of the day, who were steeped in Greek philosophy. At this time, in the late second century, the Christian leader Tertullian seemed to have recognized the apostate threat of Greek philosophical influences on the Church. He said, "Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition!" ("On Prescription Against Heretics," *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 1885; reprint, Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994, as cited by L. Midgley, *FARMS Review of Books*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1999, p. 31). Another of Tertullian's comments seems to apply well to the gulf between the Hellenized metaphysics of the creeds and the approach of early Christianity:

"What is there, then, about them that is alike, the philosopher and the Christian - the disciple of Hellas and the disciple of Heaven - the dealer in reputation and the dealer in salvation - one occupied with words and one with deeds - one creator of error and its destroyer - friend of error and its foe - the despoiler of truth and its restorer - its robber and warden?" (Tertullian, *Apology*, 46.18, as cited by Midgley, p. 31).

Tertullian's concerns about the influence of philosophy were justified. For example, Augustine, the father of so much of the doctrinal framework of both Protestant and Roman Catholic theology, seems to have considered himself a philosopher. He placed little emphasis on revealed truth but much on "natural philosophy," which "turns out to be what philosophers, and specifically what he, believed were Plato's views concerning divine things.... Augustine argued that Plato ... provided a necessary intellectual grounding for a mature Christian faith" (Midgley, p.37). Many of his teachings find little support in the Bible, but are the result of wresting the scriptures to comply with the demands of human philosophy. This becomes painfully apparent, for example, in considering his views on original sin and the guilt of infants, or in the relationship between faith, works, and salvation (see, for example, *Faith, Grace, and Works: the Biblical LDS Position* or *Adam and the Fall of Man*).

That Augustine is the source of much modern theology is a point that many non-LDS scholars recognize. Even some evangelical writers have stated as much, in spite of the popular evangelical assumption that their theology comes straight from the Bible. **It may come largely from the Bible, but the framework for understanding and interpreting the Bible is one that has been developed over many centuries, and**

the father of much of that framework is Augustine. Thus, the evangelical writers Norman L. Geisler and Ralph E. MacKenzie in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1995, p. 431, as cited by Midgley, p. 65) declare that Augustinianism "was the major soteriological framework that informed Western Christianity. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants are indebted to the Bishop of Hippo [Augustine]." Further, they state that "both Catholics and orthodox [evangelical?] Protestants have a common creedal and Augustinian doctrinal background. Both groups accept the creeds and confession and councils of the Christian church of the first five centuries. Both claim Augustine as a mentor" (Geisler and MacKenzie, p. 17, as cited by Midgley, pp. 65-66).

Protestants often feel that their doctrines come straight from the Bible, even when many core doctrines are set in language borrowed from philosophers, not the Bible. Doctrines such as the Trinity, original sin, salvation by grace alone, and others are not found taught in the Bible - certainly not in the language and forms used to describe these doctrines, language which, ironically, is used as a litmus test to determine who is a true Christian and who is not. Personally, I share Tertullian's prescient discomfort with Christianity mixed with philosophy, and its emphasis on words rather than deeds. The test of faith for true Christians should not be acceptance of the metaphysical formulations of a combative post-Biblical committee of philosophers - but faith in Jesus Christ, expressed in part by deeds based on His teachings. And I would encourage more reading and thinking for those who think they take their religion straight from the Bible without recognizing the profound influence of post-Biblical creeds and extra-Biblical philosophy on the way in which approach the Bible. Can you really read the Sermon on the Mount or the Gospel of John with no preconceptions and still accept doctrines like original sin, infant guilt, salvation without keeping commandments (see Matt. 19 or Luke 10), predestination to heaven or hell, and a Trinitarian God without body, parts, or passions, one in substance and essence (see John 17)?

For more information on this topic, see my page, "Questions About Apostasy and Restoration."

Do you put "revelation to living authorities" on the same plane as the Bible?

What is the Bible but a collection of revelations that God gave to "living authorities" - His prophets and apostles? Did the death of Moses, Peter, or Paul add any intrinsic value to what they had written and revealed? Must a prophet be dead and distant to have honor? Were the revelations that God gave to John as he wrote his books of scripture less valuable than what God had previously given to prophets who were dead at the time? 2000 years ago, were the newly spoken words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount less valuable than the words of God to Jeremiah or Ezra? If anything, modern revelation can be more timely and immediately pertinent than past scripture, just as the words of God to Noah about building an ark probably were much more relevant and valuable to Noah's fellow men just prior to the Flood than were the previous words of God to Enoch or Adam. But an established human weakness has been to reject modern revelation in favor of what is old - and thus many died when the Flood came.

In Matthew 23, Christ spoke some very strong words to those who claimed to revere dead prophets yet rejected living ones:

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

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

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

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

The Latter-day Saints have suffered greatly under the hands of mobs stirred up ministers who claimed to revere dead prophets, but sought to kill living ones.

Yes, we do have living prophets and apostles, and God can speak to them and reveal His word. We accept their official words as the word of God when they are moved upon by the Spirit of God, in accordance with the following principle that was revealed to Joseph Smith (Doctrine and Covenants, 68:4):

And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.

A general test of inspiration of the words of the leaders of the Church, who are still human beings and not infallible as individuals (no mortal prophet or apostle ever was infallible!), is whether they agree with the scriptures that have been openly accepted by the body of the Church. In some rare cases, modern revelations will be officially added to the canon of LDS scripture, which is done through revelation to the combined First Presidency and by the common consent of the body of the Church at one of the semi-annual General Conferences.

Do you accept the Bible as the final authority?

No. God the Father is the final authority. We trust and worship Him above all. While we love and cherish His word in the Bible, I believe that no single volume can contain all His revelations and instructions for all time and all situations, especially when that volume has been strongly influenced by human hands in selecting, editing, copying, translating, and typesetting those words. If the Bible were the final authority, we must ask, "Which Bible?" - an issue discussed above. Thus, we rely on revelation from God as the rock upon which His Church is built (as Christ taught in Matt. 16:16-19).

I recently received e-mail from John Tvedtnes offering a relevant quote from a Protestant scholar, Floyd V. Filson, discussing the tendency of many modern Christians to believe that the Bible is the sole and final word of God (F. V. Filson, *Which Books Belong in the Bible*, pp. 20-21):

If it will not seem too facetious, I would like to put in a good word for God. It is God and not the Bible who is the central fact for the Christian. When we speak of "the Word of God" we use a phrase which, properly used, may apply to the Bible, but it has a deeper primary meaning. It is God who speaks to man. But he does not do so only through the Bible. He

speaks through prophets and apostles. He speaks through specific events. And while his unique message to the Church finds its central record and written expression in the Bible, this very reference to the Bible reminds us that Christ is the Word of God in a living, personal way which surpasses what we have even in this unique book. Even the Bible proves to be the Word of God only when the Holy Spirit working within us attests the truth and divine authority of what the Scripture says. Faith must not give to the aids that God provides the reverence and attention that belong only to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hope is in God; our life is in Christ; our power is in the Spirit. The Bible speaks to us of the divine center of all life and help and power, but it is not the center. The Christian teaching about the canon must not deify the Scripture.

Is the Bible all that is needed for salvation?

No. Christ taught that we must repent, believe, and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Matt. 4:17; John 3:3-5). Baptism, for example, requires more than just the Bible: it requires water and someone with authority to perform the baptism. The Bible teaches that Christ organized a Church and gave His apostles special keys and authority - authority to seal in heaven (Matt. 16:16-19), in fact, and that His Church was guided by revelation from Christ to His apostles and prophets which would provide unity and direction to believers (Eph. 4:11-14). Men claiming to rely on the Bible alone - cut off from prophetic revelation - have resulted in so much disunity and confusion about the Gospel that there are something like 3,000 Christian churches today with many contradictions in doctrine and ritual. Something more is needed for the work of the ministry: revelation and guidance from God through His chosen and authorized leaders.

Martin Luther and others have taught the doctrine of "sola scriptura," meaning "only the scriptures," the doctrine that all we need for salvation is contained in the scriptures. **But does the Bible actually teach that?** It simply does not. The Bible teaches that the word of God is great and valuable, but that word includes the word of God through living prophets (Amos 3:7) as well as written scripture. Was reliance on the Bible alone part of early Christianity? No - if only for the simple fact that the Bible as we know it did not exist. Many people have the idea that Paul and his followers carried around the New Testament with them and that the scriptures were widely available to the early Christians. The reality is otherwise. During the early centuries, "most churches had only a few, if any, of the apostolic writings available to them. The books of the Bible had to be painstakingly copied by hand, at great expense of time and effort. Also, because most people were illiterate, they could only be read by a privileged few. The exposure of most

Christians to the Scriptures was confined to what they heard in the churches - the Law and Prophets, the Psalms, and some of the Apostles' memoirs" [Bernstein, p. 4]. Early churches functioned without a complete Bible. How grateful we should be to have the Bible - but let us not assume that it alone brings salvation, nor let us make it an object of worship ("bibolatry"?). Rather, let us worship God and seek to live by every word that proceeds from His mouth.

Ironically, some modern ministers teach that all we need is the Bible and nothing else, while simultaneously calling LDS people non-Christian because we reject the post-Biblical creeds. Their position seems to be that we need to accept these creeds in addition to the Bible to be considered a Christian. That seems to be the antithesis of the *sola scriptura* position. They may argue that the creeds are just a summary of what the Bible teaches, but they go far beyond that, using declarations and abstract philosophical concepts nowhere taught in the Bible. For example, the incomprehensible Trinity without body, parts, or passions, is hardly a summary of anything in the Bible. The word Trinity does not even occur in the Bible, nor do other words essential to the doctrine of the Trinity (coequal, consubstantial, and others - see Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian*, Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, Utah, 1991, p. 72). The statements of philosophy and metaphysics found in the creeds may arguably be consistent with the Bible (I suggest they are not), yet undeniably go beyond what is taught there and are much more than just a summary or repetition. The creeds are extra-Biblical and post-Biblical. To require Christians to accept them to be saved is to admit that sources other than the Bible are necessary. (But by whose authority has this extra-Biblical material been sanctioned? By authorized apostles or committees of men?)

We need the truths of the Bible and of the Book of Mormon, but salvation would still be possible if they were all destroyed or we were made blind and unable to read, as long as the truths of the Gospel were taught to us and we could receive baptism and other ordinances (e.g., receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands) that Christ has instituted for us to enter into a saving covenant with Him.

Why don't you accept the Bible as complete?

For one thing, because there are obviously missing sacred writings which the Bible refers to that are no longer known or no longer contained in the Bible. Mike Parker (Webmaster of Mike Parker's LDS Library) has compiled the following well known examples of lost sacred writings mentioned in the Old Testament:

- The book of the covenant, through which Moses instructed Israel (Exodus 24:7).
- The book of the wars of the Lord (Numbers 21:14).
- The book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18).
- The book of the manner of the kingdom (1 Samuel 10:25).
- Possible books containing three thousand proverbs, a thousand and five songs, a treatise on natural history by Solomon (1 Kings 4:32,33).
- The acts or annals of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41).
- The book of Gad the Seer (1 Chronicles 29:29).
- The book of Nathan the prophet (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29).
- The prophecy of Ahijah, the Shilonite (2 Chronicles 9:29).
- The visions of Iddo the Seer (2 Chronicles 9:29).
- The book of Shemaiah the prophet (2 Chronicles 12:15).
- The story of the prophet Iddo (2 Chronicles 13:22).
- The book of Jehu (2 Chronicles 20:34).
- The Acts of Uzziah, by Isaiah, the son of Amoz (2 Chronicles 26:22)
- Sayings of the Seers (2 Chronicles 33:19)

The New Testament also refers to the Book of Enoch in Jude 14; a missing epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:3); a missing Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9); and a missing Epistle to the Colossians, written from Laodicea (Col. 4:16). These writings were important enough to quote or refer to in subsequent writings preserved now as scripture. In addition, Matthew 2:23 cites a now fulfilled prophecy from "the prophets" that Christ would be a Nazarene (someone from Nazareth), but this prophecy is not found anywhere in any existing Old Testament canon. Matthew was citing scripture which is missing now. Another example of missing scripture is the text containing the words of Christ that Paul quotes in Acts 20:35: "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." This saying of Christ appears in none of the Gospels. Here Paul was writing to foreign converts

who were not around to hear Christ preach, so how were they to "remember" those words? Paul obviously must have been citing it from a sacred writing that they had. We no longer have that writing. Something is missing.

Without question, the Bible alone shows that there are sacred writings that early Christians and Jews respected as scripture but which we no longer have. I could also add to that the many books such as the Shepherd of Hermas (available online at the Early Church Fathers section of ccel.org) which were respected by many early Christians as scripture but which are no longer included in modern canons.

Those arguing for an inerrant Bible will say that whatever books we now have must be the ones God intended for us to have, and thus there can be no missing books worthy of being scripture or else He would have put them in the text. This is not a Biblical doctrine, to be sure (chapter and verse, anyone?). And it again raises the issue of which Bible God has chosen to personally compile (not to mention translate). Would that be the Bible that Timothy had as a child (some form of the Septuagint), or the Vulgate, or the Protestant Bible? And would that be with or without the disputed Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7,8)? Perhaps would that include the Book of Enos that Jude and other early Christians saw as scripture? Perhaps it would include the Pastor of Hermas, viewed as scripture by other early Christians? Or did God not decide to offer a complete Bible until about 1000 A.D., when the subset of writings now found in modern Bibles was canonized for the first time? Ah, but all of this misses the obvious point. The committees and groups that selected writings for publication in the various editions of the Bible, as well as those who performed the translations thereof, were not the Godhead or angelic representatives of the Godhead, but humans - and not even prophets or apostles at that. The Bible is inspired, and it's a great miracle that it has been preserved so well - but it both unbiblical and illogical to state that it must be complete and perfect. (Neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon is complete and perfect.) That doctrine verges on idolatry - elevating the Bible above God. God is the ultimate, complete, and living authority - not an inanimate work that has passed through human hands, minds, and print shops. Those who lack or reject God's prophets and apostles have lost the guidance of modern revelation and perhaps must fall back on an indefensible faith in the completeness of the Bible rather than admit that the ship of the church has lost its

rudder (see Eph. 4). But the position is unjustified. The concept of Biblical inerrancy and self-sufficiency developed only after Christians realized that they no longer had continuing revelation. Good news, though: it's back!

Regarding the Johannine Comma mentioned above, that term refers to 1 John 5:7, which is one of several New Testament passages not found in all of the ancient manuscripts available to us. In fact, the Johannine Comma is particularly questionable. According to Dr. John Tvedtnes (and many other scholars of the scriptures), the words "*the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*" from the verse in question "are missing in 250 Greek New Testament manuscripts and are found in no manuscript from before the seventh century A.D. They only appear in four manuscripts written after 1400. Most scholars believe that a scribe added these words as an explanatory gloss." See the article "A Bible! A Bible! The Canon and Ongoing Revelation," by John Tvedtnes at SHIELDS-research.org. Also discussed are other apparent examples of scribal addition to the text in Mark 16 and John 8, as well as many examples of lost material. One interesting further example from Dr. Tvedtnes regarding possibly lost material involves Ezekiel:

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are two fragmentary copies of a document (4Q385, 4Q386) that have been termed "Pseudo-Ezekiel" because it has passages from the biblical Ezekiel that vary from what is found in the standard Masoretic Hebrew text. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century A.D., declared that Ezekiel had written two books of prophecies (Antiquities of the Jews 10.5.1), though only one is found in the Bible.

What is the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible?

Concerning the accuracy of the modern Bible, Joseph Smith said:

I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.

[*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.327].

Some time after completing the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph was commanded to perform a "translation" of the Bible in which important missing or corrupted items would be restored. Though the work was not completed, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible makes many changes to existing Bible passages that often bring questionable or troublesome passages closer to the spirit of the Bible, clarify unclear passages, or add revealed material

completely missing. In performing this "translation," Joseph used the King James Version rather than Hebrew or Greek texts, and sought guidance through revelation about corrections that were needed. Though we use the King James Version, LDS people regularly do and should use information from the Inspired Version in studying the scriptures.

There are many interesting examples of the correction. For example, when Mary encounters the Resurrected Lord in the garden before Christ has ascended to heaven, the King James Version of John 20:17 has Christ saying, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. . . ." The Joseph Smith Translation instead has "Hold me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" which actually proves to be in excellent agreement with the best available Greek texts for that passage.

For other examples of the nature of the corrections made, I'll quote from the article, "Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible" in Vol. 2 of Encyclopedia of Mormonism:

In the KJV [King James Version] the wise men ask Herod about the birth of the "King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2); in the JST [Joseph Smith Translation] they pose a more searching question: "Where is the child that is born, the Messiah of the Jews?" (JST Matt. 3:2). . . . When Herod inquires of the scribes, he is told that it is written that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, "For out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt. 2:6); the JST reads, "for out of thee shall come the Messiah, who shall save my people Israel" (JST Matt. 3:6).

In the JST a transitional passage without a KJV equivalent is inserted between the end of KJV Matthew chapter 2 and the beginning of Matthew chapter 3:

And it came to pass that Jesus grew up with his brethren, and waxed strong, and waited upon the Lord for the time of his ministry to come. And he served under his father, and he spake not as other men, neither could he be taught; for he needed not that any man should teach him. And after many years, the hour of his ministry drew nigh [JST Matt. 3:24-26].

At age twelve, when Jesus was teaching in the temple, the KJV (Luke 2:46) records that Jesus was "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." The JST reads, "they were hearing him, and asking him questions" (JST Luke 2:46).

The KJV account of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness states that Jesus went there "to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered" (Matt. 4:1-2). The JST reads: "Then Jesus was led up of the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be with God. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, and had communed with God, he was afterwards an hungered, and was left to be tempted of the devil" (JST Matt. 4:1-2). Luke's record (KJV) says that Jesus was "forty days tempted of the devil" (Luke 4:2). The JST reads, "And after forty days, the devil came unto him, to tempt him" (JST Luke 4:2).

The KJV states that "the devil taketh" Jesus to a "pinnacle of the temple" and also to a "high mountain" (Matt. 4:5-8; Luke 4:5-9). The JST says it was "the Spirit" who transported Jesus to these places (JST Matt. 4:5-8; Luke 4:5-9).

In the KJV John 3:23 states that Jesus performed baptisms, but John 4:2 largely negates Jesus' activity as a baptizer by stating: "Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." The JST reads, "Though he himself baptized not so many as his disciples; For he suffered them for an example, preferring one another" (JST John 4:3-4).

Jesus' parables are touched upon in many JST passages. One of the most important is a statement, presented as the words of Jesus himself, explaining why he used parables to veil the spiritual message when speaking to certain individuals: "Hear another parable; for unto you that believe not, I speak in parables; that your unrighteousness may be rewarded unto you" (JST Matt. 21:34).

In Mark 7:22-24 (KJV) Jesus enters a house "and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid." JST Mark 7:22-23 reads, "and would that no man should come unto him. But he could not deny them; for he had compassion upon all men."

Luke reports that while Jesus was on the cross, he cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (KJV Luke 23:34). The JST adds a parenthetical clarification: "(meaning the soldiers who crucified him)" (JST Luke 23:35).

Do you think the Bible contains errors?

President Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., wrote:

"We are all aware that there are errors in the Bible due to faulty translations and ignorance on the part of the translators, but the hand of the Lord has been over this volume of Scripture nevertheless, and it is remarkable that it has come down to us in the excellent condition in which we find it." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:191)

There is no question that some parts of the text have been corrupted. Of the thousands of early Greek and Hebrews manuscripts and fragments that scholars have to work with, there are many small and some serious differences that make it impossible to propose one single, standard text that one might hope to be free from errors. In fact, Leon Vaganay and Christian-Bernard Amphoux, two non-LDS writers, say that there are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts or fragments to work with, containing roughly 250,000 variants among them. They say that "it would be difficult to find a sentence, even part of a sentence, for which the rendering is consistent in every single manuscript. That certainly gives plenty of food for thought." (Leon Vaganay and Christian-Bernard Amphoux, *Initiation a la critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament* [An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism], translated by J. Heimerdinger, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.2, as cited by Kerry A. Shirts, *Journal of Mormon Apologetics*, Vol. 1, 1999, p. 94.)

Some of the errors are obvious and can be found by an inspection of the Bible alone. Many such problems are discussed by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe in their excellent book, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992). Though written from a faithful Protestant perspective to support the Bible, Geisler and Howe regularly acknowledge that some minor problems and contradictions are due to copyist errors. For example, 1 Kings 4:26 says Solomon had 40,000 stalls when 2 Chronicles 9:25 says he had 4,000. "This is undoubtedly a copyist error" (p. 181). That particular problem is one of many examples of problematic large numbers in the Hebrew text. In 1 Samuel 13:1, a word is missing in the Hebrew (Geisler and Howe, p. 159). The first phrase of that verse literally says that "Saul was the son of ... years when he became king." Translators must fill in the missing word with a numerical estimate, resulting in many contradictions among translations (NKJV gives "one year", NASB gives "forty", and the NIV gives "thirty"). A verse with a word missing shows that the Biblical text cannot be utterly infallible with no missing or corrupted elements. But this is only one of many problems.

Some problems may be minor errors due to translation problems, such as Leviticus 11:20, which speaks of "fowls that creep, going upon all four" (KJV - some other translations offer "insects" instead of "fowls," which makes more sense in the context but still seems biologically puzzling). Listing a bat as a "bird" and a hare as a cud chewer in Deut 14 (verses 7 and 18, respectively) also raises arguably trivial questions

about biological accuracy (though it's even more serious than the apparent biological errors anti-Mormons mock in the Book of Mormon).

Further, there are many examples of contradictions within the Bible, though they are usually of minor or non-doctrinal importance, such as the numerical contradiction mentioned above. Other examples of contradictions include I Chron. 21:5 and 2 Samuel 24:9; 2 Sam. 10:8 and 1 Chron. 19:18; 2 Kings 24:8 and 2 Chron. 36:9; Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7, and 2 Chron. 22:2 and 2 Kings 8:26. Some of these are so plain that even defenders of Biblical inerrancy must at least admit the likelihood of copyist errors (Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992, p. 199, comparing 2 Kings 24:8 and 2 Chron. 36:9 where Jehoiachin's age when he began to reign is given as 18 and 8 years, respectively).

Some errors in the Biblical appear to be simple, easily understood accidents, such as Matthew misattributing a quote from Zechariah (Zech. 11:12-13) to Jeremiah in Matt. 27: 9-10. Others are harder to resolve, though generally still minor, such as the apparent contradiction between Mark 6:8, Luke 9:3, and Math. 10:10, where the staff is forbidden in Matthew and Luke but permitted in Mark's account of Jesus' instructions to his disciples.

Of slightly more significance are the differences in the three Biblical accounts of Paul's vision on the road to Damascus. These differences can be explained as due to slight errors in memory and should not detract from our acceptance in the Bible. But they do show that even great apostles are not infallible in all things, just as the Bible itself is not infallible in every little detail.

Paul relates his story three times in the Bible (Acts chapters 9, 22, and 26), and each time there appear to be differences, even contradictions. There are many details that differ between the three accounts. A well-known problem concerns the other witnesses who were with Paul. Look at the three accounts:

-- Acts 9:7 --

And the men which journeyed with him **stood** speechless, **hearing a voice, but seeing no man.**

-- Acts 22:9 --

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but **they heard not the voice** of him that spake to me.

--Acts 26:14 --

And when **we were all fallen to the earth**, I heard a voice speaking unto me. . .

Did the others hear the voice or not? Did they fall or remain standing? (Does it really matter?) Anti-Mormon critics would revel in an apparent contradiction of this magnitude in the Book of Mormon or in the history of Joseph Smith, but they are quick to gloss over such problems in the Bible. I think we need to be generous with Paul and recognize that the peripheral details are not essential for his message. Perhaps the apparent contradictions just relate different aspects of a single story, with others who may have heard the voice and may have been standing initially, but then later fell and did not hear part of the message. Frankly, it looks like a minor contradiction, perhaps resulting from a lapse in memory concerning details of the event, but it does not bother me because I do not require the Bible to be infallible in minor details to still be scripture from God.

There are several more differences in the three accounts of Paul's vision worth noting. Some of the differences seem minor and easily compatible. For example, Acts 9 and 22 simply say the light that Paul saw appeared around him, while Acts 26 say the light was around him and those that were with him. All three agree that the Lord said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and that Paul said, "Who art thou, Lord?". However, in Acts 9, the Lord says "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" before Paul responds, while Acts 26 has the Lord say that after Paul responds, and Acts 22 makes no mention of that statement from the Lord.

More analogous to the Joseph Smith First Vision accounts, the accounts in Acts 9 and 22 conclude by telling how Paul regained his sight and make no mention of statements from the Lord about Paul's future mission. Later, though, in Acts 26, Paul does not even mention his blindness and his miraculous recovery, but says instead that the Lord

prophesied to him of his future mission among the Gentiles. If Paul were Joseph Smith, critics would accuse him of fabricating new twists to his story and contradicting himself, but I feel it's more fair to believe that both Paul and Joseph were relating different parts of their visionary experiences. Initially, Paul may have been most concerned about the healing of his eyes, while later his recollection of the Lord's words about his mission to the Gentiles became a more important part of the vision.

Anti-Christian critics in the early Christian era "also noted that a number of verses from the Hebrew Bible were incorrectly quoted in the New Testament. For example, they compared Deuteronomy 6:5 with Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27. How could Jesus be the Messiah, the gainsayers asked, if Jesus and his disciples were ignorant of verses that even the youngest child would know?" (Darrick T. Evenson, *The Gainsayers: A Converted Anti-Mormon Responds to Critics of the LDS Church*," Horizon Publishers, Bountiful, Utah, 1989, pp. 43-44, citing Daniel J. Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages*, New York, KTAV, 1977, p. 5). Again, these minor problems do not detract from the divinity of the Bible's message, but should temper our expectations about the inerrancy of any record produced with human assistance.

There are also some examples of prophecies that don't seem to have been fulfilled in the expected or logical way. I discuss several of these on my LDSFAQ page, Questions about Prophets in Latter-day Saint Religion. One obvious example is the story of Jonah, who was told by God to prophecy to the people of Nineveh. Jonah prophesied that the people would be destroyed in 40 days (Jonah 3:4) - no loopholes were offered, just imminent doom. God changed things, however, when the people repented and He chose to spare them - much to the chagrin of that imperfect (yet still divinely called) prophet, Jonah. Jonah, in fact, was "displeased ... exceedingly" and "very angry" (Jonah 4:1) about this change from God, perhaps because it made Jonah look bad. In spite of an "incorrect" prophecy and in spite of the obvious shortcomings of Jonah, he was a prophet of God and the Book of Jonah in the Bible is part of the Word of God.

Another problematic prophecy is found in 2 Samuel 7:4-17, where Nathan the prophet tells David that his royal house and kingdom will "be established forever" (v. 16). No

conditions are given. The Babylonian invasion later overthrew the throne of David and that kingdom, and it certainly is not in place today. However, we do find conditions in a related prophecy in I Kings 9, given when the Lord appeared to Solomon (v. 2 - one of many reminders that God does appear to some of His prophets, in spite of some anti-LDS claims to the contrary). The Lord told Solomon that He would "establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever, as I promised to David thy father" (v.5) - IF Solomon would walk in the ways of the Lord (v. 4). Solomon failed to follow the Lord and committed terrible sins. Soon the house of David lost the northern kingdom of Israel, and later the throne of David was overthrown. But what Nathan spoke in 2 Samuel 7 was not tempered with any explicit conditions and thus could be branded as an incorrect prophecy. Whatever the case, 2 Samuel 7 is problematic.

On the issue of problems with dates in the Bible, Kevin Hill sent e-mail with the following comments:

The dating/chronology problems in the Bible are legion. Just check out a good Bible Dictionary under the article "Chronology." A few examples:

- The ages of the Patriarchs upon their successors' births (and in some cases their ages at death) vary wildly among the Masoretic Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Which are correct?
- The Masoretic Text has 720 years from Abraham's birth to the Exodus; the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch have 505 years. Again, which is correct? Why the discrepancy if the Bible is perfect?
- The Septuagint has 10 fewer years from the Exodus to the founding of Solomon's temple (as compared to the Masoretic Text). Where did they go?
- There are numerous instances where the biblical data does not match the testimony of Assyrian and Babylonian records, and for various reasons scholars have a high degree of confidence in those secular records.
- Luke at 2:2 mentions that Jesus was born at the time of a census when one Quirinius was governor of Syria. We know from Roman records that P. Sulpicius Quirinius conducted an assessment in 6-7 C.E. [far too late to be Luke's census] while governor of Syria; he was not governor during Herod's reign. There have been various attempts to resolve this problem.

(As an aside, some of our Bible-believing critics who get bent out of shape over apparent quirks in the chronology given by Joseph Smith in his writings ought to be careful about making too

much of such problems unless they are prepared to fully resolve the problems with chronology in the Bible.)

Another example discussed on my page about Prophets in Latter-day Saint Religion is the case of Tyre and Ezekiel's prophecy of its destruction. I don't think that the problems with this prophecy can be refuted. This small example of a clear difficulty doesn't mean that the Bible is false at all - but that we must understand that it must be interpreted with caution and an open mind, and that it is not strictly inerrant. The only truly inerrant authority is God - that's why continuing revelation through His apostles and prophets is so important for His Church (the true, restored Church of Jesus Christ).

Finally, some people expect the Bible to be not only an infallible guide to faith, but an infallible guide to science as well. They will be disappointed to find (minor) technical "errors" that challenge such assumptions. The PUZZLING description of "fowls that creep upon all four" in Leviticus 11:20 has already been mentioned. Also, in Joshua 10:12-13, when daylight hours were miraculously extended for a battle, we read that "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed" - as if the sun goes around the earth. (This may have been an accurate description of what was observed, but it doesn't make good science for those who expect every statement to be scientifically precise.)

Don't Be Quick to Condemn!

In dealing with the Bible as well as any other scripture, we must strive to consider how apparent conflicts might be harmonized and avoid the tendency to criticize and reject truth out of our own ignorance. We must have an open-minded willingness to look past minor problems in order to understand the priceless message of the Word. This faithful approach to scripture is well illustrated in Laurence E. Porter's discussion of the differences between the Gospels of Mark and Luke in their relation of events at the empty tomb of Christ, differences which some see as further examples of (minor) contradictions in the Bible ("Luke," in *The International Bible Commentary*, ed. F.F. Bruce, Zondervan Publ. House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, p. 1226):

Luke's story is in general outline very much like Mark's, but there are considerable differences in detail.

(a) Mark has one young man at the sepulchre, Luke has "two men". (Matthew incidentally has an angel, John has two angels.) These are not necessarily contradictions. The "clothes that gleamed like lightning" of Luke suggests supernatural beings (cf. 9: 29). The difference between one angel or two may be due to nothing more than the fact that two were present, but that one only engaged in speech. At all events, the descriptions that we have are expressions in human words of a phenomenon that far transcended human experience.

But the truth of the story of the empty tomb does not depend on our ability to devise a satisfactory scheme of harmonization, but in the tremendous effect that the event had on the disciples, and on subsequent history.

(b) The lists of women's names in the two Gospels are slightly different. But neither of them is necessarily complete.

(c) Luke omits the message reported by Mark that Peter and the disciples are to meet Jesus in Galilee. The post-resurrection appearances recorded by Luke are all in Judea, but the disciples are reminded of teaching He gave them in Galilee.

(d) In Mark, the women were so startled by the events at the tomb that they found themselves unable to give the message to the disciples. In Luke on the other hand, they go and report to the disciples all that has happened, though of course there is no message of a rendezvous in Galilee for them to convey.

The fact of the resurrection is one of the best historically attested facts of ancient history. For a clear and concise survey of the evidence, see J. N. D. Anderson, *The Evidence for the Resurrection* (London, 1950).

Porter refuses to stumble over minor apparent difficulties and seeks to understand how they might be resolved. That approach is needed by any Christian to benefit from the Bible.

Those who put their faith in a perfect, complete Bible worship a fictional idol, not the living God. I really worry about those who have this belief, for they will become disillusioned once they do a little serious study. They might give up on God altogether once the former object of their worship proves to be incomplete and imperfect, at least as imperfect as human language and much more so due to obvious glitches in the text.

I recently received this message:

"If [the Bible] really is the Word of God, then it most surely is perfect, complete, and true because God is perfect, complete, and true. In other words, there is no inbetween - if God is perfect, so is His word."

I asked this person if there was any biblical basis for his assumption. It is an entirely human assumption that every tiny aspect of a text must be perfect for it to come from God. On the face of it, though, since human language is obviously imperfect, no text in human language can be transcendentally perfect and complete, but that doesn't mean the text did not originate from a perfect Being. Now apart from the limitations of language, if a sentence or two in the book of Amos is garbled, for example - as several sentences most assuredly are, or if a few words are missing in some parts of the Old Testament such that translators just have to guess at the meaning (clearly the case), how does that detract from the value of what has been preserved? It's only a problem if one assumes that the text is the final authority - in other words, that the text IS God and thus must be perfect to be worthy of worship. Such an object of worship will not withstand much scrutiny. Please don't worship the text - worship the living God.

Conclusion: The Bible is true, in spite of some minor problems. It is not infallible and inerrant, but true and divinely inspired, though it required the work of human hands to produce it.

Why does your Eighth Article of Faith say you accept the Bible as the word of God as far as it is translated correctly, but adds no such limitation to your acceptance of the Book of Mormon?

I believe it's primarily because the original Book of Mormon text was perfectly preserved over time after being engraved on metal plates by inspired prophets, and then was translated under divine inspiration by a prophet of God. This is radically different from the process in which the many differing Biblical manuscripts were transmitted to our age and translated. Dr. Hugh Nibley discussed this issue briefly during one of his classes on the Book of Mormon. I quote from a transcript published in the volume *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 1, p.3:

Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the oldest manuscript we had of the books of Moses (the first five books) was from the ninth century A.D., the Ben Asher Codex. There are eight thousand different old manuscripts of the New Testament, no two alike. So there is a lot of collating, comparing, and arguing about which passages are which and what order they come in. Then when you have translation, there is no agreement about that. Year after year there are new revised translations coming forth. Well, if the last translation is reliable, why the new revised, improved Cambridge, or Anchor, or whatever it is, edition of the Bible? It's processing all the time. The Bible is a very human document, of course it is. So is

the Book of Mormon. It covers thousands of years. It has many authors; it was edited, etc. But it was handed to us in a single passage. Bang, just like that, the whole thing - all edited, all in order, all translated. We don't have to argue about any of that stuff. If it is true, it comes to us whole, and there is nothing to slow us down on it - nothing to hold us up until we have decided what this passage means, or what that is. It was translated directly by the gift and power of God. There is no need to argue about it. It is in words of exceeding plainness. . . .

The Book of Mormon still has the potential for human errors - typos, printing errors, grammatical errors - but it was translated with divine guidance by a prophet of God and can be considered as the most correct book on earth.

Evangelical critics of the Church often get riled over our statement that we believe the Bible as far as it is translated correctly, but our position is actually quite close to that of many evangelical churches. An Evangelical scholar, Dr. Craig L. Blomberg, Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, explains this issue in *How Wide the Divide?* by Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997). This book, by the way, is a MUST READ for those wishing to understand the similarities and differences in the LDS and Evangelical positions on key issues such as the scriptures, the nature of God, the divine potential of humans, and salvation. Here's a relevant quote from Dr. Blomberg (pp. 34-35):

Not all Evangelicals are comfortable with the term *inerrancy* because it can suggest a degree of precision that cannot be squared with various details in the Scripture themselves. This discomfort led to a decade of intense study, as a large interdenominational body of Evangelical scholars and theologians met for a series of conferences from 1978 to 1988 and published numerous works under the auspices of an organization called the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Perhaps the most famous product of this council was the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," now widely used to articulate what a broad cross-section of Evangelicals can agree on when they use the term.

An abbreviated version of that ten-page declaration by one of its shapers may form the foundation of our discussion here:

Inerrancy means that when all facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs [as written by the authors] and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical or life sciences.

There are at least five important qualifications in this declaration of Scripture's truthfulness, the first one being "when all facts are known." ... The second qualification is "in their original autographs." We recognize that the Scriptures have not been preserved flawlessly as they were copied through the centuries, because the manuscripts that exist vary from each other in numerous (though mostly minute and theologically insignificant) ways. But the vast numbers of early manuscripts (over five thousand for parts of the Greek New Testament alone) that have been preserved enable scholars to reconstruct, with a very high degree of confidence, what the writers of the Old and New Testaments most likely wrote. Dr. Blomberg's co-author, Dr. Stephen E. Robinson of Brigham Young University, offers an LDS perspective on the issue of inerrancy, referring to Dr. Blomberg's position (p. 56):

As Prof. Blomberg points out, the LDS view of the nature of Scripture is actually closer to the Evangelical view than is the view held by liberal Protestants or Catholics. We take the Scriptures to be literally true, and we hold symbolic, figurative or allegorical interpretation to a minimum, accepting the miraculous events as historical and the moral and ethical teaching as binding and valid. What separates Latter-day Saints from evangelicals is less our view of the nature of scripture and more our view of canon....

The eighth article of faith, written by Joseph Smith in 1842 states that "we believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." Evangelicals sometimes take offense at the phrase "as far as it is translated correctly" but this should not be so. The wording is intended to communicate exactly the same caution to Latter-day Saints that the phrases "when all facts are known," "in their original autographs," and "properly interpreted" from the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy are intended to convey to Evangelicals. By setting these very similar parameters, both Latter-day Saints and Evangelicals stipulate that the present text of Scripture may contain errors, and neither Mormons nor (most) Evangelicals would insist that any modern version can claim absolute inerrancy.

Robinson also points out that current printings of the Book of Mormon mention that past printing errors have been corrected, and that Mormons make no claim of total perfection for the text. However, it is in a different category, having been through fewer hands and having been translated from the original with divine assistance.

"All scripture" has been given already, according to 2 Tim. 3:16. How can there be more?

Looking at the previous verse, we see Paul telling Timothy that Timothy knew the scriptures since childhood. What scriptures would that be? The New Testament did not exist at the time of

Paul's letter, and certainly not during Timothy's childhood. The scriptures that Timothy knew undoubtedly were the scriptures of the Old Testament, probably the Septuagint. Paul was referring primarily or even exclusively to the Old Testament when he wrote that passage. If it means that there can be no more scripture, then the whole New Testament must be abandoned.

Clearly, Paul does not mean that the Old Testament was the end of God's word. He is not revealing some new limitation on what God can speak, but simply describing the nature of scripture - of all scripture - namely, that it is inspired of God (literally, "God-breathed"). I, too, believe that all genuine scripture is inspired of God - including the New Testament, including the Book of Mormon, including the Doctrine and Covenants, and including whatever other words that God will reveal. We should live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4), not just those we've inherited by tradition. Since all scripture is given by God, shouldn't we be willing to accept it? All scripture? I hope so!

No scripture is of private interpretation, so why are you Mormons always interpreting the Bible your way?

All scripture requires interpretation to be understood. So if we are not to rely on our private interpretations, what authoritative source do we look to when there is confusion? Might I suggest that the Lord already solved this problem. That is precisely why the Church of Jesus Christ needs to have living apostles and prophets, as Paul explained, that we might not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:11-14). And the good news is that this living Church of Jesus Christ is on the earth right now, fully functioning with living apostles and prophets, just as in ancient times. We have openings right now, so please contact your local missionaries and ask how to join! (Tip: You can have missionaries bring you your own free copy of the Book of Mormon by making a request at Mormon.org.)

What do you think of the scholarly view that the Old Testament is a work of men, filled with fraudulent passages?

Many modern scholars have argued that the Old Testament was written by men to justify or strengthen their political ambitions, or, at best, was a hopeful means of justifying the importance of Israel. As part of this view, it is argued that passages of fulfilled prophecy were all written after the fact, fraudulently in essence. In general, the authorship of Old Testament books is questioned. For example it is said that the Moses had little to do with the books of Moses, but that they were written much later by various priests to strengthen their position, and it is likewise

argued that books such as Isaiah were written by multiple people. Great and foundational stories, such as the miraculous exodus from Egypt, probably never have really happened, but were invented by later generations and exploited by priests inventing books of scripture.

One very influential scholar who has espoused some of these views is Richard Elliott Friedman, author of *Who Wrote the Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), which I read recently. He presents a seemingly powerful case that the Books of Moses are a combination of different documents from much later times that were written to justify political ambitions of priests and kings. Chapters and verses are dissected according to apparent influences from differing political views, and the resulting view of the Bible is one of a fraudulent document with, nevertheless, great literary value.

I agree with some of Dr. Friedman's points. There are some obvious and undeniable textual problems with traditional views that ascribe all of the Books of Moses to Moses (e.g., how could Moses write about his own death?), and with the view of Biblical inerrancy and divine origin of every word. There certainly are some legitimate authorship questions. But I find the justification for the schizophrenic dissection of verses and chapters into many different authors to be based on a house of cards. He almost instantly accepts the assumption that different authors must be invoked to explain verses that use different phrases, images, words for God, or other literary tools, or that seem to offer fuel for differing opinions on political matters. Using that assumption, the text is forcibly dissected, and then the fact that the separated chunks of text seem to be consistent with the original assumption is used to justify the original assumption, all without a fair evaluation against the hypothesis that a single prophet may have been author of the dissected passages. The brilliant interweaving of contradictory texts that Friedman calls for to produce the Old Testament is a far less elegant and reasonable solution than the assumption that individual prophets wrote substantial passages, a few parts of which - in a worst case scenario - may have been altered over time. (But I do really appreciate Friedman's insight into the ancient tabernacle and its relationship to the temple: he has made some marvelous discoveries that are reported in his book.)

The Book of Mormon, if it is true (and it is!), provides strong evidence that the revisionist approach of modern scholars is wrong. It reports that in 600 B.C., the Nephites had the writings of Moses and other Old Testament prophets, and that they know of and spoke of now disputed Biblical events as historical fact. The exodus from Egypt was real. Joseph was a real ancestor of Nephi who left actual prophetic writings for his posterity. Isaiah was a real prophet who wrote the Book of Isaiah, including prophetic passages that were fulfilled after his life (some of these are quoted in the Book of Mormon). The Book of Mormon gives us direct insight into the world of the Old Testament and refutes some of the major claims of modern scholars. In light of the Book of Mormon, we can see that the Old Testament is not a fraudulent man-made document, in spite of some possible problems. It is scripture, the Word of God (as far as it is translated correctly), produced by the hand of real prophets. If you want to gain a confirmation that the Bible is true, I urge you to read the Book of Mormon.

Why can't you just accept what the Bible says it is?

One "inquirer" accused me of "slandering" God's word by "twisting" Rev. 22 and Deut. 4 to suit my own purposes, and insisted that the Bible is exactly what it says it is. ("Slander," in this context, means "not agreeing with my views.") Here is a response:

May I ask just what it is that the Bible says about itself? And just which Bible do any such passages refer to? In answering that question, may I ask if you know when and how the various books of the Bible were selected, brought together, and organized into the form currently known as the Bible? And may I ask if you are aware that the selection of books in typical Protestant Bibles is only one of many, many different compilations that have been proposed by various committees and groups over the centuries - and differs from older Catholic Bibles, for example, in many ways, such as having "subtracted" a variety of books. And when Paul or Christ refer to "scripture" or "scriptures," do you know what they were referring to? (One hint: before the New Testament had been written and compiled, those referring to scripture around A.D. 30-50 were probably referring to the Septuagint - which differs in several important ways from the text used to produce the Old Testament of most Protestant Bibles.)

I'm afraid you won't find any passages in the Bible that use the word "Bible" or refer specifically to Protestant canons or the translation of your choice. In fact, it may be very difficult to find out what the "Bible" says about the "Bible" without thinking about what the Bible is, what scripture is, and how you got whatever canon and translation you have chosen to us. But if you have a canon and translation that is perfect and complete, exactly as God wants it, please let me know - for my King James Version, as much as I love it, clearly is not, in spite of the many hundreds of helpful changes that have been made in it since its first edition in 1611.

How can you use the Bible as God's Word if it has errors? If it's from God, it must be perfect and complete like He is.

Here's an excerpt from a question received Sept. 2001:

I noticed you contradict yourself on more than a few occasions. For example, concerning the bible, you go to great lengths to establish that there exist possible (and even definite) errors and "missing" passages or even whole books throughout the Old and New Testaments. Okay, fine. But in other sections you attempt to use the scripture as your authority to "back-up" other discussions . . . [T]he bottom line remains that either you believe it IS or it IS NOT of God. If it really is the Word of God, then it most surely is perfect, complete, and true because God is perfect, complete, and true. In other words, there is no inbetween - if God is perfect, so is His word.

I agree that whatever God says is perfect. But there is a huge difference between what God says and what man understands, then writes, copies, translates, and publishes. Much of the Bible is not quotations given directly from God, but history or letters created in the first place by inspired humans, who then expressed their inspired knowledge in human language. But the very obvious limitations of human language alone means that it is utterly unreasonable to expect any text in a human language to be perfect and complete, for there are inherent limitations in what can be expressed and how accurately it can be expressed. The very fact that there are multiple competing and sometimes contradictory translations of the Bible shows that printed Bible texts cannot be perfect and complete. For example, which of the numerous editions of the King James Bible was the perfect one? The 1611 version, perhaps? Or is it an entirely different translation like the New English Bible? Which of the dozens of differing Greek manuscripts is the perfect one to translate from? And for the Old Testament, is the Septuagint the perfect version (that's the one that the early Apostles knew and quoted from), or is it one of the variants of the Masoretic text? Perhaps the Aramaic Targum?

Remember, unless God himself is the writer, copyist, translator, publisher and typesetter, any book, no matter how inspired and divine at its core, is subject to some degree of error. That's why we worship God, not the Bible, and need ongoing revelation from Him to ensure that we stay on course, as Paul taught in Eph. 4:11-14.

We can use human logic coupled with human assumptions to convince ourselves that the Bible must be perfect and complete like God, written as if he had dictated every word and guided every act of each copyist, translator, and typesetter, resulting in a crystal-clear perfect text utterly free of error and human influence, but - and I will be blunt here - this takes one to a fantasy land utterly out of touch with reality. You cannot dig into the Bible without realizing that there are NO original manuscripts that have been preserved, and many differing secondary manuscripts that leave numerous uncertainties in the text with easy-to-demonstrate errors and other problems. You cannot even walk into a Christian bookstore and look at the Bible section without realizing that there are many competing translations of the Bible.

It is sheer fantasy to think that God has eliminated all human influences to preserve one sole original manuscript and one perfect, complete translation into English that allows the Bible to be the perfect, complete final authority, possessing the very nature of God, perfection and completeness. It's almost as if some people want to worship the Bible and give it the attributes of God.

Amazingly, it can be demonstrated that MUCH of the Bible has been preserved among various competing manuscripts. The core messages of the Bible are not subject to question due to textual problems. It is entirely acceptable to believe that the Bible is the word of God as far as it has been properly preserved and translated, with reliance on additional texts and ongoing revelation to clarify uncertainties or correct possible errors. The Book of Mormon is one such additional text, serving as another witness of Jesus Christ and a powerful CONFIRMATION of the truth of the Bible on numerous key issues, and providing confirmation of the accuracy of existing manuscripts for some specific Bible passages such as many parts of Isaiah and the Sermon on the Mount.

Acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God *as far as it is translated correctly* is the most logical approach for a true, faithful Christian who understand the Bible text and its origins. And it has been the approach of the Latter-day Saints from the beginning.

Why do LDS scriptures change, unlike the Bible?

Here is a typical and recent example of an objection I received on this topic:

One thing that confounds me is the ever-changing positions and text in your scriptures. The Bible is the same as it always has been.... Not so with the Book of Mormon, which changes. LDS followers are encouraged to accept the latest version as is.

I would think that if the books are inspired by God, they would not change. I know of specific cases where those trying to learn of the original text contents and meaning were reprimanded. Have you read the text from the original books? In the case of the Bible, I have. In fact I can get them at the local Christian bookstore and have several copies in my house. Not so with the Book of Mormon.

My response:

Do you realize that the King James Version of today has hundreds of changes compared to the 1611 printing? And do you realize that the selection of manuscripts used in its translation contain many thousands of variations relative to other possible selections of manuscripts? (And there definitely are NO surviving original manuscripts to work with - the earliest are still removed from the originals by many, many decades or centuries.) One example where clear problems arise is the famous Johannine Comma, where the King James version has a passage (1 John 5:7,8) with two verses from relatively late manuscripts that are not attested in earlier manuscripts - suggesting a late addition by somebody to buttress the doctrine of the trinity. Most modern translations of the Bible no longer have those two verses because the earliest manuscripts all lack them. Of course, it's hard to be sure on such issues because there are no original manuscripts and many variations in the existing manuscripts. Most is clear, of course, but there are thousands of areas where change and uncertainty exists. The Bible is of God and inspired - but it has clearly been through human hands and must not become an object of worship. It is helpful to recognize the truth about what it is and what it is not.

In addition to the numerous revisions of the King James Bible, there is strong evidence that revisions have occurred in the ancient manuscripts. A small sampling of the evidence is given in the following quotation from Kevin Barney (e-mail of April 24, 2000):

Matthew 24:36

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

The text originally most likely read "...neither the angels of heaven *nor the son*, but my Father only". The words "nor the son" (Greek **oude ho huios**) are present in the best representatives of the Alexandrian, Western and Caesarian text types, but absent from the Byzantine texts on which the KJV was based. The words are also attested in the parallel at Mk. 13:32. They appear to have been intentionally deleted by scribes because of the perceived doctrinal difficulty of the Father knowing something the Son does not (which indeed would appear to be a difficulty in later Trinitarian thinking)....

Col. 2:2

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

There is a bewildering array of variants for the confusing end of the verse (following "of the mystery"):

- (1) of God, Christ
- (2) of God
- (3) of Christ
- (4) of God and Christ
- (5) of God which is Christ
- (6) of God which is in Christ
- (7) of God the Father in Christ Jesus
- (8) of God the Father and of Christ
- (9) of God even the Father of Christ
- (10) of God even the Father and of Christ

The JST [Joseph Smith Translation] makes its own contribution here: "of God, and of Christ, who is of God, even the Father." I have argued elsewhere [see Kevin L. Barney, "The Joseph Smith Translation and Ancient Texts of the Bible," *Dialogue* 19/3 (Fall 1986): 92-93] that this change was primarily intended to correct the unfortunate translation in the KJV, "of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," which creates the misimpression that God and the

Father are separate beings. (As you can see from my translation, the Greek **kai** here should be an intensive, not a conjunction.)

These two of many related passages indicate the possibility of either deliberate scribal "corrections" or corrupted text that led scribes to generate variants in their effort to make sense of a passage. In any case, one thing is certain: Greek texts have been changed, for good or evil, resulting a Bible that most clearly has undergone changes.

The same is also clearly true for the Hebrew text, as we have discussed above. (Also see the question about scribes below.)

For additional perspective, here is an interesting passage from Bart D. Ehrman, "Textual Criticism of the New Testament", in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, edited by Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 127-145 (sent to me by Ted Jones, 2004):

To this point we have been speaking chiefly in the abstract about scribes inadvertently and intentionally modifying the texts of the NT that they copied. What, though, are the concrete realities? Were there in fact a large number of such errors? For us to realize the extent of the problem, some basic data may prove useful. At present, we have over 5360 manuscripts of all or part of the NT in Greek (the language in which all its books were originally written). These manuscripts range in size from tiny fragments the size of a credit card to hefty volumes that include all twenty-seven books of the NT. They range in date from the early second century [note 5: 'p52, which contains several verses from John 18. It is usually dated to the first half of the second century'] to the sixteenth century (some copies were made by hand even after the invention of moveable-type printing). What is striking is that among these thousands of manuscripts, with the exception of the smallest fragments, no two are exactly alike in all of their particulars.

The manuscripts themselves thus leave no question that scribes made changes in their texts, and many such changes. How many differences are there among our surviving manuscripts? While estimates typically put them in the hundreds of thousands, no one knows the real number for certain because no one has yet been able to count them all. What we can say with confidence is that there are more differences among the manuscripts than there are words in the NT. (pp. 129-130)

Now if you were really being accurate in stating that the Bible does not change and stands as is, it would require that you be using a 100% accurate translation of original manuscripts. And even then, I would ask which canon are you using? Catholics have one selection of texts, Protestants another, and there have been dozens of different selections proposed and used over the centuries. Which is the true canon? early Christians accepted the Book of Enoch, the Shepherd of Hermas, and other texts as part of their canon. I think you do not - but why? Why have there been changes in the canon, not to mention changes in the manuscripts, not to mention changes among the competing translations, not to mention changes even in a single translation like the King James Version?

What you really meant, I think, is that the 20th century edition of the particular translation you prefer (King James?) has not been through any revisions that you are aware of. But to say that it's in a different class than the Book of Mormon is inaccurate.

Understanding what the inspired and wonderful Bible is helps us appreciate what the Book of Mormon is. Neither are inerrant, 100% accurate texts. That can never be the case as long as human translators and printers are involved, for one thing. The final authority on all issues must not be a book printed by humans, but God the Father. We can trust the printed word as far as it is translated and printed correctly - but we must look to revelation from Him through His prophets and apostles when there are uncertainties in interpretation or when new information is needed.

As for the charge of many changes in the Book of Mormon, please see http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_changes.shtml. They have been minor changes, largely grammatical and typographical, with a deliberate effort to be true to the original manuscripts from Joseph's translation. The 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon is readily available - and no one is reprimanded for digging into it. Of course, no one should just use the 1830 edition, in my opinion, because they would miss many useful resources (useful division into verses, chapter headings, footnotes, an index, etc.) if they aren't using the modern printings, which have also corrected a number of errors introduced in previous editions. It's hard to get perfection when things go through human hands and human printers - but the Book of Mormon comes about as close as one could hope for. Like the Bible, it is the word of God. Don't reject either for the

changes they have been through or the occasional human influence inherent in any translated, printed text.

Since ancient scribes were so totally accurate in their work, how could any mistakes ever enter into the Bible?

There is a myth among some circles that ancient scribes were so incredibly cautious, making sure that every letter was perfectly copied, that they never produced any mistakes when copying the manuscripts, and thus all ancient manuscripts agree with each other. This is entirely bogus - a deceptive lie or statement of sheer stupidity. The great Hebrew scholar, Emmanuel Tov, for example, has discussed numerous scribal problems in Hebrew manuscripts. In a 1994 lecture entitled "The Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls," Dr. Tov explains what we learned about ancient scribes and Hebrew manuscripts with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Let me explain the importance of having discovered these documents from a very early period relating to the Hebrew Bible. Before these discoveries were made in 1947, the earliest sources for the Hebrew Bible were the texts found in the Cairo Geniza. The Geniza is a storeroom in which discarded writings considered to be holy or that contained the name of God were placed [when they were worn out]. The earliest of these documents are from the eighth century of the Common Era [A.D.]. Until 1947 we had no ancient records in Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible. You might say we had no really good evidence of what the Hebrew Bible looked like, until the discoveries of Qumran. It turns out that our knowledge was rather good, but we had no evidence in our hands. So, the first time that we were able to see what an ancient Hebrew Bible looked like was after these documents were found near the Dead Sea. We now know what is meant by a copy of the Hebrew Bible from early periods. We now know that the text was written in a scroll, and when we say scroll, we really mean something which was rolled. We mean that these were sheets of leather sewn to each other or glued to each other, on each of which you could have a number of columns of writing. Each column is what we would probably call a page, and so normally you'd have three or four columns on each sheet, with a fixed number of lines. We now see what the text looked like. We see that there are scribes who wrote well, and we see that there are scribes who were rather sloppy. One of the scribes was a terrible scribe, the scribe who wrote the Isaiah scroll. When I say terrible, I mean terrible. This is a scribe who made a mistake in every second, third, or fourth -- well, let's say every fifth word. Already the second word of that scroll has a mistake. It starts with the vision of Isaiah, and in that word *Yisha'yahu* the third letter, the '*ayin*', he simply forgot, because this is a guttural letter, which he (like I) did not pronounce, so he just wrote *yod shin yod hay vav* and then afterwards when he realized what he did, he, or a reader, put the '*ayin*' above the line.

Mistakes in guttural letters in that scroll abound. Words are omitted. Words are added. Words are added in the margin. This is sloppy handwriting. We simply must remember that this is a human scribe of blood and flesh who wrote this scroll and hence produced a product which, in his case, was not a good product.

(Emmanuel Tov, "The Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls," Seventh Annual F.A.R.M.S. Lecture, Feb. 20, 1994, Document TOV-94, Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994, pp. 6-7; see also Emmanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edition, Fortress Press, 2001)

It's not just that some scribes were sloppy. They were condemned as a class by the Lord for their unrighteousness ("Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" in Matt. 23:39). Evidence supports the idea that changes were deliberately made due to their religious bias. Some early Christians reported that Hebrew scriptures had been changed to take out some clear prophecies of Christ, which was an entirely logical but corrupt response from those who kept the manuscripts and hated Christianity.

One thing is clear: there are numerous variants between the different ancient texts, both in Greek and Hebrew. While the manuscripts agree with each other in many ways, there are thousands of differences due to the vagaries of human activity. Scribes were imperfect. They were not infallible. Their products cannot possibly be considered infallible, perfect and complete. One can ignore the abundant evidence, but it's time to recognize that only God is the final and perfect authority, and that's why we need continuing revelation from his authorized prophets and apostles. The Bible is scripture and needs to be studied with faith, but also with a recognition that it is a book printed by humans, translated by humans, copied by humans, and even originally written by inspired humans, none of whom were infallible. Mistakes happen. Errors creep in. Translations create unintended meanings. This is mortality, and these kind of things happen. Thank goodness there is a mechanism to overcome these problems when it's critical, and that mechanism is continuing revelation, which was meant to be an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ from the beginning, and which has been restored in our day.

Don't the Dead Sea Scrolls prove the Bible has not changed and contradict the Book of Mormon idea that there are errors in Bible?

Here is a related question that was posed to John Tvedtnes:

How does the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls support the Mormon belief that the Bible was changed through the translations over the years? In my understanding, these scrolls, which were written before the apostasy, closely match the Masoretic Texts written during the apostasy, which closely match the scripture that we use today. Am I missing something?

Here is John's answer, received in e-mail from 2004:

The Dead Sea Scrolls include portions of all of our Old Testament canon except Esther, along with many texts that were not included in the Bible as we know it, though some are known from other ancient manuscripts. There are, however, many variants and, in fact, different versions. For example, there are several different versions of Exodus and Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel were a single book at that time). One of the Samuel manuscripts has information found in no other Bible versions, while others have material found in the Greek Septuagint of the 3rd century B.C. but not found in the Hebrew texts from which English Bibles have been translated. The late Yehezkel Kutscher of the Hebrew University wrote an entire book on the variants between the larger Isaiah Scroll found in cave 1 and the Massoretic Hebrew text that has been used in synagogues for centuries and was the basis for our English Bibles. Fundamentalist Christians, believing that the Bible is complete and inerrant, take exception with Latter-day Saint views of the Bible, but the scholarly evidence suggests that there have always been problems of transmission of Bible texts. Some of the Isaiah variants from the Dead Sea Scrolls support the Book of Mormon quotes from Isaiah, while others support the Massoretic text and still others support neither.

The same person had a related question:

And for the New Testament, I've read that the 5,000+ manuscripts are in 99% agreement with each other, with the oldest copy dating to A.D. 130. (I'm not being very detailed because I'm assuming you've argued this before and already know the history) These seem like pretty good numbers...what is your view on why the New Testament is inaccurate? My friends were under the impression that the NT has been translated from language A to language B to language C, and so on, and that over the years, the original meaning of the scriptures was lost. But as far as I know, each time the Bible is written it is translated from one of the original texts. Comments?

Here is John's reply:

There are not 5,000+ manuscripts, since most are fragments rather than complete manuscripts. For example, the one you note from ca. A.D. 130 is one of the smallest fragments and contains only portions of two verses from John. (Another early fragment has a few words from Matthes.) To date, non-Latter-day Saint Bible scholars have catalogued more than half a million variants in the Greek texts of the New Testament. Many are, of

course, scribal errors, but there is much evidence for manipulation of the text. See, for example, Bart Ehrman's book, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. If you are really interested in looking into this, I can suggest other books that also discuss the subject. Indeed, I have written about 80% of a book that I entitle *As Far as It Is Translated Correctly: Problems in the Transmission and Translation of the Books of the Bible*, which I hope to finish next year.

I should add that there are no Bible manuscripts from before the fourth century A.D. Prior to that time, each book was written on a separate scroll. Some of the first bound Bibles lack New Testament books like 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude, and Revelation, but include books no longer in our Bibles, such as Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, and 1 Clement. >From the writings of the early Church Fathers, we know that many early Christians accepted other books that did not end up in the Bible. Indeed, even today, the Russian Orthodox, Abyssinian (Ethiopic), and other eastern churches have Bibles that contain books missing from our western Bible, which came via the Roman Catholic Church.

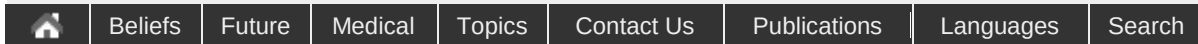
[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Jehovah's Witness beliefs

http://www.watchtower.org/e/jt/article_03.htm

Jehovah's Witnesses Official Web Site



Jehovah's Witnesses—Who Are They? What Do They Believe?

What Do They Believe?

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES believe in Almighty God, Jehovah, Creator of the heavens and the earth. The very existence of the intricately designed wonders in the universe surrounding us reasonably argues that a supremely intelligent and powerful Creator produced it all. Just as the works of men and women reflect their qualities, so do those of Jehovah God. The Bible tells us that "his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made." Also, without voice or words, "the heavens are declaring the glory of God."—Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-4.

People do not mold clay pots or make television sets and computers without a purpose. The earth and its creations of plant and animal life are far more marvelous. The structure of the human body with its trillions of cells is beyond our understanding—even the brain with which we think is incomprehensibly wonderful! If men have a purpose in bringing forth their comparatively insignificant inventions, surely Jehovah God had a purpose in his awesome creations! Proverbs 16:4 says that he does: "Everything Jehovah has made for his purpose."



**EARTH . . . created
by Jehovah . . . cared
for by man . . .
inhabited forever**





Jehovah made the earth for a purpose, as he stated to the first human pair: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth . . . , have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28) Because they became disobedient, this couple failed to fill the earth with righteous families who would lovingly care for the earth and its plants and animals. But their failure does not make Jehovah's purpose fail. Thousands of years later, it was written: "God, the Former of the earth . . . , did not create it simply for nothing." He "formed it even to be inhabited." It is not to be destroyed, but "the earth endures for ever." (Isaiah 45:18; Ecclesiastes 1:4, *The New English Bible*) Jehovah's purpose for the earth will be realized: "My own counsel will stand, and everything that is my delight I shall do."—Isaiah 46:10.

Hence, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the earth will remain forever and that all people, living and dead, who will fit in with Jehovah's purpose for a beautified, inhabited earth may live on it forever. All mankind inherited imperfection from Adam and Eve and, hence, are sinners. (Romans 5:12) The Bible tells us: "The wages sin pays is death." "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Romans 6:23; Ecclesiastes 9:5; Ezekiel 18:4, 20) Then how can they live again to share in the earthly blessings? Only through the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus, for he said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life." "All those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29; 11:25; Matthew 20:28.



How will this come about? It is explained in "the good news of the kingdom," which Jesus started to proclaim while on earth. (Matthew 4:17-23) But today Jehovah's Witnesses are preaching the good news in a very special way.

WHAT JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BELIEVE	
Belief	Scriptural Reason
Bible is God's Word and is truth	2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21; John 17:17
Bible is more reliable than tradition	Matt. 15:3; Col. 2:8
God's name is Jehovah	Ps. 83:18; Isa. 26:4; 42:8, AS; Ex. 6:3
Christ is God's Son and is inferior to Him	Matt. 3:17; John 8:42; 14:28; 20:17; 1 Cor.

	11:3; 15:28
Christ was first of God's creations	Col. 1:15; Rev. 3:14
Christ died on a stake, not a cross	Gal. 3:13; Acts 5:30
Christ's human life was paid as a ransom for obedient humans	Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 Pet. 2:24
Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient	Rom. 6:10; Heb. 9:25-28
Christ was raised from the dead as an immortal spirit person	1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:17, 18
Christ's presence is in spirit	John 14:19; Matt. 24:3; 2 Cor. 5:16; Ps. 110:1, 2
We are now in the 'time of the end'	Matt. 24:3-14; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Luke 17:26-30
Kingdom under Christ will rule earth in righteousness and peace	Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-5; Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 6:10
Kingdom will bring ideal living conditions to earth	Ps. 72:1-4; Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-17; 21:3, 4
Earth will never be destroyed or depopulated	Eccl. 1:4; Isa. 45:18; Ps. 78:69
God will eliminate present system of things in the battle at Har-Magedon	Rev. 16:14, 16; Zeph. 3:8; Dan. 2:44; Isa. 34:2; 55:10, 11
Wicked will be eternally destroyed	Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-9
People God approves will receive everlasting life	John 3:16; 10:27, 28; 17:3; Mark 10:29, 30
There is only one road to life	Matt. 7:13, 14; Eph. 4:4, 5
Human death is due to Adam's sin	Rom. 5:12; 6:23
The human soul ceases to exist at death	Ezek. 18:4; Eccl. 9:10; Ps. 6:5; 146:4; John

	11:11-14
Hell is mankind's common grave	Job 14:13, <i>Dy</i> ; Rev. 20:13, 14, <i>AV</i> (margin)
Hope for dead is resurrection	1 Cor. 15:20-22; John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26
Adamic death will cease	1 Cor. 15:26, 54; Rev. 21:4; Isa. 25:8
Only a little flock of 144,000 go to heaven and rule with Christ	Luke 12:32; Rev. 14:1, 3; 1 Cor. 15:40-53; Rev. 5:9, 10
The 144,000 are born again as spiritual sons of God	1 Pet. 1:23; John 3:3; Rev. 7:3, 4
New covenant is made with spiritual Israel	Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:10-13
Christ's congregation is built upon himself	Eph. 2:20; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42
Prayers are to be directed only to Jehovah through Christ	John 14:6, 13, 14; 1 Tim. 2:5
Images should not be used in worship	Ex. 20:4, 5; Lev. 26:1; 1 Cor. 10:14; Ps. 115:4-8
Spiritism must be shunned	Deut. 18:10-12; Gal. 5:19-21; Lev. 19:31
Satan is invisible ruler of world	1 John 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31
A Christian ought to have no part in interfaith movements	2 Cor. 6:14-17; 11:13-15; Gal. 5:9; Deut. 7:1-5
A Christian should keep separate from world	Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15; John 15:19; 17:16
Obey human laws that do not conflict with God's laws	Matt. 22:20, 21; 1 Pet. 2:12; 4:15
Taking blood into body through mouth or veins violates God's laws	Gen. 9:3, 4; Lev. 17:14; Acts 15:28, 29
Bible's laws on morals must be obeyed	1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 3:2; Prov.

	5:1-23
Sabbath observance was given only to Israel and ended with Mosaic Law	Deut. 5:15; Ex. 31:13; Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:9, 10; Col. 2:16, 17
A clergy class and special titles are improper	Matt. 23:8-12; 20:25-27; Job 32:21, 22
Man did not evolve but was created	Isa. 45:12; Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4
Christ set example that must be followed in serving God	1 Pet. 2:21; Heb. 10:7; John 4:34; 6:38
Baptism by complete immersion symbolizes dedication	Mark 1:9, 10; John 3:23; Acts 19:4, 5
Christians gladly give public testimony to Scriptural truth	Rom. 10:10; Heb. 13:15; Isa. 43:10-12

Published in 2000

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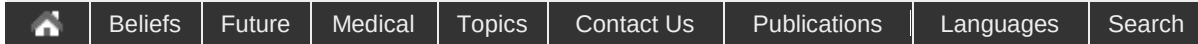
[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The Bible- a Book from God

http://www.watchtower.org/e/bh/article_02.htm

Jehovah's Witnesses Official Web Site



What Does the Bible *Really* Teach?

CHAPTER TWO

The Bible—A Book From God

In what ways is the Bible different from any other book?

How can the Bible help you cope with personal problems?

Why can you trust the prophecies recorded in the Bible?

CAN you recall a time when you received a fine gift from a dear friend? Likely, the experience was not only exciting but also heartwarming. After all, a gift tells you something about the giver—that he or she values your friendship. No doubt you expressed gratitude for your friend's thoughtful gift.

² The Bible is a gift from God, one for which we can be truly grateful. This unique book reveals things that we could never find out otherwise. For example, it tells us about the creation of the starry heavens, the earth, and the first man and woman. The Bible contains reliable principles to help us cope with life's problems and anxieties. It explains how God will fulfill his purpose and bring about better conditions on the earth. What an exciting gift the Bible is!

³ The Bible is also a heartwarming gift, for it reveals something about the Giver, Jehovah God. The fact that he has provided such a book is proof that he wants us to get to know him well. Indeed, the Bible can help you to draw close to Jehovah.

⁴ If you have a copy of the Bible, you are far from alone. In whole or in part, the Bible has been published in more than 2,300 languages and thus is available to more than 90 percent of the world's population. On the average, more than a million Bibles are distributed *each week*!

Billions of copies of either the whole Bible or part of it have been produced. Surely, there is no other book like the Bible.

The “New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures” is available in many languages



⁵ Furthermore, the Bible “is inspired of God.” (2 Timothy 3:16) In what way? The Bible itself answers: “Men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21) To illustrate: A businessman might have a secretary write a letter. That letter contains the businessman’s thoughts and instructions. Hence, it is really *his* letter, not the secretary’s. In a similar way, the Bible contains God’s message, not that of the men who wrote it down. Thus, the entire Bible truthfully is “the word of God.”—1 Thessalonians 2:13.

HARMONIOUS AND ACCURATE

⁶ The Bible was written over a 1,600-year period. Its writers lived at different times and came from many walks of life. Some were farmers, fishermen, and shepherds. Others were prophets, judges, and kings. The Gospel writer Luke was a doctor. Despite the varied backgrounds of its writers, the Bible is harmonious from beginning to end.*

⁷ The first book of the Bible tells us how mankind’s problems began. The last book shows that the whole earth will become a paradise, or garden. All the material in the Bible covers thousands of years of history and relates in some way to the unfolding of God’s purpose. The harmony of the Bible is impressive, but that is what we would expect of a book from God.

⁸ The Bible is scientifically accurate. It even contains information that was far ahead of its time. For example, the book of Leviticus contained laws for ancient Israel on quarantine and hygiene when surrounding nations knew nothing about such matters. At a time when there were wrong ideas about the shape of the earth, the Bible referred to it as a circle, or sphere. (Isaiah 40:22) The Bible accurately said that the earth ‘hangs on nothing.’ (Job 26:7) Of course, the Bible is not a science textbook. But when it touches on scientific matters, it is accurate. Is this not what we would expect of a book from God?

⁹ The Bible is also historically accurate and reliable. Its accounts are specific. They include not only the names but also the ancestry of individuals.[#] In contrast to secular historians, who often do not mention the defeats of their own people, Bible writers were honest, even recording their own failings and those of their nation. In the Bible book of Numbers, for instance, the writer

Moses admits his own serious error for which he was severely reproofed. (Numbers 20:2-12) Such honesty is rare in other historical accounts but is found in the Bible because it is a book from God.

A BOOK OF PRACTICAL WISDOM

¹⁰ Because the Bible is inspired of God, it is “beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight.” (2 Timothy 3:16) Yes, the Bible is a practical book. It reflects a keen understanding of human nature. No wonder, for its Author, Jehovah God, is the Creator! He understands our thinking and emotions better than we do. Furthermore, Jehovah knows what we need in order to be happy. He also knows what pathways we should avoid.

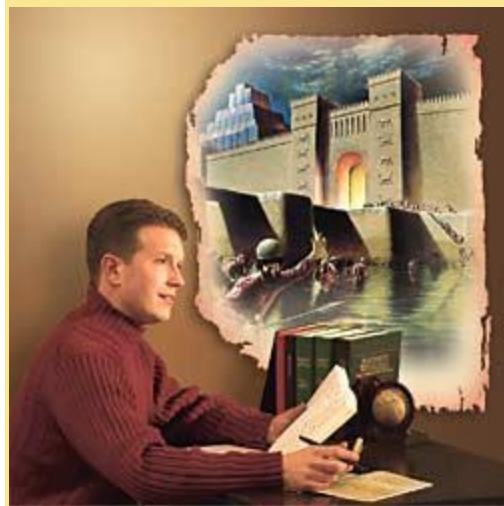
¹¹ Consider Jesus’ speech called the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew chapters 5 to 7. In this masterpiece of teaching, Jesus spoke on a number of topics, including the way to find true happiness, how to settle disputes, how to pray, and how to have the proper view of material things. Jesus’ words are just as powerful and practical today as they were when he spoke them.

¹² Some Bible principles deal with family life, work habits, and relationships with others. The Bible’s principles apply to all people, and its counsel is always beneficial. The wisdom found in the Bible is summarized by God’s words through the prophet Isaiah: “I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself.”—Isaiah 48:17.

A BOOK OF PROPHECY

¹³ The Bible contains numerous prophecies, many of which have already been fulfilled. Consider an example. Through the prophet Isaiah, who lived in the eighth century B.C.E., Jehovah foretold that the city of Babylon would be destroyed. (Isaiah 13:19; 14:22, 23) Details were given to show just *how* this would happen. Invading armies would dry up Babylon’s river and march into the city without a battle. That is not all. Isaiah’s prophecy even named the king who would conquer Babylon—Cyrus.—Isaiah 44:27–45:2.

The Bible writer Isaiah foretold the fall of Babylon



¹⁴ Some 200 years later—on the night of October 5/6, 539 B.C.E.—an army encamped near Babylon. Who was its commander? A Persian king named Cyrus. The stage was thus set for the fulfillment of an amazing prophecy. But would the army of Cyrus invade Babylon without a battle, as foretold?

¹⁵ The Babylonians were holding a festival that night and felt secure behind their massive city walls. Meanwhile, Cyrus cleverly diverted the water of the river that flowed through the city. Soon the water was shallow enough for his men to cross the riverbed and approach the walls of the city. But how would Cyrus' army get past Babylon's walls? For some reason, on that night the doors to the city were carelessly left open!

¹⁶ Regarding Babylon, it was foretold: "She will never be inhabited, nor will she reside for generation after generation. And there the Arab will not pitch his tent, and no shepherds will let their flocks lie down there." (Isaiah 13:20) This prophecy did more than predict a city's fall. It showed that Babylon would be desolated *permanently*. You can see evidence of the fulfillment of these words. The uninhabited site of ancient Babylon—about 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq—is proof that what Jehovah spoke through Isaiah has been fulfilled: "I will sweep her with the broom of annihilation."—Isaiah 14:22, 23.[%]

Ruins of Babylon



¹⁷ Considering how the Bible is a book of reliable prophecy is faith strengthening, is it not? After all, if Jehovah God has fulfilled his past promises, we have every reason to be confident that he will also fulfill his promise of a paradise earth. (Numbers 23:19) Indeed, we have "hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times long lasting."—Titus 1:2.[^]

"THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE"

¹⁸ From what we have considered in this chapter, it is clear that the Bible is truly a unique book. Yet, its value extends far beyond its internal harmony, scientific and historical accuracy, practical wisdom, and reliable prophecy. The Christian apostle Paul wrote: "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart."—Hebrews 4:12.

¹⁹ Reading God’s “word,” or message, in the Bible can change our life. It can help us to examine ourselves as never before. We may claim to love God, but how we react to what his inspired Word, the Bible, teaches will reveal our true thoughts, even the very intentions of the heart.”—Hebrews 4:12.

²⁰ The Bible truly is a book from God. It is a book that is to be read, studied, and loved. Show your gratitude for this divine gift by continuing to peer into its contents. As you do so, you will gain a deep appreciation of God’s purpose for mankind. Just what that purpose is and how it will be realized will be discussed in the following chapter.

* Although some people say that certain parts of the Bible contradict other parts of it, such claims are unfounded. See chapter 7 of the book *The Bible—God’s Word or Man’s?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

For example, note the detailed ancestral line of Jesus set out at Luke 3:23-38.

% For more information on Bible prophecy, see pages 27-9 of the brochure *A Book for All People*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

^ The destruction of Babylon is just one example of fulfilled Bible prophecy. Other examples include the destruction of Tyre and Nineveh. (Ezekiel 26:1-5; Zephaniah 2:13-15) Also, Daniel’s prophecy foretold a succession of world empires that would come into power after Babylon. These included Medo-Persia and Greece. (Daniel 8:5-7, 20-22) See the Appendix for a discussion of the many Messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

- The Bible is inspired of God and thus is accurate and reliable.—2 Timothy 3:16.
- The information found in God’s Word is practical for everyday life.—Isaiah 48:17.
- God’s promises found in the Bible are certain to be fulfilled.—Numbers 23:19.

Study Questions

- 1, 2. In what ways is the Bible an exciting gift from God?
3. What does the provision of the Bible tell us about Jehovah, and why is this heartwarming?
4. What impresses you about the distribution of the Bible?
5. In what way is the Bible “inspired of God”?
- 6, 7. Why is the harmony of the material in the Bible particularly noteworthy?
8. Give examples showing that the Bible is scientifically accurate.
9. (a) In what ways does the Bible show itself to be historically accurate and reliable? (b) What does the honesty of its writers tell you about the Bible?
10. Why is it not surprising that the Bible is a practical book?
- 11, 12. (a) What topics did Jesus discuss in his Sermon on the Mount? (b) What other practical matters are considered in the Bible, and why is its counsel timeless?
13. What details did Jehovah inspire the prophet Isaiah to record regarding Babylon?
- 14, 15. How were some details of Isaiah’s prophecy about Babylon fulfilled?

16. (a) What did Isaiah foretell about the final outcome of Babylon? (b) How was Isaiah's prophecy about Babylon's desolation fulfilled?

17. How is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy faith strengthening?

18. What powerful statement does the Christian apostle Paul make about "the word of God"?

19, 20. (a) How can the Bible help you to examine yourself? (b) How can you show your gratitude for God's unique gift, the Bible?



Published in 2005

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Translators of the Jehovah's Witness *The New World Translation*

http://www.towerwatch.com/Witnesses/New_World_Translation/new_world_translation.htm

TOWERWATCH MINISTRIES

Helping Christians Reach Jehovah's Witnesses
with the Gospel of Our Savior Jesus Christ

The Jehovah's Witness Bible

The New World Translation

The New World Translation of the Bible is Jehovah's Witnesses own translation, no other religious group uses this Bible and Jehovah's Witnesses make very little use of other Bibles.

The translators of The New World Translation were: Nathan Knorr, Albert Schroeder, George Gangas, Fred Franz, M. Henschel

"Fred Franz was the only one with any knowledge of the Bible languages to attempt translation of this kind. He had studied Greek for two years in the University of Cincinnati but was only self-taught in Hebrew." ["Crisis of Conscience"; by Raymond Franz; Commentary Press, Atlanta; 1983 edition; footnote 15; page 50.]

Four out of the five men on the committee had no Hebrew or Greek training at all, and only a high school education. Franz studied Greek for two years at the University of Cincinnati, but dropped out after his

sophomore year. When asked in a Scotland courtroom if he could translate Genesis 2:4 into Hebrew, Franz replied that he could not. The truth is that Franz was unable to translate Hebrew or Greek.

What we have is a very inexperienced translating committee that twisted Scripture to make it fit the Society's doctrine.

A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION (NEW WORLD TRANSLATION)

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John 1:1, which reads "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," is shockingly mistranslated, "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god," in a *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, published under the auspices of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since my name is used and our *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* is quoted on page 744 to seek to justify their translation I am making this statement.

The translation suggested in our Grammar for the disputed passage is, "the Word was deity." Moffatt's rendering is "the Word was divine." William's translation is, "the Word was God Himself." Each translation reflects the dominant idea in the Greek. For, whenever an article does not precede a noun in Greek, that noun can either be considered as emphasizing the character, nature, essence or quality of a person or thing, as *theos* (God) does in John 1:1, or it can be translated in certain contexts as indefinite, as they have done. But of all the scholars in the world, as far as we know, none have translated this verse as Jehovah's Witnesses have.

If the Greek article occurred with both Word and God in John 1:1 the implication would be that they are one and the same person, absolutely identical. But John affirmed that "the Word was with (the) God" (the definite article preceding each noun), and in so writing he indicated his belief that they are distinct and separate personalities. Then John next stated that the Word was God, i.e., of the same family or essence that

characterizes the Creator. Or, in other words, that both are of the same nature, and the nature is the highest in existence, namely divine.

Examples where the noun in the predicate does not have an article, as in the above verse, are: John 4:24, "God is spirit," (not a spirit); I John 4:16, "God is love," (not a love); I John 1:5, "God is light," (not a light); and Matthew 13:39, "the reapers are angels," i.e. they are the type of beings known as angels. In each instance the noun in the predicate was used to describe some quality or characteristics of the subject, whether as to nature or type.

The apostle John in the context of the introduction to his gospel is pulling all the stops out of language to portray not only the deity of Christ but also His equality with the Father. He states that the Word was in the beginning, that He was with God, that He was God and that all creation came into existence through Him and that not even one thing exists which was not created by Christ. What else could be said that John did not say? In John 1:18 he explained that Christ had been so intimate with the Father that He was in His bosom and that He came to earth to exhibit or portray God. But if we had no other statement from John except that which is found in John 14:9, "He that has seen me has seen the Father," that would be enough to satisfy the seeking soul that Christ and God are the same in essence and that both are divine and equal in nature.

Besides, the whole tenor of New Testament revelation points in this direction. Compare Paul's declaration in Colossians 1:19, for instance: "that all the divine fullness should dwell in Him," or the statement in Hebrews 1:3, "He is the reflection of God's glory and the perfect representation of His being, and continues to uphold the universe by His mighty word." (Williams translation). And note the sweeping, cosmic claim recorded in Matthew 28:19, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth."

And, if we contrast with that the belittling implication that Christ was only a god, do we not at once detect the discord? Does not such a conception conflict with the New Testament message both in whole and in part? Why, if John, in the midst of the idolatry of his day, had made such a statement would not the first century hearers and readers have gotten a totally inadequate picture of Christ, who we believe, is the Creator of the universe and the only Redeemer of humanity?

Julius Robert Mantey, A.B., Thd.D., PH.D., D.D.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN? (Lutheran Hour Ministries booklet)

<http://www.lhm.org/projectconnect/downloadfile.asp?ID=3115>

Printed in U.S.A.

by Dr. Philip Bickel

Why Do Bad Things Happen?

(Courage during difficult times)

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Lutheran Hour Ministries is a global media and congregational outreach ministry supporting churches worldwide. It is also a volunteer movement of more than 100,000 people strong.

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Contents

- 1. The Whole World Plays Hurt**
- 2. How Can God Be Good if He Allows All This Evil?**
- 3. What is God Doing While We Suffer?**
- 4. Pain: God's Bullhorn**
- 5. Refined Like Silver**
- 6. Exemplary Suffering**
- 7. God Has a Better Idea**
- 8. God Has Scars, Too**

9. Comfort for Julie

10. God Wants to Comfort You

1. The Whole World Plays Hurt

Sports commentators praise athletes who play hurt, who give their best though hampered by injuries. Do you know what? The whole world is playing hurt. We keep playing the game of life despite an endless list of hard knocks:

- Families are torn apart by dysfunctions, addictions, abuse, and divorce.
- Workers are stressed by unemployment and low income.
- Terrorist attacks murder innocent people.
- War ravages countries, leaving graves, widows, and orphans.
- Diseases bring pain, suffering, and death.
- Robbery and oppression leave people poor and defenseless.
- Earthquakes and tsunamis leave thousands of victims in their wake.

Add your own difficulties and disappointments to the list. No one is exempt. My personal list of “bad things” includes these items:

1. The death of parents
2. Assorted physical injuries
3. Rebellion and poor decisions of children
4. Under-employment and diminished income
5. The disrespect of colleagues
6. False accusations and slander
7. Burnout and depression
8. Skeletons appearing from the family closet
9. Sandwich generation challenges
10. Number ten just arrived. I’m writing this in a hospital waiting room while my wife, Julie, is having cancer surgery.

I admit that sometimes I’ve buckled under these ten burdens. I’ve wrestled with God. I’ve questioned His faithfulness. Yet, here I am writing this booklet because the Lord has taught me to keep on trusting Him—even in the dark.

When a child gets hurt, he or she pleads, “Mommy, kiss it!” Mom dutifully kisses the bruise and the child walks away, comforted and assured that everything is better. This works with children, but as adults we want something that will really heal us. Perhaps you picked up this booklet hoping it would give a simple, magic answer to the tribulations of life. Unfortunately, there is no quick remedy to your pain. What I can offer, however, is substantial—the Bible’s answers to these questions:

1. Why do pain and suffering exist?
2. What benefit can possibly come from my troubles?
3. What has God done to deal with the evil and pain in this world?

Senseless suffering is unbearable. Pain with a purpose, however, can be endured with courage. Look at the athlete who punishes his body to compete in the Olympics. Look at the mother who endures childbirth to bring a baby into the world. Look at the father toiling long, hard hours to support his family. Because their pain has a noble purpose, they are examples of courage, not senseless suffering.

Perhaps the trials you face have left you frustrated, angry, or even bitter. May this booklet give you a new perspective of hope, determination, and joy as you play the game of life hurt.

2. How Can God Be Good if He Allows All This Evil?

When we contemplate the evil and anguish in the world, it is quite common to complain, “How can a good God allow bad things to happen?” In frustration, some people conclude that either God must be the cause of evil or there isn’t any God at all. Before you draw such conclusions, wouldn’t it be fair to consider the matter from God’s point of view?

The Bible reports that God created the first man and woman with a quality no other creature had—free will. They were not robots programmed to follow orders, nor were they slaves obeying out of fear. Instead, our first parents were created perfect and were granted the freedom to choose to love and obey God simply because He was worthy of such respect. Unfortunately, they decided to disobey God, and the result is the troubled, aching world we see today.

At this point you might object: “Are you asking me to believe that old story about Adam and Eve in the garden and the snake that talked them into eating the forbidden fruit?”

Yes, I am. I know that you might feel like shoving this booklet in the wastebasket, but please hear me out. It can’t hurt to keep reading to gain a complete picture of what the Bible says about evil.

We generally view freedom as positive, don’t we? We cheer when an oppressive regime yields to the will of the people. We delight to see poor people enjoy a quality education and good-paying jobs. We take pleasure in innovative artists who refuse to be limited to tired, old styles. Desiring to give us true freedom, God created Adam and Eve with free will. If He hadn’t, we would all be robots, and no one would like that.

Although you may find it hard to accept the Bible’s story of humanity’s fall into sin, the present day evidence supports it:

- God does not manufacture bombs and drop them on cities. Humans do!
- God does not misuse the tillable land of the earth, resulting in famines and malnutrition. People do.
- God does not abuse children. People do.
- God does not transmit the HIV/AIDS virus; people do.
- God has not invented a million and one ways to sin; we have!

It hurts our pride to admit it, but the blame lies with us. We constantly seek our own selfish purposes at the expense of others. Try as we may, we have not and cannot create a utopian civilization.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed, God told them life would be hard. Adam would have to toil to support his family; Eve would experience pain in childbirth. And worst of all, when their lives had run their tired courses, they would die. Death is the ultimate and certain tragedy stalking each of us. None of us are going to get out of here alive. Every human death adds to the mounting evidence that men and women are tainted with evil, and that life on this earth is not as God originally intended it to be.

3. What is God Doing While We Suffer?

Even if suffering and pain are our fault, what is God doing about the problem? Has He washed His hands of the matter and abandoned us to the fate of annihilating ourselves? No. God is gravely concerned about our suffering. In the Bible, the Lord promises to take three separate actions to deal with evil.

First, God tells us that, unlike an overly permissive parent, He will not overlook injustice. Evil people often seem to be winning the day, while good people are crushed in the dust. However, God promises a day will come when He will judge all people with justice, and all outstanding penalties will be paid.

Second, God promised Adam and Eve and further generations that He would send a Savior to resolve the problem of evil and sin. The Lord fulfilled this promise in the person and ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the central teaching of the whole Bible, and we will consider it in detail later on.

Third, God makes a startling promise in Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." This verse claims God will take all the events of our lives, including the bad things, the disasters, and the trials, and bring good out of them. Disasters and trials do not come from God. They are the result of the sinful choices made by humans. Yet, God is so wise and powerful that He can take the bad stuff that happens to us and work it out for our good. Like a master artist, He can take junk and turn it into something beautiful.

This promise sounds almost unbelievable, doesn't it? Many talk as if their lives were ruled by blind fate, but this is not so. God continues to love us in spite of our disobedience. How does God work this miracle of making things work out for good? That is the subject of the next few sections.

4. Pain: God's Bullhorn

When troubles oppress us, often we ask ourselves, "Is God punishing me?" We hunt for the exact sin that might have caused our present problems. However, in most cases it would be

more beneficial to ask, “Is God warning me?” You see, sometimes God allows us to endure troubles in order to warn us of the foolishness of living without Him and to call us back to Him.

Jeff and Reid were university students who stole thousands of dollars worth of merchandise. When the police started to catch on to their activities, Jeff moved to another city where he became a drug dealer. Eventually, Jeff became an addict himself, experiencing uncontrollable drug flashbacks and hallucinations. After three years, Jeff moved back and hoped to team up with Reid again, only to discover that Reid had become a follower of Jesus Christ. For a couple years, Jeff mocked Reid incessantly, hoping he would revert to his old ways. Instead, Reid held his ground and often told Jeff that Jesus could help him, too.

Although Jeff didn’t want anything to do with religion, he found an honest job and hoped to forget his sordid past, but nightmarish drug recurrences plagued him. Finally one night as Jeff lay awake at 3 a.m. with his mind tormented by drug flashbacks, he decided to take his own life. But as he went to the kitchen to get a knife, he suddenly recalled Reid had claimed Jesus could help him. Even though Jeff did not really know who Jesus was, he shouted in desperation: “Jesus, help me!”

A warm glow filled him and he fell sound asleep. The next day he began to read the Bible, and within the week Jeff came to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Were Jeff’s drug flashbacks simply a punishment, as though God was yelling at him: “Take that, you lousy drug pusher”? No, the Lord had a much nobler purpose in mind. He was allowing Jeff to experience such agony, so he would seek Him and discover how much God loves him. As long as things are going well, we rest contentedly in our rebellion and foolishness. Pain, on the other hand, demands our full and immediate attention. Let me paraphrase what C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Problem of Pain*: God whispers to us through our pleasures, speaks through our conscience, but shouts by means of our pain. Pain is God’s bullhorn to rouse a deaf world.

So, when you consider your personal trials, don’t ask yourself, “Is God punishing me?” Instead ask, “Is the Lord warning and calling me—as He called Jeff—to humbly turn to Him and receive His kindness and love?” Our afflictions have a purpose. Often God uses pain as a bullhorn to rouse a deaf world. Are you listening?

5. Refined Like Silver

Have you ever observed someone refining silver? The silversmith places the precious metal over an intense flame until it melts. With the utmost patience, he must sit for a long time, periodically removing the impurities that rise to the top until the silver is pure and fit to be fashioned into a beautiful work of art. The Bible says that God is like a refiner who sits and purifies silver (Malachi 3:3). When we are tried by fire, the Lord can remove the impurities of sin from our character and make us into something exquisitely beautiful.

How does the silversmith know when all the impurities have been refined from the silver? He knows when he can see his own face reflected in the smooth surface of the molten metal. That is God’s goal as well. He allows trials to come our way, not to hurt us or discourage us, but so the image of our faithful Father will be seen more clearly in our lives. Then, we will recognize that God does indeed work out all things for our good.

The Bible tells the story of Jacob, a fellow who always looked out for himself and was an expert at tricking others. How did God refine Jacob? The Lord allowed him to be deceived by his uncle. Finally, the discipline had its effect, and the impurity of deception was removed from Jacob's character.

Once there was a couple that took great pride in their well-behaved children and secretly criticized parents who seemed unable to control their kids. Then, God saw fit to bless that couple with another child who was strong-willed and freespirted. By means of this unruly child, the parents learned humility and were able to empathize with parents who had independent children.

God allows trials to come to us so we become refined and more compassionate people. Our problem is that often we do not want to be improved. This attitude is aptly illustrated in the Argentine comic strip "Mafalda." The character Felipe never wants to do his homework. One day he imagines himself at the front door where a salesman offers him Willpower Pep Pills. Felipe buys the pills and after taking them, jubilantly shouts, "They're fantastic! I can't wait to do homework!" Right then, he is awakened from his daydream by the ringing of the doorbell. Believing that the salesman from his daydream is actually standing at the door, Felipe jumps up screaming, "No matter who it is, Mom, I'm not at home!" Often, we are like Felipe—children who do not want to receive the discipline necessary to grow up and become responsible.

A good father disciplines his son not because he dislikes him, but because he loves him and wants him to be successful in life. Similarly, our heavenly Father disciplines us for our good so that we might share in His holiness. This is why the Bible advises us: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

6. Exemplary Suffering

When people are suffering, they often think of the ancient story of Job. He was a fellow who knew what it meant to be down and out. At one time Job had been prosperous. But, in a single day all his riches were destroyed and his children died in a furious windstorm. Then, he was infected with a disease that left him covered with painful sores. All he had left was his wife, and her only advice was "Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9). To this Job responded, "'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said" (Job 2:10).

Three friends came to visit Job, insisting that God must be punishing him for a skeleton in his closet, some horrendous, secret wrong. But the friends were mistaken. Job had done nothing wrong to deserve the harsh treatment he received. What then was the reason for his affliction? Job is history's most famous case of exemplary suffering.

God permitted Satan to oppress Job in order to demonstrate the strength of Job's faith. Remember, there is a war going on between God and Satan. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve to distrust God, he gained human beings as allies in this war. Whenever we experience troubles, Satan tempts us to curse God, just as Job's wife urged Job to do. Like soldiers on the battlefield, we may at times be called on to experience trials and afflictions. When we accept

them with faith as Job did, we demonstrate to the world that Satan is a deceiver and God is the One who truly loves us.

Job's example of courageous faith has had far-reaching effects. In the midst of his sufferings, Job pleaded, "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll" (Job 19:23). God fulfilled Job's request, for millions have been comforted by his story, which appears in the world's most widely read book, the Bible.

There are many, modern-day Jobs. Take, for example, Tony Dungy, coach of the Indianapolis Colts. In December 2005, Tony's eighteen-year old son, James, died of an apparent suicide following bouts with depression. To experience such a tragedy in private is painful enough, but as the coach of a football team that was 13-0, Tony was under the microscope of the media. How could he survive? Well, Tony and his wife Lauren are Christians and, though the anguish of their loss was extreme, they continued to trust in the Lord.

Tony Dungy's endurance under extreme duress has brought hope to others who read about his problems. Several grieving parents have contacted Tony asking him how to endure the death of a child. Even though Tony didn't know these people, he graciously responded to their pleas, and he continues to encourage them as he is able.

In this case and in countless others, we see how God uses exemplary suffering to bring about good. The Lord "comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

7. God Has a Better Idea

If there was ever a guy who had a right to think God had deserted him, it was Joseph. His ten older brothers couldn't stand the sight of him because their dad preferred him above the rest. One day, when they were all far away from the old man, the ten older ones decided to kill Joseph. While they were discussing the details of how to do him in, they got a better idea. A caravan of traders happened by, and the ten brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Surely, they figured, he wouldn't live long as a slave, and the guilt for his death would be on someone else's head.

Dragged off to a foreign land, Joseph was bought by a royal official. The official took notice of Joseph's honesty and administrative abilities and placed him in charge of his mansion.

Just when Joseph's situation appeared to be improving, things began to go badly. His boss's wife wanted to have an affair with him. Being a man of principle, however, Joseph wouldn't go near her. Miffed by his refusal, she told her husband Joseph had tried to rape her, and Joseph was pitched into prison.

At that point, no one would have blamed Joseph if he had deserted his faith and screamed, "There is no God! Or, if there is, He's the devil himself!" But that's not what happened. Joseph did not give up on God. More importantly, God did not give up on Joseph. You see, God had a plan to create good out of the bad things that happened to Joseph.

A few years later, the king of the land had a dream that disturbed him a great deal. No one in the land could interpret the dream—no one, that is—except Joseph. The dream had two parts:

First, seven fat cows were eaten up by seven skinny cows. Then seven full ears of corn were devoured by seven scrawny ears. God revealed to Joseph the meaning of the dream: after seven years of bumper crops, the land would experience seven years of famine. The king was so impressed by Joseph's explanation he made him his top official. Joseph was placed in charge of storing the surplus of the seven prosperous years, so people could survive the seven years of famine.

Well, when the famine arrived, guess who showed up in search of grain? You guessed it—Joseph's ten famished brothers. Now, if this were a Hollywood movie, Joseph would have reaped revenge, subjecting his brothers to ten ghastly, gory, gruesome deaths. The true story, however, is much more dramatic. With tears in his eyes, Joseph forgave them and said, "Do not be afraid, for I bear no grudge against you. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:19-20).

The Bible promises, "All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose." This does not mean those who trust God will never suffer. It means they will never suffer without a purpose. Evil people may cause all sorts of suffering and conflict, but God promises to make their purposes backfire and result in blessing.

As Joseph sat in his jail cell, he did not know exactly what good would result from his plight. Nonetheless, he trusted God would keep His word. In your case, if you answer God's call to trust in Christ as your Savior from sin, you can rest assured God is caring for you, and you will never experience trials without a purpose.

In the midst of what seem to be insurmountable difficulties, do not turn away from God. Rather draw closer to Him and trust in His promise from the Bible: "God is faithful; He will not let you be tested beyond what you can bear. But when you are tested, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

8. God Has Scars, Too

We all know of people who have suffered unjustly, but let me tell you about the man who was treated more unfairly than anyone else in history. He didn't deserve the miserable fate that crushed him. He spent his life in service to others, reaching out to the sick with healing, to the lonely with love, and to the guilt-ridden with mercy. Everywhere he went crowds followed him because his compassionate attitude, words, and actions soothed their aching hearts.

You would think everyone would admire a guy like that, but he had his enemies. They bribed one of his friends to turn him over to the police. Then, they put him on trial for crimes he'd never committed. The kangaroo court came to the attention of two government officials who had the authority to set him free. One ridiculed him; the other washed his hands of the whole business, leaving the innocent man to die an agonizing death.

Who was this poor man? His name is Jesus. But this is only half the story. The greatest agony He endured could not be seen. The Bible teaches that as Christ suffered on the cross of Calvary, God the Father placed upon Him all our sins—all the evil and guilt of the entire human race. Someone who grasped this truth was the Dutch painter Rembrandt. In 1633, he painted "The Raising of the Cross." Helping the Roman soldiers to hoist up Jesus on the cross is

a man in a blue painter's beret. That man is Rembrandt—a self-portrait. By painting himself as one of the executioners, Rembrandt admitted that his sins, too, contributed to Christ's death.

On the cross, Jesus suffered all the punishment you and I deserve for our disobedience of God's will. What a bum rap! We should have been executed. We should have been crucified. We should have been sentenced to exile in hell. But Jesus took it all in our place. Why did Jesus do it? Was He forced to suffer against His will? Jesus declared, "No one takes it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord" (John 10:18). He gave His life so that we wouldn't have to pay the price for our sins. As a brave soldier sacrifices his life to save his buddies, Jesus willingly laid down His innocent life to free you and me from the eternal punishment we deserve.

Do you understand now? God's help goes far beyond a mother's kiss and saying everything is okay, when it really isn't. God actually makes all things turn out right. This is not the childish dreaming of gullible people. It is the Gospel truth! God graciously forgives each and every one of us who will confess his or her disobedience and accept that Christ died for their sins.

While we suffer in this troubled world, what has God done to help us? He has experienced the greatest suffering Himself. We can trust wholeheartedly in Jesus Christ because He is the only God with scars. He knows what it is like to suffer. He understands. He is able to sympathize with our every weakness and comfort us with His profound kindness and compassion. With this understanding, our trials, as difficult as they may be, diminish in their harshness.

A woman named Sarah had seven children and an alcoholic husband. She struggled to hold the family together while inside she felt like running away. Then, she became a believer in Christ. Although her problems didn't disappear, God gave her strength to face them. One day a skeptical neighbor told Sarah, "Your religion is nothing more than a drug to keep you from feeling how painful life is."

Sarah answered, "My Savior, a drug? Not at all! Drugs make people weak and addicted. People take them to avoid their problems. But look at me. Since I met Jesus, have I become weaker and less able to deal with life? No. The love of God empowers me to love my husband and children no matter how hard life is."

God the Father has even more good news for us! He raised His Son Jesus from the dead. He promises similar victory over death to all who will turn from their sins and trust in Christ to forgive them. He will raise us from the dead and give us new bodies that will never know suffering again. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Revelation 21:4). That is what heaven will be like.

About heaven the Apostle Paul writes, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). When we get to heaven, we won't say, "Is this all there is? I went through all those trials and suffering for this?" We won't be disappointed because the sorrows of this world will pale in comparison with the glory of that life awaiting those who trust in Jesus Christ to make them right with God. Our time here is only the first few strums on the guitar before the eternal song begins and the dancing starts.

9. Comfort for Julie

Near the beginning of this booklet, I mentioned I was in a waiting room while my wife, Julie, was undergoing surgery. I've asked Julie to share what God has been teaching her during her illness.

This is what Julie had to say: From the initial diagnosis of cancer, to treatment, and beyond, can seem like a long process. After the surgeon removed the cancerous tissue, I began six and a half weeks of daily radiation therapy. I am in the middle of that therapy now.

Sometimes I feel strong and sense God's presence. At other times, I feel sad and vulnerable. But how I feel at the moment does not alter the certainty of God's love and His promises.

This experience is teaching me to express my physical and emotional needs to close friends, rather than try to "soldier on." When I feel weak, it does me no good to deny it or fight it. When I admit I'm not feeling well, I recognize more clearly my rest is in Jesus. Then I take a deep breath, put my feet up, and relax.

Keeping a sense of humor helps when people say unusual things. A friend asked me, "How does radiation work? Do you just lie down and they kill you with x-rays?" As soon as the words came out, she felt so embarrassed. We laughed together, as I gave a brief explanation of the process of therapy.

I've told my husband and others how much I appreciate their prayers to God on my behalf. Especially when they pray aloud in my presence, I feel so blessed as I pray along silently. In the radiation therapy waiting room I'm getting to know people I never would have met otherwise. We encourage each other, and God has given me opportunities to tell them about His constant care in the midst of trials like cancer.

My appointments at radiation therapy are daily reminders that I am mortal. While many people are ignoring the fact they are going to die someday, I can't escape it. But that is a blessing, because it leads me to lean even more on God's promises. Jesus said, "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Yes!!

10. God Wants to Comfort You

We have seen that God brings good out of suffering in five different ways:

1. Pain works as a bullhorn, warning us to turn back to the God of love.
2. As silver is refined by fire, God refines our character through trials.
3. Like Job, some endure sufferings so that their example may teach others of God's faithfulness.
4. The Lord may allow us to go through trials that will ultimately turn out more favorable for us than we ever could have imagined.
5. Jesus Christ willingly endured the harshest suffering in our place.

All this proves that “in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). What is God’s purpose? It is to restore people to a living relationship with Him. He actively calls everyone to be reconciled to Him and to know His love. The Lord is calling you right now so you may find comfort in His forgiving love. To respond to His love, all you need to do is repent of your sins and place your confidence in Christ.

The following questions will help you determine where you stand with God:

- Do you believe Jesus Christ died to right all the wrong that people do, including your own disobedience?
- Do you desire the full and free forgiveness Christ has won for you on the cross?
- Do you wish to live with God guiding all the events of your life for good?
- Do you desire the certainty of knowing you have eternal life in heaven?

If these are your sincere beliefs and desires, then tell God how you feel. You can do this in your own words, or by using the following thoughts:

Heavenly Father, although the world is full of strife and pain, I know that You are not to blame for it. People have caused all the sorrow and suffering. I confess to You with a heavy heart that I am guilty; I also have sinned against Your will. But I thank You, Father, for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself the eternal punishment that I, and all others, deserve. I believe Jesus died for my sins, and I ask You to forgive me in Christ’s name. Help me, by Your Holy Spirit, to renew my faith in You each day, no matter how tough my life may be. Although I may not understand the meaning of every problem that comes my way, I believe You have a plan for my life, and You will work it out for my good. Thank You for Your daily care and comfort. Amen.

Rest assured, God accepts you as His forgiven child. “The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7-9).

To grow in your faith, you are invited to explore God’s Word and discover more about His love for you. For a more detailed discussion of the question of why bad things happen, read Philip Yancey’s excellent book *Where Is God When It Hurts?*

In conclusion, consider the great French painter, Pierre Renoir, and his crippling arthritis. One day, a friend watching him paint pondered how the artist could endure such excruciating agony with every stroke. The friend asked, “How can you paint at the expense of such torture?” Renoir replied, “The pain passes, but the beauty remains.”

You have learned that God works some good purpose out of every heartache, every tear, and every misfortune. Through our trials God warns us and calls us to Himself. He disciplines us for our own good. He guides us through difficult times, so that all may turn out to be a blessing in the end. And He grants to some the honor of demonstrating their faith in Him in the midst of sorrow. One day you will look back and see that your time of suffering was just a brief period of

preparation for the never-ending joys of heaven. Never forget, dear friend, “The pain passes, but the beauty remains.”

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Why Do Bad Things Happen?

(Courage during difficult times)

As both author and pastor, Dr. Phillip Bickel rose to the challenge when asked to revise his writings about commonly asked question in the face of heartache. In this booklet, Bickel shares in easy-to understand language why trouble exists in the world, the benefit that can come from suffering, and what God has done to deal with the evil and pain of this world. Dr. Bickel also provides valuable insights for sharing God's love and reminds readers that His desire is to comfort His people in all situations.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE SOPHERIM

http://www.grmi.org/renewal/Richard_Riss/evidences/16trans.html

Christian Evidences

TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

The accuracy of the present-day Hebrew version of the Old Testament is a result of the fastidious care with which the Sopherim and the Masoretes transmitted it. The Sopherim copied manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures from about 300 B.C. until A.D. 500. According to the Talmud, they came to be called "Sopherim" because, in their endeavor to preserve the text from alteration or addition, they counted the number of words in each section of Scripture, as well as the number of verses and paragraphs.

During this time, there were two general classes of manuscript copies, the synagogue rolls and private copies. Even the private copies, or "common copies" of the Old Testament text, which were not used in public meetings, were preserved with great care. For the synagogue rolls, however, there was a very elaborate set of rules for the copyists. The manuscript had to be prepared by a Jew, written on the skins of clean animals and fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. Every skin was to contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the codex. The length of each column was to be no less than 48 and no more than 60 lines. The breadth was to be 30 letters. The ink was to be prepared according to a definite special recipe. An authentic copy was to be used from which to copy, and the transcriber was not to deviate from it in the least. No word or letter, not even a yod, was to be written from memory. The scribe was to examine carefully the codex to be copied. Between all of the consonants of the new copy, a space of at least the thickness of a hair or thread had to intervene. Between every parashah, or section, there was to be a breadth of nine consonants. Between every book, there was to be three lines.¹

During the period A.D. 500-900, the text of the Hebrew Bible was standardized by the Masoretes, who were also very careful in the transmission of the text. They counted every letter and marked the middle letter and middle word of each book, of the Pentateuch and of the whole Hebrew Bible, and counted all parashas (sections), verses, and words for every book. These procedures were a manifestation of the great respect they had for the sacred Scriptures, and secured their minute attention to the precise transmission of the text.

The Masoretes also introduced a complete system of vowel pointings and punctuation for the text. Because of their high regard for faithfulness to the text in transmission, wherever they felt that corrections or improvements should be made, they placed them in the margin.² They retained certain marks of the earlier scribes relating to doubtful words and offered various possibilities as to what they were. Among the many lists they drew up was one containing all the words that occur only twice in the Old Testament.

Accuracy was also a primary consideration in the transmission of the books of the New Testament. After Christianity became legal in A.D. 313, commercial book manufacturers, or scriptoria, were used to produce copies of the New Testament books. Bruce Metzger wrote:

In order to ensure greater accuracy, books produced in scriptoria were commonly checked over by a corrector . . . specially trained to rectify mistakes in copying. His annotations in the manuscript can usually be detected today from differences in styles of handwriting or tints of ink. . . .

When prose works were copied, a line called a stichos, having sixteen (or sometimes fifteen) syllables, was frequently used as a measure for determining the market price of a manuscript. . . . The application of stichometric reckoning served also as a rough and ready check on the general accuracy of a manuscript, for obviously a document which was short of the total number of stichoi was a defective copy. . . .

In order to secure a high degree of efficiency and accuracy, certain rules pertaining to the work of scribes were developed and enforced in monastic scriptoria. The following are examples of such regulations prepared for the renowned monastery of the Studium at Constantinople. About A.D. 800 the abbot of this monastery, Theodore the Studite, who was himself highly skilled in writing an elegant Greek hand, included in his rules for the monastery severe punishments for monks who were not careful in copying manuscripts. A diet of bread and water was the penalty set for the scribe who became so much interested in the subject-matter of what he was copying that he neglected his task of copying. Monks had to keep their parchment leaves neat and clean, on penalty of 130 penances. If anyone should take without permission another's quaternion (that is, the ruled and folded sheets of parchment), fifty penances were prescribed. If anyone should make more glue than he could use at one time, and it should harden, he must do fifty penances. If a scribe broke his pen in a fit of temper (perhaps after having made some accidental blunder near the close of an otherwise perfectly copied sheet), he had to do thirty penances.³

The accuracy of the present-day Greek version of the New Testament has resulted from the comparison of thousands of manuscripts by textual critics who have been able to separate them into families on the basis of certain variations that each manuscript family has in common. The principles of textual criticism enable scholars to determine which versions of the text are predecessors of the others, thereby coming close to the original reading.

While there are many variant readings in the documents of the New Testament, the vast majority of them are of very minor significance, and, according to A. T. Robertson, affect a "thousandth part of the text."⁴ This minuscule portion of the text does not affect any aspect of Christian doctrine. F. C. Grant wrote in his Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament that, of the variant readings in the New Testament manuscripts, "none has turned up

thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine."⁵ Philip Schaff wrote that not one of the variant readings affects "an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching."⁶

The great multitude of variant readings of the text supplies abundant means for checking on the accuracy of those variants. The criteria used in choosing among conflicting readings in New Testament texts can be found in the introduction to Bruce M. Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. xxiv-xxviii.

¹ Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), pp. 240-241, citing Samuel Davidson, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, 2d ed., p.89.

² Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 63.

³ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 15, 16, 19.

⁴ Archibald T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 22, as quoted by Geisler and Nix, p. 366.

⁵ F. C. Grant, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament* (1946), p. 42, quoted by F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, third ed. (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963), p. 189.

⁶ Philip Schaff, *Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version*, 3d ed., rev., p. 177, as quoted by Geisler and Nix, p. 366.

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

An Examination of the Essenes

<http://virtualreligion.net/iho/essenenes.html>

(The original link is broken. This new site offers information about the Essenes from various ancient sources).

Essenes & Dead Sea Scrolls

76. Essenes are Rural Poor

⁷⁵ Then too, Syrian Palestine is not unproductive in moral excellence. There the major portion of the Jewish people are distributed. It is said that among them there are more than 4000 persons with the name of Essenes. In my judgment---(though) it is not exact in the Greek dialect---they are, indeed, they have become servants (*therapeutae*) of God, not by sacrificing animals, but by praying to render their thoughts fit for the holy.

⁷⁶ Now in the first place, they dwell in villages, keeping away from the cities because of lawlessness practiced by city-dwellers. They know that the pestilence bred from this company, as from polluted air, would render their souls incurable. There are some who till the soil, while others pursue crafts which work for peace. And so they benefit themselves and their neighbors.

⁷⁷ They do not treasure silver and gold or acquire great sections of land because of a desire for the proceeds. Instead, they provide the necessities for the basic requirements of life. For they are unique among all the race of men, having become penniless and landless by choice rather than lack of good luck. But they count themselves very wealthy, judging ready satisfaction and contentment with little (to be) abundance, as it is.

--- Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 12.75-77

77. Dead Sea Settlement of Essenes

⁷³ On the west bank (of the Dead Sea) the Essenes take refuge, to the point where they are harmful. This is a solitary people and remarkable in comparison with others in the whole world. They live as partners of the palms, without any women---having renounced all desire---and without money. From day to day this throng of refugees is renewed by crowds weary with life, whom fortune drives in waves from afar to adopt their customs. Thus, through thousands of ages---incredible to say---a people in which no one is born is eternal, so fruitful for them is others' repenting of life!.

-- Pliny, *Natural History* 5.15.73

78. Some Essenes Marry

¹⁶⁰ There is also another order of Essenes which, though agreeing with the others in life-style, customs and rules, is distinct in its doctrine regarding marriage. That is they think that those who do not marry cut off the greatest goal of life---the line of succession. Moreover, (they claim), if all were of this mind the race would very shortly die out.

--- Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.160

79. Essene Monastic Rules

¹²⁰ Although (the Essenes) are Jews by birth, they love one another even more than the others. They avoid pleasures as a vice and hold that virtue is to overcome one's passions and not be subject to them. Marriage is disdained by them. But they adopt the children of others while still young, leading them like kin through their studies and impressing them with their

customs.

121 (The Essenes) frown on wealth. And their common life is wonderful! No one can be found superior to others in property. For their law is for those entering the party to make their substance public for the order.

122 So nowhere is either extreme poverty or exceptional wealth evident. Rather, each man's possessions are mixed into one property which is for all the brothers.

123 Oil they regard as pollution. And if anyone in the assembly is anointed he scrubs his body. For they count dryness as good and wear white everywhere. Those who administer the community are elected and their appropriate duties determined by vote of the whole.

124 They have no city, but many settle in each town. And all that they own lies open to those who have come from elsewhere, just as if they belonged with them. And they entertain those whom they have never seen before as their closest associates.

125 And so they make their journeys carrying nothing at all except weapons on account of the bandits. In each town an attendant is chosen by the order to serve strangers, and he provides clothing and whatever they need.

126 Like children, they are trained to be scrupulous about dress and bodily appearance. And they change neither garments nor sandals until they are tattered or worn out by time.

135 They master an even temper and control their anger. They advocate trust and assist peace. And all that is spoken by them has more force than an oath. But they avoid swearing, regarding it worse than perjury. For they say that he who cannot be believed unless God is against him is already condemned...

143 Now they expel from the order those who wander into substantial sins. And he who has been condemned often winds up with a miserable fate. For he who is bound by their vows and customs cannot partake of a meal with others...

144 Therefore, they take back many who are at their last breath out of pity, deeming the near fatal torture as satisfaction for their sins...

146 Now they obey their elders and hold that the majority is right. For example, when ten sit

together, no one speaks if nine are unwilling. They also avoid spitting in their midst or to the right side.

147 And they are the most distinct of all Jews in abstaining from work on the Sabbath. For not only do they prepare their meals one day ahead so as not to light a fire on that day, they do not dare to move a dish or even relieve themselves...

--- Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.120-126, 135-147

80. Communal Property at Qumran

11 ...And all who volunteer for his Truth shall bring all their knowledge and powers

12 and possessions into the Unity of God:
--to purify their knowledge by the truth of God's precepts, and
--to measure their powers

13 according to the perfection of his ways and all their possessions according to his righteous counsel.

--- Dead Sea Scrolls, *Community Rule (1QS)* 1.11-13

81. Deviants from Torah Excommunicated

21 All who enter in the council of Holiness are those who walk in perfection of way, as he commanded. Every man from this (group)

22 who with a lax or high hand bypasses a word from the Torah of Moses shall be driven out of the council of the Unity

23 and shall return no more. And no one from the men of Holiness shall mix his property with

his for any reason.

--- Dead Sea Scrolls, *Community Rule (1QS)* 8.21-23

82. Directions for the Instructor

¹² These are the precepts for the instructor to walk in with all who live according to the rule for each occasion and the value of every man:

¹³ --to go along with the will of God, according to all that has been revealed for each occasion; and to measure with all the understanding he has attained according to the times

¹⁴ along with the precept for each occasion;
--to separate and weigh the sons of Zadok according to their spirits and to uphold those chosen at the time

¹⁵ by his favorable decision;
--to judge each as to his spirit and to bring near each as his hands are clean and to advance him according to his understanding.

¹⁶ --Thus his love is like his hatred. He is not to argue or dispute with the men of corruption but to conceal the counsel of the Torah among the men of error.

--- Dead Sea Scrolls, *Community Rule (1QS)* 9.12-16

83. Essene Worship & Communal Meal

¹²⁸ Moreover, their way of worshipping God is their own. For they utter nothing mundane before sunrise, but with some of their fathers' prayers they beg him to arise.

¹²⁹ After this they are dismissed by those in charge, each to his own craft. And they work

strenuously until the fifth hour [= 11 a.m.], when they again gather together in one spot. Girding themselves with linen cloths, they wash their bodies with cold water. And after this purification, they assemble in a private room, where no one with other beliefs is allowed to come. Having purified themselves, they enter the dining hall as if it were some shrine.

130 When they are seated in silence, the baker passes out the loaves according to rank and the cook passes each one a portion from a single dish.

131 The priest prays before the meal; and one is not allowed to eat before this prayer. When they have breakfasted, he gives thanks again. So, they begin and finish (eating) by honoring God as the author of life...

132 ...No shouting or confusion ever pollutes the house, but they speak in turn to one another.

133 Now, to those outside, the silence of those within seems like some awesome mystery. But it is really because they are allotted just enough food and drink and, so, are always sober.

--- Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.128-133

84. Communal Order at Qumran

2 They shall walk in these ways in all dealings with each other, wherever they dwell:
--regarding work and wealth [*mammon*]: the lesser shall heed the greater.
--but united they shall eat

3 and united they shall pray; and united they shall take counsel.
--and in every locale where there are ten men from the common council,

4 --a priest shall not be lacking among them.
and they shall sit before him each according to his rank;
and thus they shall be asked for their counsel in every case.

--and when they prepare the table for eating or the new wine

⁵ for drinking, the priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand for the blessing on the first portion of bread or new wine.

--- Dead Sea Scrolls, *Community Rule (1QS)* 6.2-5

85. Council of Twelve

¹ In the council of the community there shall be twelve men and three priests perfected in all that has been revealed from the whole

² Torah:
--for practicing truth and righteousness, justice and loving kindness and walking humbly with each other;

³ --for keeping faithfulness in the land with firm intention and contrite spirit;
--for overcoming iniquity by deeds of justice and endurance of fiery trials;

⁴ --and for walking in all things by the standard of truth and the regulation for the occasion.

--- Dead Sea Scrolls, *Community Rule (1QS)* 8.1-4

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

A Fragment of John's Gospel in the John Ryland's collection

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/greek/johnpap.html>

P⁵²: A Fragment of the Gospel of John (a.k.a. John Rylands P457)



P⁵² is the oldest known manuscript fragment of the New Testament.

This photo is of the *recto* (front side).

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John Rylands
Library of Manchester.**

DESCRIPTION

Language:	Greek
Medium:	papyrus
Size:	3.5 inches long 2.5 inches wide
Length:	7 lines on each side
Approximate Date:	c. 125–150 CE
Place of Discovery:	Egypt
Date of Discovery/ Acquisition:	1920
Acquirer:	Bernard P. Grenfell
Current Location:	John Rylands Library Manchester, England
Inventory Number:	Rylands Greek Papyrus 457
Manuscript Number:	P ⁵²
Manuscript Family:	Alexandrian

GREEK TEXT

Recto: John 18:31-33

(Readable as Greek if "SYMBOL" font is
installed)

ΕΙΠΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ Λ
ΑΒΕΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΥΜΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑ Τ
ΟΝ ΝΟΜΟΝ ΥΜΩΝ ΚΡΙΝΑΤΕ ΑΥΤΟ
Ν ΕΙΠΟΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΗΜΙΝ
ΟΥΚ ΕΞΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΑΙ ΟΥΔΕ
ΝΑ ΙΝΑ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΛΗΡ
ΩΘΗ ΟΝ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΩ
ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΗΜΕΛΛΕΝ ΑΠΟΘΗΝΗΣΚΕΙ
Ν ΕΙΣΗΛΘΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ Π
ΡΑΙΤΩΡΙΟΝ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΩΝ
ΗΣΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΑΥΤ

TRANSLATION

by K. C. Hanson

Therefore Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Judeans said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he would die. Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the king of the Judeans?"

Ω ΣΥ ΕΙ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩ
Ν

Letters in **red** are visible on the fragment;
letters in black are reconstructed

GREEK TEXT
Verso: John 18:37-38

ΕΙΠΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΑΥΤΩ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΟΥΚ
ΟΥΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΑΠΕΚΡΙΘΗ Ο
ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΣΥ ΛΕΓΕΙΣ ΟΤΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ
ΕΙΜΙ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΣ **ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΕΓΕΝΝΗΜΑΙ**
ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΕΛΗΛΥΘΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ
ΚΟΣΜΟΝ **ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΗΣΩ** ΤΗ ΑΛ
ΗΘΕΙΑ ΠΑΣ Ο ΩΝ **ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ**
Σ ΑΚΟΥΕΙ ΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΦΩΝΗΣ **ΛΕΓΕΙ**
ΑΥΤΩ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΤΙ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΛΗΘΕ
ΙΑ ΚΑΙ **ΤΟΥΤΟ** ΕΙΠΩΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΞΗΛ
ΘΕΝ ΠΡΟΣ **ΤΟΥΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΥΣ** ΚΑΙ Λ
ΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΕΓΩ ΟΥΔΕΜΙΑΝ ΕΥΡΙ
ΣΚΩ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ

Letters in **red** are visible on the fragment;
letters in black are reconstructed

TRANSLATION
by K. C. Hanson

Therefore Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into society: to witness to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Judeans again, and he told them, "I find no crime in him."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the discovery of this fragment of John affect the dating of the gospel? What had New Testament scholars argued before this fragments was discovered?

2. Metzger and others have identified this fragment with the "Alexandrian" family of manuscripts. What is a textual "family" and how does that help interpret manuscripts? What problems have been raised about this construct?

3. By what means do scholars date manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts?

4. What factors account for so many biblical papyri having been discovered in Egypt?

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[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Evidence for Daniel being written before 155 BC

http://www.harvardhouse.com/Daniel_date-written.htm



When was Daniel Written?

Evidence Supporting 6th Century BCE Authorship Date

After Removing Naturalist Bias

Naturalists use 165 BCE as the date of authorship for the book of Daniel. Even if we use 165 BCE as the date of authoring Daniel based on Naturalist bias, Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy contains a very accurate forth telling of the Christian faith. Six credible prophecies were fulfilled. Based on the evidence, modern scholars (**Naturalists**) are biased against the reality of prophecy at the 98.5% confidence level. There are only 14 chance in a 1,000 that this conclusion is not true (**due to random error**).

Below are reference web sites that successfully defend that the book of Daniel appears to have been authored in the 6th BCE. As you review the evidence presented at these web sites, keep in mind that we have shown that Naturalists are biased against the reality of prophecy.

The Einstein Method reveals that Daniel received words from outside time-space through the Archangel Gabriel. Since the future was revealed, it appears that God has revealed spiritual truth to humankind. Daniel's words foretold of a Messiah that would be killed at Jerusalem before the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in 70 CE. Christians logically accept and believe that Jesus fulfilled these prophetic words. In addition, archaeological finds continue to be found that support the Christian faith.

Only a Being living outside the control of time can consistently reveal the future. The data supports that we live in a universe under supernatural control. To this end, conservative scholars take the position that the book of Daniel was written centuries before 165 BCE. The evidence is very sound. Let's review the evidence.

Evidence No. 1: Documents written in 5th century BCE Egypt (~495 BCE TO ~402 BCE) reveal unique textual and linguistic styles from that era. These documents are called the Elephantine Papyri. By comparing the texts of the Elephantine Papyri to the texts of Daniel, scholars have concluded that the textual style of Daniel places the book within the era of the 5th century BCE. Even Naturalists accept that

the style of writing would place the book of Daniel centuries earlier than the 2nd century BCE. However, Naturalists favor the 165 BCE date due to their bias.

Common Sense Placement for Daniel

Perhaps the easiest way of understanding why Daniel was written about 530 BCE is by using the English language from another era. Have you ever read Chaucerian English (14th century - 700 years ago) or Miltonian English (17th century - 300 years ago)? Consider the following example from the 14th century written by Chaucer:

But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gypon
Al bismotered with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

Language changes over time. This is a true statement for English as it is for Aramaic and Hebrew. The style of writing and word usage date when the literature was written. Consider the following example from the 17th century written by Milton:

When such musick sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortall finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blisfull rapture took:
The Air such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echo's still prolongs each heav'nly close.

Many of the words take time to decipher for someone used to reading 21st century English. In the same way, the Aramaic found in the book of Daniel does not fit the era of 165 BCE.

In support of this conclusion by analogy, Naturalists believe it is okay to place the initial six chapters of the book of Daniel as being written at an earlier time than 165 BCE. Since there is no prophecy in the initial six chapters, that is acceptable to Naturalists. However, the writing style for the entire book of Daniel requires that it be dated much earlier than 165 BCE. **(Another indication of bias against the reality of prophecy).**

Finally, if you would like to get a better feel on why the book of Daniel does not fit in with the Dead Sea Scrolls era, take the time to watch a science fiction movie entitled, "**Millennium**." In this movie, a person comes to the 20th century from the 30th century to snatch away people who happen to be flying on an aircraft that is about to crash. The point of watching such a movie is to show how the person from the 30th century does not fit into the 20th century.

Evidence No. 2: Another textual evidence that Daniel was written centuries before 165 BCE are the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls (**written from 150 BCE to 50 CE**). Scholarly comparison of the unique textual and linguistic styles support that Daniel was written centuries before the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dating Daniel to 165 BCE is not credible.

Naturalist's views for dating the book of Daniel are based on false assumptions about prophecy. Since we can verify Daniel's prophetic ideas came true, then Daniel's words appear to come from outside time-space. The date for writing the book of Daniel must be pushed back to match the text and linguistic style of the 5th century BCE.

Evidence No. 3: Jesus called Daniel a prophet. "... **spoken of through Daniel the prophet (Matthew 24:15 [NASB])**).

Daniel foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened to occur in 70 CE (**about 235 years after the modern scholars date of 165 BCE, showing Daniel to be prophetic**). There are many reasons why we would expect Jesus to foretell of the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

- **Reason No. 1:** Jesus claimed to be the Messiah foretold by the prophets (**including Daniel**).
- **Reason No. 2:** According to Daniel 9:26, the Messiah would be killed at Jerusalem some time before the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem were to occur. Jesus walked inside and taught people within the temple courts.
- **Reason No. 3:** Jesus knew and understood Daniel as a prophet. Since Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, Jesus expected both the temple and Jerusalem to be destroyed after his time on earth. Daniel foretold these events. Jesus accepted Daniel as a prophet and carried through with the prophecy.
- **Reason No. 4:** Jesus' followers knew of his prophecies about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and wrote Jesus' words into the gospel accounts.
- **Reason No. 5:** In the book of Acts, the first Christian martyr named Stephen was accused of telling about Jerusalem's coming destruction, "**For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place**" (**Acts 6:14**). The book of Acts shows that early Christians expected the temple and Jerusalem to be destroyed (**this expectation was commonplace**).

Both the message of Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy and the words of Jesus foretold that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Based on Jesus' claim to being the Messiah, it would be expected of him to foretell the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem.

Evidence No. 4: Josephus called Daniel, ". . . one of the greatest of the prophets [Antiquities Book 10, Chapter 11, paragraph 7 **Search for "GREATEST OF THE PROPHETS on the linked site"**] because Daniel's prophecies are "time-oriented" and reveal "WHEN" future events would occur. Why did Josephus hold such a high view of Daniel?

Since Josephus lived in the years 37 to 100 CE, he is closer to reality than modern scholars, who are more than 2,000 years removed from the biblical culture. Since the study of Daniel shows that modern scholars are biased against the reality of prophecy at the 98.5% confidence level, Josephus' view of Daniel appears to be correct.

Evidence No. 5: Dead Sea Scrolls community members referred to . . . Daniel the Prophet (**book entitled "Florilegium" or commentary**). Eight copies of Daniel were found at the Qumran community with one copy dated to 125 BCE using carbon dating techniques. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Daniel was written in 165 BCE. Would people living in 165 BCE accept Daniel as a prophet if Daniel was written at that time?

Evidence No. 6: Scholarly remarks about the Dead Sea Scrolls community accepting Daniel as a prophet. Some modern-day scholars find it incredible that if Daniel were indeed written in 165 BCE, the Dead Sea Scroll community would have accepted Daniel as a prophet. Again, the Naturalist views are questionable based on their doubts about Daniel being accepted as a prophet after only 40 years. Would Daniel be renowned as a prophet if it were known that he had lived a mere 40 years earlier? In that event, he would have been a contemporary person writing fiction. Refer to "The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible" translated and with commentary by Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint & Eugene Ulrich, dated 1999, page 484.

Evidence No. 7: Internal textual evidence that compares the book of Daniel to the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are known to have been written in the era of 170 BCE to 50 CE. There is a definitive textual style and linguistics for this era. However, the textual style and linguistics for the book of Daniel are very different. Both conservative and liberal scholars acknowledge that the textual style and linguistics for the book of Daniel supports that it was written centuries before the Dead Sea Scrolls community came to exist. Naturalists override this evidence due to their bias against the reality of prophecy.

Evidence No. 8: Jesus' life meets Daniel's prophecy about a Messiah that would be killed. Jesus fulfilled Daniel's prophecy by being crucified (**supported by numerous sources**). Based on Daniel, after the Messiah's death, Jerusalem and the temple were to be destroyed. It is apparent that Jesus knew and understood the book of Daniel. It would only be expected that Jesus would foretell of the temple and Jerusalem's destruction. Christians accept all these facts as the basis for believing Jesus fulfilled Daniel's "time-oriented" prophecy. It would be expected that Jesus would foretell of the temple and Jerusalem's destruction before those events were to occur.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

A convincing argument that Daniel is prophetic and not historic

<http://christianthinktank.com/qwhendan3x.html>

Good question.... Was Daniel written AFTER the events he foretold?

[Draft May 16, 1998; major revision Dec/2000]

Someone wrote in:

When was the book of Daniel written? Do we have any proof that it was written before the events it foretold happened? My professor told our class that it was written after the events and made to look like real prophecies.

A lot depends on which events/prophecies your professor is referring to:

1. the statute prophecy of Daniel 2
2. the tree vision/humbling of Nebuchadnezzar of Dan 4
3. the prophecy of the fall of Babylon to the Medes/Persians, of Dan 5
4. the beast visions of world empires in Daniel 7
5. the ram/goat/horn vision--identified as Media/Persia versus Greece, with likely reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, in Daniel 8
6. the 70 weeks prophecy of the Messiah, in Daniel 9
7. Prophecies of successive empires, with likely reference to Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 11
8. Prophecies of Israel's future and end-time events, in Daniel 12

The prophecies that are usually 'objected to' in this way are the detailed prophecies in chapter 11, especially with reference to 11.21-35 dealing with Antiochus Epiphanes. So we will concentrate on that section first, and then broaden the discussion to encompass some of the earlier prophecies (e.g. the triumph of Greece).

.....

Well, let's try to scope out the problem first--(1) when did the events Daniel (theoretically) referred to happen, and (2) when did he allegedly write the book?

One--The events in history (of Daniel 11)

It is generally accepted by scholars of ALL theological orientations that **some** of the elements of Daniel 11 were fulfilled (at least partially) by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC), with the 'abomination of desolation' being in 167 BC.

Josephus, for example, explicitly connected some of Daniel's prophecy to the Maccabean period:

"Though these dreams and visions all concern events in the future, there is considerable variation both in the timescale involved and in the scope of the events predicted. Some dreams predict events for the immediate future, some for the more distant future, and some for the very distant future. The dream of Pharaoh's butler indicated that he would be released from prison 'within three days' (Ant. 2.65). **Events under Antiochus Epiphanes, on the other hand, had been predicted 'many years' in advance by Daniel**, on the basis of his visions (10.276). As we saw in chapter 1, **Josephus believed that Daniel had predicted events that occurred in the Roman period**, and even events that were still to come from his own (Josephus') point of view"

[HI:PFLST:63]

[Christians, under the guidance of Jesus in Matthew 24.15, speaking of some future manifestation of the 'abomination of desolation spoken of by **the prophet Daniel**', saw this event as typological of a later, eschatological event, as well.]

This places the events under question (i.e., the prophetic elements) squarely in the period of the Maccabean revolt, ca. 168-165 B.C.

Two--When was the book written?

Most modern non-conservative scholars believe that Daniel (or at least the second half of Daniel, the section containing the passages in question) was written by **someone other than Daniel** either DURING these events or shortly thereafter. This view was first developed by the brilliant anti-Christian Porphyry in the 3rd century AD. The history of this view is given by Archer in EBC:

"The Maccabean date hypothesis, a widely held theory of the origin and date of the Book of Daniel, was originally advanced by the third-century A.D. Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyrius of Tyre. According to the relation of his opinions by Jerome (who spent much of his commentary on Daniel refuting Porphyry's arguments), Porphyry contended that the remarkably accurate "predictions" contained in Daniel (esp. ch. 11) were the result of a pious fraud, perpetrated by some zealous propagandist of the Maccabean movement, who wished to encourage a spirit of heroism among the Jewish patriots resisting Antiochus IV. The discomfiture of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar as related in Daniel were intended to be prophetic of the defeats and downfall of the hated Epiphanes.

"Following Jerome's refutation of Porphyry, he was more or less dismissed by Christian scholarship as a mere pagan detractor who had allowed a naturalistic bias to warp his judgment. But during the time of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, all supernatural elements in Scripture came under suspicion, and Porphyry's theory received increasing support from J.D. Michaelis (1771), J.G. Eichhorn (1780), L. Berthold (1806), F. Bleek (1822), and many others after them. They all agreed that every accurate

prediction in Daniel was written after it had already been fulfilled (a *vaticinium ex eventu*) and therefore in the period of the Maccabean revolt (168-165 B.C.). Also some of them were inclined to question the unity of the book on the ground of internal evidence and language differences; certain portions of the book--particularly the narratives in chapters 2-6--were thought to come from third-century authors or even earlier. Essentially the same position is maintained even to this day by liberal scholars throughout Christendom. "

Collins [ABD, "Daniel, Book of"] cites Jerome's description:

"Quite apart from the historicity of the figure of Daniel, the authenticity of the book had already been questioned by the 3d century Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry. We are informed by Jerome that: "Porphyry wrote his twelfth book against the prophecy of Daniel, denying that it was composed by the person to whom it is ascribed in its title, but rather by some individual living in Judaea at the time of that Antiochus who was surnamed Epiphanes; he further alleged that 'Daniel' did not foretell the future so much as he related the past, and lastly that whatever he spoke of up till the time of Antiochus contained authentic history, whereas anything he may have conjectured beyond that point was false, inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future."

The alternative view, of conservative evangelicals, is that Daniel was written in the late 6th century BC, long before these events. EBC gives a summary:

"As to the date of the composition of Daniel, the narrative of the prophet's earliest experiences begins with his capture as a hostage by Nebuchadnezzar back in 605-604 B.C. and according to 1:21 continues certainly till the first year of Cyrus (c. 537 B.C.), in relation to his public service, and to the third year of Cyrus (535 B.C.), in relation to his prophetic ministry (Dan 10:1). Daniel seems to have revised and completed his memoirs during his retirement sometime about 532 or 530 B.C. when he would have been close to ninety years old (assuming his birth c. 620 B.C.). The appearance of Persian-derived governmental terms, even in the earlier chapters composed in Aramaic, strongly suggests that these chapters were given their final form after Persian had become the official language of government."

The issue--was it written BEFORE the events or NOT?

Notice carefully that our task is much more simple than would first appear. We do NOT have to demonstrate that the Book of Daniel was written according to conservative theories--in the 6th century BC. ALL we have to do (in this first part) is to demonstrate that it was written BEFORE 167 BC! If the prophecies were uttered **even ten years before the event**, then they constitute 'prophecy proper'.

Strictly speaking, all that is therefore necessary to do is to demonstrate that the material/content in the book of Daniel was in existence by the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. We don't even have to show that the book was in its current form at all-if we can even find references or close/obvious allusions to the images/languages in Daniel, we will have ante-dated the events, and hence, have encountered 'real' prophecy. [If we find data to support a MUCH earlier, perhaps 6th century provenance, then 'so much the better'.]

And this is a much simpler task...

I will survey the data in the following categories:

- 1. Do we have any copies of the Book of Daniel that either date BEFORE 167bc, or even somewhat later ones that virtually require the existence of the Danielic material before that time? [The Dead Sea Scrolls data]**
- 2. Do we have any literary references or clear allusions to the Book in other pre-Maccabean extra-biblical literature?**
- 3. Do we have any contrary data *adequate to overturn* any of the data in points 1 and 2 above [Internal Evidence: Historical and Linguistic]?**
- 4. Is there any other data that is best explained by the "early dating" of the Book?**

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Using DNA to ensure the proper placement of scroll fragments

<http://www.jpost.com/HealthAndSci-Tech/ScienceAndEnvironment/Article.aspx?id=61490>

How goat skin DNA solved Dead Sea scrolls mystery

Judy Siegel-Itzkovich

Scientists are examining the scrolls to reconstruct the DNA of the goats whose skin was used to make the parchments.



Scientists at the Hebrew University's Koret School for Veterinary Science near Rishon LeZion are helping to piece together some of the 10,000 fragments of Dead Sea Scrolls found decades ago in Qumran by examining the DNA profiles of the goats whose skin was used to make the parchment and reducing the number of possible matches. Dr. Galia Kahila Bar-Gal said during a journalists' tour at the nearby Hebrew University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, where students learn and treat animals, that she and colleagues were looking at genetic forms from each fragment to know which came from specific animals. Once they know that two pieces came from the skin of the same animal, it is easier to piece them together, she said. Bar-Gal, who studies the genomes of ancient creatures that lived in Israel using molecular biology, morphology and DNA from bones, said mammoths roamed the land millions of years ago, elephants many thousands of years ago and that even hippopotami lived here. In more recent times there were lions, as well as Syrian bears that became extinct in 1917. Civilization, which brought in hunting, killed off many species, and during the last century, others have been wiped out by being hit by cars, she said. The Hebrew University scientists, who are trying to bring back golden squirrels, tested for their genetic makeup in museums with preserved specimens going back 70 years to find out what contemporary species are most similar and can be used to breed them locally. They have also studied the bones of animals found with human skeletons to determine whether humans were infected with zoonotic diseases originating in the

animals. Hospital director Prof. Hylton Bark and Koret School head Prof. Gadi Glaser said the veterinary school was permitted by the Council for Higher Education to accept only about 40 new students a year, as the cost of training veterinarians is the most expensive of any university school - twice that of teaching physicians at the medical school in Jerusalem. However, they said, if the school were permitted to take in 20 more, they would not have to expand faculty or facilities but would make it possible for some of the 80 Israelis who go to Eastern Europe to study veterinary medicine to do it here. They noted that the level in Eastern European schools is significantly lower than in Israel, and that graduates come back to Israel to practice. They know of no unemployed vets, as the demand for their services as private veterinarians, employees in the public sector supervising meat and poultry production and in epidemiology is rising. The school, 80 percent of whose students are women, was established in 1985, and the nearby hospital was founded four years later. The non-profit hospital runs on a balanced budget, with pet and domestic animal owners paying for treatment, while donors pay for new buildings and other facilities. Although there are a few small animal "hospitals" in other parts of the country, the Hebrew University veterinary teaching hospital is the only one to operate round the clock every day of the year, to educate and to offer specialists in every conceivable field, including cardiology, ophthalmology, internal medicine and even oncology. Weekends are very busy, as private vets close their clinics and worried pet owners rush their sick dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters and other creatures to the hospital for treatment. The school also offers continuing education for veteran and new immigrant vets and enables students and vets to conduct research that benefits man as well as animal. Glaser noted that demand for its horse treatment and fertility units was expected to increase greatly when horse racing in the Jezreel Valley is allowed to begin next year. Horses are fertilized with frozen semen from abroad and some from a thoroughbred named Mukhtar who was injured and began a "new career" of supplying sperm to females. Some horses also serve as surrogate mothers implanted with embryos from others.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The Synchrotron – a new tool to read damaged, fragile manuscripts

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/synchrotron.htm>

Is there a light 10 billion times brighter than the sun?

by Jacob Silverman

Inside this Article

1. Is there a light 10 billion times brighter than the sun?
2. The Diamond Synchrotron
3. Lots More Information
4. See all Optics articles



The Diamond synchrotron's powerful light source could be used on a variety of scientific projects, including deciphering ancient manuscripts.

Image courtesy Diamond Light Source

By the numbers, the Diamond synchrotron facility in Oxfordshire, England, is a massive undertaking. The particle accelerator cost more than \$500 million to build and is housed in a circular building equal in size to five soccer fields. It also produces a highly focused beam of light "10 billion times brighter than the Sun" [source: BBC News]. This incredibly powerful light source and the technological might behind it have many potential scientific applications. But it may surprise you that the Diamond synchrotron could produce its most important discoveries in the field of theology.

Particle Accelerators Image Gallery

Scientists hope to use light from the Diamond synchrotron to "read" ancient texts that have suffered significant damage. Although the discovery of an ancient scroll or manuscript represents a major achievement for archaeologists, anthropologists and other researchers, frequently, these texts are too fragile to open or simply too faded or damaged to read. With the Diamond synchrotron, scientists hope to get around that problem -- this particle accelerator will allow scientists to read some books without even opening them.

The synchrotron emits a powerful X-ray that, when applied to a scroll, allows scientists to produce a 3-D image of the text. With the aid of computer imaging software, scientists then separate the various layers of the image to reconstruct the pages of the book or scroll. In some cases, the text is then readable. The technique has already been successfully applied to texts written with iron gall ink, which scribes began using in the 12th century. Because these parchments contain iron from the ink, applying X-rays results in the formation of an **absorption image**, distinguishing traces of ink from parchment.

A similar technique may be used on parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which researchers haven't opened for fear of damaging them. Once the process of reading texts is improved, it could be used to read a variety of books and manuscripts that have, because of their poor condition, made deciphering their meaning difficult.

Many ancient texts are written on parchment made of dried animal skin. Over time, collagen in the parchment turns into gelatin, causing the parchment and text to deteriorate. Scientists can use the Diamond synchrotron to learn how much of a parchment's collagen has become gelatin and the parchment's level of decay. They also hope to develop new insights into how to preserve manuscripts and to recover those believed to have been lost to the effects of the environment and time.

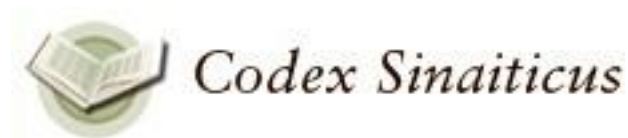
The Diamond synchrotron's powerful light source emits many types of light, allowing researchers to produce images of objects on the atomic level. On the next page, we'll take a closer look at the technology behind the Diamond synchrotron and other synchrotrons. We'll also find out what else scientists hope to learn from the Diamond synchrotron.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Codex Sinaiticus

<http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/codex/default.aspx>



What is Codex Sinaiticus?

Codex Sinaiticus, a manuscript of the Christian Bible written in the middle of the fourth century, contains the earliest complete copy of the Christian New Testament. The hand-written text is in Greek. The New Testament appears in the original vernacular language (koine) and the Old Testament in the version, known as the Septuagint, that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians. In the Codex, the text of both the Septuagint and the New Testament has been heavily annotated by a series of early correctors.

The significance of Codex Sinaiticus for the reconstruction of the Christian Bible's original text, the history of the Bible and the history of Western book-making is immense.

Significance

Codex Sinaiticus is one of the most important witnesses to the Greek text of the Septuagint (the Old Testament in the version that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians) and the Christian New Testament. No other early manuscript of the Christian Bible has been so extensively corrected.

A glance at the transcription will show just how common these corrections are. They are especially frequent in the Septuagint portion. They range in date from those made by the original scribes in the fourth century to ones made in the twelfth century. They range from the alteration of a single letter to the insertion of whole sentences.

One important goal of the Codex Sinaiticus Project is to provide a better understanding of the text of the Codex and of the subsequent corrections to it. This will not only help us to understand this manuscript better, but will also give us insights into the way the texts of the Bible were copied, read and used.

By the middle of the fourth century there was wide but not complete agreement on which books should be considered authoritative for Christian communities. Codex Sinaiticus, one of the two earliest collections of such books, is essential for an understanding of the content and the arrangement of the Bible, as well as the uses made of it.

The Greek Septuagint in the Codex includes books not found in the Hebrew Bible and regarded in the Protestant tradition as apocryphal, such as 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 1 & 4 Maccabees, Wisdom and Sirach. Appended to the New Testament are the Epistle of Barnabas and 'The Shepherd' of Hermas.

The idiosyncratic sequence of books is also remarkable: within the New Testament the Letter to the Hebrews is placed after Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians, and the Acts of the Apostles between the Pastoral and Catholic Epistles. The content and arrangement of the books in Codex Sinaiticus shed light on the history of the construction of the Christian Bible.

The ability to place these 'canonical books' in a single codex itself influenced the way Christians thought about their books, and this is directly dependent upon the technological advances seen in Codex Sinaiticus. The quality of its parchment and the advanced binding structure that would have been needed to support over 730 large-format leaves, which make Codex Sinaiticus such an outstanding example of book manufacture, also made possible the concept of a 'Bible'. The careful planning, skilful writing and editorial control needed for such an ambitious project gives us an invaluable insight into early Christian book production.

'Codex Sinaiticus'

The name 'Codex Sinaiticus' literally means 'the Sinai Book'. It reflects two important aspects of the manuscript: its form and a very special place in its history.

'Codex' means 'book'. By the time Codex Sinaiticus was written, works of literature were increasingly written on sheets that were folded and bound together in a format that we still use to this day. This book format was steadily replacing the roll format which was more widespread just a century before when texts were written on one side of a series of sheets glued together to make a roll. These rolls were made of animal skin (like most of the Dead Sea Scrolls) or the papyrus plant (commonly used for Greek and Latin literature).

Using the papyrus codex was a distinctive feature of early Christian culture. The pages of Codex Sinaiticus however are of prepared animal skin called parchment. This marks it out as standing at an important transition in book history. Before it we see many examples of Greek and Latin texts on papyrus roll or papyrus codex, but almost no traces of parchment codices. After it, the parchment codex becomes normative.

During its history – particularly its modern history – parts of Codex Sinaiticus were also known by other names. The 43 leaves which are now at Leipzig University Library were published in 1846 as 'Codex Frederico-Augustanus' in honour of Frederick Augustus II, King of Saxony, who was the patron of the German Biblical scholar and editor of Codex Sinaiticus, Constantine Tischendorf. The 347 leaves now in The British Library were previously known as 'Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus', as they were kept in St Petersburg between 1863 and 1933.

Date

Codex Sinaiticus is generally dated to the fourth century, and sometimes more precisely to the middle of that century. This is based on study of the handwriting, known as palaeographical analysis. Only one other nearly complete manuscript of the Christian Bible – Codex Vaticanus (kept in the Vatican Library in Rome) – is of a similarly early date. The only manuscripts of Christian scripture that are definitely of an earlier date than Codex Sinaiticus contain small portions of the text of the Bible.

Content

As it survives today, Codex Sinaiticus comprises just over 400 large leaves of prepared animal skin, each of which measures 380mm high by 345mm wide. On these parchment leaves is written around half of the Old Testament and Apocrypha (the Septuagint), the whole of the New Testament, and two early Christian texts not found in modern Bibles. Most of the first part of the manuscript (containing most of the so-called historical books, from Genesis to 1 Chronicles) is now missing and presumed to be lost.

The Septuagint includes books which many Protestant Christian denominations place in the Apocrypha. Those present in the surviving part of the Septuagint in Codex Sinaiticus are 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 1 & 4 Maccabees, Wisdom and Sirach.

The number of the books in the New Testament in Codex Sinaiticus is the same as that in modern Bibles in the West, but the order is different. The Letter to the Hebrews is placed after Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians, and the Acts of the Apostles between the Pastoral and Catholic Epistles.

The two other early Christian texts are an Epistle by an unknown writer claiming to be the Apostle Barnabas, and 'The Shepherd', written by the early second-century Roman writer, Hermas.

Production

Codex Sinaiticus was copied by more than one scribe. Constantine Tischendorf identified four in the nineteenth century. Subsequent research decided that there were three, but it is possible that a fourth (different from Tischendorf's fourth scribe) can be identified. Each of the three undisputed scribes has a distinctive way of writing which can be identified with practice. Each also had a distinctive way of spelling many sounds, particularly vowels which scribes often wrote phonetically. One of them may have been a senior copyist.

To make their manuscript, the scribes had to perform a series of tasks. They had to

1. determine a format (there are very few surviving manuscripts written with four columns to a page);
2. divide the work between them;
3. prepare the parchment, including ruling it with a framework for the layout of columns and lines;
4. prepare the manuscripts they were copying;
5. get pens and ink together;
6. write the text;
7. check it;
8. assemble the whole codex in the right order.

History of Codex Sinaiticus

The text which follows, concerning the history of the Codex Sinaiticus, is the fruit of collaboration by the four Institutions that today retain parts of the said Codex: the British Library, the Library of the University of Leipzig, the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg, and the Holy Monastery of the God-Trodden Mount Sinai (Saint Catherine's). These Institutions recognize that events concerning the history of the Codex Sinaiticus, from 1844 to this very day, are not fully known; hence, they are susceptible to widely divergent interpretations and recountings that are evaluated differently as to their form and essence. Although they have not come to a full accord over the recent history of the Codex, the four collaborating Institutions offer the present, common, agreed text as the basis of a common formulation, as a framework of historical reference that may be completed by yet further documents, and as a basis for dialogue and the interpretation of events.

The Codex Sinaiticus is named after the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai, where it had been preserved until the middle of the nineteenth century. The principal surviving portion of the Codex, comprising 347 leaves, is now held by the British Library. A further 43 leaves are kept at the University Library in Leipzig. Parts of six leaves are held at the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg. Further portions remain at Saint Catherine's Monastery.

On 9 March 2005, a Partnership Agreement was signed between the four institutions listed above for the conservation, photography, transcription, and publication of all surviving pages and fragments of the Codex Sinaiticus. Included among the aims and objectives of the Project was a provision:

To undertake research into the history of the Codex . . . , to commission an objective historical narrative based on the results of the research which places the documents in their historical context, written by authors agreeable to all four Members, and to publish the outcomes of the research through the project website and other related print publications, such publications to include the full texts of relevant documents (either as transcripts or digital surrogates) wherever the permission of the owners can be secured to publish the documents in this way.

The following text is a synopsis of the history of the Codex, which has been agreed by all four Partners. It is based on the evidence that has been thus far identified and made available to the Project.

The first written record of the Codex Sinaiticus may be identifiable in the journal of an Italian visitor to the Monastery of Saint Catherine in 1761. In it the naturalist Vitaliano Donati reported having seen at the Monastery 'a Bible comprising leaves of handsome, large, delicate, and square-shaped parchment, written in a round and handsome script'.

Over eighty years later, in 1844, Codex Sinaiticus re-emerges from the mists of history. Sometime between 24 May and 1 June, the monks at Saint Catherine's brought to the attention of the visiting German biblical scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, 129 leaves of the Old Testament portion of the Codex. According to his own published account (no other record has so far been identified), Tischendorf then obtained 43 of these leaves from the Monastery. In January 1845, he returned to Leipzig, together with this portion of the Codex and many other manuscripts that he had collected during his travels in the Eastern Mediterranean. The following year, Tischendorf published the 43 leaves now at Leipzig under the title of Codex Friderico-Augustanus. He did so in honour of King Frederick Augustus II of Saxony, who had supported Tischendorf's journeys in 1843 and his edition of 1846. At that point the leaves were described merely as 'from a monastery in the Orient', a phrase which has given rise to various interpretations. Subsequently the 43 leaves became part of the collections of Leipzig University Library.

After 1844 several sightings of the Codex were recorded by visitors to the Monastery. According to his own account, the Russian Archimandrite Porfirij Uspenskij examined 347 leaves of the Codex during his visit in 1845. The leaves that he saw included the 86 seen, but not removed by Tischendorf in 1844. During the same visit Uspenskij obtained three fragments of two pages of the Codex, which had previously formed part of the bindings of books at the Monastery. Together with other manuscripts and artefacts that he had obtained from his extensive travels in the Middle East, these fragments were taken to Russia by Uspenskij. Subsequently, in 1883, they were acquired by the Imperial Library in Saint Petersburg. During his second visit to the Monastery in 1853, Tischendorf obtained several other manuscripts, including a fragment of the Codex that had originally formed part of the same leaf as one of the fragments acquired by Uspenskij. According to Tischendorf, this latest fragment was discovered serving as a bookmark. It was later acquired by the Imperial Library. In 1911 a further fragment, taken from a binding, was identified in the collection of the Society of Ancient Literature, Saint Petersburg.

In 1859, Tischendorf made his third and final visit to Saint Catherine's, this time under the patronage of the Russian Tsar Alexander II. According to his own account, he first saw the 347 leaves of the Codex on 4 February. Recognising the significant benefit to biblical scholarship of transcribing their complete text, but also the difficulties of doing so at the Monastery, Tischendorf requested that all the leaves be transferred to the Monastery's metochion in Cairo. On 24 February, the Codex was brought to Cairo, and for three months, from March to May, Tischendorf was allowed access to the Codex, one gathering at a time. This detailed examination confirmed the German scholar's belief that the 347 leaves were 'the most precious biblical treasure in existence'. After further travels in the Middle East, Tischendorf returned to Cairo on 12/24 September, and four days later on 16/28 September, he signed a receipt for the loan of the 347 leaves. In the receipt Tischendorf stated that the purpose of the loan was to enable him to take the manuscript to Saint Petersburg and there compare his earlier transcription with the original as part of his preparations for its publication. He promised to return the Codex to the Monastery intact and as soon as it was requested, but at the same time referred to additional conditions stated in an earlier letter from the then Russian Ambassador to the Porte, Prince Lobanov, to the Monastery. Dated 10/22 September 1859, this letter refers to Tischendorf's assertion that the community at Saint Catherine's wished to donate the Codex to the Tsar. As the Donation could not be taken for granted, the Ambassador recognized that up and until, and always provided that it would be realized, ownership of the manuscript remained with the Holy Monastery, to which the manuscript ought to be returned, at its earliest request. In their reply to Lobanov, dated 17/29 September, the community expressed their support for Tischendorf in his endeavours and devotion to the Tsar, but made no explicit reference to the issue of donation.

What happened next is in its essentials now clearly documented. After further intense study of the Codex in Russia, Tischendorf published his lavish print facsimile edition in 1862. This edition was presented to its

dedicatee and funder, Tsar Alexander II, at a formal audience in Zarskoje Zelo on 10 November 1862. At the same occasion, the Codex was also handed over by Tischendorf, his scholarly work completed. For the next seven years the manuscript remained in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saint Petersburg; only in 1869 was it moved to the Imperial Library. In that same year, 1869, an act of donation of the Codex to the Tsar was signed first, on 13/25 November, by the then Archbishop of Sinai, Kallistratos, and the synaxis of the Cairo metochion, to which the Codex had been transferred in 1859, and second, on 18/30 November, by Archbishop Kallistratos and the synaxes of both the Cairo metochion and the Monastery of Saint Catherine's itself.

Yet recent research has also brought to light a wide range of perspectives on each of these key events. In relation to the loan, conflicting evidence has emerged as to whether a donation to the Tsar was part of the original intention of all involved in the agreement of 1859. As for the ten years between the receipt and the act of donation, this period has become increasingly recognised as one of great complexity and difficulty for Saint Catherine's. Most notably, the death of Archbishop Konstantios at Constantinople in 1859 was followed by a protracted vacancy of the Archiepiscopal Throne, as well as by a very turbulent period of succession. Although elected by the Brotherhood to succeed Konstantios as Archbishop, Kyrillos Byzantios was refused consecration as such by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. At length, it became possible for Kyrillos to be consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and hence, to be recognized by the political authorities of the Ottoman Empire, to which, at the time, Egypt belonged. Yet, very soon afterwards, Kyrillos's actions led to a severance with the Brotherhood, to his repudiation by them, and to their election of a new Archbishop, Kallistratos. The latter was duly consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, but not recognised by either the other Patriarchs and Orthodox Churches or the political authorities, since they continued to consider Kyrillos, who resided in Constantinople after his disavowal by the Brotherhood, as the legitimate and rightful Archbishop. Finally, in 1869, Kallistratos achieved recognition as Archbishop by all canonical and state authorities. The concurrent resolution of such an apparently intractable situation and of the status of the Codex, both through Russian diplomacy, has been variously interpreted. There is certainly evidence to suggest that Russian diplomats directly connected their intervention over the Archiepiscopal succession with the official donation of the Codex by the Monastery to the Tsar. A policy of protracted obstruction, inconstancy and wavering adopted by the Monastery proved ineffectual in that it led to the Donation of 18/30 November.

Yet, the travels of the Codex did not end there. By the summer of 1933, it had become known in Britain that the Soviet Government of Joseph Stalin wished to raise foreign capital – this to support the second Five Year Plan – by selling the Codex through the London booksellers Maggs Brothers. With the strong support of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, the Trustees of the British Museum persuaded the Treasury to support a payment of £100,000 upon delivery of the Codex to London. To achieve this, the Treasury had agreed in October 1933 to provide £93,000 from the Civil Contingencies Fund on condition that a public fund-raising appeal was organised by the Museum. The Museum had committed to contribute £7,000 from its own funds. The full sum was paid by cheque to Arcos Ltd, the Soviet Government's trading company, which was responsible for the delivery of the Codex to Britain. The Codex itself arrived in London on 26 December 1933, and on the following day was delivered to the British Museum, where, after having been checked against the published facsimile, it was put on public display. Championed by the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the former Director of the British Museum Sir Frederic Kenyon, the public campaign raised £46,500 by May 1934. By October of the following year the campaign had returned to the Treasury a grand total of £53,563. A concerted British national effort, focused on the long-term preservation of the Codex, was then brought to an end.

Shortly after the arrival of the Codex in London, concerns about its continuing separation re-emerged. In a telegram, dated 29 January 1934, Archbishop Porphyrios of Sinai asserted the Monastery's claim to be the 'sole rightful owner'. In its reply, sent the following day, the British Museum referred the Monastery to the Soviet Government. At the same time the Museum's director, Sir George Hill, initiated a re-examination of the events of 1859 to 1869. Based on the documentary evidence that the Museum had been able to access (the relevant Russian archives were at that point inaccessible) and a legal opinion from Lord Hanworth, Hill remained confident of the legality of his acquisition. While he faced numerous other expressions of concern over other issues relating to the purchase of the Codex from the Soviets, very few concerns over either their

title to it or right to sell it were aired by the British press, governing class, or public. Of greater concern were such issues as the retention by the Russians, almost certainly unintentional, of one tiny fragment of one of the 347 leaves that came to the Imperial Library in 1869.

Over forty years later, in 1975, the Monastery uncovered further, previously unknown parts of the Codex. On 26 May, during the clearance of a chamber underneath Saint George's Chapel on the north wall of the Monastery, the Skeuophylax Father Sophronios noted a large cache of manuscript fragments. Within these were soon noted several leaves and fragments of the Codex Sinaiticus. Thus, today at the Holy Monastery of Sinai there are to be found, at least, eighteen leaves in their entirety or in fragments, whose provenance is due either to the New Finds of 1975, or from the bindings of manuscripts in which, from time to time, they had been incorporated.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Codex Vaticanus- Catholic Encyclopedia Article

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04086a.htm>

Codex Vaticanus

(CODEX B), a Greek manuscript, the most important of all the manuscripts of Holy Scripture. It is so called because it belongs to the Vatican Library (*Codex Vaticanus*, 1209).

This codex is a quarto volume written in uncial letters of the fourth century, on folios of fine parchment bound in quaterns. Each page is divided into three columns of forty lines each, with from sixteen to eighteen letters to a line, except in the poetical books, where, owing to the stichometric division of the lines, there are but two columns to a page. There are no capital letters, but at times the first letter of a section extends over the margin. Several hands worked at the manuscript; the first writer inserted neither pauses nor accents, and made use but rarely of a simple punctuation. Unfortunately, the codex is mutilated; at a later date the missing folios were replaced by others. Thus, the first twenty original folios are missing; a part of folio 178, and ten folios after fol. 348; also the final quaterns, whose number it is impossible to establish. There are extant in all 759 original folios.

The Old Testament (Septuagint Version, except Daniel, which is taken from the version of Theodotion) takes up 617 folios. On account of the aforementioned lacunae, the Old Testament text lacks the following passages: Genesis 1-46:28; 2 Samuel 2:5-7, 10-13; Pss. cv,27-cxxxvii, 6. The order of the books of the Old Testament is as follows: Genesis to Second Paralipomenon, First and second Esdras, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Job, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Esther, Judith, Tobias, the Minor Prophets from Osee to Malachi, Isaias, Jeremias, Baruch, Lamentations and Epistle of Jeremias, Ezechiel, Daniel; the Vatican Codex does not contain the Prayer of Manasses or the Books of Machabees. The New Testament begins at fol. 618. Owing to the loss of the final quaterns, a portion of the Pauline Epistles is missing: Hebrews 9:14-13:25, the Pastoral Letters, Epistle to Philemon; also the Apocalypse. It is possible that there may also be some extra-canonical writings missing, like the Epistle of Clement. The order of the New Testament books is as follows: Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Catholic Epistles, St. Paul to the Romans, Corinthians (I-II), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Thessalonians (I-II), Hebrews.

In the Vatican Codex we find neither the Ammonian Sections nor the Eusebian Canons. It is, however, divided into sections, after a manner that is common to it with the Codex Zacynthius (Cod. "Zeta"), an eighth-century Scriptural manuscript of St. Luke. The Acts of the Apostles exhibits a special division into thirty-six chapters. The Catholic Epistles bear traces of a double division, in the first and earlier of which some believe that the Second Epistle of Peter was

wanting. The division of the Pauline Epistles is quite peculiar: they are treated as one book, and numbered continuously. It is clear from this enumeration that in the copy of the Scriptures reproduced by the Vatican Codex the Epistle to the Hebrews was placed between the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The Vatican Codex, in spite of the views of Tischendorf, who held for the priority of the Codex Sinaiticus, discovered by him, is rightly considered to be the oldest extant copy of the Bible. Like the Codex Sinaiticus it represents what Westcott and Hort call a "neutral text", i.e. a text that antedates the modifications found in all later manuscripts, not only the modifications found in the less ancient Antiochene recensions, but also those met with in the Eastern and Alexandrine recensions. It may be said that the Vatican Codex, written in the first half of the fourth century, represents the text of one of those recensions of the Bible which were current in the third century, and that it belongs to the family of manuscripts made use of by Origen in the composition of his Hexapla.

The original home of the Vatican Codex is uncertain. Hort thinks it was written at Rome; Rendel Harris, Armitage Robinson, and others attribute it to Asia Minor. A more common opinion maintains that it was written in Egypt. Armitage Robinson believes that both the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus were originally together in some ancient library. His opinion is based on the fact that in the margins of both manuscripts is found the same special system of chapters for the Acts of the Apostles, taken from the division of Euthalius, and found in two other important codices (Amiatinus and Fuldensis) of the Latin Vulgate. Tischendorf believed that three hands had worked at the transcription of the Vatican Codex. He identified (?) the first hand (B1), or transcriber, of the Old Testament with the transcriber of a part of the Old Testament and some folios of the New Testament in the Codex Sinaiticus. This primitive text was revised, shortly after its original transcription, with the aid of a new manuscript, by a corrector (B2 — For the Old Testament B2 is quoted by Swete as Ba). Six centuries after (according to some), a third hand (B3,Bb) retraced the faded letters, leaving but very little of the original untouched. According to Fabiani, however, this retracing was done early in the fifteenth century by the monk Clemens (*qui saeculo XV ineunte floruisse videtur*). In modern times (fifteenth-sixteenth century) the missing folios were added to the codex, in order, as Tregelles conjectures, to prepare it for use in the Vatican Library. Old catalogues show that it was there in the fifteenth century. The addition to the New Testament was listed by Scrivener as Cod. 263 (in Gregory, 293) for the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Cod. 91 for the Apocalypse. Napoleon I had the codex brought to Paris (where Hug was enabled to study it), but it was afterwards returned to the Holy See, with some other remnants of Roman booty, and replaced in the Vatican Library. There are various collations, editions, and studies of the Vatican Codex. The collations are:

- that of Bartolucci (Giulio di S. Anastasia), formerly librarian of the Vatican; it was done in 1669 and is preserved in manuscript — Gr. Suppl. 53 of the Bibliothèque Nationale — at Paris (quoted under the *sigla*: Blc);
- that of Birch (Bch) published at Copenhagen in 1798 for the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, in 1800 for the Apocalypse, in 1801 for the Gospels;
- that executed for Bentley (Btly) by the Abbate Mico about 1720 on the margin of a copy of the Greek New Testament which was published at Strasburg, 1524, by Cephalaëus; this copy is among Bentley's books in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge — the collation itself was published in Ford's appendix to Woide's edition of the Codex Alexandrinus in 1799;

- a list of the alterations executed by the original copyist or by his correctors, edited at the request of Bentley by the Abbate Rulotta with the aid of the Abbate de Stosch (Rlt); this list was supposed to have perished, but it is extant among the Bentley papers in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, under the *sigla*: B. 17.20;
- in 1860 Alford, and in 1862 Cure, examined a select number of the readings of the Vatican Codex, and published the results of their labours in the first volume of Alford's Greek Testament.

Many other scholars have made special collations for their own purposes e.g. Tregelles, Tischendorf, Alford, etc. Among the works written on the Vatican Codex we may indicate: Bourgon, Letters from Rome" (London, 1861). In the second volume of the Catalogue of Vatican Greek manuscripts, executed according to the modern scientific method for the cataloguing of the Vatican Library, there is a description of the Codex Vaticanus.

As to the editions of this codex, the Roman edition of the Septuagint (1587) was based on the Vaticanus. Similarly, the Cambridge edition of Swete follows it regularly and makes use of the Sinaiticus and the Alexandrinus only for the portions that are lacking in the Vaticanus. The first Roman edition appeared in 1858, under the names of Mai and Vercellone, and, under the same names, a second Roman edition in 1859. Both editions were severely criticized by Tischendorf in the edition he brought out at Leipzig in 1867, "Novum Testamentum Vaticanum, post A. Maii aliorumque imperfectos labores ex ipso codice editum", with an appendix (1869). The third Roman edition (Verc.) appeared under the names of Vercellone (died 1869) and Cozza-Luzi (died 1905) in 1868-81; it was accompanied by a photographic reproduction of the text: "Bibliorum SS. Graecorum Cod. Vat. 1209, Cod. B, denou phototypice expressus, jussu et cura praesidium Bibliothecae Vaticanae" (Milan, 1904-6). This edition contains a masterly anonymous introduction (by Giovanni Mercati), in which the writer corrects many inexact statements made by previous writers. Until recently the privilege of consulting this ancient manuscript quite freely and fully was not granted to all who sought it. The material condition of the Vatican Codex is better, generally speaking, than that of its contemporaries; it is foreseen, however, that within a century it will have fallen to pieces unless an efficacious remedy, which is being earnestly sought for, shall be discovered.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Codex Alexandrinus

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/codex-a.html>

Codex Alexandrinus (A)



Codex Alexandrinus received its name from the circumstance that its earliest known location was the Egyptian city of Alexandria. It is believed to be from the fifth century. The text is written in capitals (called *uncial* script), and arranged in two columns on the page. It contains the entire Greek Bible, minus Matthew 1:1 through 25:6, John 6:50 through 8:52, and 2 Corinthians 4:13 through 12:6. At the end are

added some early Christian writings commonly used in teaching: the first Epistle of Clement, and the second Epistle of Clement up to 12:4.

The codex was sent as a gift to King James I of England (the same James who commissioned the King James version) by Cyril Lucar, who at the time was the Eastern Orthodox Bishop of Alexandria, and reached England in 1627. (See Matthew Spinka, 'Acquisition of the Codex Alexandrinus by England,' *Review of Religion*, xvi (1936), pp. 10-29). A collation of the New Testament was made by Alexander Huish for Walton's Polyglot (see Walton 1657) where its readings alone appeared below the Greek text, while the readings of other manuscripts were indicated in an appendix.

Bengel (see Bengel 1734) took it as a standard representative of the "African" type of text, and esteemed it above all other manuscripts known to him. Later critics have also valued it highly, but with some reservations. Schaff describes the text thus: "It presents a text which in the Gospels occupies an intermediate position between the oldest uncial and the later cursive text ... but in the rest of the New Testament it stands next to Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. In several books it agrees with the Latin Vulgate in many peculiar readings which are not attested by the older Latin; hence Dr. Hort (ii.152) infers that Jerome, in his revision, must have used to a great extent a common original with Alexandrinus." (Schaff 1891, p. 113).

The manuscript was first published in Woide 1786 (a typographical facsimile). Later editions of the manuscript are Cowper 1860, Hansell 1864, Thompson 1879, and Kenyon 1909. Full collations are in major critical editions Tischendorf 1869 and Tregelles 1857. In the Spring of 2006 the New Testament volume of Thompson 1879 was made available on the internet by The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts.

Codex Alexandrinus

Romans 1:1-27

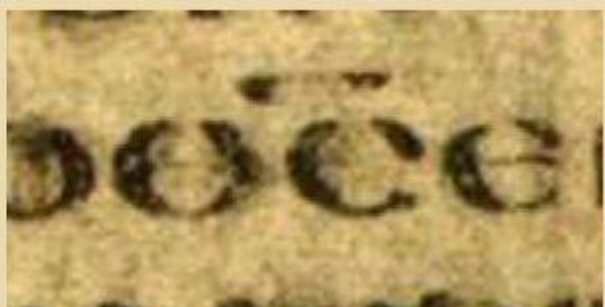
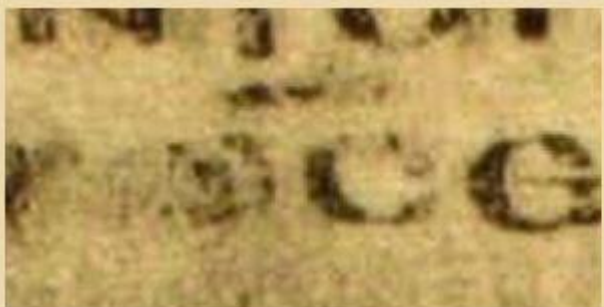
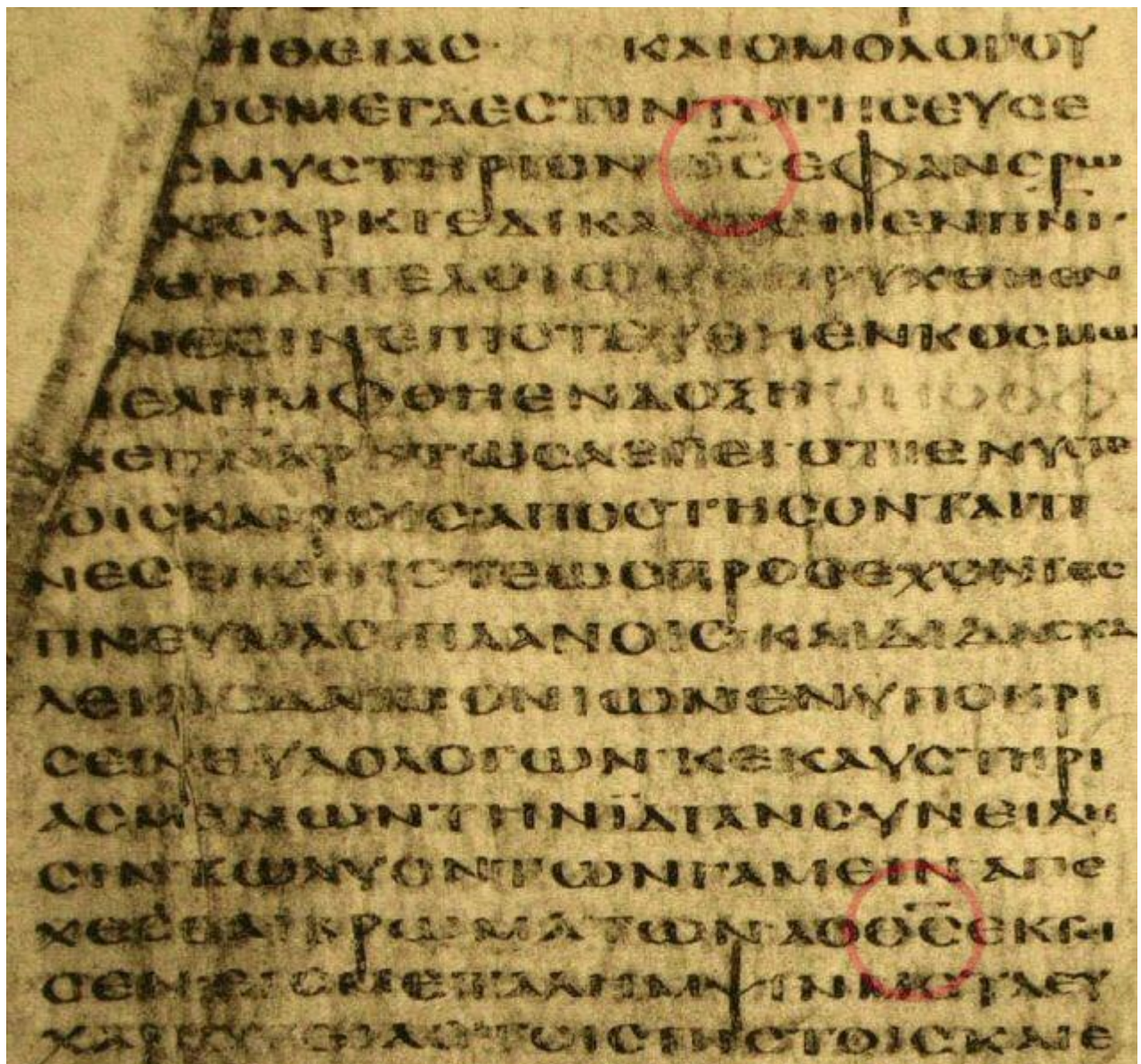
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Photo source: E. Maunde Thompson, ed., *Facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus: New Testament and Clementine Epistles* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1879), published on the internet by The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts.

1 Timothy 3:16 in Codex Alexandrinus

Reproduced below is the text of 1 Timothy 3:16–4:3 from Codex A, as presented in the photographic facsimile volume published by the British Museum in 1879. Of particular interest here is the reading in 3:16, where it may be seen that the manuscript reads **ΘC** "God was manifested in the flesh," employing the usual abbreviation **ΘC** for **ΘEOC**, with a stroke over the letters to indicate an abbreviation. However, textual critics believe that the ink in the center of the **Θ** and the stroke above were added by a corrector in modern times. Reasons for this belief are the color of the ink, and the fact that a "dot" has been placed in the **Θ** instead of a line. Tregelles writes, "The ink in which this has been done in A is sufficiently modern and black to declare its recent application" (*An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, London, 1854). Without these marks, the manuscript originally read **OC** "He who was manifested in the flesh." In the photograph below the **ΘC** in 3:16 is circled. Further down, in verse 4:3, there is another **ΘC** circled for comparison. Click on the circled areas for a larger view.



Nestle-Aland: καὶ ὁμολογούμενος μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· ὅς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὥφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ. Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ῥητῶς

λέγει ὅτι ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως, προσέχοντες πνεύμασιν πλάνοις καὶ διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων, ἐν ὑποκρίσει ψευδολόγων, κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν, κωλύόντων γαμεῖν, ἀπέχεσθαι βρωμάτων ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν εἰς μετάληψιν μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ ἐπεγνωκόσι τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

Photo source: E. Maunde Thompson, ed., *Facsimile of the Codex Alexandrinus: New Testament and Clementine Epistles* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1879), published on the internet by The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Codex Alexandrinus Catholic Encyclopedia Article

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04080c.htm>

Codex Alexandrinus

A most valuable Greek manuscript of the Old and New Testaments, so named because it was brought to Europe from Alexandria and had been the property of the patriarch of that see. For the sake of brevity, Walton, in his polyglot Bible, indicated it by the letter A and thus set the fashion of designating Biblical manuscripts by such symbols. Codex A was the first of the great uncials to become known to the learned world. When Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Alexandria, was transferred in 1621 to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, he is believed to have brought the codex with him. Later he sent it as a present to King James I of England; James died before the gift was presented, and Charles I, in 1627, accepted it in his stead. It is now the chief glory of the British Museum in its manuscript department and is on exhibition there. [*Editor's Note:* The British Museum and the British Library split in 1973, and the Codex is now kept in the latter.]

Codex A contains the Bible of the Catholic Canon, including therefore the deuterocanonical books and portions of books belonging to the Old Testament. Moreover, it joins to the canonical books of Machabees, the apocryphal III and IV Machabees, of very late origin. To the New Testament are added the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome and the homily which passed under the title of Second Epistle of Clement — the only copies then known to exist. These are included in the list of New Testament books which is prefixed and seem to have been regarded by the scribe as part of the New Testament. The same list shows that the Psalms of Solomon, now missing, were originally contained in the volume, but the space which separates this book from the others on the list indicates that it was not ranked among New Testament books. An "Epistle to Marcellinus" ascribed to St. Athanasius is inserted as a preface to the Psalter, together with Eusebius's summary of the Psalms; Psalm 151 and certain selected canticles of the Old Testament are affixed, and liturgical uses of the psalms indicated. Not all the books are complete. In the Old Testament there is to be noted particularly the lacuna of thirty psalms, from 5:20, to 80:11; moreover, of Genesis 14:14-17; 15:1-5, 16-19; 16:6-9; 1 Samuel 12:20-14:9. The New Testament has lost the first twenty-five leaves of the Gospel of St. Matthew, as far as 25:6, likewise the two leaves running from John 6:50, to 8:52 (which, however, as the amount of space shows, omitted the formerly much disputed passage about the adulterous woman), and three leaves containing 2 Corinthians 4:13-12:6. One leaf is missing from *I Clement* and probably two at the end of *II Clement*. Codex A supports the Sixtine Vulgate in regard to the conclusion of St. Mark and John 5:4, but, like all Greek manuscripts before the fourteenth century, omits the text of the three heavenly witnesses, 1 John 5:7. The order of the Old Testament books is peculiar. In the New Testament the order is Gospels, Acts, Catholic Epistles, Pauline Epistles, Apocalypse, with Hebrews placed before the Pastoral Epistles. Originally one large volume, the codex is now bound in four volumes, bearing on their covers the arms of Charles I. Three volumes contain the

Old Testament, and the remaining volume the New Testament with Clement. The leaves, of thin vellum, 12 3/4 inches high by 10 inches broad, number at present 773, but were originally 822, according to the ordinary reckoning. Each page has two columns of 49 to 51 lines.

The codex is the first to contain the major chapters with their titles, the Ammonian Sections and the Eusebian Canons complete (Scrivener). A new paragraph is indicated by a large capital and frequently by spacing, not by beginning a new line; the enlarged capital is placed in the margin of the next line, though, curiously, it may not correspond to the beginning of the paragraph or even of a word. The manuscript is written in uncial characters in a hand at once firm, elegant, simple; the greater part of Volume III is ascribed by Gregory to a different hand from that of the others; two hands are discerned in the New Testament by Woide, three by Sir E. Maunde Thompson and Kenyon — experts differ on these points. The handwriting is generally judged to belong to the beginning or middle of the fifth century or possibly to the late fourth. An Arabic note states that it was written by Thecla the martyr; and Cyril Lucar the Patriarch adds in his note that tradition says she was a noble Egyptian woman and wrote the codex shortly after the Nicene Council. But nothing is known of such a martyr at that date, and the value of this testimony is weakened by the presence of the Eusebian Canons (d. 340) and destroyed by the insertion of the letter of Athanasius (d. 373). On the other hand, the absence of the Euthalian divisions is regarded by Scrivener as proof that it can hardly be later than 450. This is not decisive, and Gregory would bring it down even to the second half of the fifth century. The character of the letters and the history of the manuscript point to Egypt as its place of origin.

The text of Codex A is considered one of the most valuable witnesses to the Septuagint. It is found, however, to bear a great affinity to the text embodied in Origen's Hexapla and to have been corrected in numberless passages according to the Hebrew. The text of the Septuagint codices is in too chaotic a condition, and criticism of it too little advanced, to permit of a sure judgment on the textual value of the great manuscripts. The text of the New Testament here is of a mixed character. In the Gospels, we have the best example of the so-called Syrian type of text, the ancestor of the traditional and less pure form found in the *textus receptus*. The Syrian text, however, is rejected by the great majority of scholars in favour of the "neutral" type, best represented in the Codex Vaticanus. In the Acts and Catholic Epistles, and still more in St. Paul's Epistles and the Apocalypse, Codex A approaches nearer, or belongs, to the neutral type. This admixture of textual types is explained on the theory that A or its prototype was not copied from a single manuscript, but from several manuscripts of varying value and diverse origin. Copyist's errors in this codex are rather frequent.

Codex Alexandrinus played an important part in developing the textual criticism of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament. Grabe edited the Old Testament at Oxford in 1707-20, and this edition was reproduced at Zurich 1730-32, and at Leipzig, 1750-51, and again at Oxford, by Field, in 1859; Woide published the New Testament in 1786, which B. H. Cowper reproduced in 1860. The readings of Codex A were noted in Walton's Polyglot, 1657, and in every important collation since made. Baber published an edition of the Old Testament in facsimile type in 1816-28; but all previous editions were superseded by the magnificent photographic facsimile of both Old and New Testaments produced by the care of Sir E. Maunde Thompson (the New Testament in 1879, the Old Testament in 1881-83), with an introduction in which the editor gives the best obtainable description of the codex (London, 1879-80). 

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Partial New Testament Papyri

<http://www.cbl.ie/Collections/The-Western-Collection/Papyri/Biblical.aspx>



Biblical



The early New Testament papyri are, for many visitors, the greatest Christian treasures to be seen at the Library.

These incredible discoveries were first made public in The Times (19 November 1931). Before this find, the earliest and most important manuscripts of the Greek New Testament were parchment codices from the fourth and fifth centuries, all dating from the period after Constantine had granted toleration to Christianity.

Only a few small fragments of papyrus with portions of the New Testament from an earlier date were known, and most of these were too small to be of much significance.

The discovery of the Chester Beatty New Testament papyri caused a sensation; they were at least 100 years older than the most important parchment codices at that time.

The papyri not only contained much larger portions of the New Testament than any previously known papyri, but also provided a unique witness to the biblical text at a time when Christianity was experiencing extensive persecution and destruction of its scriptures.

By acquiring these early Christian texts, including the earliest surviving codex of the gospels and acts, the earliest copy of Saint Paul's Letters and the earliest copy of the Book of Revelation, as well as many other early or unique versions of homilies, epistles or pseudo-canonical texts, Chester Beatty's Library became one of the major centres in the world for the study of the Christian Bible.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The History of Modern Greek Editions

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Textus-Receptus.html>

What is the Textus Receptus?

Question: "What is the Textus Receptus?"

Answer: The Textus Receptus (Latin for "Received Text") is a Greek New Testament that provided the textual base for the vernacular translations of the Reformation Period. It was a printed text, not a hand-copied manuscript, created in the 15th century to fill the need for a textually accurate Greek New Testament. As the Christian message was carried abroad, the books of the New Testament were not only taken along, but also translated into the languages of the people to whom the message was given. In the transmission of the text, copies were made, mostly by Christians who were not trained in the art of the task; therefore, not too much attention was given to the correctness of the copies. As the number of copies in the different languages proliferated, it became apparent that many differences and discrepancies were found in the various versions. Eventually, it became obvious that there was a need for someone to bring textual criticism into play.

Needless to say, the invention of the printing press with movable type in the mid-fifteenth century revolutionized the world of literature. The first Bible to be printed in 1456 was the Latin Vulgate. This was also known by the Gutenberg Bible. Bible scholars at that time were little concerned about the Greek text of the New Testament; the Latin Vulgate was their Bible.

Then in the late fifteenth century, the Greek language—unknown for hundreds of years—was recovered in the West, the geographical area of the Latin Church. With the rediscovery of Greek and its inception as the language of the people, the Latin Vulgate translation was subjected to a critical examination in comparison with the Greek original. Scholars discovered numerous mistranslations or outright errors in the Vulgate. This provided a reason for printing the New Testament in its original language, Greek.

Erasmus, a 15th century Dutch theologian, working at great speed in order to beat to press another Greek New Testament being prepared in Spain, gathered together what hand-copied Greek manuscripts he could locate. He found five or six, the majority of which were dated in the twelfth century. Working with all the speed he could, Erasmus did not even transcribe the manuscripts; he merely made notes on the manuscripts themselves and sent them to the printers. The entire New Testament was printed in about six to eight months and published in 1516. It became a best seller, despite its errors, and the first printing was soon gone. A

second edition was published in 1519 with some of the errors having been corrected.

Erasmus published two other editions in 1527 and 1535. Stung by criticism that his work contained numerous textual errors, he incorporated readings from the Greek New Testament published in Spain in later editions of his work. Erasmus' Greek text became the standard in the field, and other editors and printers continued the work after his death in 1536. In 1633, another edition was published. In the publisher's preface, in Latin, we find the following words: Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum; that can be translated as "the (reader) now has the text that is received by all." From that publisher's notation has come the words "Received Text." The Textus Receptus became the dominant Greek text of the New Testament for the following two hundred and fifty years. It was not until the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament in 1881 that the Textus Receptus lost its position.

The reason for its losing its prominent position as a basis of biblical textual interpretation was the inception of textual criticism. Influential scholars paved the way for the acceptance of a critical text. The work of Westcott and Hort brought about the final dethronement of the Textus Receptus and the establishment of the principle of a critical text. However, the Textus Receptus is not a "bad" or misleading text, either theologically or practically. Technically, however, it is far from the original text. Yet three centuries were to pass before scholars had won the struggle to replace this hastily assembled text with a text which gave evidence to being closer to the New Testament Autographs.

Many consider the King James Version of the Bible to be the crown of English Bibles. Even at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Greek text used in preparing the KJV was the Textus Receptus. Both Luther and Tyndale translated the Scriptures into their vernacular languages using the same basic Greek text. Luther used the second edition of the Erasmus New Testament, and Tyndale utilized the third edition.

Regardless of one's position on the Textus Receptus, it is evident that it had great influence on preserving God's inspired Word through many centuries. Textual criticism of the Scriptures is so evidently important that all scholars and students of the Word of God need to utilize its principles in order to fulfill the biblical mandate, "Study to show yourselves approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Recommended Resource: A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament by Bruce Metzger.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

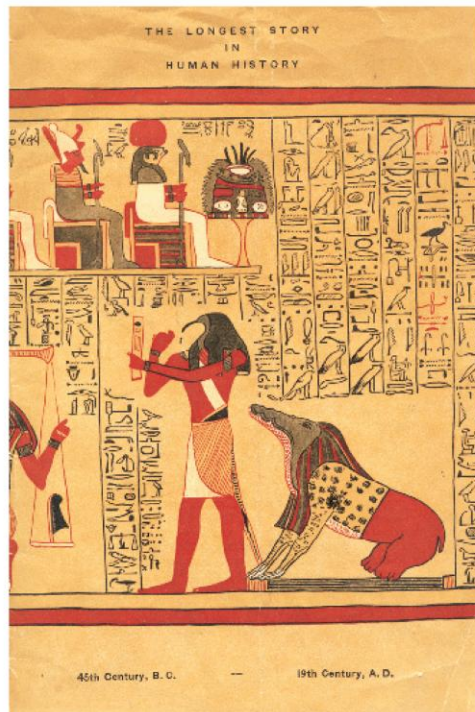
A History of Human Writing

<http://www.safde.org/hwhistory.pdf>

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF HANDWRITING GUIDELINE FOR SAFDE MAMBERS

Making a Long Story Short

The History of Handwriting



On an old piece of Egyptian papyrus, it was written that writing is more useful than a home and better than a monument in a temple. The ancient people of Egypt valued the invention of writing. Now some people don't even know the origins of written language.

Note: Egyptians believed that writing was a gift from "Thoth" the God of the moon and of wisdom and learning. Thoth is depicted standing.

WRITING - IT IS
THIS BOON TO
MANKIND THAT
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
PRAISED IN THE
HIGHEST OF TERMS
WHEN HE SPOKE
OF WRITING AS
THE GREATEST
INVENTION OF
MAN.

E.A. LOWE

The study of the history of handwriting may not have a direct effect on the examination and comparison of handwriting. However, if a forensic document examiner was asked, "Who is Ludovico degli Arrighi aka Vicentino?" it is not likely that there would be an immediate and confident answer. Who is Vicentino? A secretary to the papal offices in Rome who contributed significantly to the development of our current handwriting styles.

During the SWAFDE 2001 Spring Seminar in Monterey, California all participants were asked to take part in a contest to write a synopsis on why it is necessary or unnecessary for a forensic document examiner to have knowledge of the history of handwriting. The winner of the contest was Floyd Whiting, and the following is his hastily composed but very thoughtful response:

"If a person purports to be an expert in a discipline, it is expected that he would have a comprehensive knowledge of the information pertinent to that discipline. Not only does such knowledge enhance the perception that the person truly understands his subject matter, but it also assists him in countering any attempt to discredit his professionalism. In the field of QD examinations we have to deal with defense attorneys who wish to undermine our presentations to the court. If we are able to show a deep understanding of the history of handwriting, it implies that we have spent considerable time dealing with our subject and thus most likely are highly skilled in other aspects, such as handwriting identification. If questions do arise during cross-examination, a rapid and accurate response quickly reveals the depth of our knowledge. Both the lawyer and the jury thus

gain more respect for the analysis, and the attorney generally backs away from his confrontation. In addition, one gains greater self-confidence when he knows he has a solid grasp of his subject."

WHAT IS ROCK ART?

With that said, we will now embark on the long road of the history of handwriting.

This guideline will only concentrate on the important stops along this long road, those that have influenced the development of the Roman (*Latin*) alphabet upon which the modern western European alphabets are founded.

Nearly 30,000 years B.C., stone-age humans decided to cover the walls of caves with hunting images. Was this the first attempt at writing?

Rock Art can be divided into two distinct categories: Petroglyphs and Pictographs.	
	A Petroglyph is a drawing on stone that is pecked, incised (carved), scratched or abraded, or a combination of these methods.
	A Pictograph is a painting on stone with natural pigments, the most common color being black. Sometimes red would be used and more rarely white, yellow, green and blue. Colors were primarily from mineral sources although the pigment binders may have been plant derived. Black was most often finely ground charcoal. Manganese dioxide and graphite were also used where available.
Reds and yellows were derived from Hematite also known as ocher or simply iron oxide (rust). Early man knew that by heating the yellow ocher (sometimes referred to as limonite), it would slowly change color, becoming increasingly more red allowing the artist to create any shade of yellow-red needed. White was most often kaolin clay. Chalk, calcium from sea shell ash and gypsum were also used as a white pigment. Blues and greens were primarily derived from different varieties of clay.	

The walls of the caves were covered with *Pictographs* and *Petroglyphs*

Definitions:

Pictograph: A painting on stone with natural pigments.

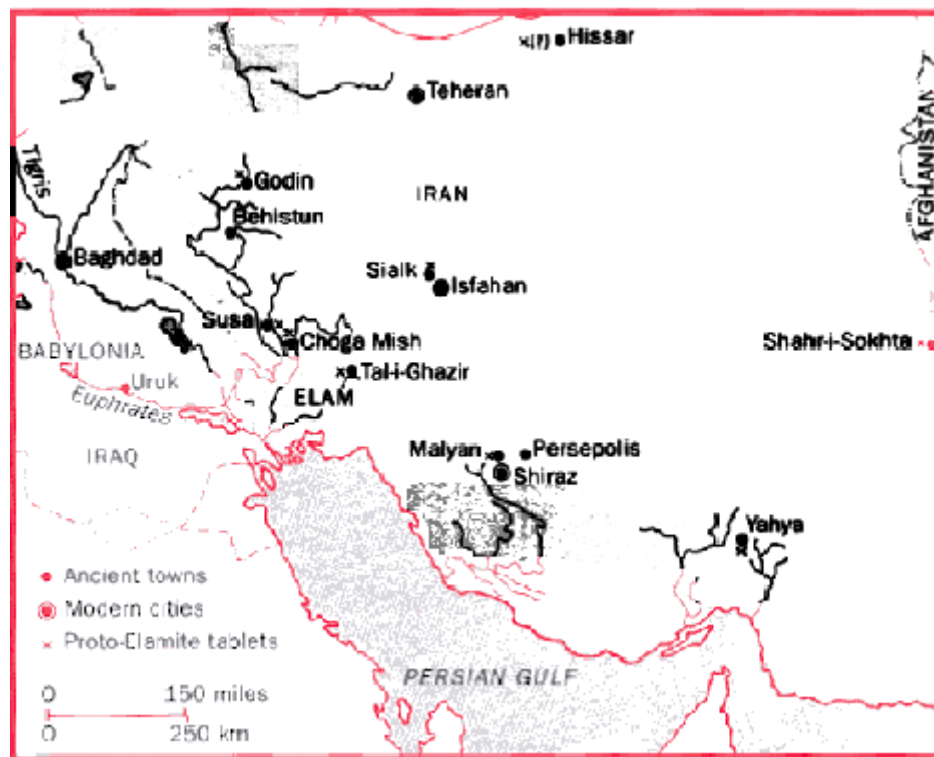
Petroglyph: A drawing on stone that is pecked, incised (carved), scratched or abraded.

CUNEIFORM

Definition: Latin: *Cuneus* (Wedge) and *Forma* (Shape).

Cuneiform is not a language or system of writing. It is a mode (method) of writing.

Cuneiform originate in Southern Mesopotamia in about 3300 B.C., and it was probably invented by the Sumerians. (*Mesopotamia is in modern-day Iraq*).



MESOPOTAMIA

Probably as many as thirteen different languages used cuneiform writing.

The earliest cuneiform inscriptions were composed of pictographs,

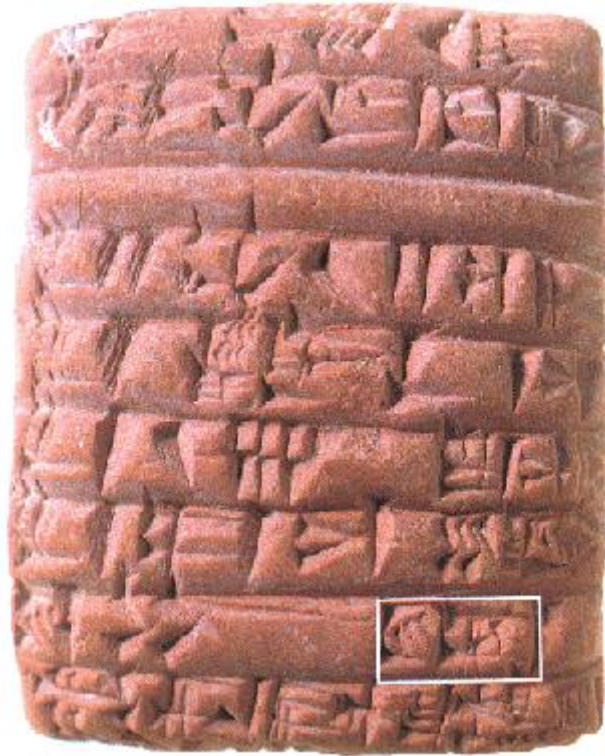
Later a fully developed Cuneiform system had more than 600 signs that could be used as symbols for words or as syllables.

Cuneiform was used for approximately 3,300 years. Our Roman (Latin) alphabet has been in use for approximately 2,500 years.

Cuneiform was mainly inscribed on soft clay with a wedge-shaped reed then baked in the hot desert sun or in ovens. However, it was also inscribed on stone, metals, wax, and other materials.

The last known cuneiform inscription was written in 75 AD.

CUNEIFORM TABLET FROM c. 2100 B.C.



HOW CUNEIFORM WAS WRITTEN WITH A REED STYLUS

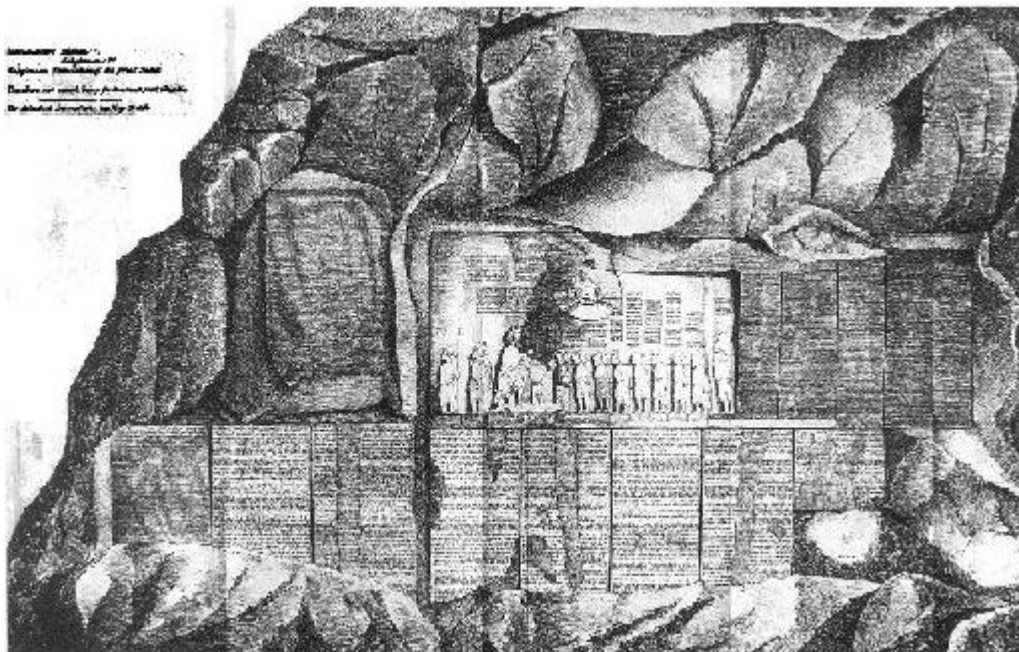


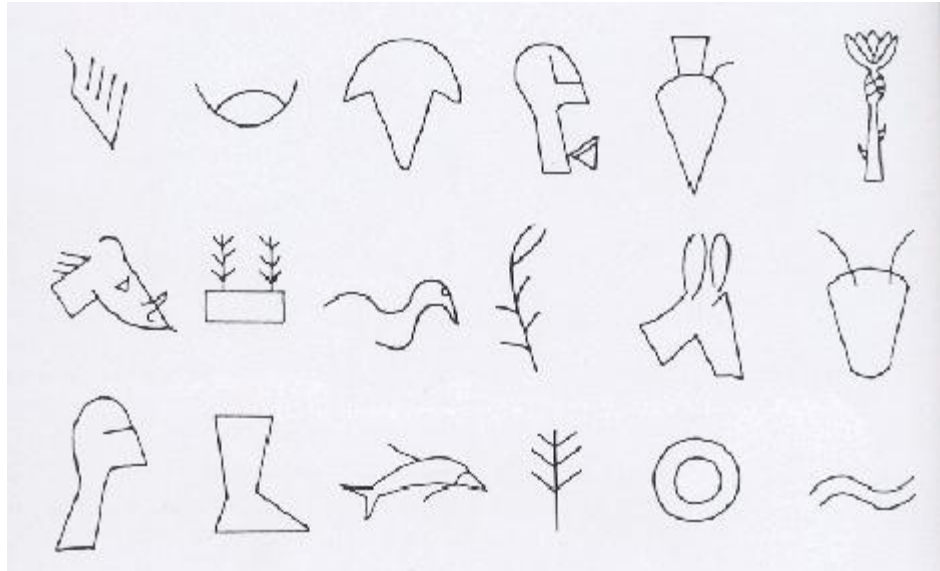
THE ROCK AT BEHISTUN

Massive Cuneiform inscriptions were cut into a cliff near the city of Behistun in Western Iran. Three scripts were used *Persian*, *Elamite* and *Babylonian*.

These inscriptions greatly assisted in the decipherment of Babylonian cuneiform. The Rock at Behistun has a similar value as the Rosetta Stone.

THE ROCK AT BEHISTUN DECIPHERMENT OF CUNEIFORM





SUMERIAN PICTOGRAMS FROM c. 3000 B.C.

HIEROGLYPHS

Definition: Greek: *Hieros* (Sacred) and *Glyphein* (Carving)

Developed around 3,000 B.C.

Represent recognizable objects. Ideograms and phonograms.

Ideograms represent a specific object or something closely related.

Phonograms were used for their phonetic value.

More than 750 individual signs were used for hieroglyphics.

A problem that both the Sumerians and the Egyptians experienced was the vast number of signs used for their methods of writing. It took ten years of training to become an Egyptian scribe, and the majority of the citizens could not read or write.

The Egyptians continued to use hieroglyphs for sacred writing, however, two writing styles followed the hieroglyphs; *Hieratic writing* and *Demotic writing*.

Definition: Hieratic: *Developed about 2,755 B.C. This was the cursive form of writing, as script is to printed letters. It was much quicker to write since the picture quality of the language was reduced to a pattern of lines and squiggles.*

Definition: Demotic: *This was a shorthand version of the hieratic script which was used during the late period. Demotic means "the peoples writing."*

The need for “*speed*” and “*legibility*” is what probably influenced the creation of the *alphabet*.

HIEROGLYPHICS



ROSETTA STONE

Until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, Egyptian hieroglyphs were a mystery, and could not be read. There were many who made contributions to the decipherment of the hieroglyphs, but it was Jean Francois Champollion (1790-1832) who in 1823 established the foundations on which present knowledge of the language of the ancient Egyptians is based, and he is rightly looked upon as the Father of the Decipherment of Hieroglyphs.

Discovered in 1799 by Napoleon’s soldiers.

Location: A small village in Egypt’s Western Delta called *Rashid*, better known to Europeans as *Rosetta*.

Size and Material: 2’ 3” wide and 3’ 9” high. Made of compact black basalt.

Text: A decree was drawn up in 196 B.C. that was written in three scripts: *Hieroglyphs, Demotic and Greek*.

Currently on display in the British Museum.

THE FIRST ALPHABET

Probably developed by the Phoenicians along the Eastern Mediterranean Coast between 1700 B.C. and 1500 B.C.

Transition: *Ideographic writing to phonetic writing*.

The Phoenician alphabet consisted of 22 letters.

THE ROUTE TO THE ROMAN (LATIN) ALPHABET

The Phoenician alphabet was adopted by the Greeks around 900 B.C.

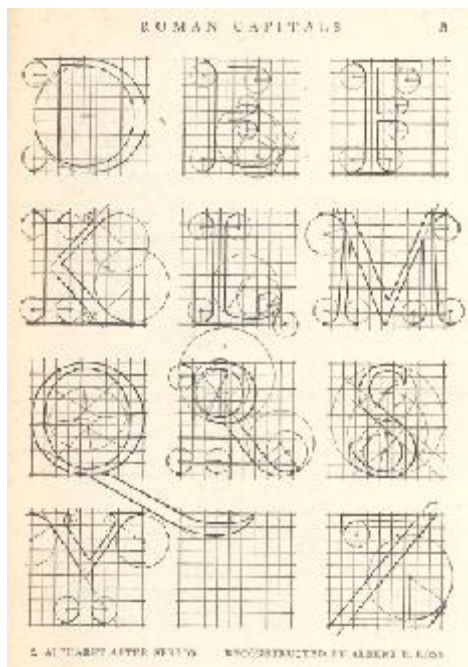
The Etruscans established themselves in Italy in around 850 B.C. and adopted the Greek alphabet.

The Greeks invented the modern alphabet with vowels around 800 B.C.

When the Romans conquered the Etruscans around 509 B.C., they adopted their alphabet and added several consonants. All the Western European scripts come from the Classical Latin alphabet. *(There are conflicting theories about the source of the Roman alphabet. Some scholars believe that a small community of Greeks settled in the area that became Rome, and they brought the alphabet with them).*

The *Lapis niger*, from the Roman Forum, the oldest known Latin inscription. Written in boustrophedon, a manner of writing which remained in use until the 4th century B.C.

ROMAN CAPITALS



Definition: Boustrophedon: *Greek. Turning like an OX while plowing.* An ancient method of writing in which the lines are inscribed alternately from right to left and from left to right.

Around 350 B.C. left to right writing became standard within the Roman Empire.

Around 200 B.C. serifs first appeared, and there was a significant improvement in base-line alignment of letters.

The majuscule alphabet was the original model from which all Roman letterforms are derived.

Definition: Majuscule: *An uppercase letter.*

Definition: Minuscule: *A lowercase letter.* Developed from uncial between the seventh and ninth centuries and used in medieval manuscripts. *(A second century Roman cursive did use several minuscule letters).*

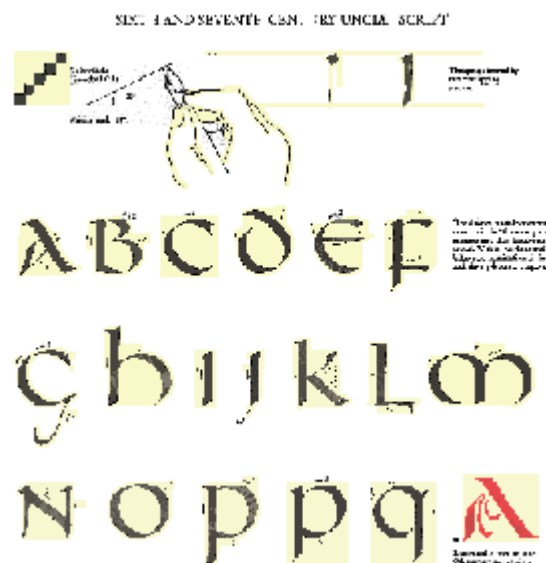
The Roman majuscule alphabet continued to undergo numerous subtle changes in its structure between the 1st and 4th centuries A.D., however, *Square capitals* and *Rustic capitals* were the most common scripts used.

Uncial writing was used by the Romans and Greeks from the 4th through the 8th century. *Uncial*: *half inch*, is a style of writing characterized by somewhat rounded capital letters which provided the model from which most of the modern Latin Alphabet capital letters are derived.

ROMAN UNCIAL



6TH AND 7TH CENTURY UNCIAL



With the increased use of the pen and paper for writing and the increase in the amount of writing itself, in books and documents and proclamations, professional scribes made their appearance in the Roman Empire. There were, of course, many people who could not write at all, and others who wrote very badly. When a person had a message to be written, he called a scribe to do it for him. Only capital letters were used with no spacing between words. Occasionally a dot was placed between words for separation.

ROMAN CAPITALS



Uncial Writing



Many of the Roman and Greek scribes used a form of shorthand called *tachygraphy*.

Wax Tablets were used throughout the Roman Empire

Definition: Paleography: The study of ancient inscriptions, which have very often been made on perishable materials such as papyrus, parchment, paper or wax.

Definition: Epigraphy: From Greek *epi* “on” and *graphein* “to write” is the branch of paleography which deals with inscriptions on hard surfaces such as stone, metal or bone.

WAX TABLETS “CODEX”

The Romans and Greeks used a method of keeping temporary records or just writing messages by writing on wax tablets with a stylus. The wax was usually poured into a wooden frame, and then the frames were connected together which formed a *diptych*, which evolved into a *codex*, then to our current *book*.

The stylus has a sharp point on one end for writing on wax, and a flat chisel form on the other end to smooth out (*erase*) the written material when it is not needed any longer.

Definition of *Diptych*: An ancient writing tablet having two leaves hinged together.

PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY METHODS OF RECORDING INFORMATION

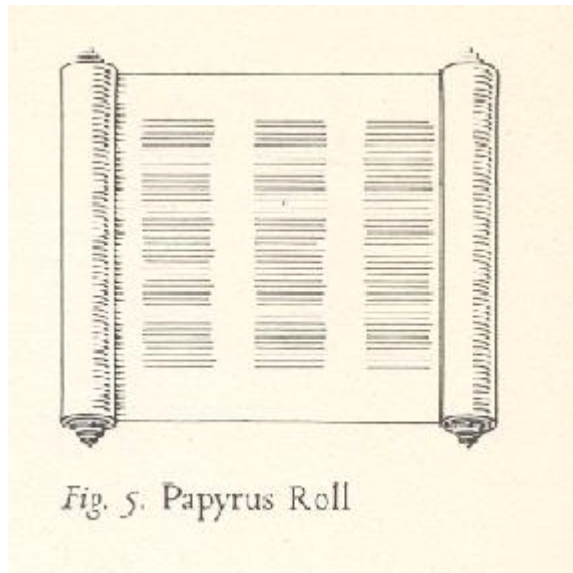
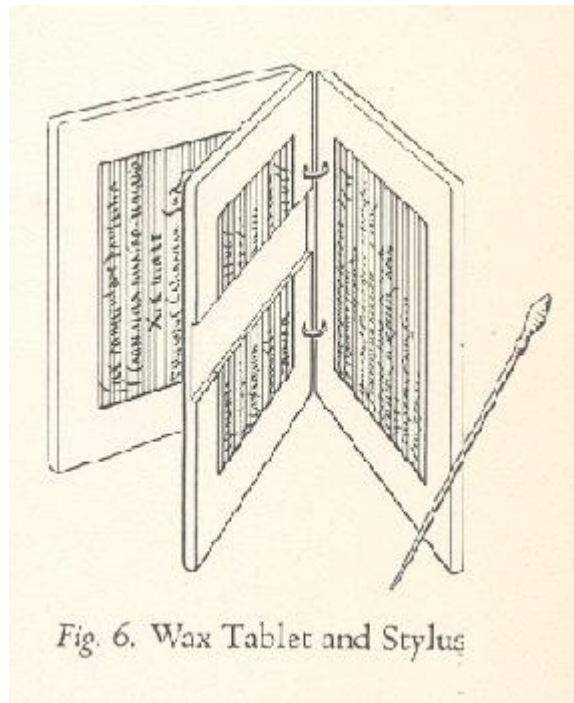


Fig. 5. Papyrus Roll



PAPYRUS

Egyptians began making it about 2000 B.C.

It is a variety of reed that grows up to ten feet high on the banks of large rivers and lakes around the Mediterranean basin.

It was used because of its availability and durability.

MAKING PAPYRUS

A SIMPLE METHOD OF MAKING PAPYRUS



1. The stalk of the reed is thinly sliced and then laid out crisscross fashion on a flat stone.

2. The slices are then covered with a protective cloth and beaten with a wooden mallet for about an hour until the individual strips begin to bind together with the aid of the sap to form a continuous sheet.

3. The sheet is then polished using a smooth round stone and its uneven edges are cut off.

4. Individual sheets can be joined together to form a scroll.

5. Some scrolls reached a length of 30 meters.

Papyrus was almost universally used up until the 3rd century A.D., at which time it began to be replaced by parchment.

The Catholic Church used papyrus for the production of important documents until the 11th century.

Papyrus is still produced in small quantities and can be obtained through several specialized merchants.

PARCHMENT

Made from animal skins such as *sheep and goat*.

VELLUM: Is a refined form of parchment usually made from the skin of a *stillborn calf* or from the stomach of *sheep, ram or goat*.

First used widely around the 2nd century B.C., but probably used prior to papyrus.

While the process to produce papyrus is quite simple. The process to produce

parchment/vellum is a long tedious process.

1. The skin is first trimmed and disinfected by leaving it to steep in limewater.
2. It is then tanned and scraped to remove hairs before being stretched on a rectangular frame.
3. The skin is then finished off and powdered with pounce, a powdered chalk which keeps the ink from being absorbed too quickly.

(pounce is still used by calligraphers today on very absorbent papers to keep the ink from bleeding into the paper fiber).

4. The skins are then finished by polishing with a pumice stone and cut to required size.

When the scribe made a mistake he had to scrape the ink off the parchment/vellum.

Parchment/vellum is still produced in very small quantities in the USA and Europe.

PAPER

Probably invented in China in the early years of the 2nd century A.D.

Probably invented by a Chinese official of the court of the Han Dynasty by the name of Tsai Lun.

The first paper was made from vegetable matter such as bamboo, hemp and cotton.

The process was kept a secret until about 751 A.D. when the Arabs forced Chinese prisoners to turn over the formula.

Paper began to be produced in Europe around 1250 A.D.

Around 1400 A.D. paper makers adopted the habit of putting watermarks in their paper in the form of letters, monograms and drawing of flowers or animals in order to indicate their origin.

Once the formula for papermaking became common knowledge the main difference between Chinese and Western methods of paper making was in the composition of the pulp. The Chinese used mulberry and bamboo rather than hemp and linen rags used in the West.

SOME OF THE FIRST WRITING INSTRUMENTS

Burin: A steel cutting tool with a sharp beveled point, used in engraving or carving stone.

Stylus: For writing on wax tablets, marking or engraving.

Reed Pen: The reed pen was used throughout the ancient world, especially by river based, agrarian cultures such as flourished on the fertile banks of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and it continued to be used until replaced by the quill around the 5th century A.D.

(Note: The reed pen is still commonly used today by modern day calligraphers).



STYLI MADE OF LEAD, BRONZE AND COPPER



THE REED PEN

THE FEATHER QUILL

Quill Pen: Quill pens are commonly made from the penna, or large flight feathers of geese. (Swan, turkey, pelican, pheasant, eagle, peacock and crow feathers were also used).

Crow quills were used for fine detailed writing (*micro-calligraphy*); thus, the modern day *metal crowquill nib* is also used for fine writing detail. Nobody knows when this type of pen was first used; though the British Museum possesses ancient Egyptian paintings showing scribes writing with quills.

The penknife is usually not mentioned, however, individuals who used a quill or reed pen had to have a penknife always handy for the initial cut of the instrument or to re-cut or sharpen the writing instrument. Along with the reed and the quill, the penknife is one of the scribes essential tools. The penknife also became a status symbol by being decorated with gold and jewels.

Primitive Pencil: A lump of lead or charcoal was used as a primitive pencil, but the bulkiness of the lump would make fine or detailed writing very difficult. Thus, the lead was shaped to a fine



stylus form with a pointed tip. For pencils the Romans used lead and silverpoint styluses.

What has come to be known as a pencil was named because it resembled the brush known in Latin as a “penicillum.” This fine pointed instrument, which was formed by inserting a carefully shaped tuft of animal hairs into a hollow reed, much as a piece of lead is inserted into a mechanical pencil today. *Peniculus* is a diminutive form of the word “*penis*,” which is Latin for tail. The word was used for the very first fine brushes because they were actually formed from the tails of animals. Thus, a pencil is literally a “*little tail*,” which can be used for writing or drawing fine lines.

IRISH HALF UNCIAL

Writing Brushes: The first Chinese pointed brushes for writing appeared around 259 – 210 B.C. However, letters painted in black ink have been found on pottery dating back to 1500 B.C., which would indicate that brushes made from hair were probably in use at a much earlier date than traditionally attributed.

METAL NIBS

Metal Pens: Are not a recent invention for they were known to scribes from the earliest times. Actually, a copper-nibbed pen was discovered among the treasures of the Pharaoh Ramses II who reigned in the 13th century B.C.

The Romans also used such pens with great skill. A bronze pen in the shape of a goose quill was found in Pompeii. Metal pens were not widely used however until the 19th century; an Englishman by the name of John Mitchell patented the first steel-nibbed pen in 1822.

Eight years later the metal pen making industry was founded in Birmingham by Joseph Gillott. Currently Mitchell and Gillott metal nibs are still being used by calligraphers.



SAINT PATRICK AND THE HALF-UNCIALS



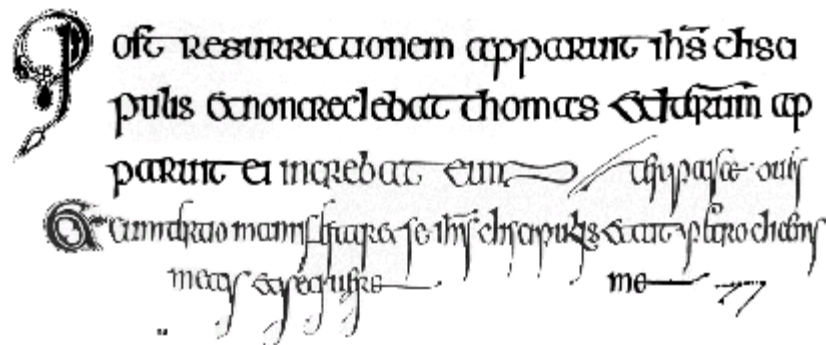
In 432 A.D. Saint Patrick laid his foundations so well in Ireland that in the following centuries his once pagan country became one of the seats of learning for Europe.

Perhaps the most important thing he taught the Irish was to write with Roman letters. By his time not only were *Square* capitals and *Rustic* capitals well developed, but the ever increasing amount of writing and the need for *speed* had started still another style of writing, the *semi-uncials* (*half uncials*). The *semi-uncials* like all other letters were given a certain national character by the people who used them. The Irish scribes made the most

of the semi-uncials and developed them into the most beautiful manuscript hand that has ever been seen. This Irish style of writing was so delicate and so highly finished that it became the most famous of all the semi-uncials.

BOOK OF KELLS

The *Book of Kells*, which is called by most experts the handsomest manuscript ever written, was written during the seventh century in a monastery at Kells in County Meath, Ireland. It is available for public viewing at Trinity College, Dublin.



THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN HANDWRITING “CAROLINGIAN MINISCULE”

CHARLEMAGNE (*Charles the Great*) 742 – 814

The Dark Ages did not permit the development of the arts of civilization.

Charlemagne was intent on restoring learning, and he set up schools in various parts of his empire and encouraged artists and men of learning.

In 781 Charlemagne invited to his court a famous English scholar from York named Alcuin.

In 796 Alcuin, encouraged by Charlemagne, started a school at the Abbey of Saint Martin's at Tours, which became the most renowned school in Europe.

Alcuin set out to teach his scribes to write as fine and readable a hand as possible. He taught them a modified form of the semiuncials (*half uncials*) that were used by the Irish monks. Based on this form, a new style of writing which Alcuin developed at Tours "*Carolingian Miniscule*" was to spread throughout Europe and become the original small lowercase letters as we know them today. The "*Carolingian Miniscule*" letters were not only different in size than the capital *Majuscule* letter, but also different in form.

Alcuin established the usage of capitals at the head of paragraphs and sentences.

Alcuin was the first to systematize the punctuation of manuscripts and the division into sentences and paragraphs.

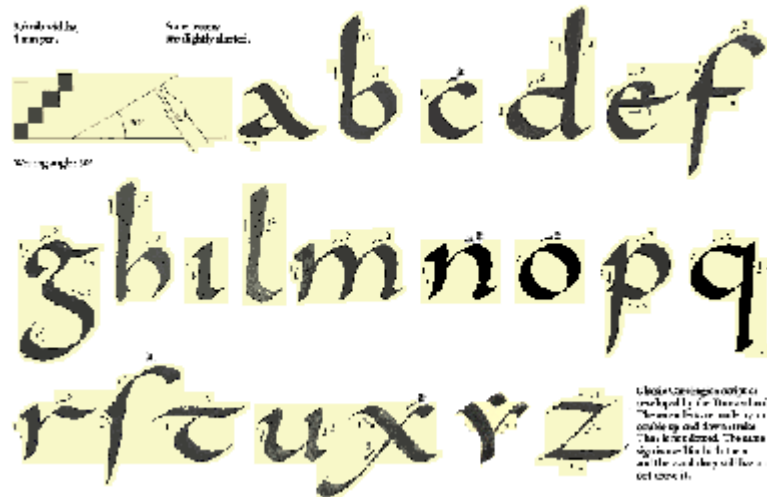
Scriptoriums were created in monasteries where calligraphy could be mass-produced in somewhat comfortable conditions.

The "*Carolingian Script*" of the tenth and eleventh centuries later served as one of the models for modern type.

Note: Charlemagne, who the "Carolingian Script" was named after, could read and speak Latin and Greek in addition to his own language, but he could not write.

CAROLINGIAN MINUSCULE

THE CAROLINGIAN MINUSCULE



Note: Calligraphy is not a system of writing. It simply means Beautiful Writing.

Definition of Kalli: Beautiful

Graphia: Writing.

THE GRADUAL CHANGE

It was natural, however, that the widespread use of the “*Carolingian Script*” in many parts of the empire and by many scribes with different training would cause changes in the character of the script, some slight, some very great. By the end of the Middle Ages a whole new group of national hands developed just as they developed at the end of the Roman period. Only two of these national styles *Gothic & Italic* need concern the forensic document examiner.

GOTHIC

During the Late Middle Ages the Monks were the few privileged who could read and write. The script they primarily used was Gothic. The development of Gothic scripts from the Carolingian writing was a natural process. Carolingian writing was replaced in succession by the late Carolingian style, primitive Gothic and, finally fully-fledged Gothic.

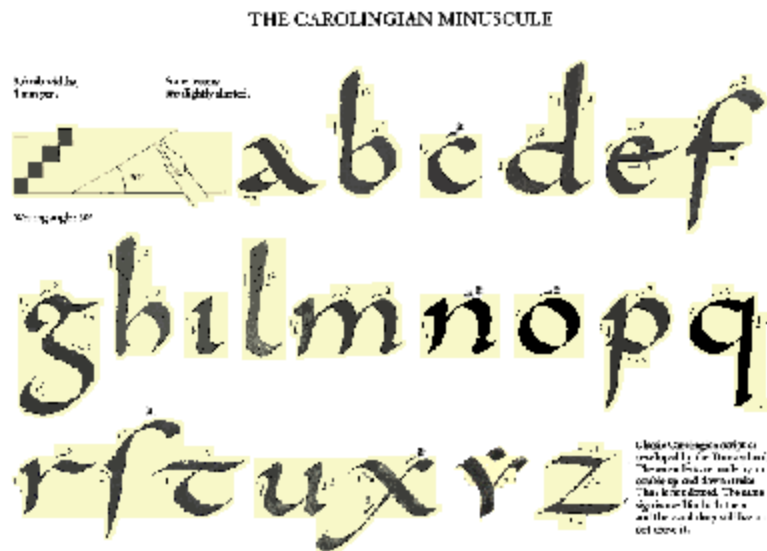
14TH CENTURY GOTHIC

Gothic became a distinct style in the twelfth century.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it swept over nearly all of Northern Europe and drove out almost all other styles of writing.

The first printers modeled their types upon the Gothic style.

There are numerous styles of Gothic script, and the following are the principal types used:



THE GOTHIC SCRIPT

et de hinc ad: et secundum aplm
qui huiusmodi sunt sermone
esse non possunt. **R**ursus in li
bro hestet alphabetum ex nu
mero usque ad theta latinum feci
m" cuius in locis: volentes
scilicet septuaginta in ipso
ordine per hoc insinuate stu
dioso lectori. **H**os nu uirt a
more heteru: ordine psequi
entia in septuaginta editione
malum? **Grubrit vltimis**

FRAKTUR SCRIPT



**FIRST PRINTED WRITING BOOK PRODUCED
IN 1522 CHANCERY SCRIPT FROM FIRST
WRITING BOOK**

CHANCERY SCRIPT (CANCELLARESCA) (ITALIC)

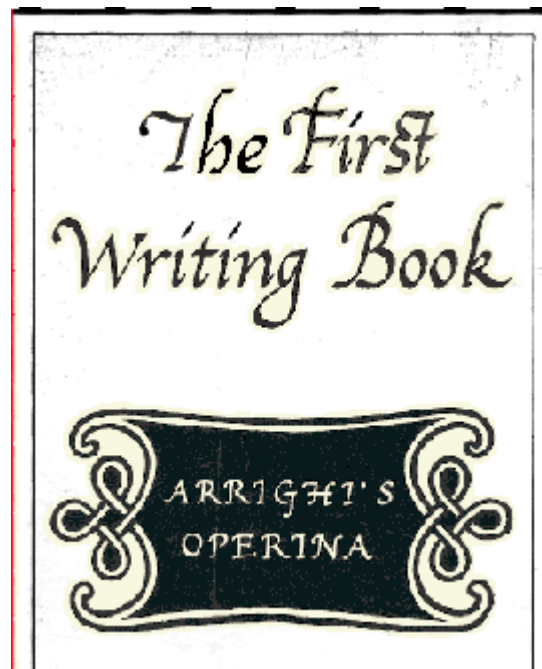
Italic, a slanted letter, became very popular throughout Europe after the introduction of printing, principally because it was made into a type by the Venetian printer, Aldus.

Our everyday writing styles, regardless of what type of writing instrument used, remain the direct descendants of chancery script. Italic is a style of writing or printed type that is patterned on a Renaissance Chancery script with letters slanting to the right.

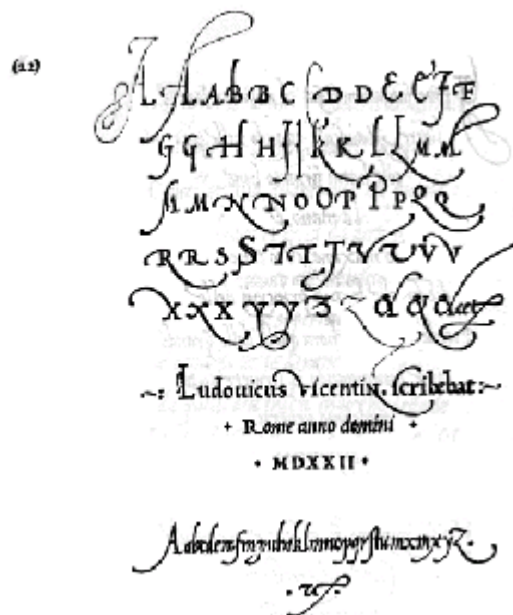
Chancery cursive was used in the Chancery office of the Catholic Church, and it was written more rapidly than the Gothic hand used for formal documents. Italian writing books of the first half of the 16th century, notably those of Arrighi, Tagliente, and Palatino, supply us with printed examples of the Chancery letter.



Of these the 1522 *Operina of Arrighi aka Vicentino* is considered by many today to be the finest and first formalized of all writing books as well as the first to be printed.



FIRST PRINTED WRITING BOOK PRODUCED IN 1522

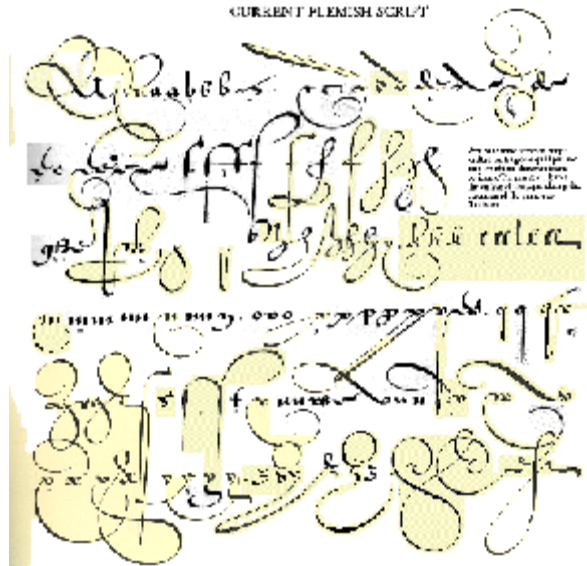


CHANCERY SCRIPT FROM FIRST WRITING BOOK

16th & 17th CENTURY FLEMISH WRITING MASTERS

FLEMISH SCRIPT

CURRENT FLEMISH SCRIPT



One of the writing styles that was commonly used by the Flemish Writing Masters was *Ronde* which can be rapidly executed because its letters can be joined together continuously without pen lifts. This style of writing set the pattern for English Round Hand and Spencerian.

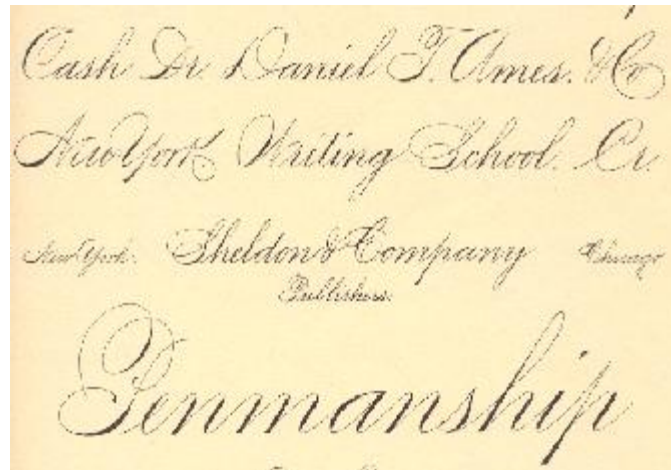
In addition, it created a style of flourishing that was adopted by America's Master Penmen of the Golden Age of Ornamental Penmanship, 1850 – 1925.

The finest Flemish penman, Jan Van den Velde who was born in Antwerp in 1569 published nine books on the subject of calligraphy.

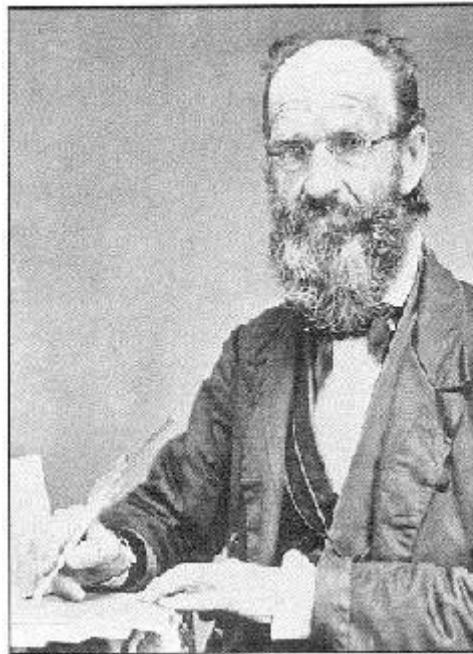
COPPERPLATE

A cursive style of Cancellaresca became the basis for a manual printed by C.A. Hercolani in 1574. His use of copper plates for printing, instead of wood blocks, allowed more delicate lines for the ascenders and descenders of the letterforms. Between 1680 and 1700, Colonel John Ayers of London worked on a merging of the Cancellaresca hand and the Secretarie hand. He introduced a cursive slant to the right and gave delicate loops to the ascenders and descenders. This style became known as copperplate, which is basically an English Round Hand style.

ENGLISH ROUND HAND



**THE SPENCERIAN SYSTEM OF HANDWRITING
PLATT ROGERS SPENCER**



**Platt R.
Spencer
1800–1864**

The early American handwriting manuals were derived from their English models, and in Boston in 1791 John Jenkins published one of the first widely accepted American copybooks for an original handwriting teaching system, which was based on a contemporary English Round Hand. However, the earliest copybook published in America was printed in Philadelphia in 1748. It was called the *American Instructor or Young Man's Best Companion*, which was also based on a contemporary English Round Hand.

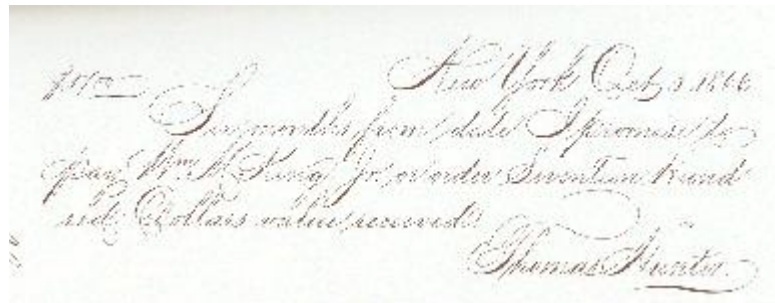


In North America there were a number of writing schools and penmanship books by 1830, but no single method had established itself as the accepted American standard for learning penmanship until the Spencerian script. Platt Rogers Spencer (1800 – 1864) developed the Spencerian System of Penmanship. His system of handwriting became very popular by 1830, and by the early 1860's, Spencer had written several books on penmanship, and his system of handwriting became the standard used throughout the United States. This was

the major system taught in the United States until 1890.

PROMISSORY NOTE WRITTEN IN SPENCERIAN

The Spencerian system proved to be very difficult for the general population to learn, and at times very difficult to read. Therefore, A.N. Palmer developed a simplified system based upon Spencerian that improved speed and legibility.



The Palmer Business Hand was adopted by New York City in 1905 and soon spread across the country.

OBLIQUE PEN HOLDER

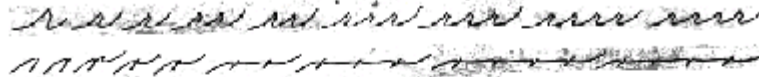
SPENCERIAN Oblique Pen Holder and No. 1 Pen

For careful writers and expert penmen
One Holder and Five No. 1 College Spencerian Pens, sent by
mail on receipt of 10 cents.
Spencerian Pen Co., 349 Broadway, New York

Since the Palmer Business Hand was developed there have been approximately 76 new handwriting systems developed throughout North America, however, many of them have not significantly departed from the basic teaching methods of Palmer. Today, it is quite unlikely that the handwriting of an individual can be positively associated with a particular system.

44

LESSON 37 Drill 40



The small 'r' given in the first line in drill forty cannot be made at a high rate of speed, as the form requires a checking of movement at the top to form the shoulder. Study the parts of the letter shown below the first completed form.

The 'r's in the second line can be made at much higher speed, and, while somewhat different in form, as much easier in execution when mastered. The first part of it is just like the first part of small 'r' or 'a'. The downward stroke is reduced to a point about one-fourth of a space above the first part; a stop (lightly marked by) and a dot are made before the

bringing curve to the top letter. If the oblique line between letters of this style are made with too much under-curve, perhaps seeming to have line they will cause nearly resemble small 'r' than 'r'. Guard against this fault.

Close study of the form while practicing will be necessary. After its mastery, many connected letters to the minute will be a good deal of speed. Unquestionably, the first few trials will be discouraging, as brilliant practice will be required. Stick to it.

Practice groups of five should be made in the minute.

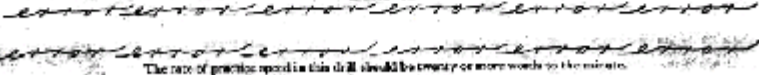
Drill 41



The count for this small 'r' in drill forty-one for each group of five, is 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10; or one-dot, two-dot, three-dot, four-dot, five-dot; or one-stop, two-stop, three-stop, four-stop, five-stop. A conventional count similar to that in small 'r' drill eleven, may be used

to advantage in small 'r', thus—You-stop, you-stop, you-stop, you-stop, you-stop. How long, as you stop, at the top? Not long, but stop, every time at the top. What for, what for, what for? To make a dot, to make a dot, to make a dot, etc.

Drill 42



The rate of practice speed in this drill should be twenty or more words to the minute.

PALMER METHOD SPEED "R"



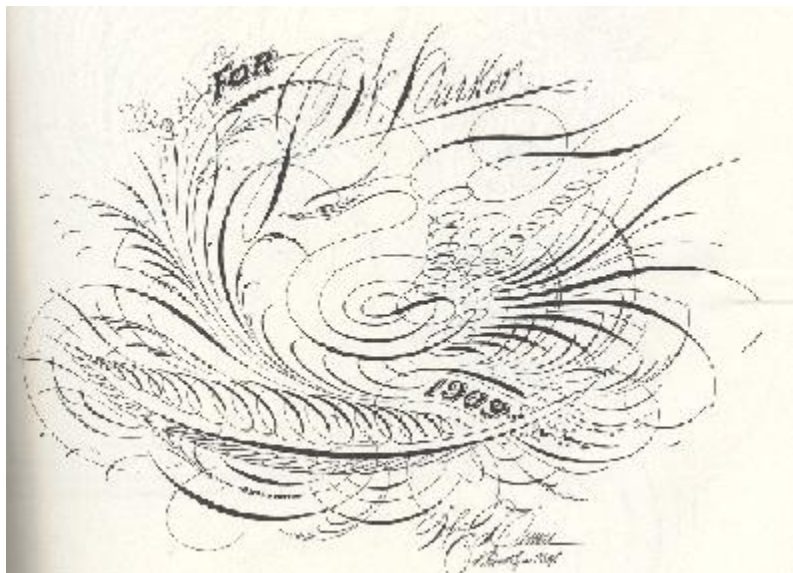
VERTICAL WRITING

PROFESSORS OF PENMANSHIP

The golden Age of Ornamental Penmanship in the United States is an era that lasted from approximately 1850 to 1925. There were a number of professions that made great use of penmanship. As in all fields of endeavor, different styles of handwriting were developed to perform a variety of functions.

Business colleges featured handwriting courses that covered a variety of handwriting styles that were taught by Professors of Penmanship.

These Professors of Penmanship preferred to be referred to as Master Penmen rather than Calligraphers.



Many of the master penmen (*chirographers*) and professors of penmanship made a natural transition into the field of handwriting identification because Bank Investigators, Attorneys and Police Officers usually had nowhere else to go, other than to the handwriting department of business colleges, when they had a disputed handwriting problem.

FRANCIS B. COURTNEY'S

METHOD of

Detecting Forgery and Raised Checks

by George Graham, and John Thomson, a Holograph Expert

Expert Examiners of Forged and Unsigned Holographs

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS: The Book Concern, 1894

REPRINTED FROM THE
HALL AND ELLIOTT'S THE FORGERY AND RAISED CHECKS
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HALL AND ELLIOTT'S THE FORGERY AND RAISED CHECKS

Some of the charter members of the ASQDE were master penman and professors of handwriting, but at least two of the charter members *Scott F. Leslie* and *Herbert J. Walter* are in the Master Penman's Hall of Fame. Another notable document examiner by the name of Daniel T. Ames is also in the Master Penman's Hall of Fame.

Officers

Members

Albert D. Osborn, Herbert J. Walter, Harry E. Cassidy, Edwin H. Fearon, Scott E. Leslie,

Rafael F. Ruenes, John L. Harris, George B. Walter, Elwin C. Leslie, George J. Lacy, Warren T. Johnson.

WRITING HAS PROGRESSED INTO AN ART FORM



BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED



If you forget everything that you just read, here is a simple time line to remember:

Cave Painting – Sumerian Cuneiform – Egyptian

Hieroglyphics – Phoenician Alphabet – Greek Alphabet – Etruscan Alphabet –

Roman Alphabet – Carolingian Minuscules – Gothic Script – Italic Script –

Copperplate – Calligraphy – Modern Writing.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The Evolution of Uncial Text in Greek

<http://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/UncialScript.html>

Contents: Introduction * Table of Scripts Used in Various Uncials * Easily Confused Uncials (Greek and Latin) * Appendix: The Evolution of Writing Styles

Introduction

In describing the script used Greek manuscripts, we speak of "uncial" and "minuscule" writing. But neither of these forms are fixed; both evolved over time. (Fortunately for us, else paleographers would have very little evidence to work with.) Indeed, late uncials show many features of the minuscule script, and many minuscules use uncial forms of at least certain letters.

The table below shows how uncials evolved over the centuries. Note how the clear, simple forms of early centuries could give way to very crabbed, difficult styles toward the end of the uncial era.

Note: Most uncials are rather small -- rarely more than a centimetre tall, and often much less. This means that it is difficult to reproduce them accurately on a computer screen. Although I worked hard to get reasonably clean scans (often enlarging the lettering for clarity), one should not consider the images below authoritative. For detailed paleographic work, refer to a manual on the subject.

The table below generally shows the most typical hand used for each manuscript -- e.g. the chart for Sinaiticus shows the hand of scribe A, who wrote all but a handful of the leaves of the New Testament.

Table of Scripts Used in Various Uncials

Letter	Rosetta Stone	As Found In:									
		P ⁶⁶	Σ	Β	Α	D ^{ea}	Ν	Λ ^e	Ε ^e	Θ	Σ
A	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α	Α
B	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β	Β
Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ	Γ
Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
E	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε	Ε
Z		Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ
H	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η	Η
Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ	Θ
I	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι	Ι
K	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ
Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ	Λ
M	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ	Μ
N	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν
Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ	Ξ
O	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο
Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π
Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ	Ρ
Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ	Σ
T	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ
Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ	Υ
Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ	Φ
Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ
Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ	Ψ
Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω	Ω

Description of Manuscripts in the Above Table

- **The Rosetta Stone.** Inscription from 196 B.C.E. (Included for comparison. Note that this is not written in an uncial script but in an engraved style. This is particularly evident in the forms used for sigma and xi.)
- **P⁶⁶.** Probably the oldest substantial New Testament papyrus, dating to the second century. Written in a good calligraphic hand of that period.
- **Codex Sinaiticus.** Fourth century. One of several hands used in this manuscript. Lettering shown about 30% larger than actual size.
- **Codex Vaticanus.** Fourth century. Recall that this manuscript, written in very small, neat uncials, was retraced by a later scribe, resulting in some minor changes in the letterforms and in a much coarser appearance. Lettering shown about 50% larger than actual size.
- **Codex Alexandrinus.** Fifth century. Note that the letterforms are slightly more elaborate than those in the early manuscripts. Lettering shown about 30% larger than actual size.

- Codex **Bezae**. Fifth or sixth century. Greek/Latin diglot, with the lettering styles of the Greek and Latin sides partially conformed to each other, resulting in a script with few outside parallels. Lettering shown about 20% larger than actual size.
- Codex **Petropolitanus** (N/022). Sixth century. Written in large silver uncials (with some gold) on purple parchment. This is, in terms of style, perhaps the ideal uncial. Lettering shown about 30% *smaller* than actual size.
- Codex **Regius** (L/019). Eighth century. Written by a scribe whose familiarity with Greek was perhaps somewhat limited. Even so, it illustrates well the increasing complexity which by this time was affecting the uncial style -- a complexity which is found in most manuscripts of this era, and which reached its height in the "Slavic" style seen, e.g., in S/028. Lettering shown about 30% larger than actual size.
- Codex **Basiliensis** (E/07). Eighth century. Lettering shown about 30% larger than actual size.
- **Koridethi** Codex (Θ/038). Usually believed to date from about the ninth century, although this is uncertain as no similar script style has ever been found. It is believed that the scribe (perhaps a Georgian) did not know Greek well, and may even have been drawing imitations of the letterforms rather than reading and copying. The size of the letters varies widely (the sizes shown here seem to be fairly typical). Due to the state of the parchment it has been difficult to obtain a good scans, particularly of unusual letters such as Z.
- Codex **S** (028). One of the very last uncial manuscripts written, and the only uncial to carry a date (March 5, 949). A clear example of the exaggerated, thick-and-thin "Slavic" style. The effort required to write in this style may have contributed to the abandonment of uncial writing. Lettering shown is about 10% *smaller* than actual size.

Note: *The above examples are intended to be printed at 72-75 dpi resolution, and the figures for sizes are based on that number.*

Easily Confused Uncials (Greek and Latin)

As in most scripts, certain letters are easily confused in Greek uncials, and can sometimes give rise to errors. Some such examples are shown below (though each particular style of uncial will have its own examples), with the uncial form on the left and the modern form on the right:

λ Δ λ	Α Δ Λ
Ε Θ Ο C	Ε Θ Ο Σ
ΙC K	ΙΣ K
Γ T	Γ T
Η H Π T TT	Η H Π T TT
Μ ΛΛ	Μ ΛΛ

In Latin, the following uncials are frequently confused (note that E, like the Greek epsilon, was written in rounded form as an uncial):

I L T
F P R

Appendix: The Evolution of Writing Styles

To understand the letterforms of a particular language, it is necessary to know the characteristics of the material it was written on. We noted above, for instance, the difference between the letterforms carved on the Rosetta Stone and the uncial script of the same general period: The engraved letterforms use almost entirely straight strokes.

Nonetheless it is clear that the Greek alphabet is originally a written (as opposed to a carved or inscribed) alphabet. This is in contrast to, for instance, the German runic alphabet, designed for inscriptions; its every stroke is straight.

Even more curious are the letterforms used in the Indian Ocean region (Sri Lanka, Burma). Books in those areas were written on palm leaves which had been cut to size and smoothed. Letters were inscribed with a stylus, and then (in at least some cases) inked.

Because the palm leaves were fragile and had a distinct grain, it was not possible, in the case of these writings, to use a horizontal stroke. Such a stroke would inevitably split the grain of the palm leaf, ruining the writing surface.

I have read that portions of the Quran were written on palm leaves also. But these portions were actually *written*, not inscribed, so the matter of stroke directions is somewhat less significant.

Other odd writing materials would have other effects. Certain important classical documents, e.g., were written on linen or woven cloth. Such cloth may not have a grain, but if it does, it will usually be easier to write horizontal and vertical strokes. And curves would be difficult on any woven material.

Cuneiform writing was not restricted so much by the writing material (clay will accept strokes in any direction) as by the stylus used to write it. You could, theoretically, draw almost anything in such a system, but it will be much slower.

All of these constraints have affected writing at one time or another. Imagine trying to inscribe the myriad symbols of Chinese writing in stone! The Chinese ideographic alphabet is possible only on surfaces which make writing possible. Surfaces which make writing difficult but make different strokes possible, on the other hand, encourage syllabaries, which use fewer strokes than alphabetic systems though they are somewhat harder to learn.

These concerns are not entirely trivial for students of New Testament writing and paleography. Papyrus was not as fragile as palm leaf, but it did have a very definite grain. This seems to be one reason why the codex was not popular for classical writings. A papyrus sheet consisted of two sets of strips pasted together. For reasons of strength, one set of strips would be set vertically, the other horizontally -- as a toy house today might be made with a double set of popsicle sticks, one half running vertically, the other horizontally. It was easy enough to write on

the horizontal side -- indeed, that side of the sheet would not even need to be ruled. The vertical side was another matter. There were, of course, seams between the reeds of the vertical side; writing on these seams was difficult, but avoiding them was also problematic.

The roughness of the papyrus also had the effect of encouraging straight strokes. This was much less of a concern on vellum, which was nearly smooth and did not hinder curved strokes.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

DATING THE GOSPELS (William R. Bragstad)

<http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/bragstadoriginofthegospels.pdf>

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

Volume 58: Number 4

OCTOBER 1994

The Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary	
(January 1995)	241
The Biblical View of Worship	
John W. Kleinig	245
The Contribution of the Reformation to Preaching	
Carl C. Fickenscher I1	255
The Origin of the Gospels	
William R. Bragstad	283
Theological Observer	295
Book Reviews.....	303

The Origin of the Gospels

William R. Bragstad

When the author attended college some years ago, he was taught a theory of the formulation of the writings of the New Testament which may be summarized as follows: St. Paul's writings were doubtless the earliest of Christian documents, as he does not mention the gospels or even hint of their existence. Thus, Paul must have learned of the life and minisby of Christ from the preaching of Jesus' followers, and not from the written word. Instead, the gospels were formed like any folk tradition, having crystallized in the Christian community over a period of decades into pre-gospel and gospel-forms.

The reason for this lengthy period of story-telling (in some cases, thirty years or more) was twofold: (1.) Since the end of the age, the *parousia*, was expected to come soon, there seemed little point in making permanent records of the words and actions of Jesus. (2.) In those times, few people could read or write. Thus, the most effective method of preserving the recollection of Christ in the early church was by "word of mouth." For decades this theory or a later refinement has been given something close to biblical authority. Volume after volume has been published, schools of criticism have developed, and the New Testament has been scrutinized, dated, and understood-all on the foundation of this underlying assumption.

In recent years, however, the author has come to question this theory, for several reasons. First of all, it seems unlikely that the tradition surrounding the life, ministry, and person of Jesus could have "crystallized like any folk tradition." Such a process may certainly have been the case if Christianity had, in some way, idealized the past through its preaching. But if the core of the Christian message was really the reflection of God's unique revelation in history, that is to say, if something really happened outside the normal flow of human events (Mark 2:12b), then it stands to reason that the gospels did not arise in this leisurely manner, by virtue of the profound excitement at what had occurred. Secondly, while the end of the age was expected to come soon, the ancient church would have felt called to greater evangelical activity instead of less. As Jesus states in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Or as St. Paul states in Colossians 1:23, ". . . the gospel which you heard. . . *has been preached* to every creature under heaven" Such an enormous undertaking must have relied on the written word, as did the Jewish synagogue. Thus, the theory of an "oral stage" lasting for several decades is clearly inadequate. In the years following the resurrection the church must have been busy with its major task of evangelizing the world prior to the coming of the new age or, for that matter, prior to the personal death of anyone who could be saved through the gospel. Documents must have been necessary for this work, not only for letters and epistles, but for preaching as well, as will be explained below.

Thirdly, the notion that few people could read or write in this period of the history of the church is doubtful. The lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea-with Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, and Alexandria-represented the quintessence of the civilized world. For many centuries writing had been used not only in academic work and documentation, but also in the conducting of daily business (as appears from the archaeological discoveries at Oxyrhynchus). In the Old Testament writing is mentioned from the time of Moses, pen and ink from the time of Jeremiah.

In addition, for the Hebrew community, God's revelation through the law meant that, from the time of Moses on, reading and writing would attain an important place in the life of the religious community. The New Testament also bears witness to the abundance of letters being written and the number of people, even common people, who possessed the ability to read and write. Examples include Peter, once employed as a fisherman (2 Peter 3:1), and Jesus, who was once a carpenter (Luke 4:16; John 8:6, 8). When Zechariah asks for a "writing tablet," he receives one without much ado (Luke 1:63).

Thus, it is unnecessary to assume that the "oral stage" in the formulation of the early Christian writings existed to the *degree* that it is described by modern theories. It is likely, to be sure, that the early church spread its message by "word of mouth," but in many cases this word of mouth was probably words read from documents, especially gospels and letters. There is a largely overlooked body of internal evidence in the New Testament suggesting another origin of the gospels, one quite different from the theory of an "oral stage" and documents of late date. The alternative may be described as follows: Prior to, during, and after the missionary journeys of St. Paul, other apostles and evangelists were also busy disseminating the various versions of the same good news of Jesus Christ throughout the known world. The journeys of St. Paul may have been more the rule than the exception. Writing and reading from documents also played a significant role in the evangelistic work of the early church. Such a scenario would imply that some gospels, at the very least, existed in their earliest forms prior to the letters of Paul and that the gospels were more the basis of preaching than the result.

In Paul's Epistle to the Galatians we find an interesting datum as to the method of evangelism that Paul used. He writes, ". . . you know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first; and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus" (Galatians 4:13-14). One question which comes to mind is this: why did Paul "preach the gospel . . . at first" in the trying way to which he refers? Could it be that his optical condition made it impossible to preach the gospel as he was accustomed to doing, from a manuscript? This deduction would appear to be confirmed by what follows; Paul continues: "For I bear witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me" (Galatians 4: 15b).

It was said of Paul after all: "his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account" (1 Corinthians 10:10). Paul, therefore, may have read his gospel from a manuscript, at least when he had the choice. While such an interpretation may be open to debate, it remains a curiosity as to why this incident should be mentioned at all. Obviously Paul's eyesight must have been necessary for the task that he was performing. And the demand on one's eyes most appropriate to such a context would be the task of reading. Since Paul was not a good extemporaneous preacher-and was even called a "babbling" (Acts 17:18)-the idea of Paul reading from a manuscript can hardly be discounted. Paul, like others at this time, evidently carried parchments and, indeed, books with him (2 Timothy 4:13) from place to place and may have read from them as presentations to all who would listen, just as preachers and those on the lecture circuit follow manuscripts today. In the same way, presumably, Matthew would have read his gospel, Luke his, and John his. And the associates and followers of these men would also be sent out with these same gospels. The fact that others were active at the same time spreading the word is apparent from many references in Paul's letters (for example, Romans 15:20,23; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 6:7 and following; Colossians 1:5b-7a, 23), not to mention the Book of Acts.

The basic question concerns the gospels themselves. When were the four gospels written? Many scholars are of the opinion that it was several decades or more before the products of the "oral stage" crystallized into final documents. These scholars cite references in the gospels to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and reason that the gospels must have followed this event. It is apparently assumed that, as many times as Jerusalem and the temple had been plundered and

destroyed in the past, Jesus could not have predicted such a thing happening again. Thus, references to such an event could only be included in the document after the fact.

If Christianity is based upon God's revelation in history, however, it does not follow that the disciples merely sat around the campfire and reminisced for thirty years or more before someone had the idea of writing things down. Rather, it can be argued that the gospels were among the earliest documents in the New Testament. The purpose of writing them was that of evangelism (as can be seen from John 20:30-31), to tell the whole world the good news of the "things accomplished among us" (Luke 1:1). Thus, as the word spread, converts added, and new churches established, the manuscripts would have been copied and copies left with the new churches to insure an on-going believing community and consistently sound doctrine.

In this way, after all, Christianity would have followed the pattern of most historical movements. Everyone from Moses to the Mormons to Marx has begun with documentation and proceeded to implementation. Forcing Christianity to go through the reverse of this process is a highly questionable enterprise. If, however, the gospels were written at an early point in the life of the church, how can the New Testament (as we now call it) be silent on something so important? Surely the New Testament writers would have left some hint as to which writings came first. Perhaps they did, and perhaps we do not recognize what is plainly before us because of the "interpretative glasses" we are wearing.

Paul's letters presuppose a thorough knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus now found in the gospels. Paul's theology, indeed, builds upon such material. Hence, it is not surprising to find in the *Oxford Annotated Bible* over forty references in the Pauline epistles to the themes present in the four gospels. Other Bibles list more. Such references may reflect more than similarities in thought; they may reflect origins as well.

In Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians we find several points worthy of note. In the first place there is the passage often quoted in the eucharistic liturgy (1 Corinthians 11:23-25):

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me." After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

How could Paul have received this material "from the Lord"? As far as we know, Paul had no association with Jesus or the disciples prior to the resurrection. Whence, then, did he receive it? Not least among the alternatives is the possibility that he received it from a written gospel which he "delivered" to the Corinthian church. For the version of the institution of the sacrament in Luke's gospel (22:17-20) is very close to Paul's version. It stands to reason that Paul, as a companion of Luke, would have access to the latter's gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 4, secondly, Paul makes some interesting comments. In verse 5 of that chapter Paul addresses the "wise" and judgmental Corinthians in this way: "Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in

darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God." The Jerusalem Bible in its cross-references to these three teachings cites respectively Matthew 7: 1-2 (where Jesus commands us not to judge), Luke 12:2-3 (where Jesus states that what is concealed will be disclosed), and John 5:44 (where Jesus speaks of the true praise that comes from God). Then, in the very next verse (1 Corinthians 4:6), Paul states: "Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'Do not go beyond what is written.'" Now, "what is written" ordinarily refers to Scripture, and certainly to written documents. Could "what is written" here refer to the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John? If not, it would at least be a reference to Christian scriptures in existence at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians-that is, approximately in the mid-fifties of the first century A.D.-since it is the teaching of Jesus that is being discussed.

Of significance, too, is the passage in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul states: "It is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.' . . . In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (verses 9, 14). Later, in 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul refers to these sayings again with these words: "The scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,' and 'The laborer deserves his wages.'"

The first "scripture" is, of course, a passage from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 25:4). Significantly, however, the second passage, to which Paul refers in a matter-of-fact way as "scripture," is apparently quoted directly from Luke 10:7, for the Greek wording corresponds exactly (except for the appearance of *gar* in the Lukan account). Here Paul calls "scripture" on the same breath as a reference to the Old Testament-a verse which, according to many scholars today, could not have had such authority at this early date in the history of the church. First Timothy 5, however, and already, indeed, 1 Corinthians 4 provide evidence to the contrary.

The implication is, then, that the earliest form of an official body of writings-in other words, a canon of the New Testament-may have emerged by the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians and definitely had emerged by the time of 1 Timothy-that is, approximately in the mid-fifties and early sixties of the first century A.D. Paul's quotation would also suggest that Luke's gospel must have been written some time prior to this date when it is given equal footing with the Old Testament.

Luke himself, it may be argued, suggests an early date, since he refers to "those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2) as being his source. Eyewitnesses, after all, are in any research a diminishing resource, as people have a habit of forgetting, disappearing, and "falling asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6). Conversely, the author may have to leave the area in which eyewitnesses are available. In all likelihood, then, Luke's gospel was written much earlier than the eighties of the first century A.D. which many critics currently suggest as its date of origin.

Another possible interpretation of Luke 1:2 is to take it not as a general reference to any number of people, but as a specific reference to Peter and James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These are the first disciples mentioned in Luke's gospel (5:1-11). And they were also eyewitnesses to a number of events in the ministry of Jesus, including the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). The

transfiguration remained a major "eyewitness" event in their lives, as was later recalled by Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18). If Luke 1:2 is referring specifically to Peter, James, and John, it is noteworthy that Luke calls them not only "eyewitnesses" but also "servants of the word." Could these disciples have been entrusted by Jesus with the responsibility of record-keeping? What else would the role of "servant of the word" entail?

Also of interest here are two other passages in Paul's letters to Timothy which refer to "scripture." In 1 Timothy 4:13 we read: "Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching." *The Oxford Annotated Bible* has this footnote: "The church adopted many liturgical practices of the synagogue including the public reading of scripture, preaching, and teaching," implying that the "scripture" mentioned here was the Old Testament alone!

The question arises, however, of what scripture was, in fact, read and used as the basis for preaching and teaching in the early church--the Old Testament, material now contained in the New Testament, or both. We have already found "scripture" referring to both in 1 Timothy 5:18. Admittedly, if we come to 1 Timothy 4 wearing the "interpretative glasses" of the modern theory of an "oral stage," we should have to conclude that the reference is to the Old Testament alone. If this theory is incorrect, however, the conclusion may differ.

We may find some help in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, where Paul states: "as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Again *The Oxford Annotated Bible* interprets this verse as referring to the Old Testament. Significantly, however, the text speaks of "the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Now the Old Testament instructs us in many things, but the Old Testament nowhere speaks of Christ as "Jesus." While the coming of the Messiah is certainly foretold in the Old Testament, He is never specifically given the name of "Jesus."

If we assume that 2 Timothy 3:14-15 embraces also scriptures of the New Testament, we should thereby place the date of some of these writings back in the early forties or late thirties of the first century A.D. by virtue of Timothy's knowledge of them from childhood. Apparently Timothy was a believer prior to Paul's first missionary journey in 46-48 A.D. (2 Timothy 3:10-11). The Christian faith had been handed down to him from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). The fact that Timothy was uncircumcised (Acts 16:3) would tend to support his early exposure to Christianity.

Thus, there is a body of evidence in the primary documents themselves to suggest that prior to St. Paul's writing, at least some gospels--perhaps all--were already in existence. We do well to remember that Paul, as one "untimely born," appears late on the Christian scene--so late, in fact, that upon occasion others had already preceded him in missionary work (e.g., Romans 15:20). Likewise, also according to various current theories, Luke's gospel was not the first to be written, but followed on Matthew and Mark. We may conclude that by the time St. Paul wrote to Timothy late in his career, after the gospel had "been preached to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1:23), what he had first received "from the Lord" had now been included in the official writings of the early church. Apparently Paul's own writings had also achieved such a

status, given Peter's statement allying them with the "other scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). These "other scriptures" may be another reference to scriptures of the New Testament, since Peter deals here with the "twisting" of the Christian message by false teachers.

The evidence in the primary documents, then, may be summarized as follows: (1.) Paul may have preached the gospel from a manuscript when he was able. (2.) Paul's letters and theology presuppose considerable knowledge of teaching, ministry, and life of Jesus. (3.) Paul mentions a body of scriptures of the New Testament in existence in the mid-fifties of the first century A.D. (4.) Paul apparently quotes from Luke's gospel and refers to it as "scripture" in the early sixties of the century. (5.) Luke's gospel itself suggests an early date with its reference to "eyewitnesses." (6.) Paul refers to the "sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," the name "Jesus" providing *prima facie* evidence of early scriptures of the New Testament. (7.) Peter refers to Paul's various writings **as** "scripture." (8.) Peter's reference to "the other scriptures" may also embrace writings of his century, given the context.

In order to maintain the existence of an "oral stage" and the late date of the gospels, critics have attacked this evidence on several fronts. It has been argued, for example, that 1 Corinthians 4:6 must be a "scribal addition later incorporated into the text" and that such books as 1 Timothy and 2 Peter must have been written by "pseudonymous authors" years later than the death of the apostles. In the case of Paul's letters to Timothy, some scholars cite differences in language from Paul's other letters. Some suggest that a member of Paul's following may have dispatched the correspondence at differing times in the fifties and early sixties of the first century A.D. (e.g., Jeremias, Kelly, Holt., Dockx, Lestapis, Reicke, Metzger). Others see developments in ecclesiastical orders and domestic codes as suggesting a date in the second (70-100 A.D.) or third (100-130 A.D.) generation of the church (e.g., Harrison, Easton, Campenhausen, Barrett, Dibelius and Conzelmann, Hanson, Hultgren).⁶

But such scenarios remain purely speculative. With no real new evidence, such ideas remain open to conjecture. In fact, a number of considerations support the traditional belief in the Pauline authorship of these letters. Among them are the following: (1.) Unlike other writings of the New Testament to which authorship is attributed by tradition (e.g., the gospels), Paul's pastoral letters, like 2 Peter, incorporate an assertion of authorship into the body of the text itself (1 Timothy 1: 1; 2 Timothy 1:1; 2 Peter 1: I), a formidable obstacle to late dating. (2.) The authenticity of Paul's authorship of 1 and 2 Timothy has been accepted in the church since the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Doubting Pauline authorship has become popular only in quite recent times-that is, since F. D. E. Schleiermacher (1807) and F. C. Baur (1835).⁷ (3.) Differences in language may be attributed to any number of factors and do not, of themselves, indicate pseudonymity. Indeed, this study has highlighted a significant example of similar vocabulary and thought in the pastoral epistles (1 Timothy 5:18) and one of Paul's earlier letters (1 Corinthians 9:9, 14), thereby supporting the Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles. (4.) Developments in ecclesiastical orders and domestic codes may have occurred at different times and places in the early church; but it is certainly within the realm of reason to believe that the apostles were involved in the implementation of such changes for at least a decade prior to the writing of 1 Timothy (as appears from Acts 14:23). **(5.)** The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy contain material of such personal affection, concern, faith, freshness, and urgency that suggestions that they are not directly attributable to St. Paul simply fail to convince.

Given the entirety of the foregoing discussion, then, it is quite in order to conclude that certain gospels, at the every least, were written early in the life and ministry of the church, perhaps in the earliest form thereof only a few years following the resurrection. They were followed some years later by the missionary journeys and epistles of St. Paul. A case may be made for this construction based on the witness of the New Testament alone (*sola scriptura*). Such a process would correspond to the practical development of other historical movements in which documentation precedes implementation. Indeed, it would appear that a primary canon of the New Testament had emerged in the early church by the early sixties of the first century A.D. When "scripture" is mentioned as of this date, the term may refer to the Old Testament, material now contained in the New Testament, or both.

Endnotes

1. Howard Clark **Kee** and Franklin W. Young, *Understanding the New Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 68.
2. During the past thirty years, the conventional wisdom on the dating of the gospels has remained consistent. Assuming the primacy of Mark's gospel with a date between 64 A.D. and 70 A.D., Matthew's gospel is placed between 70 A.D. and 90 A.D. Luke's gospel is usually dated in the eighties and John's gospel in the nineties of the first century A.D. However, scholars often add caveats allowing for greater time-frames, such as 70-110 A.D. in the case of Matthew and 70-140 A.D. in the case of Luke, with a similar range for John. One may consult, for instance, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon, 1962); *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary* (Abingdon, 1971); *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1973); *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* (Prentice-Hall, 1990); and *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992).
3. Robert W. Funk with Mahlon H. Smith, *The Gospel of Mark: Red Letter Edition* (Sonoma, California: Polbridge Press, 1991), p. 23.
4. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1443.
5. M. J. Mellink, "Lystra," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 111 (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 195.
6. David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, VI (New York et al, 1992), p. 568.
7. F. L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 1360.

8. Such a conclusion lends qualified support to the findings of J. A. T. Robinson (***Redating the New Testament***, 1976) who held that all the writings of the New Testament originated before 70 A.D.

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[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: differences and variations between the Hand-Copied Manuscripts

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/causes.html>

Causes of Textual Variation

Categories drawn from Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*.

1. Unintentional Changes

A. From faulty eyesight or by careless inspection of the original

1) Substitution of similar letters and combinations of letters. 2 Peter 2:13 ΑΓΑΠΙΑΣ ("love feasts") and ΑΠΑΤΑΙΑΣ ("deceptions"); 2:18 ΟΛΙΓΩΣ ("scarcely") and ΟΝΤΩΣ ("really").

2) Omission of words between repeated phrases (*homoeoteleuton*). 1 John 2:23 "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not [the Father; he that acknowledgeth the Son also hath] the Father."

3) Addition of letters by repetition (*dittography*). 1 Thes. 2:7 εγεννηθημεν ηπιοι ("we were gentle") and εγεννηθημεν νηπιοι ("we were babes").

B. From likeness of pronunciation or by incorrect spelling

1) ω confused with ο. Rom. 5:1 εχομεν ("we have peace") and εχωμεν ("let us have peace").

2) αι confused with ε. Mat. 11:16 ετεροις ("others") and εταιροις ("fellows").

3) ου confused with υ. Rev. 1:5 λουσαντι ("washed") and λυσαντι ("freed").

4) η, ι, υ, ει, οι, υι all confused with one another, because they are all pronounced "ee" in later Greek (*itacism*). 1 John 1:4 ημων ("our") and υμων ("your"). A frequent variation in later manuscripts.

5) λλ confused with λ, νν confused with ν, etc. Mat. 27:35 βαλλοντες ("casting") and βαλοντες ("having cast"); Mat. 1:18 γεννησις ("birth") and γενεσις ("generation").

C. From errors of memory or anticipation

- 1) Substitution of synonyms and nearly equivalent expressions. Mat. 2:17 υπο Ιερεμιου ("by Jeremiah") and δια Ιερεμιου ("through Jeremiah"); Mat. 10:23 την αλλην ("the other") and την ετεραν ("the next").
- 2) Transposition of words to a more usual order. Rom. 1:1 "of Jesus Christ" for "of Christ Jesus"; Mat. 15:1 "scribes and Pharisees" for "Pharisees and scribes."
- 3) Transposition of letters. Mark 14:65 ελαβον ("receive") and εβαλον ("strike").
- 4) Addition of words from adjacent or parallel passages. Mat. 5:27 "to them of old time" added from verses 21 and 33.
- 5) Addition of expected pronouns. Mat. 14:15 αυτου ("of him") added after οι μαθηται ("the disciples") --a very frequent addition.

D. By incorporation of marginal notes wrongly taken as corrections

- 1) Addition of notes giving brief explanations. Mat. 10:3 "Lebbaeus, whose surname was" added before "Thaddaeus."
- 2) Addition of homiletic notes. Rom 8:1 "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom 11:6 "But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Mat. 27:35 "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."
- 3) Addition of notes giving lectionary and liturgical adaptations. Luke 7:31 "And the Lord said" added at the beginning of the reading. Mat. 6:13 "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen" added to the Lord's prayer. Mark 16:20 "Amen" added to the end of the book.
- 4) Addition of notes giving quotations from related Scripture passages. Luke 23:38 "in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew" added from John 19:20; Heb. 12:20 "or thrust through with a dart" added from Exod. 19:13.

E. Through faulty interpretation of corrections in the margin

Chiefly by treating substitutionary corrections as additions (*conflation*). Rom. 6:12 "[in] its lusts" added after "obey it" rather than substituted for "it."

2. *Intentional Alterations*

A. To make the meaning more plain

1) Additions, omissions, and substitutions designed to simplify or correct the grammar. Mark 7:2 "they found fault" added to complete the sentence. 2 Cor. 12:7 "therefore" omitted from before "lest I should be exalted."

2) Addition of implied words. Mat. 12:35 "of the heart" added after "treasure." Acts 25:16 "to die" added after "deliver any man up."

3) Addition of natural supplements, often for the sake of emphasis. Mat. 6:4, 6 "openly" added after "will reward you."

4) Substitution of more idiomatic expressions. 1 Cor. 3:4 "carnal" for "men." Phil. 2:30 "not regarding his life" for "hazarding his life."

5) Substitution of definitions. Mat. 6:1 "alms" for "righteousness." Mark 7:5 "unwashed" for "defiled."

B. To harmonize related passages

Mat. 19:17 "Why do you ask me concerning what is good?" displaced by "Why do you call me good?" from Mark 10:18. --a very frequent kind of alteration.

C. To remove difficulties which would require tedious explanation

Mark 1:2 "in Isaiah the prophet" changed to "in the prophets."

John 1:28 "Bethany" changed to "Bethabara."

John 7:8 "yet" added to "I go not up to this feast."

Mat. 24:36 "nor the Son" omitted.

D. To emphasize or safeguard important teachings

Luke 2:33 "Joseph" substituted for "his father."

Luke 2:43 "Joseph and his mother" substituted for "his parents."

E. To reflect or promote monastic customs

Mark 9:29 "and fasting" added after "prayer" (similarly in Acts 10:30, 1 Cor. 7:5).

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: Simple Description of Textual Criticism

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/rules.html>

Rules of Textual Criticism

When the manuscripts differ, how do scholars decide which words are the original ones? There is more to it than simply choosing the readings of the oldest available manuscripts. Here are three historically important sets of rules published by some influential scholars of textual criticism: Bengel, Griesbach, and Hort.

Critical Rules of Johann Albrecht Bengel

In his essay *Prodromus Novi Testamenti recte cauteque ordinandi* [*Forerunner of a New Testament to be settled rightly and carefully*], (Denkendorf, 1725), Johann Albrecht Bengel, a Lutheran schoolmaster, published a prospectus for an edition of the Greek Testament which he had already begun to prepare (published in 1734). In it he outlines his text-critical principles, which included a novel classification of manuscripts into two primitive groups: the *Asiatic* and the *African*. The first group he supposed to be of Byzantine origin, and to it belonged the majority of modern manuscripts and the Syriac version; the second, of Egyptian provenance, was represented by Codex Alexandrinus and the manuscripts of the early Latin and Coptic versions. In this work Bengel also set forth a very influential rule of criticism: a preference for harder readings. This rule he expressed in four pregnant words:

proclivi scriptioni praestat ardua. "before the easy reading, stands the difficult."

The "Monita" of Bengel

In Bengel's Preface to his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tubingen, 1742) he includes an enumerated list of 27 "suggestions" (*Monita*) which may be taken as a summary of his critical principles. The following extract of these is taken from pages 13 through 17 of Fausset's translation:

"1. By far the more numerous portions of the Sacred Text (thanks be to God) labour under no variety of reading deserving notice.

2. These portions contain the whole scheme of salvation, and establish every particular of it by every test of truth.

3. Every various reading ought and may be referred to these portions, and decided by them as by a normal standard.

4. The text and various readings of the New Testament are found in manuscripts and in books printed from manuscripts, whether Greek, Latin, Graeco-Latin, Syriac, etc., Latinizing Greek, or other languages, the clear quotations of Irenaeus, etc., according as Divine Providence dispenses its bounty to each generation. We include all these under the title of *Codices*, which has sometimes as comprehensive a signification.

5. These codices, however, have been diffused through churches of all ages and countries, and approach so near to the original autographs, that, when taken together, in all the multitude of their varieties, they exhibit the genuine text.

6. No conjecture is ever on any consideration to be listened to. It is safer to bracket any portion of the text, which may haply to appear to labour under inextricable difficulties.

7. All the codices taken together, should form the normal standard, by which to decide in the case of each taken separately.

8. The Greek codices, which possess an antiquity so high, that it surpasses even the very variety of reading, are very few in number: the rest are very numerous.

9. Although versions and fathers are of little authority where they differ from the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, yet, where the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament differ from each other, those have the greatest authority, with which versions and fathers agree.

10. The text of the Latin Vulgate, where it is supported by the consent of the Latin fathers, or even of other competent witnesses, deserves the utmost consideration, on account of its singular antiquity.

11. The number of witnesses who support each reading of every passage ought to be carefully examined: and to that end, in so doing, we should separate those codices which contain only the Gospels, from those which contain the Acts and the Epistles, with or without the Apocalypse, or those which contain that book alone; those which

are entire, from those which have been mutilated; those which have been collated for the Stephanic edition, from those which have been collated for the Complutensian, or the Elzevirian, or any obscure edition; those which are known to have been carefully collated, as, for instance, the Alexandrine, from those which are not known to have been carefully collated, or which are known to have been carelessly collated, as for instance the Vatican manuscript, which otherwise would be almost without an equal.

12. And so, in fine, more witnesses are to be preferred to fewer; and, which is more important, witnesses who differ in country, age, and language, are to be preferred to those who are closely connected with each other; and, which is most important of all, ancient witnesses are to be preferred to modern ones. For, since the original autographs (and they were written in Greek) can alone claim to be the well-spring, the amount of authority due to codices drawn from primitive sources, Latin, Greek, etc., depends upon their nearness to that fountain-head.

13. A Reading, which does not allure by too great facility, but shines with its own native dignity of truth, is always to be preferred to those which may fairly be supposed to owe their origin to either the carelessness or the injudicious care of copyists.

14. Thus, a corrupted text is often betrayed by alliteration, parallelism, or the convenience of an Ecclesiastical Lesson, especially at the beginning or conclusion of it; from the occurrence of the same words, we are led to suspect an omission; from too great facility, a gloss. Where the passage labours under a manifold variety of readings, the middle reading is the best.

15. There are, therefore, five principal criteria, by which to determine a disputed text. The antiquity of the witnesses, the diversity of their extraction, and their multitude; the apparent origin of the corrupt reading, and the native colour of the genuine one.

16. When these criteria all concur, no doubt can exist, except in the mind of a sceptic.

17. When, however, it happens that some of these criteria may be adduced in favour of one reading, and some in favour of another, the critic may be drawn sometimes in this, sometimes in that direction; or, even should he decide, others may be less ready to submit to his decision. When one man excels another in powers of vision, whether bodily or mental, discussion is vain. In such a case, one man can neither obtrude on another his own conviction, nor destroy the conviction of another; unless, indeed, the original autograph Scriptures should ever come to light."

Following this are ten more paragraphs, numbered 18 through 27, which do not pertain to the evaluation of various readings, but instead contain sundry remarks relative to the design and use of his critical edition. The seventeen given above may therefore be taken as Bengel's formally stated *canons* of criticism.

Griesbach's Fifteen Rules

In the Introduction to his second edition of the Greek New Testament (Halle, 1796) Griesbach set forth the following list of critical rules, by which the *intrinsic probabilities* may be weighed for various readings of the manuscripts. Rules for the prior evaluation of *documentary* evidence, such as the ones formulated by Bengel, are implicit in Griesbach's theory of the manuscript tradition, and so they are not taken up here. What follows is a translation of Griesbach's Latin as it was reprinted by Alford in the Introduction of his *Greek Testament* (London, 1849. Moody reprint, page 81).

1. The shorter reading, if not wholly lacking the support of old and weighty witnesses, is to be preferred over the more verbose. For scribes were much more prone to add than to omit. They hardly ever leave out anything on purpose, but they added much. It is true indeed that some things fell out by accident; but likewise not a few things, allowed in by the scribes through errors of the eye, ear, memory, imagination, and judgment, have been added to the text. The shorter reading, even if by the support of the witnesses it may be second best, is especially preferable-- (a) if at the same time it is harder, more obscure, ambiguous, involves an ellipsis, reflects Hebrew idiom, or is ungrammatical; (b) if the same thing is read expressed with different phrases in different manuscripts; (c) if the order of words is inconsistent and unstable; (d) at the beginning of a section; (e) if the fuller reading gives the impression of incorporating a definition or interpretation, or verbally conforms to parallel passages, or seems to have come in from lectionaries.

But on the contrary we should set the fuller reading before the shorter (unless the latter is seen in many notable witnesses) -- (a) if a "similarity of ending" might have provided an opportunity for an omission; (b) if that which was omitted could to the scribe have seemed obscure, harsh, superfluous, unusual, paradoxical, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, or opposed to parallel passages; (c) if that which is absent could be absent without harm to the sense or structure of the words, as for example prepositions which may be called incidental, especially brief ones, and so forth, the lack of which would not easily be noticed by a scribe in reading again what he had written; (d) if the shorter reading is by nature less characteristic of the style or outlook of the author; (e) if it

wholly lacks sense; (f) if it is probable that it has crept in from parallel passages or from the lectionaries.

2. The more difficult and more obscure reading is preferable to that in which everything is so plain and free of problems that every scribe is easily able to understand it. Because of their obscurity and difficulty chiefly unlearned scribes were vexed by those readings - (a) the sense of which cannot be easily perceived without a thorough acquaintance with Greek idiom, Hebraisms, history, archeology, and so forth; (b) in which the thought is obstructed by various kinds of difficulties entering in, e.g., by reason of the diction, or the connection of the dependent members of a discourse being loose, or the sinews of an argument, being far extended from the beginning to the conclusion of its thesis, seeming to be cut.

3. The harsher reading is preferable to that which instead flows pleasantly and smoothly in style. A harsher reading is one that involves an ellipsis, reflects Hebrew idiom, is ungrammatical, repugnant to customary Greek usage, or offensive to the ears.

4. The more unusual reading is preferable to that which constitutes nothing unusual. Therefore rare words, or those at least in meaning, rare usages, phrases and verbal constuctions less in use than the trite ones, should be preferred over the more common. Surely the scribes seized eagerly on the more customary instead of the more exquisite, and for the latter they were accustomed to substitute definitions and explanations (especially if such were already provided in the margin or in parallel passages).

5. Expressions less emphatic, unless the context and goal of the author demand emphasis, approach closer to the genuine text than discrepant readings in which there is, or appears to be, a greater vigor. For polished scribes, like commentators, love and seek out emphases.

6. The reading that, in comparison with others, produces a sense fitted to the support of piety (especially monastic) is suspect.

7. Preferable to others is the reading for which the meaning is apparently quite false, but which in fact, after thorough examination, is discovered to be true.

8. Among many readings in one place, that reading is rightly considered suspect that manifestly gives the dogmas of the orthodox better than the others. When even today many unreasonable books, I would not say all, are scratched out by monks and other men devoted to the Catholic party, it is not credible that any convenient readings of the manuscripts from which everyone copied would be neglected which seemed either to

confirm splendidly some Catholic dogma or forcefully to destroy a heresy. For we know that nearly all readings, even those manifestly false, were defended on the condition that they were agreeable to the orthodox, and then from the beginning of the third century these were tenaciously protected and diligently propagated, while other readings in the same place, which gave no protection to ecclesiastical dogmas, were rashly attributed to treacherous heretics.

9. With scribes there may be a tendency to repeat words and sentences in different places having identical terminations, either repeating what they had lately written or anticipating what was soon to be written, the eyes running ahead of the pen. Readings arising from such easily explained tricks of symmetry are of no value.

10. Others to be led into error by similar enticements are those scribes who, before they begin to write a sentence had already read the whole, or who while writing look with a flitting eye into the original set before them, and often wrongly take a syllable or word from the preceding or following writing, thus producing new readings. If it happens that two neighbouring words begin with the same syllable or letter, an occurrence by no means rare, then it may be that the first is simply omitted or the second is accidentally passed over, of which the former is especially likely. One can scarcely avoid mental errors such as these, any little book of few words to be copied giving trouble, unless one applies the whole mind to the business; but few scribes seem to have done it. Readings therefore which have flowed from this source of errors, even though ancient and so afterwards spread among very many manuscripts, are rightly rejected, especially if manuscripts otherwise related are found to be pure of these contagious blemishes.

11. Among many in the same place, that reading is preferable which falls midway between the others, that is, the one which in a manner of speaking holds together the threads so that, if this one is admitted as the primitive one, it easily appears on what account, or rather, by what descent of errors, all the other readings have sprung forth from it.

12. Readings may be rejected which appear to incorporate a definition or an interpretation, alterations of which kind the discriminating critical sense will detect with no trouble

13. Readings brought into the text from commentaries of the Fathers or ancient marginal annotations are to be rejected, when the great majority of critics explain them thus. ("He proceeds at some length to caution against the promiscuous assumption of such corruptions in the earlier codices and versions from such sources." - *Alford*)

14. We reject readings appearing first in lectionaries, which were added most often to the beginning of the portions to be read in the church service, or sometimes at the end or even in the middle for the sake of contextual clarity, and which were to be added in a public reading of the series, [the portions of which were] so divided or transposed that, separated from that which preceeds or follows, there seemed hardly enough for them to be rightly understood. ("Similar cautions are here added against assuming this too promiscuously." - *Alford*)

15. Readings brought into the Greek manuscripts from the Latin versions are condemned. ("Cautions are here also inserted against the practice of the earlier critics, who if they found in the graeco-latin MSS. or even in those of high antiquity and value, a solitary reading agreeing with the Latin, hastily condemned that codex as latinizing." - *Alford*)

Latin text of the above

1. Brevior lectio, nisi testium vetustorum et gravium auctoritate penitus destituatur, praeferenda est verbosiori. Librarii enim multo proniores ad addendum fuerunt, quam ad omittendum. Consulto vix unquam praetermiserunt quicquam, addiderunt quam plurima: casu vero nonnulla quidem exciderunt, sed haud pauca etiam oculorum, aurium, memoriae, phantasiae ac iudicii errore a scribis admisso, adjecta sunt textui. In primis vero brevior lectio, etiamsi testium auctoritate inferior sit altera, praeferenda est - (a) si simul durior, obscurior, ambigua, elliptica, hebraizans aut soloeca est, (b) si eadem res variis phrasibus in diversis codicibus expressa legitur; (c) si vocabulorum ordo inconstans est et instabilis; (d) in pericoparum initiis; (e) si plenior lectio glossam seu interpretamentum sapit, vel parallelis locis ad verbum consonat, vel e lectionariis immigrasse videtur.

Contra vero plenior lectionem breviori (nisi hanc multi et insignes tueantur testes) anteponimus-- (a) si omissioni occasionem praebere potuerit homoeoteleuton; (b) si id quod omisum est, librariis videri potuit obscurum, durum, superfluum, insolens, paradoxum, pias aures offendens, erroneum, aut locis parallelis repugnans; (c) si ea quae absunt, salvo sensu salvaue verborum structura abesse poterant, e quo genere sunt propositiones, quod vocant, incidentes, praesertim breviores, et alia, quorum defectum librarius relegens quae scripserat haud facile animadvertibat; (d) si brevior lectio ingenio, stylo aut scopo auctoris minus conveniens est. (e) si sensu prorsus caret; (f) si e locis parallelis aut e lectionariis eam irrepsisse probabile est.

2. Difficilior et obscurior lectio anteponenda est ei, in qua omnia tam plana sunt et extricata, ut librarius quisque facile intelligere ea potuerit. Obscuritate vero et

difficultate sua eae potissimum indoctos librarios vexarunt lectiones-- (a) quarum sensus absque penitior graecismi, hebraismi, historiae, archaeologiae, &c. cognitione perspicere non facile poterant, (b) quibus admissis vel sententia, varii generis difficultatibus obstructa, verbis inesse, vel aptus membrorum orationis nexus dissolvi, vel argumentorum ab auctore ad confirmandam suam thesin prolatorum nervus incidi videbatur.

3. Durior lectio praeferatur ei, qua posita, oratio suaviter leniterque fluit. Durior autem est lectio elliptica, hebraizans, soloeca, a loquendi usu graecis consueto adhorrens aut verborum sono aures offendens.

4. Insolentior lectio potior est ea, qua nil insoliti continetur. Vocabula ergo rariora, aut hac saltem significatione, quae eo de quo quaeritur loco admittenda esset, rarius usurpata, phrasesque ac verborum constructiones usu minus tritae, praeferantur vulgationibus. Pro exquisitoribus enim librarii usitiora cupide arripere, et in illorum locum glossemata et interpretamenta (praesertim si margo aut loca parallela talia suppeditarent) substituere soliti sunt.

5. Locutiones minus emphaticae, nisi contextus et auctoris scopus emphasin postulent, propius ad genuinam scripturam accedunt, quam discrepantes ab ipsis lectiones quibus major vis inest aut inesse videtur. Erudituli enim librarii, ut commentatores, emphases amabant ac captabant.

6. Lectio, prae aliis sensum pietati (praesertim monasticae) alendae aptum fundens, suspecta est.

7. Praeferatur aliis lectio cui sensus subest apparenter quidem falsus, qui vero re penitus examinata verus esse deprehenditur.

8. Inter plures unius loci lectiones ea pro suspecta merito habetur, quae orthodoxorum dogmatibus manifeste prae caeteris faciet. Cum enim codices hodie superstites plerique, ne dicam omnes, exarati sint a monachis aliisque hominibus catholicorum partibus addictis, credibile non est, hos lectionem in codice, quem quisque exscriberet, obviam neglexisse ullam, qua catholicorum dogma aliquod luculenter confirmari aut haeresis fortiter jugulari posse videretur. Scimus enim, lectiones quascunque, etiam manifesto falsas, dummodo orthodoxorum placitis patrocinentur, inde a tertii saeculi initiis mordicus defensas seduloque propagatas, caeteras autem ejusdem loci lectiones, quae dogmati ecclesiastico nil praesidii afferrent haereticorum perfidae attributas temere fuisse.

9. Cum scribae proclives sint ad iterandas alieno loco vocabulorum et sententiarum terminationes easdem, quas modo scripsissent aut mox scribendas esse, praecurrentibus calamum oculis, praeviderent, lectiones ex ejusmodi rhythmici fallacia facillime explicandae, nullius sunt pretii.

10. Hisce ad peccandum illecebris similes sunt aliae. Librarii, qui sententiam, antequam scribere eam inciperent, totam jam perlegissent, vel dum scriberent fugitivo oculo exemplum sibi propositum inspicerent, saepe ex antecedentibus vel consequentibus literam, syllabam aut vocabulum perperam arripuerunt, novasque sic lectiones procuderunt. Si v.c. duo vocabula vicina ab eadem syllaba vel litera inciperent, accidit haud raro, ut vel prius plane omitteretur, vel posteriori temere tribueretur, quod priori esset peculiare. Ejusmodi hallucinationes vix vitabit, qui libello paullo verbosiori exscribendo operam dat, nisi toto animo in hoc negotium incumbat: id quod pauci librarii fecisse videntur. Lectiones ergo, quae ex hoc errorum fonte promanarunt, quantumvis vetustae ac consequenter in complures libros transfusae sint, recte rejiciuntur, praesertim si codices caeteroqui cognati ab hujus labis contagio puri deprehendantur.

11. E pluribus ejusdem loci lectionibus ea praestat, quae velut media inter caeteras interjacet; hoc est ea, quae reliquarum omnium quasi stamina ita continet, ut, hac tanquam primitiva admissa, facile appareat, quanam ratione, seu potius quonam erroris genere, ex ipsa caeterae omnes propullularint.

12. Repudiantur lectiones glossam seu interpretamentum redolentes, cujus generis interpolationes nullo negotio emunctioris naris criticus subolfaciet.

13. Rejiciendas esse lectiones, e Patrum commentariis aut scholiis vetustis in textum invectas, magno consensu critici docent...

14. Respuimus lectiones ortas primum in lectionariis, quae saepissime in anagnosmatum initiis ac interdum in clausulis etiam atque in medio contextu claritatis causa addunt, quod ex orationis serie supplendum esset, resecantque vel immutant, quod, sejunctum ab antecedentibus aut consequentibus, vix satis recte intelligi posse videretur....

15. Damnandae sunt lectiones e latina versione in graecos libros invectae....

Theories of Westcott and Hort

In 1881 two English scholars, B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, published a very influential edition of the Greek Testament: *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881). The *Introduction and Appendix of Notes on Select Readings* volume of the original edition was written by Dr. Hort, and in it he set forth the arguments and general theories upon which the text was reconstructed, and provided explanations for many specific textual decisions.

Westcott and Hort brought the main tendency of nineteenth century textual criticism—the exaltation of the oldest Greek copies—to its culmination. They firmly set aside the Latin witnesses along with the later Greek manuscripts; but the oldest known Greek copies, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, they elevated to a pristine class called "Neutral," and very nearly identified them with the original manuscripts. It cannot be said, however, that Westcott and Hort were simply following a tendency here, for they realized that if such weight were to be given to only two manuscripts, a theory must be offered to explain how the text given in them had so early disappeared from the manuscript tradition. And so Hort offered in the *Introduction* of their text a theoretical history of the manuscript tradition that met the needs of the case, or at least so it seemed to many scholars.

They theorized that the "Neutral" text was the most primitive type, carefully copied for use in the worship services of the churches. The "Western" text-type arose early on as an uncontrolled popular edition, and persisted mainly in the Latin witnesses after Greek copies were no longer being produced in Italy. The "Byzantine" group, which includes the mass of later copies, began in the fourth century as an official church-sponsored edition of the New Testament, written probably in Antioch, which combined the various readings of the Western and Neutral groups. This edition was so effectively propagated throughout Europe that both the older "Neutral" and "Western" text-types ceased to be copied in the European scriptoria, and eventually decayed. The Neutral text survived for a while in Egypt, but then suffered corruption and became the "Alexandrian" type. Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are relics of the Neutral type. A considerable amount of speculation is involved in this argument, but Westcott & Hort further bolstered their text with detailed arguments from two other directions, presenting "external" arguments (from the oldest manuscripts, as in Lachmann) and "internal" arguments (from the tendencies of scribes, as in the rules of Griesbach). External and internal arguments were also made to support one another by the principle, "Readings are to be preferred that are found in a manuscript that habitually contains superior readings:" superior, that is, as determined by the rules of internal criticism. The text of Westcott & Hort therefore had the appearance of resting firmly

upon three-legged arguments, and it was considered by many scholars to be the best possible text.

Whatever may be the merits of Westcott and Hort's theory, the success of their text was largely due to personal influence and advantageous timing. In the 1860's the two most ancient copies, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, were both published for the first time, creating a public sensation. At about that time, Westcott and Hort began work on their text, and so in 1870, the year that a critical revision of the King James version was commissioned by the church authorities in England, they were able to distribute to the members of the revision committee a draft copy of their text. They both served on the revision committee, and they published their text in 1881, the same year that the revision was published. For ten years, then, Westcott and Hort continually advocated their views in favour of the texts of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in regular meetings of the most influential scholars of Great Britain and America, and it is hardly surprising that their text should be so well regarded when it appeared. In fact two generations passed before most scholars would recognize that the genealogical theories of Westcott and Hort were without adequate empirical foundation.

The text of Westcott & Hort was most vigorously assailed by John William Burgon, Dean of Chichester, and more temperately criticized by many others. The common theme of criticism was the lack of historical basis for their hypothesis of an early "Byzantine" recension in Antioch.

Critical Rules of Westcott & Hort

The following summary of principles is taken from the compilation in Epp and Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (1993, pages 157-8). References in parentheses are to sections of Hort's *Introduction*, from which the principles have been extracted.

1. Older readings, manuscripts, or groups are to be preferred. ("The shorter the interval between the time of the autograph and the end of the period of transmission in question, the stronger the presumption that earlier date implies greater purity of text.") (2.59; cf. 2.5-6, 31)
2. Readings are approved or rejected by reason of the quality, and not the number, of their supporting witnesses. ("No available presumptions whatever as to text can be obtained from number alone, that is, from number not as yet interpreted by descent.") (2.44)

3. A reading combining two simple, alternative readings is later than the two readings comprising the conflation, and manuscripts rarely or never supporting conflate reading are text antecedent to mixture and are of special value. (2.49-50).
4. The reading is to be preferred that makes the best sense, that is, that best conforms to the grammar and is most congruous with the purport of the rest of the sentence and of the larger context. (2.20)
5. The reading is to be preferred that best conforms to the usual style of the author and to that author's material in other passages. (2.20)
6. The reading is to be preferred that most fitly explains the existence of the others. (2.22-23)
7. The reading is less likely to be original that combines the appearance of an improvement in the sense with the absence of its reality; the scribal alteration will have an apparent excellence, while the original will have the highest real excellence. (2.27, 29)
8. The reading is less likely to be original that shows a disposition to smooth away difficulties (another way of stating that the harder reading is preferable). (2.28)
9. Readings are to be preferred that are found in a manuscript that habitually contains superior readings as determined by intrinsic and transcriptional probability. Certainty is increased if such a better manuscript is found also to be an older manuscript (2.32-33) and if such a manuscript habitually contains reading that prove themselves antecedent to mixture and independent of external contamination by other, inferior texts (2.150-51). The same principles apply to groups of manuscripts (2.260-61).

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: “The Historical-Grammatical Method” (Dr. Raymond F. Surburg)

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The Presuppositions of the Historical-Grammatical Method as Employed by Historic Lutheranism

Raymond F. Surburg

THE HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL METHOD is primarily a product of the

Reformation and post-Reformation periods of Western European Christianity.¹ While certain aspects of it were known and occasionally spasmodically utilized prior to Luther, the historical-grammatical method is a development of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, John Knox and other Protestant reformers.² After Luther's death it was the method used during the 17th and 18th centuries in Lutheranism, Calvinism and Arminianism.

The historical-grammatical method came out of the context of Western European Christianity and was developed in reaction to the allegorical method which had more or less dominated the history of the Church of Latin Christianity for over a thousand years. Those theologians and exegetes that developed, propounded and defended the historical-grammatical method brought with them a number of presuppositions which had controlled previous methodology in the church. These they kept but other presuppositions were also adopted whose acceptance made necessary a new interpretative methodology, which in many respects was radically different from the method that controlled the Roman Catholic Church during the first decades of the 16th century and in the centuries prior to 1517³.

Before giving the main presuppositions of the historical-grammatical method, it is necessary to describe how it operates and what its goals are. The majority of books that contain a history of Biblical hermeneutics do not have a special section dealing with the historical grammatical method⁴. During the time that the Christian Church has been in existence, which has been over 1900 years, different methods of interpretation have been in vogue.⁵ In the course of that long history a number of different kinds of schools of interpretation have arisen upon the scene utilizing methods which were significantly different from each other. The consequence of this situation resulted in different understandings and promulgations of what the Holy Scriptures truly taught and intended to teach.

Allegory, taken over from Greek secular literary interpretation, invaded the church already in the pre-Nicene age as well as in the centuries following Nicene Council⁶. Both Origen and St. Augustine were proponents of a manifold-sense of Scriptures concept. Eventually a fourfold sense was practiced in both the Eastern and Western branches of Asiatic and European Christendom respectively. After Augustine's death allegorism came to be the controlling method of Biblical interpretation. In addition to its use, there developed the claim by the Bishop of Rome that only the Church has the God-given right to interpret the Scriptures and that the Church alone had the privilege and ability to interpret Scriptures and determine its true meaning. The Roman Catholic believer was to believe a doctrine or dogma not because it was taught in the Scriptures but because the Church determined a doctrine or belief. All Christians were to recognize the teaching magisterium of the Church; although a dogma was not in the Scriptures it was nevertheless to be accepted. In addition, the Vulgate of Jerome, in many respects a fine translation, yet containing mistakes in translation, was made the definitive text, when matters of doctrine and ethics were concerned⁶. Furthermore,

the Old Testament canon was enlarged to include ten of the fourteen books regarded as apocryphal by both the Jewish synagogue and the Protestant Churches.⁷

The allegorical method had been opposed by the School of Antioch which stressed a historical interpretation as opposed to the allegorical⁸. In Paris the school of the Victorines emphasized a methodology not in sympathy with allegorical method⁹. Nicholas of Lyra also sponsored hermeneutical views that were contradictory of what was standard hermeneutical procedure in his day. Luther was influenced by Nicholas of Lyra.¹⁰

However, it was in the 16th century that there occurred a hermeneutical revolution or revolt which Luther initiated and fostered, a revolution that changed the course of Western European history. The Protestant Reformation would have been impossible apart from this change in the hermeneutics that was employed to interpret the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments.¹¹ Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and other reformers rejected the fourfold meaning of a Biblical text or pericope. Luther realized that permitting the Scriptures to be interpreted by this method was to make of the Bible a waxen nose, which would be twisted to give any meaning any way that an interpreter desired to give a passage. It was declared that a passage had only one intended meaning. Furthermore, it was the contention of Luther and other reformers that only the Scripture determined the meaning of a text and not the Church, and if church doctrine or dogma contradicted the Bible, the church teaching was to be rejected.¹³ For the 16th century that truly was revolutionary. The Protestant movement which made great inroads on the numerical strength of the Roman See and resulted in the loss of millions of adherents was made possible by the adoption of a new system of Biblical interpretation by the Reformer. A system of hermeneutics was developed and utilized that differed radically in many points from the systems in use in both the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity as represented by the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Churches.¹³

Luther became the proponent of a methodology which in essence was the historical-grammatical method. Melanchthon employed it in his teaching at the University of Wittenberg. Since Luther and Melanchthon wrote the majority of the Lutheran Confessions—the Large and Small Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles (Luther), the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Melanchthon)—The Formula of Concord was the only book not authored by these two professors of the University of Wittenberg. A perusal of the hermeneutics of the Formula of Concord reveals A perusal of the hermeneutics of the Formula of Concord reveals that it also uses the principles of the historical-grammatical method.¹⁴

In the post-Reformation period, during the 17th and 18th and 19th centuries the historical-grammatical method was employed by the Lutheran theologians. A number of scholars refined the method and defined some of its aspects more clearly. Professor Terry, who lived most of his life prior to the twentieth century, and did not witness the development of the newer sub-methods of the historicalcritical method, which was to develop from a

radical type of literary criticism into form criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism and content criticism, described in his 1890 *Biblical Hermeneutics* the historical-grammatical method as follows:

In distinction from all the above-mentioned methods of interpretation, we may name the Grammatico-Historical as the method which most fully commends itself to the judgment and conscience of Christian scholars. Its fundamental principle is to gather from the Scriptures themselves the precise meaning which the writers intended to convey. It applies to the sacred books the same principles, the same grammatical process and exercise of common sense and reason, which we apply to other books. The grammatico-historical exegete, furnished with suitable qualifications, intellectual, educational, and moral, will accept the claims of the Bible without prejudice or adverse prepossession, and, with no ambition to prove them false, will investigate the language and import of each book with fearless independence. He will master the language of the writer, the particular dialect which he used, and his peculiar style and manner of expression. He will inquire into the circumstances under which he wrote, the manners and customs of his age, and the purpose or object which he had in view. He has a right to assume that no sensible author will be knowingly inconsistent with himself, or seek to bewilder and mislead his readers.¹⁵

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL METHOD

Some of the presuppositions that were used by the developers and promoters of the historical-grammatical method had been used in the interpretation of the Bible according to the allegorical method and because they were valid were not abandoned. Yet other presuppositions were adopted in order truly to justify the elimination and rejection of the past weakness and errors in the exegesis of Holy Scriptures.

1. A basic presupposition kept by Luther, Calvin and many other reformers was the historic position of Latin Western and Eastern Greek Christianity that the Bible was the Word of God in its entirety.¹⁶ Even though the Roman Church of Luther's day held that there were two sources for revelation, Scripture and tradition, they did teach that the Bible in its entirety was the inspired, inerrant Word of God. Christian scholars down through the centuries have held it a presupposition that the Bible is a unique book because the Holy Spirit was its author. In the *Table Talk* Luther is reported as saying: "*We ought not to criticize the Scriptures, or judge the Scriptures by our mere reason, but diligently, with prayer, meditate thereon, and seek their meaning.*"¹⁷
2. Another presupposition of the developers of the historical-grammatical method was the recognition of only those canonical books which were employed as Scripture by the Jewish synagogue and are also reflected in the New Testament, neither one of which gives any evidence of having acknowledged any of the apocryphal books, now a part of the official Old

'Testament canon of Roman Catholicism and of Eastern orthodoxy'.¹⁸ The rejection of books like Maccabees, Tobit, the Wisdom of Solomon and other writings had implications for the establishment of the kind of doctrines which were to be placed into a systematic theology as true doctrine God would have His people hold and teach. The elimination of ten of the fourteen apocryphal writings as given in Protestant apocryphal lists, has implications for Biblical interpretation, especially when the principle is used, namely, that Scripture alone is the source for the formulation of divine truth.

3. A third presupposition of the Luther and the other Protestant Reformers was that only the text in the original languages was the determinative one. This meant the non-recognition of the Vulgate, a translation in Latin, as the Scriptural text that decided the meaning of a certain text. The mistranslation of the pronoun *hu'* in the Hebrew text of Gen. 3 : 15, in the Protevangelium, as *hi*, "she," was utilized to support Mariolatry. Both the Council of Trent and the Vatican Council of 1870 affirmed the authoritative character of the Latin Vulgate as the deciding authority in establishing doctrine and morals. The Reformers' insistence on the use of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament made possible a scholarly exegesis of the Biblical text and fostered the philological method of the interpretation of the Bible which came to characterize the historical-grammatical method. Only by the use of the original text could exegeses truly be scholarly and grammatical.¹⁹

4. A fourth presupposition was the conviction, based on the Word of God itself, that the supreme and final authority in theological matters was the Bible, Ramm stated Luther's position as follows: "The Bible is the supreme and final authority in theological authority. Its teaching cannot be countermanded nor qualified nor subordinated to ecclesiastical authority whether of persons or documents."²⁰

5. A fifth important presupposition of the historical-grammatical method as developed by the Protestant Reformers was the principle that the literal meaning was the usual and normal one. The Scholastics had developed their hermeneutics into two divisions: literal and spiritual. The Spiritual was divided into allegorical, anagogical, and tropological. Luther contended for the primacy of the literal meaning of a text. Dean Farrar quoted Luther as holding: "The literal sense of Scripture alone is the whole essence of Christian faith and of Christian theology."²¹ C. A. Briggs cites Luther as writing: "Every word should be allowed to stand in its natural meaning and that should not be abandoned unless faith forces us to it."²²

The literal meaning could only be adequately attained by the use of the original text in Hebrew and Greek. Luther gave the following advice: 'While the preacher may preach Christ with edification though he may be unable to read the Scriptures in the originals, he cannot expound or maintain their teaching against heretics without this indispensable knowledge.'²³: It is generally acknowledged that Luther played an important role in sponsoring the revival of Hebrew and Greek studies.

6. The proponents of the historical-grammatical method operate with the presupposition that the *autographic* text is the authoritative text and that since errors have crept into the transmission of the text, it is necessary to practice textual criticism, also known as lower criticism. Part I of Fuerbringer's little hermeneutical manual, by means of which thousands of Lutheran Missouri Synod pastors were introduced to the science of Biblical hermeneutics, deals with Biblical Criticism, establishing the text of the Bible. Dr. Fuerbringer wrote: "The exegete must for this reason, first of all, endeavor to ascertain the original form of the text. (Textual criticism, verbal criticism, lower criticism.)"²⁴ Fuerbringer calls attention to the fact that Luther already realized the necessity of textual criticism, and cites IX, 1086; VIII, 1719, 18r9, 1852; XIV, 600.²⁵ Historical Lutheranism has not opposed the proper use of lower criticism and not rejected the legitimate findings of a reliable type of textual criticism.

7. Another presupposition of the employers of the historical-grammatical method was the recognition that the Biblical books were literary documents and therefore there was a proper place for literary criticism.²⁶ After the textual critic has either determined the text himself or else is persuaded that the text of printed critical editions substantially contains the correct text, he then on the basis of such a text as an exegete studies a Biblical book in terms of authorship, time of writing, place of writing, purpose of writing, integrity and historical background. Sometimes these isagogical questions are answered clearly by the text of the book, sometimes they are not. The literary critic uses both internal evidence and external evidence in dealing with these questions which often determine the interpretation of a given book or books. For example, the rejection of Mosaic authorship in favor of the documentary hypothesis has many implications for the interpretation of the first five books of the Old Testament and sometimes also for the book of Joshua (Hexateuch theory). The unity of Isaiah versus multiple authorship of Isaiah again has implications as to where in the progress of Old Testament revelation the 66 chapters of this book are to be placed, how chapter 13 and 14 and 39 are to be understood, chapters which the text assigns to Isaiah but denied by historical-critical proponents to the prophet Isaiah. There are New Testament statements in which there are quotations from chapters 1-39, 40-55, and 56-66, and they are all ascribed to Isaiah the prophet.

8 Another assumption of the users of the historical-grammatical method as employed by Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and those who have remained faithful to the hermeneutics of the Lutheran Confessions is the assumption of the unity of the Holy Scriptures." God ultimately is the Author of the **66** canonical books. The Old and New Testaments are one complete revelation of God and are not to be separated. The Old Testament is not to be treated as if there were no New Testament for which it was preparatory. Luther cited the ancient maxim: *Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet* (Luther 111, 1882, 1884) .²⁸ The New Testament is hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is revealed in the New. Sometimes the true intended meaning of a given Old Testament text is first made explicit by the New Testament where the author, the Holy Spirit, reveals what had been the intended meaning of a given Old Testament text. Psalm 110 would be an example, where David speaks about Yahweh's Messiah. Jesus and other New Testament

writers clearly state that David wrote Psalm 110, a view which commentaries written by proponents of the historical-critical method do not accept; instead they claim this psalm was used at the coronation of a new king in Judah or Israel and in no way was predictive of the Messiah.

9. Related to the presupposition of the unity of the Scriptures is the presupposition that Scripture can be used to interpret Scripture. This presupposition is found in the New Testament and for this reason Luther, the authors of the Lutheran Confessions, and later Lutheran theologians and pastors who accepted the hermeneutical principles practiced and employed what the theologians described as "*Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur*"²⁶ The Old Testament frequently receives clarification, as to its God-intended meaning, from the New. By virtue of the validity of this presupposition which is employed as an interpretive principle, the Biblical interpreter uses parallel passages to understand given passages. This rule is also useful in dealing with dark passages or those that are susceptible of more than one meaning, because to our age there are factors unknown that were known to the original recipients. The classical formulation of *Scriptura Sacra sui ipsius interpres* is already evident in Luther's writings as early as 1519.³⁰ This was a principle that was employed by various writers before Luther's time. In a general way, the principle that an interpreter uses the writings of a given author to explain statements in a book is a principle of general literature. That Scripture can and does interpret Scripture is also related to the fact of the clarity of the Holy Scripture and to the fact that God is the ultimate Author of all books comprising the Biblical canon and that the Scriptures are the only source and norm of doctrine and morals. Dr. Ralph Bohlmann wrote concerning this matter:

The fact that the Scriptures were authored by God suggests that this principle is ultimately an extension of the general hermeneutical principle that any passage must be considered and explained in terms of its context. Thus the context of any Bible passage is the entire Scripture, since all Scripture is authored by the same Holy Spirit. That the "context of Scripture can give a *true* explanation of any passage rests on the fact of its *divine* authorship, by virtue of which Scripture is held to be in agreement with itself"³¹.

10. It was and is an assumption of the Lutheran exegetes following the teachings of the Bible that the Scriptures in their autographic text are inerrant and do not contain contradictions as they employ the historical-grammatical method. Because God is the author of the Scriptures Luther and the Lutheran Confessions held that they did not have errors or contradictions. In the Large Catechism Luther wrote "that God does not lie" (IV, 57) and "God's Word cannot err" (IV, 57). Therefore Luther urges: "Believe the Scriptures. They will not lie to you" (LC V, 76). The Formula of Concord rejects as an opinion the errancy of Scripture because "In this way it would be taught that God, who is the eternal Truth, contradicts himself" (SD XI, 3 5). The preface to the Book of Concord describes the Scripture as "the pure, infallible, and unalterable Word of God."³²

Frederick C. Grant, a well known critical scholar, in *An Introduction to New Testament Thought* stated that the Scriptures testify about themselves as follows:

Everywhere it is taken for granted that what is written in scripture is the work of divine inspiration and is therefore trustworthy, infallible, and inerrant. The scripture must be "fulfilled" (Luke 22:37). What was written there was "written for our instruction" (Rom. 15: 4; I Cor. 10:11). What is described or related in the Old Testament is unquestionably true. No New Testament writer would dream of questioning a statement contained in the Old Testament, though the exact manner or mode of its inspiration is nowhere stated explicitly.³³

11. A fundamental and basic presupposition of the Lutheran exegete employing the historical-grammatical method is the centrality of justification by faith as the chief article of the Biblical revelation.³⁴ No interpretation of the Bible dare violate or be in disagreement with this Biblical teaching. This has been called the *Hauptartikel* Principle.³⁵ We may say of it that it is a presupposition as well as a hermeneutical principle: "The *Hauptartikel* presupposition or principle is referred to often in the Lutheran Confessions. In Apology IV, 79-80 we read: "We prove the minor premise as follows. Since Christ is set forth to be the propitiator, through whom the Father is reconciled, we cannot appease God's wrath by setting forth our own works. For it is only by faith that Christ is accepted as mediator. By faith alone, therefore, we obtain the forgiveness of sins when we comfort our hearts with trust in the mercy promised for Christ's sake." In Apology IV, 2 (German text) Melancthon calls the doctrine of justification by faith "der vornehmste Artikel (praecipuus locus)," an article valuable for determining the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone able to point the way to the unspeakable treasures and right knowledge of Christ; thus, it alone shows the true meaning of all of the Bible. In the Smalcald Articles the Wittenberg Reformer calls Christ and faith in Him "the first and chief article."

12. A presupposition closely allied with this *Hauptartikel* for the Lutheran exegete is the Christocentricity of the entire Bible.³⁶ This Christocentricity of the Scriptures of the Old Testament is regarded as basic by interpreters who do not question the reliability of the Biblical text. For Luther Christ permeates the Old Testament Scriptures and this fact was emphasized by Luther in his writings as well as throughout the Lutheran Confessions. One does not truly understand the message of the Old Testament, if with modern exegetes one does not find Christ there as many of the New Testament writers do. Luther stated that all the promises of the Old Testament find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. The Angel of the Lord who comes to the patriarchs of the Old Testament and blessed them was Christ. "When Yahweh is depicted in the Old Testament times as redeeming His people, the reader must think of Christ, so Luther contends. The Old Testament saints were not merely saved by implicit trust in the mercy and grace of God but by Christ, who was the object of the faith of the Old Testament believers.

Commenting on Gen. 3: 15, Luther says: "Here it is written that Adam was a Christian long before the birth of Christ. For he had the same faith in Christ that we have. For in matters of faith, time makes no difference. Faith is of the same nature from the beginning to the end of the world. Therefore he, through his faith, received the same that I receive. He did not see Christ with his eyes, neither did we, but he had Him in the Word. The only difference is this: at that time it was to come to pass, now it has come to pass. Accordingly all the Fathers were justified in the same manner as we are, through the Word and through faith and in this faith they also died." When Luther finds Christ the Old Testament he is not allegorizing as some might contend, but merely reading the Old Testament in the light of the New and thus finding a deeper meaning than an exegete does who ignores the New Testament. This would also be an application of the use of the analogy of faith. In response to the objection to Luther's Christological interpretation that he was making a text utter something not originally intended by the text, Luther would reply that the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament promise is a part of the larger historical context of Old Testament passages, because God, the Author of all Biblical books, therefore can set forth what the true, intended meaning of Old Testament passages was by means of the New Testament.

13. A fundamental presupposition of the Lutheran exegete employing the historical-grammatical method is the belief that in the Holy Scriptures God speaks a word of Law and a word of Gospel, a word of condemnation and a word of forgiveness.³⁷ It is a fundamental presupposition that these two doctrines must not be confused but their messages kept distinct from each other. Without the proper distinction between Law and Gospel the central message of Holy Scripture cannot be ascertained. Melancthon's whole argument in the Apology is closely bound up with the recognition and use of the Law/Gospel dichotomy. The Formula of Concord stated: "The distinction between Law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy apostles may be explained and understood correctly."³⁸ This Law/Gospel distinction is no Lutheran invention, For "since the beginning of the world these two proclamations have continually been set forth side by side in the church of God with proper distinction."³⁹ The patriarchs knew this distinction as did David.

14. Another important presupposition of the historical-grammatical method is the Spirit principle, namely, that the Holy Spirit is the true interpreter of the Bible. The Holy Scriptures were inspired and written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; every true interpreter needs the enlightenment of the Spirit of God. The Spirit principle is one that pervades the Lutheran Confessions.⁴⁰ Thus R. Preus asserted: Scripture is clear not only because of its own coherent and consistent nature but because God's Holy Spirit has authored it."⁴¹ In the Apology this fact was stated by Melancthon as follows, "It is surely amazing that our opponents are unmoved by the many passages in the Scriptures that clearly attribute justification to faith and specifically deny it to works . . . Do they suppose that these words fell from the Holy Spirit

unawares?"⁴² The Holy Scriptures are clear and purposeful soteriologically because their ultimate author is God the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit principle also involves the necessity of the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians of the important fact that "the natural men receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they must be spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2 : 14). Many by nature is alienated from God; his life is termed by the Apostle "enmity against God," and no amount of education and learning can change that condition in an unregenerated expositor. Unless the exegete is born from above, the Bible will remain a sealed book. To Timothy Paul wrote, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2 : 7) .

The gift of the Spirit is necessary for the interpretation of the Bible, just as the Spirit must convert a person, so He must open the heart to accept and believe the Word of God. Thus the Formula of Concord declares: "He opens the intellect and the heart to understand the Scriptures and to heed the Word, as we read in Luke 24: 45, 'Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.'⁴³

This guidance of the Holy Spirit does not mean that the interpreter can depart from the literal sense of the Bible and is given a new and different meaning than that set forth in the words of Scripture, or that the expositor need not follow a sound historical and grammatical interpretation of the text of the Scriptures, but it means that the Spirit of Truth aids the interpreter to grasp the God-intended meaning of the text. Otherwise this would amount to enthusiasm or *Schwaermerei*.⁴⁴

Despite the clearness of the Scriptures on this matter, Colwell wrote, "The student who uses the historical method of interpreting the Bible relies upon no supernatural aids."⁴⁵ Again the same scholar said: "The plea for some special endowment as a prerequisite for biblical study seems rather out of place in such areas as textual criticism and the study of Biblical languages."⁴⁶ To expect an unconverted individual adequately to interpret the Scriptures or any part thereof is as unreasonable as to suppose that a blind person can appreciate a sunset, or some deaf person respond to the music of the great masters.⁴⁷ The spiritual mind may be said to be the key that adequately unlocks the treasure house of God's riches contained in the Word.⁴⁸

The Spirit principle is in harmony with other principles of Biblical and Lutheran interpretation. The Holy Spirit, the ultimate Author of the Books of the Old and New Testament, works through Law and Gospel upon all those who hear and read the written revelation of God.⁴⁹

15 . It is an important presupposition of the historical-grammatical method as employed by Lutherans that the Holy Scriptures are "for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may himself be complete, and

completely equipped for every good work."⁵⁰ Included under this presupposition is what Robert Preus has called the "eschatological principle."⁵¹ The Bible has an eschatological burden, expressed in Romans 15: 4: "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." The Formula of Concord in commenting on this particular passage asserts: "But this is certain that any interpretation of the Scriptures which weakens or even removes this comfort and hope is contrary to the Holy Spirit's will and intent [*Meinung*]."⁵²

FOOTNOTES

1. L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation (Sacred Hermeneutics)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 27.
2. Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), pp. 48-51.
3. Raymond F. Surburg, "The Significance of Luther's Hermeneutics for the Protestant Reformation," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 24 :241-261, April, 1953.
4. Cf. James D. Wood, *The Interpretation of the Bible* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1958); Frederick W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (London : Macmillan and Co., 1886).
5. E. C. Blackman, *Biblical Interpretation* (London: Independent Press, 1957), pp. 65-158; Henry Preserved Smith, *Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Marshall Jones and Company, 1924), pp. 33-167; George Holley Gilbert, *Interpretations of the Bible. A Short History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), pp. 1-292.
6. Farrar, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-158.
7. Cf. *Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam* (Rome-Torino-Paris: Typis Societatis S. Joannis Evangelii, 1956), pp. ix-xii.
8. Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-51.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
10. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 277
11. Surburg, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

12. Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
13. Cf. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 325ff.
14. Ralph A. Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis : Concordia Publishing House, 1968).
15. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutic. A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1890), p. 70.
16. Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 , 58.
17. As cited by Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 54
18. Dr. M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1944), pp. 13-48; Rupert E. Davies, *The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers* (London: Epworth Press, 1936) , p. 107.
19. Henry Preserved Smith, *Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (Boston : Marshall Jones Company, 1921) , p. 80.
20. Ramm., *op.cit.*, p. 53..
21. Farrar, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
22. C. A. Briggs, *History of the Study of Theology* (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1916), II, p. 107.
23. **As** cited by Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
24. L. Fuerbringer, *Theological Hermeneutics* (St. Louis: CPH, 1924), pp.4-8.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
26. A. Berkeley Mickelson, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, **1963**), pp. 99-337; Charles Augustus Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy*

Scriptures, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970, reprinted from revised edition of 1900), pp. 293ff.

27. L. Fuerbringer, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 (par. 28), 30 (par. 29 & 30), p. 17.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 15; Wm. Dallman, W. H. T. Dau and Th. Engelder, *Walther and the Church* (St. Louis, CPH, 1938), pp. 124, 125.

30. Bohlmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

32. Tappert, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

33. Frederick Grant, *An Introduction to New Testament Thought* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), p. 75.

34. Robert David Preus, "How is The Lutheran Church to Interpret and Use the Old and New Testaments?" *The Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, 14:23-24 (Fall, 1973).

35. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

36. Preus, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

37. Holsten Fagerberg, *Die Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften von 1529 bis 1537*, trans. Gerhard Klose (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 91-96; Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans., by P. F. Koehneke and H. J. A. Boumann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 136-137.

38. Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 558.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 562.

40. Preus, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

41. Ibid., p. 34.
42. Apol. IV, 107-108. Tappert, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
43. FC SD, II., 26, Tappert, p. 526.
44. Raymond F. Surburg, "The Moral and Spiritual Qualifications of the Biblical Interpreter," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 22:483 (July 1951).
45. Ernst Cadman Colwell, *The Study of **the** Bible* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 125.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
47. George Dahl, "The Modern Approach to the Old Testament," in *Education for Christian Service, By Members of the Faculty of Yale University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), p. 52.
48. R. A. Torrey, *To Show Thyself Approved* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1921), pp. 30-31; L. Fuerbringer, *Theologische Hermeneutik* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912), p. 4.
49. FC SD, V, 11, Tappert, *op. cit.*, p. 560.
50. Helen Barrett Montgomery, *The New Testament in Modern English, The Centenary T'ranslation* (Philadelphia : The Judson Press, 1924), p. 578.
51. Preus, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
52. FC SD, XI, 92, Tappert, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: considers the end of the Gospel of Mark.

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/endmark.html>

Mark 16:9-20

Mark 16:9-20 has been called a *later addition* to the Gospel of Mark by most New Testament scholars in the past century. The main reason for doubting the authenticity of the ending is that it does not appear in some of the oldest existing witnesses, and it is reported to be absent from many others in ancient times by early writers of the Church. Moreover, the ending has some stylistic features which also suggest that it came from another hand. The Gospel is obviously incomplete without these verses, and so most scholars believe that the final leaf of the original manuscript was lost, and that the ending which appears in English versions today (verses 9-20) was supplied during the second century. Below are some excerpts from various scholarly sources that conclude that the verses are a later addition.

Nevertheless, some scholars have not been impressed with the evidence against these verses, and have maintained that they are original. These scholars have pointed out that the witnesses which bring the verses into question are few, and that the verses are quoted by church Fathers very early, even in the second century. To represent this point of view we give below a long excerpt from F.H.A. Scrivener, together with its footnotes.

The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948).

vv. 9-20. This section is a later addition; the original ending of Mark appears to have been lost. The best and oldest manuscripts of Mark end with ch. 16:8. Two endings were added very early. The shorter reads: "But they reported briefly to those with Peter all that had been commanded them. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them from the East even to the West the sacred and

incorruptible message of eternal salvation." The longer addition appears in English Bibles; its origin is uncertain; a medieval source ascribes it to an elder Ariston (Aristion), perhaps the man whom Papias (c. A.D. 135) calls a disciple of the Lord. It is drawn for the most part from Luke, chapter 24, and from John, chapter 20; there is a possibility that verse 15 may come from Matthew 28:18-20. It is believed that the original ending must have contained an account of the risen Christ's meeting with the disciples in Galilee (chs. 14:28; 16:7).

A Commentary on the Holy Bible, edited by J.R. Dummelow (New York: MacMillan, 1927), pages 732-33.

9-20. Conclusion of the Gospel. One uncial manuscript gives a second termination to the Gospel as follows: 'And they reported all the things that had been commanded them briefly (or immediately) to the companions of Peter. And after this Jesus himself also sent forth by them from the East even unto the West the holy and incorruptible preaching of eternal salvation.'

Internal evidence points definitely to the conclusion that the last twelve verses are not by St. Mark. For, (1) the true conclusion certainly contained a Galilean appearance (Mark 16:7, cp. 14:28), and this does not. (2) The style is that of a bare catalogue of facts, and quite unlike St. Mark's usual wealth of graphic detail. (3) The section contains numerous words and expressions never used by St. Mark. (4) Mark 16:9 makes an abrupt fresh start, and is not continuous with the preceding narrative. (5) Mary Magdalene is spoken of (16:9) as if she had not been mentioned before, although she has just been alluded to twice (15:47, 16:1). (6) The section seems to represent not a primary tradition, such as Peter's, but quite a secondary one, and in particular to be dependent upon the conclusion of St. Matthew, and upon Luke 24:23f.

On the other hand, the section is no casual or unauthorised addition to the Gospel. From the second century onwards, in nearly all manuscripts, versions, and other authorities, it forms an integral part of the Gospel, and it can be shown to have existed, if not in the apostolic, at least in the sub-apostolic age. A certain amount of evidence against it there is (though very little can be shown to be independent of Eusebius the Church historian, 265-340 A.D.), but certainly not enough to justify its rejection, were it not that internal evidence clearly demonstrates that it cannot have proceeded from the hand of St. Mark.

Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, 1971), pages 122-126.

16:9-20 The Ending(s) of Mark. Four endings of the Gospel according to Mark are current in the manuscripts. (1) The last twelve verses of the commonly received text of Mark are absent from the two oldest Greek manuscripts (א and B), from the Old Latin codex Bobiensis (it^k), the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript, about one hundred Armenian manuscripts, and the two oldest Georgian manuscripts (written A.D. 897 and A.D. 913). Clement of Alexandria and Origen show no knowledge of the existence of these verses; furthermore Eusebius and Jerome attest that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them. The original form of the Eusebian sections (drawn up by Ammonius) makes no provision for numbering sections of the text after 16:8. Not a few manuscripts which contain the passage have scribal notes stating that older Greek copies lack it, and in other witnesses the passage is marked with asterisks or obeli, the conventional signs used by copyists to indicate a spurious addition to a document.

(2) Several witnesses, including four uncial Greek manuscripts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries (L Ψ 099 0112), as well as Old Latin k, the margin of the Harelean Syriac, several Sahidic and Bohairic manuscripts, and not a few Ethiopic manuscripts, continue after verse 8 as follows (with trifling variations): "But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation." All of these witnesses except it^k also continue with verses 9-20.

(3) The traditional ending of Mark, so familiar through the AV and other translations of the Textus Receptus, is present in the vast number of witnesses, including A C D K W X Δ Θ Π Ψ 099 0112 f¹³ 28 33 *al.* The earliest patristic witnesses to part or all of the long ending are Irenaeus and the Diatessaron. It is not certain whether Justin Martyr was acquainted with the passage; in his *Apology* (i.45) he includes five words that occur, in a different sequence, in ver. 20. (του λογου του ισχυρου ον απο ιερουσαλημ οι αποστολοι αυτου εξελθοντες πανταχου εκηρουξαν).

(4) In the fourth century the traditional ending also circulated, according to testimony preserved by Jerome, in an expanded form, preserved today in one

Greek manuscript. Codex Washingtonianus includes the following after ver. 14: "And they excused themselves, saying, 'This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits [*or*, does not allow what lies under the unclean spirits to understand the truth and power of God]. Therefore reveal thy righteousness now — thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, 'The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, in order that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven.' "

How should the evidence of each of these endings be evaluated? It is obvious that the expanded form of the long ending (4) has no claim to be original. Not only is the external evidence extremely limited, but the expansion contains several non-Markan words and expressions (including **ο αιων ουτος, αμαρτανω, απολογεω, αληθινος, υποστρεφω**) as well as several that occur nowhere else in the New Testament (**δεινος, ορος, προσλεγω**). The whole expansion has about it an unmistakable apocryphal flavor. It probably is the work of a second or third century scribe who wished to soften the severe condemnation of the Eleven in 16.14.

The longer ending (3), though current in a variety of witnesses, some of them ancient, must also be judged by internal evidence to be secondary. (a) The vocabulary and style of verses 9-20 are non-Markan. (e.g. **απιστεω, βλαπτω, βεβαιωω, επακολουθεω, θεαομαι, μετα ταυτα, πορευομαι, συνεργεω, υστερον** are found nowhere else in Mark; and **θανασιμον** and **τοις μετ αυτου γενομενοις**, as designations of the disciples, occur only here in the New Testament). (b) The connection between ver. 8 and verses 9-20 is so awkward that it is difficult to believe that the evangelist intended the section to be a continuation of the Gospel. Thus, the subject of ver. 8 is the women, whereas Jesus is the presumed subject in ver. 9; in ver. 9 Mary Magdalene is identified even though she has been mentioned only a few lines before (15.47 and 16.1); the other women of verses 1-8 are now forgotten; the use of **αναστας δε** and the position of **πρωτον** are appropriate at the beginning of a comprehensive narrative, but they are ill-suited in a continuation of verses 1-8. In short, all these features indicate that the section was added by someone who knew a form of Mark that ended abruptly with ver. 8 and who wished to supply a more appropriate conclusion. In view of the inconcinnities between verses 1-8 and 9-20, it is unlikely that the long ending was composed *ad hoc* to fill up an obvious gap; it is more likely that the section was excerpted from another document, dating perhaps from the first half of the second century.

The internal evidence for the shorter ending (2) is decidedly against its being genuine. Besides containing a high percentage of non-Markan words, its rhetorical tone differs totally from the simple style of Mark's Gospel.

Finally it should be observed that the external evidence for the shorter ending (2) resolves itself into additional testimony supporting the omission of verses 9-20. No one who had available as the conclusion of the Second Gospel the twelve verses 9-20, so rich in interesting material, would have deliberately replaced them with four lines of a colorless and generalized summary. Therefore, the documentary evidence supporting (2) should be added to that supporting (1). Thus, on the basis of good external evidence and strong internal considerations it appears that the earliest ascertainable form of the Gospel of Mark ended with 16.8. At the same time, however out of deference to the evident antiquity of the longer ending and its importance in the textual tradition of the Gospel, the Committee decided to include verses 9-20 as part of the text, but to enclose them within double square brackets to indicate that they are the work of an author other than the evangelist.

Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 269-270.

... we may find it instructive to consider the attitude of Church Fathers toward variant readings in the text of the New Testament. On the one hand, as far as certain readings involve sensitive points of doctrine, the Fathers customarily alleged that heretics had tampered with the accuracy of the text. On the other hand, however, the question of the canonicity of a document apparently did not arise in connection with discussion of such variant readings, even though they might involve quite considerable sections of text. Today we know that the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to Mark (xvi. 9-20) are absent from the oldest Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian manuscripts, and that in other manuscripts asterisks or obeli mark the verses as doubtful or spurious. Eusebius and Jerome, well aware of such variation in the witnesses, discussed which form of text was to be preferred. It is noteworthy, however, that neither Father suggested that one form was canonical and the other was not. Furthermore, the perception that the canon was basically closed did not lead to a slavish fixing of the text of the canonical books. Thus, the category of 'canonical' appears to have been broad enough to include all variant readings (as well as variant renderings in early versions) that emerged during the course of the transmission of the New Testament documents while apostolic tradition was still a living entity, with an intermingling of written and oral forms of that tradition. Already in the second century, for example, the so-called

long ending of Mark was known to Justin Martyr and to Tatian, who incorporated it into his *Diatesseron*. There seems to be good reason, therefore, to conclude that, though external and internal evidence is conclusive against the authenticity of the last twelve verses as coming from the same pen as the rest of the Gospel, the passage ought to be accepted as part of the canonical text of Mark.

F.H.A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, fourth ed. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), volume 2, pp. 337-344.

Mark xvi. 9-20. In Vol. I. Chap. 1, we engaged to defend the authenticity of this long and important passage, and that without the slightest misgivings (p. 7). Dean Burgon's brilliant monograph, 'The Last Twelve Verse of the Gospel according to St. Mark vindicated against recent objectors and established' (Oxford and London, 1871), has thrown a stream of light upon the controversy, nor does the joyous tone of his book miscome one who is conscious of having triumphantly maintained a cause which is very precious to him. We may fairly say that his conclusions have in no essential point been shaken by the elaborate and very able counter-plea of Dr. Hort (Notes, pp. 28-51). This whole paragraph is set apart by itself in the critical editions of Tischendorf and Tregelles. Besides this, it is placed within double brackets by Westcott and Hort, and followed by the wretched supplement derived from Cod. L (*vide infra*), annexed as an alternative reading (αλλως). Out of all the great manuscripts, the two oldest (ⲛ B) stand alone in omitting vers. 9-20 altogether. ¹ Cod. B, however, betrays consciousness on the scribe's part that something is left out, inasmuch as after εφοβουντο γαρ ver. 8, a whole column is left perfectly blank (*the only blank one in the whole volume* ²), as well as the rest of the column containing ver. 8, which is usual in Cod. B at the end of every other book of Scripture. No such peculiarity attaches to Cod. ⲛ. The testimony of L, that close companion of B, is very suggestive. Immediately after ver. 8 the copyist breaks off; then in the same hand (for all corrections in this manuscript seem *prima manu*: see p. 138), at the top of the next column we read ... φερετε που και ταυτα ... παντα δε τα παρηγγελμενα τοις περι του πετρον συντομωσ εξηγγιλαν μετα δε ταυτα και αυτος ο ις απο ανατολης και αχρι δυσεως εξαπεστιλεν δι αυτων το ιερον και αφθαρτον κηρυγμα της αιωνιου σωτηριας ... εστην δε και ταυτα φερομενα μετα το εφοβουντο γαρ ... Αναστασ δε, πρωι πρωτη σαββα κ.τ.λ.,, ver. 9, *ad fin. capit.* (Burgon's *facsimile*, facing his page 113: our *facsimile* No. 21): as if verses 9-20 were

just as little to be regarded as the trifling apocryphal supplement ³ which precedes them. Besides these, the twelve verses are omitted in none but some old Armenian codices ⁴ and two of the Ethiopic, *k* of the Old Latin, and an Arabic Lectionary [ix] No. 13, examined by Scholz in the Vatican. The Old Latin Codex *k* puts in their room a corrupt and careless version of the subscription in L ending with **σωτηριας** (*k* adding **αμην**): the same subscription being appended to the end of the Gospel in the two Ethiopic manuscripts, and (with **αμην**) in the margin of 274 and the Harkleian. Not unlike is the marginal note in Hunt. 17 or Cod. 1 of the Bohairic, translated by Bishop Lightfoot above. Of cursive Greek manuscripts 137, 138, which Birch had hastily reported as marking the passage with an asterisk, each contains the marginal annotation given below, which claims the passage as genuine, 138 with no asterisk at all, 137 (like 36 and others) with an ordinary mark of reference from the text to the note, where (of course) it is repeated. ⁵ Other manuscripts contain marginal scholia respecting it, of which the following is the substance. Cod. 199 has **τελος** ⁶ after **εφοβουντο γαρ** and before **Αναστας δε**, and in the same hand as **τελος** we read, **εν τισι των αντιγραφων ου κειται ταυτα, αλλ ενταυθα καταπαυει**. The kindred Codd. 20, 215, 300 (but after ver. 15, not ver. 8) mark the omission in some (**τισι**) copies, adding **εν δε τοις αρχαιοις παντα απαραλειπτα κειται**, and these had been corrected from Jerusalem copies (see pp. 161 and note, 193). Cod. 573 has for a subscription **εγραφη και αντεβληθη ομοιως εκ των εσπουδασμενων κεφαλαιοις σλζ**: where Burgon, going back to St. Matthew's Gospel (see p. 161, note) infers that the old Jerusalem copies must have contained our twelve verses. Codd. 15, 22 conclude at **εφοβουντο γαρ**, then add in red ink that in some copies the Evangelist ends here, **εν πολλοις δε και ταυτα φερεται**, affixing verses 9-20. In Codd. 1, 250 (in its duplicate 206 also), 209, is the same notice, **αλλοις** standing for **πολλοις** in 206, with the additional assertion that Eusebius "canonized" no further than ver. 8, a statement which is confirmed by the absence of the Ammonian and Eusebian numerals beyond that verse in **ⲭΑΛSU** and at least eleven cursives, with *am. fuld. ing.* of the Vulgate. It would be no marvel if Eusebius, the author of this harmonizing system, had consistently acted upon his own rash opinion respecting the paragraph, an opinion which we shall have to notice presently, and such action on his part would have added nothing to the strength of the adverse case. But it does not seem that he really did so. These numerals appear in most manuscripts, and in all parts of them, with a good deal of variation which we can easily account for. In the present instance they are annexed to ver. 9 and the rest of the passage in Codd. **CEKVII**, and (with some changes) in **GHMΓΔΛ** and many others: in Cod. 566 the concluding sections are there (**σλδ** ver. 11, **σλε** ver. 12, **σλς** ver. 14) without the canons. In their respective margins the annotated codices 12 (of Scholz), 24, 36, 37, 40, 41, 108, 129, 137, 138, 143, 181, 186, 195, 210, 221, 222, 237, 238, 255, 259, 299, 329, 374 (twenty-four in all), present in substance ⁷ the same weighty testimony in favour of the passage: **παρα πλειστοις αντιγραφοις ου κειται** (thus far also Cod. 119, adding only **ταυτα, αλλ**

ενταυθα καταπαυει) εν τω παροντι ευαγγελιω, ως νοθα νομισαντες αυτα ειναι
 αλλα ημεις εξ ακριβων αντιγραφων εν πλειστοις ευροντες αυτα και κατα το
 Παλαιστιναιον ευαγγελιον Μαρκου, ως εχει η αληθεια, συντεθεικαμεν και την
 εν αυτω επιφερομενην δεσποτικην αναστασιν. Now this is none other than an
 extract from Victor of Antioch's [v] commentary on St. Mark, which they all annex in
 full to the sacred text, and which is expressly assigned to that Father in Codd. 12, 37, 41.
 Yet these very twenty-four manuscripts have been cited by critical editors as adverse to
 the authenticity of a paragraph which their scribes never dreamt of calling into
 question, but had simply copied Victor's decided judgement in its favour His appeal to
 the famous Palestine codices which had belonged to Origen and Pamphilus (see p. 55
 and note), is found in twenty-one of them, possibly these documents are akin to the
 Jerusalem copies mentioned in Codd. Evan. Λ, 20, 164, 262, 300, &c.

All other codices, e.g. ACD (which is defective from ver. 15, *prima manu*) EF^wGH (begins
 ver. 14) KMSUVXΓΔΠ, 33, 69, the Peshitto, Jerusalem and Curetonian Syriac (which
 last, by a singular happiness, contains verses 17-20, though no other part of St. Mark),
 the Harkleian text, the Sahidic (only ver. 20 is preserved), the Bohairic and Ethiopic
 (with the exceptions already named), the Gothic (to ver. 12), the Vulgate, all extant Old
 Latins except *k* (though a *prima manu* and *b* are defective), the Georgian, the printed
 Armenian, its later manuscripts, and all the lesser versions (Arabic, &c.), agree in
 maintaining the paragraph. It is cited, possibly by Papias, unquestionably by Irenaeus
 (both in Greek and Latin), by Tertullian, and by Justin Martyr ⁸ as early as the second
 century; by Hippolytus (see Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text*, p. 252), by
 Vincentius at the seventh Council of Carthage, by the *Acta Pilati*, the Apostolic
 Constitutions, and apparently by Celsus in the third; by Aphraates (in a Syriac Homily
 dated A.D. 337), the Syriac Table of Canons, Eusebius, Macarius Magnes, Didymus, the
 Syriac Acts of the Apostles, Leontius, Ps.-Ephraem. Jerome, Cyril of Jerusalem, ⁹
 Epiphanius, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, in the fourth; by Leo, Nestorius, Cyril of
 Alexandria, Victor of Antioch, Patricius, Marius Mercator, in the fifth; by Hesychius,
 Gregentius, Prosper, John, abp. of Thessalonica, and Modestus, in the fifth and sixth. ¹⁰
 Add to this, what has been so forcibly stated by Burgon (*ubi supra*, p. 205), that in the
 Calendar of Greek Church lessons, which existed certainly in the fourth century, very
 probably much earlier, the disputed verses were honoured by being read as a special
 matins service for Ascension Day (see p. 81), and as the Gospel for St. Mary
 Magdalene's Day, July 22 (p. 89); as well as by forming the third of the eleven
 ευαγγελια αναστασιμα εωθινα, the preceding part of the chapter forming the
 second (p. 85): so little were they suspected as of even doubtful authenticity. ¹¹

The earliest objector to vers. 9-20 we know of was Eusebius (Quaest. ad Marin.), who
 tells us that they were not εν απασι τοις αντιγραφοις, but after εφοβουντο γαρ that

τα εξης are found σπανίως εν τισιν, yet not τα ακριβη: language which Jerome twice echoes and almost exaggerates by saying, 'in raris fertur Evangeliiis, omnibus Graeciae libris paene hoc capitulum fine non habentibus.' A second cause with Eusebius for rejecting them is **μαλιστα ειπερ εχοιεν αντιλογιαν τη των λοιπων ευαγγελιστων μαρτυρια**.¹² The language of Eusebius has been minutely examined by Dean Burgon, who proves to demonstration that all the subsequent evidence which has been alleged against the passage, whether of Severus, or Hesychius, or any other writer down to Euthymius Zigabenus in the twelfth century, is a mere echo of the doubts and difficulties of Eusebius, if indeed he is not retailing to us at second-hand one of the fanciful Biblical speculations of Origen. Jerome's recklessness in statement as been already noticed (Vol. II. p. 269); besides that, he is a witness on the other side, both in his own quotations of the passage and in the Vulgate, for could he have inserted the verses there, if he had judged them to be spurious?

With regard to the argument against these twelve verses arising from their alleged difference in style from the rest of the Gospel, I must say that the same process might be applied — and has been applied — to prove that St. Paul was not the writer of the Pastoral Epistles (to say nothing of that to the Hebrews), St. John of the Apocalypse, Isaiah and Zechariah of portions of those prophecies that bear their names. Every one used to literary composition may detect, if he will, such minute variations as have been made so much of in this case,¹³ either in his own writings, or in those of the authors he is most familiar with.

Persons who, like Eusebius, devoted themselves to the pious task of constructing harmonies of the Gospels, would soon perceive the difficulty of adjusting the events recorded in vers. 9-20 to the narratives of the other Evangelists. Alford regards this inconsistency (more apparent than real, we believe) as 'a valuable testimony to the antiquity of the fragment' (N.T. *ad loc.*): we would go further, and claim for the harder reading the benefit of any critical doubt as to its genuineness (Canon I. Vol. II. p. 247). The difficulty was both felt and avowed by Eusebius, and was recited after him by Severus of Antioch or whoever wrote the scholion attributed to him. Whatever Jerome and the rest may have done, these assigned the **αντιλογια**, the **εναντιωσις** they thought they perceived, as a reason (not the first, nor perhaps the chief, but still as a reason) for supposing that the Gospel ended with **εφοβουντο γαρ**. Yet in the balance of probabilities, can anything be more unlikely than that St. Mark broke off so abruptly as this hypothesis would imply, while no ancient writer has noticed or seemed conscious of any such abruptness?¹⁴ This fact has driven those who reject the concluding verses to the strangest fancies: — namely, that, like Thucydides, the Evangelist was cut off before his work was completed, or even that the last leaf of the original Gospel was torn away.

We emphatically deny that such wild surmises ¹⁵ are called for by the state of the evidence in this case. All opposition to the authenticity of the paragraph resolves itself into the allegations of Eusebius and the testimony of $\aleph$ B. Let us accord to these the weight which is their due: but against their verdict we can appeal to a vast body of ecclesiastical evidence reaching back to the earlier part of the second century; ¹⁶ to nearly all the versions; and to all extant manuscripts excepting two, of which one is doubtful. So powerfully is it vouched for, that many of those who are reluctant to recognize St. Mark as its author, are content to regard it notwithstanding as an integral portion of the inspired record originally delivered to the Church. ¹⁷

Scrivener's Footnotes (renumbered)

1. I have ventured but slowly to vouch for Tischendorf's notion, that six leaves of Cod. $\aleph$, *that containing* Mark xvi.2-Luke i.56 *being one of them*, were written by the scribe of Cod. B. On mere identity of handwriting and the peculiar shape of certain letters who shall insist? Yet there are parts of the case which I know not how to answer, and which have persuaded even Dr. Hort. Having now arrived at this conclusion our inference is simple and direct, that at least in these leaves, Codd. $\aleph$ B make but one witness, not two.
2. The cases of Nehemiah, Tobit, and Daniel, in the Old Testament portion of Cod. B, are obviously in no wise parallel in regard to their blank columns.
3. Of which supplement Dr. Hort says unexpectedly enough, 'In style it is unlike the ordinary narratives of the Evangelists, but comparable to the four introductory verses of St. Luke's Gospel' (Introduction, p. 298).
4. We ought to add that some Armenian codices which contain the paragraph have the subscription 'Gospel after Mark' at the end of verse 8 as well as of verse 20, as though their scribes, like Cod. L's, knew of a double ending to the Gospel.
5. Burgon (*Guardian*, July 12, 1882) speaks of seven manuscripts (Codd. 538, 539 being among them) wherein these last twelve verses begin on the right hand of the page. This would be more significant if a space were left, as is not stated, at the foot of the preceding page. In Cod. 550 the first letter α is small, but covers an abnormally large space.
6. Of course no notice is to be taken of $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ after $\epsilon\phi\omicron\beta\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\omicron \gamma\alpha\rho$, as the end of the ecclesiastical lesson is all that is intimated. The grievous misstatements of preceding critics from Wetstein and Scholz down to Tischendorf, have been corrected throughout by means of Burgon's laborious researches (Burgon, pp. 114-123).
7. The minute variations between these several codices are given by Burgon (Appendix E, pp. 288-90). Cod. 255 contains a scholion imputed to Eusebius, from which Griesbach

had drawn inferences which Burgon (Last Twelve Verses, &c., Postscript, pp. 319-23) has shown to be unwarranted by the circumstances of the case.

8. Dr. C. Taylor, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, in *The Expositor* for July 1893, quotes more evidence from Justin Martyr — hinting that some also remains behind — proving that that Father was familiar with these verses. Also he cites several passages from the Epistle of Barnabas in which traces of them occur, and from the Quartodeciman controversy, and from Clement of Rome. The value of the evidence which Dr. Taylor's acute vision has discovered consists chiefly in its cumulative force. From familiarity with the passage numerous traces of it arose; or as Dr. Taylor takes the case reversely, from the fact of the occurrence of numerous traces evident to a close observer, it is manifest that there pre-existed in the minds of the writers a familiarity with the language of the verses in question.

9. It is surprising that Dr. Hort, who lays very undue stress upon the silence of certain early Christian writers that had no occasion for quoting the twelve verses in their extant works, should say of Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived about A.D. 349, that his 'negative evidence is peculiarly cogent' (Notes, p. 37). To our mind it is not at all negative. Preaching on a Sunday, he reminds his hearers of a sermon he had delivered the day before, and which he would have them keep in their thoughts. One of the topics he briefly recalls is the article of the Creed **τον καθισαντα εκ δεξιων του πατρος**. He must inevitably have used Mark xvi. 19 in his Saturday's discourse.

10. Several of these references are derived from 'The Revision Revised,' p. 423.

11. Nor were these verses used in the Greek Church only. Vers. 9-20 comprised the Gospel for Easter Monday in the old Spanish or Mozarabic Liturgy, for Easter Tuesday among the Syrian Jacobites, for Ascension Day among the Armenians. Vers. 12-20 was the Gospel for Ascension Day in the Coptic Liturgy (Malan, *Original Documents*, iv. p. 63): vers. 16-20 in the old Latin *Comes*

12. To get rid of one apparent **αντιφωνια**, that arising from the expression **πρωι τη μια του σαββατου** (sic), ver. 9, compared with **οψε σαββατων** Matt. xxvii. 1, Eusebius proposes the plan of setting a stop between **Αναστας δε** and **πρωι**, so little was he satisfied with rudely expunging the whole clause. Hence Cod. E puts a red cross after **δε**: Codd. 20, 22, 34, 72, 193, 196, 199, 271, 345, 405, 411, 456, have a colon: Codd. 332, 339, 340, 439, a comma (Burgon, *Guardian*, Aug. 20, 1873).

13. The following peculiarities have been noticed in these verses: **εκεινος** used absolutely, vers. 10, 11, 13; **πορευομαι** vers. 10, 12, 15; **τοις μετ αυτου γενομενοις** ver. 10; **θεαομαι** vers. 11, 14; **απιστεω** vers. 11, 16; **μετα ταυτα** ver. 12; **ετερος** ver. 12; **παρακολουθεω** ver. 17; **εν τω ονοματι** ver. 17; **κυριος** for the Saviour, vers. 19, 20; **πανταχου, συνεργουντος, βεβαιω, επακολουθεω** ver. 20, all of them as not found elsewhere in St. Mark. A very able and really conclusive plea for the genuineness of the paragraph, as coming from that Evangelist's pen, appeared in the *Baptist Quarterly*, Philadelphia, July, 1869, bearing the signature of Professor J. A. Broadus, of South Carolina. Unfortunately, from the nature of the case, it does not admit of abridgement.

Burgon's ninth chapter (pp. 136-190) enters into full details, and amply justifies his conclusion that the supposed adverse argument from phraseology 'breaks down hopelessly under severe analysis.'

14. 'Can any one, who knows the character of the Lord and of his ministry, conceive for an instant that we should be left with nothing but a message baulked through the alarm of women' (Kelley, Lectures Introductory to the Gospels, p. 258). Even Dr. Hort can say, 'It is incredible that the Evangelist deliberately concluded either a paragraph with **εφοβουντο γαρ**, or the Gospel with a petty detail of a secondary event, leaving his narrative hanging in the air' (Notes, p. 46).

15. When Burgon ventures upon a surmise, one which is probability itself by the side of those we have been speaking of, Professor Abbot (*ubi supra*, p. 197) remarks upon it that 'With Mr. Burgon a conjecture seems to be a demonstration.' We will not be deterred by dread of any such reproach from mentioning his method of accounting for the absence of these verses from some very early copies, commending it to the reader for what it may seem worth. After a learned and exhaustive proof that the Church lessons, as we now have them, existed from very early times (Twelve Verses, pp. 191-211), and noting that an important lesson ended with Mark xvi. 8 (see Calendar of Lessons); he supposes that **τελος**, which would stand at the end of such a lesson, misled some scribe who had before him an exemplar of the Gospels whose last leaf (containing Mark xvi. 9-20, or according to Codd. 20, 215, 300 only vers. 16-20) was lost, as it might easily be in those older manuscripts wherein St. Mark stood last.

16. The codex lately discovered by Mrs. Lewis is said to omit the verses. But what is that against a host of other codices? And when the other MS. of the Curetonian includes the verses? Positive testimony is worth more than negative.

17. Dr. Hort, however, while he admits the possibility of the leaf containing vers. 9-20 having been lost in some very early copy, which thus would become the parent of transcripts having a mutilated text (Notes, p. 49), rather inconsistently arrives at the conclusion that the passage in question 'manifestly cannot claim any apostolic authority; but it is doubtless founded on some tradition of the apostolic age' (*ibid.* p. 51).

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

TEXTUAL CRITICISM: considers the account of the Adulterous Woman in John 8

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/adult.html>

Concerning the Story of the Adulteress in the Eighth Chapter of John

Biblical scholars are nearly all agreed that the *Story of the Adulteress* (also known as the *Pericope Adulterae* or the *Pericope de Adultera*) usually printed in Bibles as John 7:53-8:11 is a later addition to the Gospel. On this page I present some extended quotations from scholarly works that explain the reasons for this judgment. On another page I give an extract from one of the few scholarly defenders of the passage. To give my own opinion, it seems clear to me that the story does not belong in the Bible. If despite its absence from the early manuscripts this passage is thought to be so edifying that it is worthy of being treated as Holy Scripture, we might with equal justice add any number of edifying ancient stories to the Bible. The *Quo Vadis* legend about Peter's martyrdom, for instance, might just as well be added to the canonical book of Acts. For more on this, see my essay, *Quo Vadis?*

M.D.M.

Marginal annotations of various versions

American Standard Version (1901). Marginal note: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53--viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other."

Revised Standard Version (1946). 7:53-8:11 given in the margin, with the note, "Most of the ancient authorities either omit 7.53-8.11, or insert it, with variations of the text, here or at the end of this gospel or after Luke 21.38." Since 1971 the section is printed as ordinary text, with the note, "The most ancient authorities omit 7.53-8.11; other authorities add the passage here or after 7.36 or after 21.25 or after Luke 21.38, with variations of text."

New American Standard Version (1963). "John 7:53-8:11 is not found in most of the old mss."

New International Version (1973). "The most reliable early manuscripts omit John 7:53-8:11." Later editions of the NIV have, "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11."

New King James Version (1980). "NU [that is, the United Bible Societies' Greek text] brackets 7:53 through 8:11 as not in the original text. They are present in over 900 mss. of John."

Samuel P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London, 1854), pages 236-243.

In the application of criticism to some of the longer passages which are found in some copies, but omitted in others, it is necessary to state the evidence fully and distinctly, so as to obviate, if practicable, all possible misconception as to its value and bearing. A few such passages will now be considered; in doing which, it is only needful to premise that the principle of following the evidence which Divine Providence has caused to be transmitted to us, must in these cases, as well as in all that are similar, be strictly maintained.

St. John vii. 53--viii. 11, is a passage which has held its place in the text by a very doubtful tenure, as is familiar to all who are acquainted with the simple facts relative to biblical criticism; and even in the copies which contain these twelve verses there are peculiarities of a singular kind.

This narrative is found in some form or other in the following authorities: D F G H K U, and more than 300 cursive copies, without any note of doubt or distinction, as also in a few lectionaries. In E it is marked with asterisks in the margin; so, too, in sixteen cursive copies (two of which thus note only from viii. 3). In M there is an asterisk at vii. 53, and at viii. 3. In S, it is noted with obeli, and so, too, in more than forty cursive codices. This narrative is placed at the end of the Gospel, by itself, in ten cursive copies; four others similarly place viii. 3--11. Four MSS. (of which Cod. Leicestensis, 69, is one) place this passage at the end of Luke xxi., and one copy has it after John 7:36.

As to versions, it is found (i.) in Cod. Colbertinus and some others of the Old Latin (Cod. Veronensis is here defective); (ii.) the Vulgate, (iii.) Æthiopic, and (iv.) Jerusalem Syriac Lectionary. (As to the other versions, see below.)

It is mentioned by Jerome as being found in many copies, by Ambrose, Augustine, and other writers since the fourth century. But, though cited from the time of Augustine and onward, that father was well aware that the passage was far from universally read in the copies then extant; and he endeavored to account for the fact by a conjecture: "nonnulli modicæ, vel potius inimici veræ fidei, credo, metuentes peccandi impunitatem dari mulieribus suis, illud, quod de adulteræ indulgentia dominus fecit, auferrent de codicibus suis, quasi permissionem peccandi tribuerit, qui dixit, Deinceps noli peccare. [Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true

faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if he who had said, Sin no more, had granted permission to sin]" (De Adult. Conj., ii. 6, 7.) But this supposition of Augustine would not account for the fact of the omission of this passage having been so general, as it will be shown to be when the testimony of the versions against it is stated.

This passage is omitted by A B C T [also now Papyrus 66, Papyrus 75, N, W] (MSS. of the oldest class ⁽¹⁾), by L X Δ [also Y Θ Ψ], by Cod. 33, and more than fifty other cursive copies, by more than thirty lectionaries, in some of which, if not all, this passage is omitted where it would occur in the middle of a section. In connection with MSS. which omit this section, reference must be made to those mentioned above, which mark it as doubtful, or transfer it to the end of the Gospel, or place it elsewhere; for all these are so far witnesses against its insertion.

The versions to which this section do not belong are (i.) the Old Latin (as found in Cod. Vercellensis, the revised Cod. Brixianus, and some others), (ii.) the Peshito and (iii.) the Harclean Syriac, (iv.) the Memphitic, in the MSS. of value and authority, (v.) the Thebaic, (vi.) the Gothic, (vii.) the Armenian.

It is true that, in some of the editions of the Peshito Syriac, subsequent to that in Walton's Polyglot, this section is found; but it does not belong to that version: and so, too, such MSS. of the later Syriac as are cited as exhibiting it at all, mention that it is an addition. As to the Armenian, six old codices of those used by Zohrab omit the whole passage, as also do the MS. lectionaries; nineteen MSS. have the section separately, at the end of the Gospel, while only five (and those the most recent) place it here. One proof that it is a later addition, and not an original part of this version, is found in the great variety of forms in which it exists in those Armenian copies which contain it at all; some of these are quite peculiar, and resemble none of the Greek copies. It is thus rejected, as not a genuine part of that version. (For this precise statement I am indebted to Mr. Charles Rieu.)

Though the mere silence of ecclesiastical writers is no proof that they were unacquainted with a particular section, yet that silence becomes significant when they wrote expressly on the subject to which it relates, and when they wrote in such a way as to show that they could hardly by possibility have been acquainted with it. So, too, with regard to such ecclesiastical writers as wrote Commentaries.

Thus it may be held for certain, that Tertullian ⁽²⁾ and Cyprian knew nothing of the passage; while Origen and Chrysostom show in their Commentaries, that they were not aware of its existence. It has been indeed objected that nothing is proved by Origen's silence; because he often passes by portions of St. John's Gospel, and he had no occasion to mention this narrative: but, in reading his Commentary on this part of the Gospel, it is difficult (if not impossible) to imagine that he knew of anything between vii. 52 and viii. 12: for he cites and comments on every verse from vii. 40 to 52, and then at once continues from

viii. 12 in the same manner (iv. p. 299, ed. De la Rue). The silence of Chrysostom on the subject, as well as that of Cyril of Alexandria, and Theodorus of Mopsuestia, was long ago noticed.

The omission of this section by Nonnus, in his metrical Paraphrase of this Gospel, is worthy of notice; for though he does pass by parts, yet no narrative portion of certain genuineness, and of such length as this, is unnoticed.

It thus appears that the oldest MS. authority for this narration is D, and that the only important versions in its favour are the Vulgate, and such copies of the Old Latin as contain it. The Vulgate resolves itself into the testimony of Jerome, who mentions that copies existed of both kinds, --those which contained it and those which did not. I have put together the authorities which contain this narration, because, in fact, those in which it is found give it in such a variety of phraseology, as exceeds the difference commonly understood by the term various readings. In D, the oldest MS. which contains it, it is utterly unlike the other copies; and they, too, abound in extraordinary variations. This circumstance would weaken the testimony of the authorities which contain this narration, even if there had been a less conclusive array of witnesses (all the oldest MSS. except D, most versions, and decided testimony of fathers) on the other side.

In the fourth century, this section seems to have obtained a place in some copies (first perhaps in the West, where it was first mentioned), but even then it is spoken of doubtfully; it gradually was received into most MSS., but still with expressions of uncertainty, and with notes of its doubtful authenticity; and thus, even though it was adopted as a part of the printed text by the first editors, yet its genuineness was not believed by Erasmus himself: the same opinion was held in that century by Calvin, Beza, ⁽³⁾ and other biblical scholars. If the last three hundred years have removed all feeling of question from many, it has not been from better grounds of certainty having been discovered, but from that kind of traditional inertness of mind, which has rendered many unconscious of what have been deemed the most manifest facts of criticism.

We can no more canonise this passage, if it were not genuine Scripture from the beginning, than we can the books of the Apocrypha, or any other writings. If the best MSS., versions, and fathers, know nothing of such a portion of Holy Scripture, it behoves all who value God's word not to adopt, as part of it, what is not only unsupported by sufficient evidence, but which is opposed by that which could hardly be surmounted. The ancient translators in general could not have agreed, in so many countries, to pass by so considerable a portion of this Gospel, if they knew it, or had it in their Greek copies.

I do not rest at all on the internal difficulties connected with this passage, on the supposition that it is genuine Scripture; because, if it had been sufficiently attested, they would not present anything insurmountable. The peculiarities of the language are indeed remarkable, and very unlike anything else in St. John's Gospel; but to this it might be said, that the copies differ so

much that it is almost impossible to judge what the true phraseology is. Perhaps the difficulties in the passage have been over-estimated: at least we have no reason to conjecture that any omitted it on account of such difficulties, any more than we have to think that any expunged it on doctrinal grounds, as suggested by Augustine.

It may be felt by some to be a serious thing to conclude, that twelve whole verses which they have been accustomed to read are no part of Holy Scripture; and yet if they are only in possession of a moderate share of information, they must know well that they are and have always been regarded as of unproved genuineness: I would also ask such, if it is not a very serious thing to accept, as part of the word of God, what (as they have the full opportunity of knowing) rests on precarious grounds, and is contradicted by the best testimonies? Would it not render all Scripture doubtful, and go far to undermine all true thoughts of its authority, if all that rests on utterly insufficient evidence, and all that is supported by unquestionable testimonies, were placed on the same ground? It is impossible to give real and sufficient sanction to that which is not attested to be a genuine part of a book of Scripture, and thus, while it is in vain to attempt to raise it to the place of authority, the only consequence will be to depress the true Scripture to the low and unsatisfactory level of such unattested additions.

Though I am fully satisfied that this narration is not a genuine part of St. John's Gospel, and though I regard the endeavors to make the evidence appear satisfactory to be such as would involve all Holy Scripture in a mist of uncertainty, I see no reason for doubting that it contains a true narration. There is nothing unworthy of the acting of the Lord Jesus detailed in this history. And thus I accept the narrative as true, although its form and phraseology are wholly uncertain, and although I do not believe it to be a divine record. No doubt, that there were many narrations current in the early church of some of the many unrecorded actions of our Lord, and the only wonder is that more have not been transmitted to us. This, from the variety of its forms, seems to have been handed down through more than one channel. Perhaps some one added it at the end of John's Gospel, as one of the "many things which Jesus did which are not written in this book," and others afterwards placed it where it seemed to them to belong.

We learn from Eusebius, that Papias transmitted an account of a woman who was accused before our Lord, "Papias also put forth another history concerning a woman accused of many sins before the Lord; and this history is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews." (H.E., iii. 39) The Hebrew original of St. Matthew's Gospel appears to have been the basis of "the Gospel according to the Hebrews"; and it seems, from the mode in which Eusebius mentions the narrative as having proceeded from Papias, that he regarded it as a later addition introduced into that Hebrew document. It has been much discussed whether this is the same as the narration in John vii. 53--viii. 11. In favour of the identity may be mentioned that in D (Cod. Bezae) the sin of the woman is spoken of in a general manner, *a woman seized for sin*, instead of *a woman*

caught in adultery. And if it had been circulated in the fourth century in a Hebrew (Syro-Chaldaic) dress, the leading forms in which it is now found might have originated in different Greek translations of the narrative; or else from the writings of Papias in Greek, and from a Greek translation of the Syro-Chaldaic form of the narration. From Ruffinus's version of the passage in Eusebius, it seems clear that in the age immediately subsequent to that historian, it was thought that the narration to which he referred, was the same as that which had by this time found its way into some copies. Ruffinus renders, "Simul et historiam quandam subjungit de muliere adultera, quæ accusata est a Judæis apud Dominum." Attention to this, and also to the point of resemblance between the Cod. Bezae and the words of Eusebius, was directed by Dr. Routh; who adds, "Evidenter constat, etiamsi suspecta hæc evangelii pericope eadem esse censeatur atque historia Papiana, nondum eam codici Novi Testamenti tempore Eusebii insertam fuisse" (Rel. Sac., i. 39). The judgment expressed in these last words, however contrary to the notions of those who prefer modern tradition to ancient evidence, is fully confirmed by the most searching investigations. We first hear of this narrative in any copies of the New Testament after the middle of the fourth century. The statement of Eusebius gives us a probable account of its origin, and I believe that we shall not err if we accept this as a true history, transmitted not by the inspired apostle St. John, but by the early ecclesiastical writer Papias.

1. A and C are defective in this part of St. John's Gospel; but it is certain, from the exactitude with which the quantity in each page of these MSS. can be calculated, that they could not have contained these twelve verses.

2. Granville Penn, in his "Annotations to the Book of the New Covenant," states well the argument which may be drawn from Tertullian's silence: he says, "That the passage was wholly unknown to Tertullian, at the end of the second century, is manifest in his book *De Pudicitia*. The Bishop of Rome had issued an edict, granting pardon to the crime of adultery, on repentance. This new assumption of power fired the indignation of Tertullian, who thus apostrophised him: "Audio [etiam] edictum esse propositum, et quidem peremptorium, Pontifex scilicet Maximus [quod est] episcopus episcoporum, dicit [edicit]: Ego et moechiæ et fornicationis delicta, poenitentia functis dimitto" (c. 1). He then breaks out in terms of the highest reprobation against that invasion of the divine prerogative; and (c. 6) thus challenges: "Si ostendas de quibus patrociniis exemplorum præceptorumque coelestium, soli moechiæ, et in ea fornicationi quoque, januam poenitentiae expandas, ad hanc jam lineam dimicabit nostra congressio." "If thou canst show me by what authority of heavenly examples or precepts thou openest a door for penitence to adultery alone, and therein to fornication, our controversy shall be disputed on that ground." And he concludes with asserting, "Quæcunque auctoritas, quæcunque ratio moeche et fornicatori pacem ecclesiasticam reddit, eadem dedebit et homicidæ et idololatriæ poenitentibus subvenire." "Whatever authority, whatever consideration, restores the peace of the church to the adulterer and fornicator, ought to come to the relief of those who repent of murder or idolatry." It is manifest, therefore, that the copies of St. John with which Tertullian was acquainted did not contain the *exemplum*

coeleste,--the *divine example*, devised in the story of the "woman taken in adultery" (pp. 267, 268). Was this edict that of Callistus, referred to in the recently-discovered *Philosophoumena* (of Hippolytus), ix. 12, pp. 290, 291?

3. Theodore Beza [whose annotated Greek text was the basis of the King James version] did not suppose that a text ought to be traditionally adopted, and then, as it were, stereotyped: his notes gave him the opportunity for expressing his opinions; and he thus proved that if his attention were properly directed to ancient evidence on a passage, he so weighed it as to consider that it ought to prevail. Thus the passage in John viii. 1-12, the omission of which by critical editors has seemed to some such a proof of temerity, or of want of reverence for Holy Scripture, was differently regarded by Beza: he states the manner in which various ancient writers knew nothing about it, and the great variation in MSS.; he then concludes thus:--"As far as I am concerned, I do not conceal that I justly regard as suspected what the ancients with such consent either rejected or did not know of. Also such a variety in the reading causes me to doubt the fidelity of the whole of that narration." [from Tregelles p. 34. Notice also the comment of John Calvin (*Commentary on the Gospel of John*, on John 8:1). Calvin introduces the passage thus: "It is plain enough that this passage was unknown anciently to the Greek Churches; and some conjecture that it has been brought from some other place and inserted here. But as it has always been received by the Latin Churches, and is found in many old Greek manuscripts, and contains nothing unworthy of an Apostolic Spirit, there is no reason why we should refuse to apply it to our advantage." Notice that Calvin does not pretend to decide the question of authenticity here. - M.D.M.].

F.H.A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (4th edition. London, 1894), volume ii, pages 364-368.

. . . on all intelligent principles of mere criticism the passage must needs be abandoned: and such is the conclusion arrived at by all the critical editors . . . we cannot help admitting that if this section be indeed the composition of St. John, it has been transmitted to us under circumstances widely different from those connected with any other genuine passage of Scripture whatever.

Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, 1971), pages 219-221.

The evidence for the non-Johannine origin of the pericope of the adulteress is overwhelming. It is absent from such early and diverse manuscripts as Papyrus^{66.75} Aleph B L N T W X Y Δ Θ Ψ 0141 0211 22 33 124 157 209 788 828 1230 1241 1242 1253 2193 *al.* Codices A and C are defective in this part of John, but it is highly probable that neither contained the pericope, for careful measurement discloses that there would not have been space enough on the missing leaves to include the section along with the rest of the text. In the East the passage is absent from the oldest form of the Syriac version (syr^{c.s.} and the best manuscripts of syr^p), as well as from the Sahidic and the sub-

Achmimic versions and the older Bohairic manuscripts. Some Armenian manuscripts and the old Georgian version omit it. In the West the passage is absent from the Gothic version and from several Old Latin manuscripts (it^{a.l^e.q}). No Greek Church Father prior to Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth century) comments on the passage, and Euthymius declares that the accurate copies of the Gospels do not contain it.

When one adds to this impressive and diversified list of external evidence the consideration that the style and vocabulary of the pericope differ noticeably from the rest of the Fourth Gospel (see any critical commentary), and that it interrupts the sequence of 7.52 and 8.12 ff., the case against its being of Johannine authorship appears to be conclusive.

At the same time the account has all the earmarks of historical veracity. It is obviously a piece of oral tradition which circulated in certain parts of the Western church and which was subsequently incorporated into various manuscripts at various places. Most copyists apparently thought that it would interrupt John's narrative least if it were inserted after 7.52 (D E F G H K M U Γ Π 28 700 892 *al*). Others placed it after 7.36 (ms. 225) or after 7.44 (several Georgian mss.) or after 21.25 (1 565 1076 1570 1582 arm^{mss}) or after Luke 21.38 (*f*¹³). Significantly enough, in many of the witnesses which contain the passage it is marked with asterisks or obeli, indicating that, though the scribes included the account, they were aware that it lacked satisfactory credentials.

Sometimes it is stated that the pericope was deliberately expunged from the Fourth Gospel because it was liable to be understood in a sense too indulgent to adultery. But, apart from the absence of any instance elsewhere of scribal excision of an extensive passage because of moral prudence, this theory fails "to explain why the three preliminary verses (vii 53; viii 1-2), so important as apparently descriptive of the time and place at which all the discourses of chapter viii were spoken, should have been omitted with the rest" (Hort, "Notes on Select Readings," pp. 86 f.).

Although the committee [that is, the editorial committee of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*] was unanimous that the pericope was originally no part of the Fourth Gospel, in deference to the evident antiquity of the passage a majority decided to print it, enclosed within double square brackets, at its traditional place following John 7.52.

Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii)*, in the *Anchor Bible* series (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), pages 335-6.

Problems of Authorship and of Canonicity

These problems must be treated as a series of distinct questions. The *first* question is whether the story of the adulteress was part of the original Gospel according to John or whether it was inserted at a later period. The answer to this question is clearly that it was a later insertion. This passage is not found in any of the important early Greek textual witnesses of Eastern provenance (e.g., in neither Bodmer papyrus); nor is it found in the Old Syriac or the Coptic. There are no comments on this passage by the Greek writers on John of the first Christian millenium, and it is only from about AD 900 that it begins to appear in the standard Greek text. The evidence for the passage as Scripture in the early centuries is confined to the Western Church. It appears in some Old Latin texts of the Gospels. Ambrose and Augustine wanted it read as part of the Gospel, and Jerome included it in the Vulgate. It appears in the fifth-century Greco-Latin Codex Bezae.

However, a good case can be argued that the story had its origins in the East and is truly ancient (see Schilling, *art. cit.*). Eusebius (*Hist.* III 39:17; GCS 9¹: 292) says, "Papias relates another story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews." If this is the same story as that of the adulteress, the reference would point to early Palestinian origins; but we cannot be certain that our story is the one meant. The third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* (II 24:6; Funk ed., I, 93) gives a clear reference to the story of the adulteress and uses it as a presumably well-known example of our Lord's gentleness; this work is of Syrian origin, and the reference means that the story was known (but not necessarily as Scripture) in second-century Syria. From the standpoint of internal criticism, the story is quite plausible and quite like some of the other gospel stories of attempts to trap Jesus (Luke xx 20, 27). There is nothing in the story itself or its language that would forbid us to think of it as an early story concerning Jesus. Becker argues strongly for this thesis.

If the story of the adulteress was an ancient story about Jesus, why did it not immediately become part of the accepted Gospels? Riesenfeld has given the most plausible explanation of the delay in the acceptance of this story. The ease with which Jesus forgave the adulteress was hard to reconcile with the stern penitential discipline in vogue in the early Church. It was only when a more liberal penitential practice was firmly established that this story received wide acceptance. (Riesenfeld traces its liturgical acceptance to the fifth century as a reading for the feast of St. Pelagia.)

The *second* question is whether or not the story is of Johannine origin. The fact that the story was added to the Gospel only at a later period does not rule out the possibility that we are dealing with a stray narrative composed in Johannine circles. The Greek text of the story shows a number of variant readings (stemming from the fact that it was not fully accepted at first), but in general the style is not Johannine either in vocabulary or grammar. Stylistically, the story is more Lucan than Johannine.

Nor is the manuscript evidence unanimous in associating the story with John. One important group of witnesses places the story after Luke xxi 38, a

localization which would be far more appropriate than the present position of the story in John, where it breaks up the sequence of the discourses at Tabernacles.

If the story was not of Johannine origin and is really out of place, what prompted its localization after John vii 52? (actually, a few witnesses place it elsewhere in John: after vii 36 or at the end of the Gospel.) There are several views. Schilling, p. 97 ff., insisting on the parallels with the Susanna story, draws attention to echoes of Daniel in John, and thus makes the Daniel motif a guiding factor to the introduction of the story of the adulteress into John. A more certain explanation for the localization of the story in the general context of John vii and viii can be found in the fact that it illustrates certain statements of Jesus in those chapters, for example, viii 15, "I pass judgement on no one"; viii 46, "Can any of you convict me of sin?" Derrett, p. 1³, who thinks that the key to the story lies in the unworthiness of the accusers and the witnesses, points out that the theme of admissibility of evidence comes up in the immediate context of vii 51 and viii 13. Hoskyns, p. 571, hits on a truth when he says that, while the story may be textually out of place, from a theological viewpoint it fits into the theme of judgment in ch. viii.

The *third* question is whether the story is canonical or not. For some this question will have already been answered above, since in their view the fact that the story is a later addition to the Gospel and is not of Johannine origin means that it is not canonical Scripture (even though it may be an ancient and true story). For others canonicity is a question of traditional ecclesiastical acceptance and usage. Thus, in the Roman Catholic Church the criterion of canonicity is acceptance into the Vulgate, for the Church has used the Vulgate as its Bible for centuries. The story of the adulteress was accepted by Jerome, and so Catholics regard it as canonical. It also found its way into the received text of the Byzantine Church, and ultimately into the King James Bible. And so the majority of the non-Roman Christians also accept the story as Scripture.

----- Works cited by Brown -----

Becker, U., *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin* (Beihefte zur ZNW, no. 28; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1963).

Derrett, J.D.M., "Law in the New Testament: The Story of the Woman Taken in Adultery," NTS 10 (1963-64), 1-16. Abbreviated in StEv, II, pp. 170-73.

Riesenfeld, H., "Die Perikope von der Ehebrecherin in der frühkirchlichen Tradition," *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok* 17 (1952), 106-11.

Schilling, Frederick A., "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress," *Anglican Theological Review* 37 (1955), pp. 91-106.



Page NB (52) of Papyrus 66, a codex of John's Gospel from about AD 200, illustrates the omission of the Story of the Adulteress from early manuscripts. The text begins in the middle of the word *εραυνησον* ("search") in John 7:52. On the second line the sentence ends with a punctuation mark and is immediately followed by *Παλιν ουν αυτοις ελαλησεν ο Ις* ("again Jesus spoke to them") in 8:12. The manuscript has been annotated by a scribe who used diagonal strokes to note a word-order variant in the first and second lines, but the Story of the Adulteress is omitted without any scribal notation.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Story of John Wycliffe

<http://www.answers.com/topic/john-wycliffe>

John Wycliffe

- **Born:** c. 1324
- **Birthplace:** Hipswell, England
- **Died:** 31 December 1384
- **Best Known As:** Church reformer who translated the Bible into English

John Wycliffe (sometimes Wyclif) was a scholar at Oxford who wrote on philosophy and theology. In the 1370s he was condemned for errors and heresies by Popes Gregory XI and Urban VI, but his popularity in England allowed him to escape arrest and persecution by the Church. In 1380 Wyclif claimed that transubstantiation was not supported by the Bible; he was condemned at Oxford as a heretic and forced to retire. After his retirement he continued to write and is credited with initiating the first full English translation of the Bible. His followers, called Lollards, are considered forerunners to the Protestant Reformation.

The English theologian and reformer John Wyclif (c. 1330-1384) was the most influential ecclesiastical writer in England in the second half of the 14th century.

John Wyclif's denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation, his strong belief in the sole authority of Scripture, and his views on the right of the laity to confiscate Church property brought him under attack by the ecclesiastical leaders of his day. His ideas, however, had an important shaping effect on the Lollard movement in England and on the Hussite movement in Bohemia, and his career and ideas anticipated the work of later English reformers in the 16th century.

During the second half of the 14th century a series of changes took place in England and elsewhere that altered the nature of English society in a manner that was to last for several centuries. In spite of occasional lulls, England was involved throughout this period in a war with France that ultimately resulted in the loss of English territory on the Continent. The war also hastened a growing separation between the English Church and the papacy, which from 1305 until 1378 was resident at Avignon and French-controlled and which after 1378 was split into two rival factions that further eroded respect for the authority and sanctity of the Holy Office. Both in literature and in theological writings many doctrines and practices of the Roman Church were coming under attack, with the result that England increasingly moved in the direction of nonconformity. The political and social discontent of the period, one evidence of which was the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, increased the authority of Parliament as the forum for settling disputes

and for altering governmental policy. England also experienced in this period a revival in vernacular literature, in which the leading figure was Geoffrey Chaucer.

Little is known of the life of Wyclif before he arrived at Oxford, where he remained throughout most of his life. It seems most probable that he derived from a family of the lesser gentry in the area around Richmond. In 1356 he completed his arts degree at Oxford as a junior fellow of Merton College. Soon he shifted his affiliation to Balliol College, where, before 1360, he was elected master. During the summer of 1361 Wyclif resigned that position to accept the richest benefice within the gift of that college, namely, the rectorship of Fillingham In Lincolnshire. On the basis of that income he rented rooms in Queen's College and pursued his theological degree, which he completed in 1372. Although eventually critical of pluralism and absenteeism, as a student he held more than one benefice at a time and was not always conscientious enough to pay a vicar to perform the services for which he was receiving the revenues.

Political Career

In 1372 Wyclif entered the service of the King as a theological adviser and diplomat. The year before, he had attended Parliament in the company of two Austin friars, who argued there the thesis that dominion, or the right to exercise authority and to own property, was granted by God only to those in a state of grace. Sinful clergy might, therefore, be justifiably deprived of their property by a pious layman on behalf of the common good. This concept, known as the lordship of grace, suited the government and the lay members of Parliament who were attempting to raise funds in support of the war against France and who were having difficulty convincing the clergy to undertake half of those expenses.

Wyclif made this issue his own, and in a series of treatises during the next few years he argued for the validity of expropriation by the government of a certain portion of the Church's wealth. His attack was directed primarily against the monastic establishments in England rather than against the mendicant friars who, at least in theory, supported the idea of apostolic poverty and directly served the needs of the people. Although he may have been sincere in his campaign, his antagonism toward the monks resulted in part from his dismissal from the wardenship of Canterbury College at Oxford in 1371 in favor of the monk Henry Woodhall. Moreover, Wyclif's arguments in favor of disendowment brought him opportunities and rewards that he had been slow to acquire before, such as the rectorship of Lutterworth, given to him by the King in 1374 and upon which he eventually retired, and an appointment in the same year to a commission that met with papal delegates in Bruges over the question of papal taxes and the right of filling vacancies in major English sees and abbacies.

In 1376 Wyclif became closely associated with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, a younger son of the ailing king, Edward III. During the last years of Edward's reign and the minority of Edward's grandson, Richard II, Gaunt exercised control of the royal government. Until 1378 Wyclif was protected by Gaunt from being disciplined by Church leaders as a result of his treatises attacking ecclesiastical possessioners. When, in 1377, Wyclif was called to St. Paul's Cathedral by William Courtenay, Bishop of London, to answer for his writings, Gaunt and his closest associates were there on Wyclif's behalf, hoping to use the occasion to propagandize the cause of taxing the Church. The bishop was frustrated in his attempt to convict Wyclif, but the

incident increased the animosity that the people of London held for Gaunt and for his party. The next year Wyclif was summoned to Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the archbishop of Canterbury, to answer charges of false teaching. Again the royal family intervened, and Wyclif was freed with the warning to cease teaching questionable doctrines.

From Harassment to Heresy

The year 1378 was a crucial date in the life of Wyclif. The return of the papacy to Rome and the papal election that year resulted in the election of two popes, an Italian, resident at Rome, and a Frenchman, resident at Avignon. While the papal schism weakened the position of the papacy in taking action against Wyclif in England, it also permitted a reconciliation between the English government and the Italian pope, thus decreasing the usefulness of Wyclif. He was encouraged by his royal protectors to put down his pen and to return to the academic debates of Oxford.

The cause of reform, however, had captured Wyclif's imagination, and he did not cease to write and publicize his views. Beginning in 1378 he wrote a series of polemical and doctrine treatises that slowly carried him in the direction of heresy. The first work was *On the Truth of Holy Scripture*; it was a harmless and somewhat incoherent defense of the inspiration of Scripture and of the importance of its literal meaning. In another work, *On the Church*, Wyclif restricted true membership in the Church to the elect, or predestined, a group known only to God and which might not include the pope. Since one could not alter this judgment of God, prayers for the dead were useless. In his works *On the Office of King* and *On the Power of the Pope* he raised temporal power above that of the Church and tried to demonstrate that the authority claimed by the papacy had no foundation in Scripture or the life of the early Church.

The work of Wyclif that most disturbed his contemporaries was *On the Eucharist*, composed in 1379. In this book he attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation and the idea of Christ's real, or corporeal, presence in the Eucharist after consecration. According to Wyclif, the validity of the sacrament depended upon the sanctity of the one receiving it, not on the consecration of the priest.

Wyclif's attack on such a firmly established doctrine of the Church of his day and his simultaneous attack on the mendicant friars left him almost totally without supporters. Early in 1381 he was condemned by the chancellor of Oxford for teaching heretical doctrine on the Eucharist and prohibited from further expressing his views. Ignoring the advice of friends to remain silent, Wyclif published a defense of his condemned opinions under the title *Confession* and, with that parting shot, left Oxford for his rectorship at Lutterworth, where he remained until his death. In 1382 Wyclif composed his last work, the *Trialogue*, in which he summarized many of his earlier opinions and called for a vernacular translation of the Bible for the use of uneducated priests and the literate laity.

Further Reading

The best introduction to the life and thought of Wyclif is Kenneth B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (1952). Recent works include Edward A. Block, *John Wyclif: Radical Dissenter* (1962), and John Stacey, *John Wyclif and Reform* (1964). For

background information consult Herbert B. Workman, *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* (1926), and George M. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (repr. 1963).

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: John Wycliffe more in-depth link

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-wycliffe.html>

English Bible History

John Wycliffe



The first hand-written English language Bible manuscripts were produced in **1380's** AD by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Wycliffe, (also spelled "Wycliff" & "Wyclif"), was well-known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teaching of the organized Church, which he believed to be contrary to the Bible. With the help of his followers, called the Lollards, and his assistant Purvey, and many other faithful scribes, Wycliffe produced dozens of English language manuscript copies of the scriptures. They were translated out of the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to Wycliffe. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug-up, crushed, and scattered in the river!

John Wycliffe (1320-1384) was a theologian and early proponent of reform in the Roman Catholic Church during the 14th century. He initiated the first translation of the Bible into the English language and is considered the main precursor of the Protestant Reformation. Wycliffe was born at Ipreswell (modern Hipswell), Yorkshire, England, between 1320 and 1330; and he died at Lutterworth (near Leicester) December 31, 1384.

The Early Life of John Wycliffe

His family was of early Saxon origin, long settled in Yorkshire. In his day the family was a large one, covering a considerable territory, and its principal seat was Wycliffe-on-Tees, of which Ipreswell was an outlying hamlet. 1324 is the year usually given for Wycliffe's birth. Wycliffe probably received his early education close to home. It is not known when he first went to Oxford, with which he was so closely connected till the end of his life. He was at Oxford in about 1345, when a series of illustrious names was adding glory to the fame of the university--such as those of Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, Thomas Bradwardine, William of Occam, and Richard Fitzralph.

Wycliffe owed much to Occam; he showed an interest in natural science and mathematics, but applied himself to the study of theology, ecclesiastical law, and philosophy. Even his opponents acknowledged the keenness of his dialectic. His writings prove that he was well grounded in Roman and English law, as well as in native history. A family whose seat was in the neighborhood of Wycliffe's home-- Bernard Castle--

had founded Balliol College, Oxford to which Wycliffe belonged, first as scholar, then as master. He attained the headship no later than 1360.

The Early Career of John Wycliffe

When he was presented by the college (1361) with the parish of Fyningham in Lincolnshire, he had to give up the leadership of Balliol, though he could continue to live at Oxford. His university career followed the usual course. While as baccalaureate he busied himself with natural science and mathematics, as master he had the right to read in philosophy. More significant was his interest in Bible study, which he pursued after becoming bachelor in theology. His performance led Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, to place him at the head of Canterbury Hall in 1365.

Between 1366 and 1372 he became a doctor of theology; as such he had the right to lecture upon systematic divinity, which he did. In 1368 he gave up his living at Fyningham and took over the rectory of Ludgershall in Buckinghamshire, not far from Oxford, which enabled him to retain his connection with the university.

Roots of Wycliffe's Reformation Activities

It was not as a teacher or preacher that Wycliffe gained his position in history; this came from his activities in ecclesiastical politics, in which he engaged about the mid-1370s, when his reformatory work also began. In 1374 he was among the English delegates at a peace congress at Bruges. He may have been given this position because of the spirited and patriotic behavior with which in the year 1366 he sought the interests of his country against the demands of the papacy. It seems he had a reputation as a patriot and reformer; this suggests the answer to the question how he came to his reformatory ideas. Even if older evangelical parties did not exist in England before Wycliffe, he might easily have been influenced by continental evangelicals who abounded. It is highly probable that the older type of doctrine and practice represented by the Iro-Scottish Christians of the pre-Roman time persisted till the time of Wycliffe and reappeared in Lollardism.

The root of the Wycliffe's reformation movement must be traced to his Bible study and to the ecclesiastical-political lawmaking of his times. He was well acquainted with the tendencies of the ecclesiastical politics to which England owed its position. He had studied the proceedings of King Edward I of England, and had attributed to them the basis of parliamentary opposition to papal usurpations. He found them a model for methods of procedure in matters connected with the questions of worldly possessions and the Church. Many sentences in his book on the Church recall the institution of the commission of 1274, which caused problems for the English clergy. He considered that the example of Edward I should be borne in mind by the government of his time; but that the aim should be a reformation of the entire ecclesiastical establishment. Similar was his position on the enactments induced by the ecclesiastical politics of Edward III, with which he was well acquainted, which are fully reflected in his political tracts.

Political Career of John Wycliffe

The Reformer's entrance upon the stage of ecclesiastical politics is usually related to the question of feudal tribute to which England had been rendered liable by King John, which had remained unpaid for thirty-three years until Pope Urban V in 1365 demanded it. Parliament declared that neither John nor any other had the right to subject England to any foreign power. Should the pope attempt to enforce his claim by arms, he would be met with united resistance. Urban apparently recognized his mistake and dropped his claim. But there was no talk of a patriotic uprising. The tone of the pope was, in fact, not threatening, and he did not wish to draw England into the maelstrom of politics of western and southern Europe. Sharp words were bound to be heard in England, because of the close relations of the papacy with France. It is said that on this occasion Wycliffe served as theological counsel to the government, composed a polemical

tract dealing with the tribute, and defended an unnamed monk over against the conduct of the government and parliament. This would place the entrance of Wycliffe into politics about 1365-66. But Wycliffe's more important participation began with the Peace Congress at Bruges. There in 1374 negotiations were carried on between France and England, while at the same time commissioners from England dealt with papal delegates respecting the removal of ecclesiastical annoyances. Wycliffe was among these, under a decree dated July 26, 1374. The choice of a harsh opponent of the Avignon system would have broken up rather than furthered the peace negotiations. It seems he was designated purely as a theologian, and so considered himself, since a noted Scripture scholar was required alongside of those learned in civil and canon law. There was no need for a man of renown, or a pure advocate of state interests. His predecessor in a like case was John Owtred, a monk who formulated the statement that St. Peter had united in his hands spiritual and temporal power--the opposite of what Wycliffe taught. In the days of the mission to Bruges Owtred still belonged in Wycliffe's circle of friends.

Wycliffe was still regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as trustworthy; his opposition to the ruling conduct of the Church may have escaped notice. It was difficult to recognize him as a heretic. The controversies in which men engaged at Oxford were philosophical rather than purely theological or ecclesiastical-political, and the method of discussion was academic and scholastic. The kind of men with whom Wycliffe dealt included the Carmelite monk John Kynningham over theological questions (*utrum Christus esset humanitas*), or ecclesiastical-political ones (*De dominatione civili*; *De dotatione ecclesiae*). Wycliffe regarded it as a sin to incite the pope to excommunicate laymen who had deprived wicked clergy of their temporalities, his dictum being that a man in a state of sin had no claim upon government.

Wycliffe blamed the Benedictine and professor of theology at Oxford, William Wynham of St. Albans (where the anti-Wycliffe trend was considerable) for making public controversies which had previously been confined to the academic arena. Wycliffe himself tells (*Sermones*, iii. 199) how he concluded that there was a great contrast between what the Church was and what it ought to be, and saw the necessity for reform. His ideas stress the perniciousness of the temporal rule of the clergy and its incompatibility with the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and make note of the tendencies which were evident in the measures of the "Good Parliament".

Wycliffe's Public Declaration of his Ideas

Wycliffe was among those to whom the thought of the secularization of ecclesiastical properties in England was welcome. His patron was John of Gaunt. He was no longer satisfied with his chair as the means of propagating his ideas, and soon after his return from Bruges he began to express them in tracts and longer works--his great work, the *Summa theologiae*, was written in support of them. In the first book, concerned with the government of God and the ten commandments, he attacked the temporal rule of the clergy--in temporal things the king is above the pope, and the collection of annates and indulgences is simony. But he entered the politics of the day with his great work *De civili dominio*. Here he introduced those ideas by which the good parliament was governed-- which involved the renunciation by the Church of temporal dominion. The items of the "long bill" appear to have been derived from his work. In this book are the strongest outcries against the Avignon system with its commissions, exactions, squandering of charities by unfit priests, and the like. To change this is the business of the State. If the clergy misuses ecclesiastical property, it must be taken away; if the king does not do this, he is remiss. The work contains 18 strongly stated theses, opposing the governing methods of the rule of the Church and the straightening out of its temporal possessions. Wycliffe had set these ideas before his students at Oxford in 1376, after becoming involved in controversy with William Wadford and others. Rather than restricting these matters to the classroom, he wanted them proclaimed more widely and wanted temporal and spiritual lords to take note. While the latter attacked him and sought ecclesiastical censure, he recommended himself to the former by his criticism of the worldly possessions of the clergy.

Wycliffe's Conflict with the Church

Wycliffe wanted to see his ideas actualized--his fundamental belief was that the Church should be poor, as in the days of the apostles. He had not yet broken with the mendicant friars, and from these John of Gaunt chose Wycliffe's defenders. While the Reformer later claimed that it was not his purpose to incite temporal lords to confiscation of the property of the Church, the real tendencies of the propositions remained unconcealed. The result of the same doctrines in Bohemia--that land which was richest in ecclesiastical foundations--was that in a short time the entire church estate was taken over and a revolution brought about in the relations of temporal holdings. It was in keeping with the plans of Gaunt to have a personality like Wycliffe on his side. Especially in London the Reformer's views won support; partisans of the nobility attached themselves to him, and the lower orders gladly heard his sermons. He preached in city churches, and London rang with his praises.

The first to oppose his theses were monks of those orders which held possessions, to whom his theories were dangerous. Oxford and the episcopate were later blamed by the Curia, which charged them with so neglecting their duty that the breaking of the evil fiend into the English sheepfold could be noticed in Rome before it was in England. Wycliffe was summoned before William Courtenay, bishop of London, on Feb. 19, 1377, in order "to explain the wonderful things which had streamed forth from his mouth." The exact charges are not known, as the matter did not get as far as a definite examination. Gaunt, the earl marshal Henry Percy, and a number of other friends accompanied Wycliffe, and four begging friars were his advocates. A crowd gathered at the church, and at the entrance of the party animosities began to show, especially in an angry exchange between the bishop and the Reformer's protectors. Gaunt declared that he would humble the pride of the English clergy and their partisans, hinting at the intent to secularize the possessions of the Church.

Most of the English clergy were irritated by this encounter, and attacks upon Wycliffe began, finding their response in the second and third books of his work dealing with civil government. These books carry a sharp polemic, hardly surprising when it is recalled that his opponents charged Wycliffe with blasphemy and scandal, pride and heresy. He appeared to have openly advised the secularization of English church property, and the dominant parties shared his conviction that the monks could better be controlled if they were relieved from the care of secular affairs.

The bitterness occasioned by this advice will be better understood when it is remembered that at that time the papacy was at war with the Florentines and was in dire straits. The demand of the Minorites that the Church should live in poverty as it did in the days of the apostles was not pleasing in such a crisis. It was under these conditions that Pope Gregory XI, who in January, 1377, had gone from Avignon to Rome, sent, on May 22 five copies of his bull against Wycliffe, despatching one to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the others to the bishop of London, Edward III, the chancellor, and the university; among the enclosures were 18 theses of his, which were denounced as erroneous and dangerous to Church and State.

The reformatory activities of Wycliffe effectively began here: all the great works, especially his *Summa theologiae*, are closely connected with the condemnation of his 18 theses, while the entire literary energies of his later years rest upon this foundation. The next aim of his opponents--to make him out a revolutionary in politics--failed. The situation in England resulted in damage to them; on June 21, 1377, Edward III died. His successor was Richard II, a boy, who was under the influence of John of Gaunt, his uncle. So it resulted that the bull against Wycliffe did not become public till Dec. 18. Parliament, which met in October, came into sharp conflict with the Curia. Among the propositions which Wycliffe, at the direction of the government, worked out for parliament was one which speaks out distinctly against the exhaustion of England by the Curia.

Wycliffe tried to gain public favour by laying his theses before parliament, and then made them public in a tract, accompanied by explanations, limitations, and interpretations. After the session of parliament was over, he was called upon to answer, and in March, 1378, he appeared at the episcopal palace at Lambeth to defend himself. The preliminaries were not yet finished when a noisy mob gathered with the purpose of saving him; the king's mother, Joan of Kent, also took up his cause. The bishops, who were divided, satisfied themselves with forbidding him to speak further on the controversy. At Oxford the vice chancellor, following papal directions, confined the Reformer for some time in Black Hall, from which

Wycliffe was released on threats from his friends; the vice-chancellor was himself confined in the same place because of his treatment of Wycliffe. The latter then took up the usage according to which one who remained for 44 days under excommunication came under the penalties executed by the State, and wrote his *De incarcerandis fedelibus*, in which he demanded that it should be legal for the excommunicated to appeal to the king and his council against the excommunication; in this writing he laid open the entire case and in such a way that it was understood by the laity. He wrote his 33 conclusions, in Latin and English. The masses, some of the nobility, and his former protector, John of Gaunt, rallied to him.

Before any further steps could be taken at Rome, Gregory XI died (1378). But Wycliffe was already engaged in one of his most important works, that dealing with the truth of Holy Scripture. The sharper the strife became, the more Wycliffe had recourse to Scripture as the basis of all Christian doctrinal opinion, and expressly proved this to be the only norm for Christian faith. In order to refute his opponents, he wrote the book in which he showed that Holy Scripture contains all truth and, being from God, is the only authority. He referred to the conditions under which the condemnation of his 18 theses was brought about; and the same may be said of his books dealing with the Church, the office of king, and the power of the pope--all completed within the space of two years (1378-79).

Wycliffe wrote, *"The Church is the totality of those who are predestined to blessedness. It includes the Church triumphant in heaven... and the Church militant or men on earth. No one who is eternally lost has part in it. There is one universal Church, and outside of it there is no salvation. Its head is Christ. No pope may say that he is the head, for he can not say that he is elect or even a member of the Church."*

Statement Regarding Royal Power

It would be a mistake to assume that Wycliffe's doctrine of the Church--which made so great an impression upon John Hus, who adopted it literally and fully--was occasioned by the great schism (1378-1429). The principles of the doctrine were already embodied in his *De civili dominio*. The contents of the book dealing with the Church are closely connected with the decision respecting the 18 theses. The attacks on Pope Gregory XI grow ever more extreme. Wycliffe's stand with respect to the ideal of poverty became continually firmer, as well as his position with regard to the temporal rule of the clergy. Closely related to this attitude was his book *De officio regis*, the content of which was foreshadowed in his 33 conclusions: One should be instructed with reference to the obligations which lie in regard to the kingdom in order to see how the two powers, royal and ecclesiastical, may support each other in harmony in the body corporate of the Church.

The royal power, Wycliffe taught, is consecrated through the testimony of Holy Scripture and the Fathers. Christ and the apostles rendered tribute to the emperor. It is a sin to oppose the power of the king, which is derived immediately from God. Subjects, above all the clergy, should pay him dutiful tribute. The honours which attach to temporal power hark back to the king; those which belong to precedence in the priestly office, to the priest. The king must apply his power with wisdom, his laws are to be in unison with those of God. From God laws derive their authority, including those which royalty has over against the clergy. If one of the clergy neglects his office, he is a traitor to the king who calls him to answer for it. It follows from this that the king has an "evangelical" control. Those in the service of the Church must have regard for the laws of the State. In confirmation of this fundamental principle the archbishops in England make sworn submission to the king and receive their temporalities. The king is to protect his vassals against damage to their possessions; in case the clergy through their misuse of the temporalities cause injury, the king must offer protection. When the king turns over temporalities to the clergy, he places them under his jurisdiction, from which later pronouncements of the popes can not release them. If the clergy relies on papal pronouncements, it must be subjected to obedience to the king.

This book, like those that preceded and followed, had to do with the reform of the Church, in which the temporal arm was to have an influential part. Especially interesting is the teaching which Wycliffe addressed to the king on the protection of his theologians. This did not mean theology in its modern sense, but knowledge of the Bible. Since the law must be in agreement with Scripture, knowledge of theology is necessary to the strengthening of the kingdom; therefore the king has theologians in his

entourage to stand at his side as he exercises power. It is their duty to explain Scripture according to the rule of reason and in conformity with the witness of the saints; also to proclaim the law of the king and to protect his welfare and that of his kingdom.

Wycliffe and the Pope

The books and tracts of Wycliffe's last six years include continual attacks upon the papacy and the entire hierarchy of his times. Each year they focus more and more, and at the last pope and Antichrist seem to him practically equivalent concepts. Yet there are passages which are moderate in tone; Lechler identifies three stages in Wycliffe's relations with the papacy. The first step, which carried him to the outbreak of the schism, involves moderate recognition of the papal primacy; the second, which carried him to 1381, is marked by an estrangement from the papacy; and the third shows him in sharp contest. However, Wycliffe reached no valuation of the papacy before the outbreak of the schism different from his later appraisal. If in his last years he identified the papacy with antichristianity, the dispensability of this papacy was strong in his mind before the schism.

Wycliffe's influence was never greater than at the moment when pope and antipope sent their ambassadors to England in order to gain recognition for themselves. In the ambassadors' presence, he delivered an opinion before parliament that showed, in an important ecclesiastical political question (the matter of the right of asylum in Westminster Abbey), a position that was to the liking of the State. How Wycliffe came to be active in the interest of Urban is seen in passages in his latest writings, in which he expressed himself in regard to the papacy in a favorable sense. On the other hand he states that *"it is not necessary to go either to Rome or to Avignon in order to seek a decision from the pope, since the triune God is everywhere. Our pope is Christ."* It seems clear that Wycliffe was an opponent of that papacy which had developed since Constantine. He taught that the Church can continue to exist even though it have no visible leader; but there can be no damage when the Church possesses a leader of the right kind. To distinguish between what the pope should be, if one is necessary, and the pope as he appeared in Wycliffe's day was the purpose of his book on the power of the pope. The Church militant, Wycliffe taught, needs a head--but one whom God gives the Church. The elector [cardinal] can only make someone a pope if the choice relates to one who is elect [of God]. But that is not always the case. It may be that the elector is himself not predestined and chooses one who is in the same case--a veritable Antichrist. One must regard as a true pope one who in teaching and life most nearly follows Jesus Christ and Saint Peter.

Wycliffe distinguished the true from the false papacy. Since all signs indicated that Urban VI was a reforming and consequently a "true" pope, the enthusiasm which Wycliffe manifested for him is easily understood. These views concerning the Church and church government are those which are brought forward in the last books of his Summa, "De simonia, de apostasia, de blasphemia." The battle which over the theses was less significant than the one he waged against the monastic orders when he saw the hopes quenched which had gathered around the "reform pope;" and when he was withdrawn from the scene as an ecclesiastical politician and occupied himself exclusively with the question of the reform of the Church.

Wycliffe's Relation to the English Bible

The Bible ought to be the common possession of all Christians, and needed to be made available for common use in the language of the people. National honour seemed to require this, since members of the nobility possessed the Bible in French. Wycliffe set himself to the task. While it is not possible exactly to define his part in the translation--which was based on the Vulgate--there is no doubt that it was his initiative, and that the success of the project was due to his leadership. From him comes the translation of the New Testament, which was smoother, clearer, and more readable than the rendering of the Old Testament by his friend Nicholas of Hereford. The whole was revised by Wycliffe's younger contemporary John Purvey in 1388. Thus the mass of the people came into possession of the Bible; even as the misguided cry of Wycliffe's opponents stated: "The jewel of the clergy has become the toy of the laity."

In spite of the zeal with which the hierarchy sought to destroy it, there still exist about 150 manuscripts, complete or partial, containing the translation in its revised form. From this one may easily infer how widely diffused it was in the fifteenth century. For this reason the Wycliffeites in England were often designated by their opponents as "Bible men." Just as Luther's version had great influence upon the German language, so Wycliffe's, by reason of its clarity, beauty, and strength, influenced English.

Wycliffe's Activity as a Preacher

Wycliffe aimed to do away with the existing hierarchy and replace it with the "poor priests" who lived in poverty, were bound by no vows, had received no formal consecration, and preached the Gospel to the people. These itinerant preachers spread the teachings of Wycliffe. Two by two they went, barefoot, wearing long dark-red robes and carrying a staff in the hand, the latter having symbolic reference to their pastoral calling, and passed from place to place preaching the sovereignty of God. The bull of Gregory XI. impressed upon them the name of Lollards, intended as an opprobrious epithet, but it became a name of honour. Even in Wycliffe's time the "Lollards" had reached wide circles in England and preached "God's law, without which no one could be justified."

The Anti-Wycliffe Movement

In the summer of 1381 Wycliffe formulated his doctrine of the Lord's Supper in twelve short sentences, and made it a duty to advocate it everywhere. Then the English hierarchy proceeded against him. The chancellor of the University of Oxford had some of the declarations pronounced heretical. When this fact was announced to Wycliffe, he declared that no one could change his convictions. He then appealed--not to the pope nor to the ecclesiastical authorities of the land, but to the king. He published his great confession upon the subject and also a second writing in English intended for the common people. His pronouncements were no longer limited to the classroom, they spread to the masses. The followers of John Wycliffe, the Lollards, grew greatly in number throughout the land.

"Every second man that you meet," writes a contemporary, *"is a Lollard!"* In the midst of this commotion came the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Although Wycliffe disapproved of the revolt, he was blamed. Yet his friend and protector John of Gaunt was the most hated by the rebels, and where Wycliffe's influence was greatest the uprising found the least support. While in general the aim of the revolt was against the spiritual nobility, this came about because they were nobles, not because they were churchmen. Wycliffe's old enemy, Courtenay, now Archbishop of Canterbury, called (1382) an ecclesiastical assembly of notables at London. During the consultations an earthquake occurred (May 21); the participants were terrified and wished to break up the assembly, but Courtenay declared the earthquake a favorable sign which meant the purification of the earth from erroneous doctrine.

Of the 24 propositions attributed to Wycliffe without mentioning his name, ten were declared heretical and fourteen erroneous. The former had reference to the transformation in the sacrament, the latter to matters of church order and institutions. It was forbidden from that time to hold these opinions or to advance them in sermons or in academic discussions. All persons disregarding this order were to be subject to prosecution. To accomplish this the help of the State was necessary; but the commons rejected the bill. The king, however, had a decree issued which permitted the arrest of those in error. The citadel of the reformatory movement was Oxford, where Wycliffe's most active helpers were; these were laid under the ban and summoned to recant, and Nicholas of Hereford went to Rome to appeal. In similar fashion the poor priests were hindered in their work.

On Nov. 18, 1382, Wycliffe was summoned before a synod at Oxford; he appeared, though apparently broken in body in consequence of a stroke, but nevertheless determined. He still commanded the favour of the court and of parliament, to which he addressed a memorial. He was neither excommunicated then, nor deprived of his position.

Last Days of John Wycliffe

Wycliffe returned to Lutterworth, and sent out tracts against the monks and Urban VI, since the latter, contrary to the hopes of Wycliffe, had not turned out to be a reforming or "true" pope, but had involved in mischievous conflicts. The crusade in Flanders aroused the Reformer's biting scorn, while his sermons became fuller-voiced and dealt with the imperfections of the Church. The literary achievements of Wycliffe's last days, such as the *Trialogus*, stand at the peak of the knowledge of his day. His last work, the *Opus evangelicum*, the last part of which he named in characteristic fashion "Of Antichrist," remained uncompleted.

While Wycliffe was in the parish church on Holy Innocents' Day, Dec. 28, 1384, he again suffered a stroke, and was carried out the side-door of his church, in his chair. John Wycliffe died on the last day of the year, three days later. The Council of Constance declared Wycliffe (on May 4, 1415) a stiff-necked heretic and under the ban of the Church. It was decreed that his books be burned and his remains be exhumed. This last did not happen till twelve more years later, when at the command of Pope Martin V they were dug up, burned, and the ashes cast into the river Swift which flows through Lutterworth.

None of Wycliffe's contemporaries left a complete picture of his person, his life, and his activities. The pictures representing him are from a later period. One must be content with certain scattered expressions found in the history of the trial by William Thorpe (1407). It appears that Wycliffe was spare of body, indeed of wasted appearance, and not strong physically. He was of unblemished walk in life, says Thorpe, and was regarded affectionately by people of rank, who often consorted with him, took down his sayings, and clung to him. Thorpe continued, *"I indeed clove to none closer than to him, the wisest and most blessed of all men whom I have ever found. From him one could learn in truth what the Church of Christ is and how it should be ruled and led."* John Hus wished that his soul might be wherever that of Wycliffe was found.

One may not say that Wycliffe was a comfortable opponent to meet. Thomas Netter of Walden highly esteemed the old Carmelite monk John Kynyngham in that he "so bravely offered himself to the biting speech of the heretic and to words that stung as being without the religion of Christ." But this example of Netter is not well chosen, since the tone of Wycliffe toward Kynyngham is that of a junior toward an elder whom one respects, and he handled other opponents in similar fashion. But when he turned upon them his roughest side, as for example in his sermons, polemical writings and tracts, he met the attacks with a tone that could not be styled friendly.

Wycliffe's Doctrines

Wycliffe's first encounter with the official Church of his time was prompted by his zeal in the interests of the State, his first tracts and greater works of ecclesiastical-political content defended the privileges of the State, and from these sources developed a strife out of which the next phases could hardly be determined. One who studies these books in the order of their production with reference to their inner content finds a direct development with a strong reformatory tendency. This was not originally doctrinal; when it later took up matters of dogma, as in the teaching concerning transubstantiation, the purpose was the return to original simplicity in the government of the Church. But it would have been against the diplomatic practice of the time to have sent to the peace congress at Bruges, in which the Curia had an essential part, a participant who had become known at home by heretical teaching.

Wycliffe earned his great reputation as a philosopher at an early date. Henry Knighton says that in philosophy, Wycliffe was second to none, and in scholastic discipline incomparable. If this pronouncement seems hard to justify, now that Wycliffe's writings are in print, it must be borne in mind that not all his philosophical works are extant. If Wycliffe was in philosophy the superior of his contemporaries and had no equal in scholastic discipline, he belongs with the series of great scholastic philosophers and theologians in which England in the Middle Ages was so rich--with Alexander of Hales, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, Occam and Bradwardine. There was a period in his life when he devoted

himself exclusively to scholastic philosophy: "when I was still a logician," he used later to say. The first "heresy" which "he cast forth into the world" rests as much upon philosophical as upon theological grounds.

Wycliffe on Philosophy

Wycliffe's fundamental principle of the preexistence in thought of all reality involves the most serious obstacle to freedom of the will; the philosopher could assist himself only by the formula that the free will of man was something predetermined of God. He demanded strict dialectical training as the means of distinguishing the true from the false, and asserted that logic (or the syllogism) furthered the knowledge of catholic verities; ignorance of logic was the reason why men misunderstood Scripture, since men overlooked the connection--the distinction between idea and appearance. Wycliffe was not merely conscious of the distinction between theology and philosophy, but his sense of reality led him to pass by scholastic questions. He left aside philosophical discussions which seemed to have no significance for the religious consciousness and those which pertained purely to scholasticism: "we concern ourselves with the verities that are, and leave aside the errors which arise from speculation on matters which are not."

Wycliffe on Scripture

The Bible alone was authoritative and, according to his own conviction and that of his disciples, was fully sufficient for the government of this world (*De sufficientia legis Christi*). Out of it he drew his comprehensive statements in support of his reformatory views--after intense study and many spiritual conflicts. He tells that as a beginner he was desperate to comprehend the passages dealing with the activities of the divine Word, until by the grace of God he was able to gather the right sense of Scripture, which he then understood. But that was not a light task. Without knowledge of the Bible there can be no peace in the life of the Church or of society, and outside of it there is no real and abiding good; it is the one authority for the faith.

These teachings Wycliffe promulgated in his great work on the truth of Scripture, and in other greater and lesser writings. For him the Bible was the fundamental source of Christianity which is binding on all men. From this one can easily see how the next step came about: the furnishing of the Bible to the people in their mother tongue. Wycliffe was called "Doctor evangelicus" by his English and Bohemian followers. Of all the reformers who preceded Martin Luther, Wycliffe put most emphasis on Scripture: "Even though there were a hundred popes and though every mendicant monk were a cardinal, they would be entitled to confidence only in so far as they accorded with the Bible." Therefore in this early period it was Wycliffe who recognized and formulated the formal principle of the Reformation-- the unique authority of the Bible for the belief and life of the Christian.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Story of John Huss

<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/7.html>

John Huss, Priest and Martyr

6 July 1415

John Huss (Jan Hus) was born in Bohemia (now part of the Czech Republic) in about 1371. He received a master's degree from Charles University in Prague in 1396, became a professor of theology in 1398, was ordained to the priesthood in 1400, was made rector of the University in 1402, and in 1404 received a bachelor's degree in theology (presumably a more advanced degree than the term suggests today).

In his day, there was a crisis of authority in the Western Church. In 1305, under pressure from the King of France, the seat of the Popes was moved from Rome to Avignon in France, where it remained for 70 years. (This period is called the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy, suggesting the 70 years that Jerusalem lay desolate after when the Jews were deported to Babylon.) In 1376, the then pope returned to Rome. When he died soon after, the cardinals, mostly French, were disposed to elect a French Pope, but the people of Rome objected, fearing that a French Pope would move the Papacy back to France. The cardinals therefore elected an Italian Pope, and then fled elsewhere, where they elected a French Pope and said that the first election had been under duress, and was void. Thus there were two (later three) claimants for the Papal Office. The Council of Constance was called to settle the matter. One claimant recognized the Council and then abdicated. The Council responded by proclaiming that he had been the true Pope. It then deposed the other two, and elected a new Pope, thus healing the schism.

Meanwhile, Huss had begun to denounce various church abuses in his sermons. His disputes with authority did not concern basic theological issues, but rather matters of church discipline and practice. The custom had arisen, at celebrations of the Lord's Supper, of distributing the consecrated bread to all Christians in good standing who desired to receive it, but restricting the chalice to the celebrant alone. Huss denounced this restriction as contrary to Holy Scripture and to the ancient tradition of the Church. He also held that Church officials ought to exercise spiritual powers only, and not be earthly governors. In 1412 his archbishop excommunicated him, not for heresy, but for insubordination. (The real problem was that Huss supported one papal claimant and the archbishop another. Huss's candidate was ultimately declared to be the true pope.) Matters came to a head when one claimant (later declared unfit) proclaimed a sale of indulgences to raise money for a war against his rivals. Huss was horrified at the idea of selling

spiritual benefits to finance a war between two claimants to the title "Servant of the Servants of God," and said so.

In 1414 he was summoned to the Council of Constance, with the Emperor guaranteeing his personal safety even if found guilty. He was tried, and ordered to recant certain heretical doctrines. He replied that he had never held or taught the doctrines in question, and was willing to declare the doctrines false, but not willing to declare on oath that he had once taught them. The one point on which Huss could be said to have a doctrinal difference with the Council was that he taught that the office of the pope did not exist by Divine command, but was established by the Church that things might be done in an orderly fashion (a view that he shared with Thomas More). The Council, having just narrowly succeeded in uniting Western Christendom under a single pope after years of chaos, was not about to have its work undone. It accordingly found him guilty of heresy, and he was burned at the stake on 6 July 1415.

After his death, his followers continued to insist on the importance of administering the Holy Communion in both kinds, and defeated several armies sent against them. In 1436 a pact was signed, by which the Church in Bohemia was authorized to administer Chalice as well as Host to all communicants. The followers of John Huss and his fellow martyr Jerome of Prague became known as the Czech Brethren and later as the Moravians. The Moravian Church survives to this day, and has had a considerable influence on the Lutheran movement. When Luther suddenly became famous after the publication of his 95 Theses, cartoons and graffiti began to appear implying that Luther was the spiritual heir of John Huss. When Luther encountered the Pope's representative Johannes Eck, in a crucial debate, Eck sidestepped the questions of indulgences and of justification by faith, and instead asked Luther whether the Church had been right to condemn Huss. When Luther, after thinking it over, said that Huss had been unjustly condemned, the whole question of the authority of Popes and Councils was raised.

References:

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PRAYER (traditional language):

O Almighty God, who didst give to thy servant Jan Huss Boldness to confess the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ before the rulers of this world, and courage to die for this faith: Grant that we may always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and to suffer gladly for the sake of the same our Lord Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

PRAYER (contemporary language):

Almighty God, who gave to your servant Jan Huss
Boldness to confess the Name of our Savior
Jesus Christ before the rulers of this world, and courage to
die for this faith: Grant that we may always be ready to give

a reason for the hope that is in us, and to suffer gladly for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: John Huss more in-depth link

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/john-hus.html>

John Hus



One of Wycliffe's followers, John Hus, actively promoted Wycliffe's ideas: that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the Roman church that threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution. Hus was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire. The last words of John Hus were that, *"in 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed."* Almost exactly 100 years later, in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) into the church door at Wittenberg. The prophecy of Hus had come true!

John Hus (a.k.a. Jan Huss) was a religious thinker and reformer, born in Southern Bohemia in 1369. He initiated a reform movement based on the ideas of John Wycliffe. His followers became known as Hussites. The Catholic Church did not condone such uprisings, and Hus was excommunicated in 1411 and burned at the stake in Constance on July 6, 1415, having been condemned by the Council of Constance, in an unfair trial.

Early Life and Studies of John Hus

John Hus, the famous Reformer of Bohemia, was born at Hussinetz (Husinecz; 75 miles south west of Prague) on or around July 6, 1369. John Huss is a common English designation, but the name is more correctly written, according to Slavic spelling, Hus. It is an abbreviation from his birthplace made by himself about 1399; in earlier life he was always known as Jan, Johann or John Hussinetz, or, in Latin, Johannes de Hussinetz. His parents were Czechs.

Like Martin Luther, he had to earn his living by singing and performing humble services in the Church. He felt inclined toward the clerical profession, not so much by an inner impulse as by the attraction of the tranquil life of the clergy. He studied at Prague, where he must have been as early as the middle of the 1380's. He was greatly influenced by Stanislaus of Znaim, who later became his close friend, but eventually his bitter enemy. As a student Hus did not distinguish himself. The learned quotations of which he boasted in his writings were mostly taken from Wycliffe's works. He was said to have had a hot temper. In 1393 he received his bachelor of arts, in 1394 bachelor of theology, and in 1396 master of arts. In 1400 he was ordained priest, in 1401 he became dean of the philosophical faculty, and in the following year rector. In 1402 he was appointed also preacher of the Bethlehem Church in Prague, where he preached in the Czech language.

Influence of John Wycliffe upon John Hus

After the marriage of King Wenceslaus' sister, Anne, with Richard II. of England in 1382, the philosophical writings of John Wycliffe became known in Bohemia. As a student Hus had been greatly attracted by them. His inclination toward ecclesiastical reforms was awakened only by the acquaintance with Wycliffe's theological writings. The so-called Hussism in the first decades of the fifteenth century was nothing but Wycliffeism transplanted into Bohemian soil. The theological writings of Wycliffe spread widely in Bohemia. They had been brought over, as is said, in 1401 or 1402 by Jerome of Prague, and Hus was greatly moved by them. The university arose against the spread of the new doctrines, and in 1403 prohibited a disputation on forty-five theses taken in part from Wycliffe. Under Archbishop Shinko of Hasenburg (from 1403), Hus enjoyed in the beginning a great reputation. In 1405 he was active as synodical preacher, but on account of his severe attacks upon the clergy the bishop was compelled to depose him.

Wycliffe's Lollards, Hus, and the Pope

Hus became the first rector of the Czech university, and enjoyed the favor of the court. In the mean time, the doctrinal views of Wycliffe had spread over the whole country. The archbishop brought his complaints before the papal see, accusing the Wycliffeites (Lollards) as the instigators of all ecclesiastical disturbances in Bohemia. Thereupon the pope issued his bull of December 20, 1409, which empowered the archbishop to proceed against Wycliffeism-- all books of Wycliffe were to be given up, his doctrines revoked, and free preaching discontinued. After the publication of the bull in 1410, Hus appealed to the pope, but in vain. All books and valuable manuscripts of Wycliffe were burned, and Hus and his adherents put under the ban. This procedure caused an indescribable commotion among the people down to the lowest classes; in some places turbulent scenes occurred. The government took the side of Hus, and the power of his adherents increased from day to day. He continued to preach in the Bethlehem chapel, and became bolder and bolder in his accusations of the Church. The churches of the city were put under the ban, and the interdict was pronounced against Prague, but without result.

Further Dissentions Surrounding Hus

The clergy of Prague, through Michael de Causis, had brought their complaints before the pope, and he ordered the cardinal of St. Angelo to proceed against Hus without mercy. The cardinal put him under the great church ban. He was to be seized and delivered to the archbishop, and his chapel was to be destroyed. Stricter measures against Hus and his adherents, the counter-measures of the Hussites, and the appeal of Hus from the pope to Jesus Christ as the supreme judge only intensified the excitement among the people and forced Hus to depart from Prague, in compliance with the wish of the king; but his absence had not the expected effect. The excitement continued. The king, being grieved by the disrepute of his country on account of the heresy, made great efforts to harmonize the opposing parties. In 1412 he convoked the heads of his kingdom for a consultation, and at their suggestion ordered a synod to be held at Bohmisch-Brod on Feb. 2, 1412. It did not take place there, but in the palace of the archbishops at Prague, Hus being thus excluded from participation.

Propositions were made for the restitution of the peace of the Church, Hus requiring especially that Bohemia should have the same freedom in regard to ecclesiastical affairs as other countries and that approbation and condemnation should therefore be announced only with the permission of the state power. This is wholly the doctrine of Wycliffe (Sermones, iii. 519, etc.). There followed treatises from both parties, but no harmony was obtained. *"Even if I should stand before the stake which has been prepared for me,"* Hus wrote in those days, *"I would never accept the recommendation of the theological faculty."* The synod did not produce any results, but the king did not yet give up his hope-- he ordered a commission to continue the work of reconciliation. The doctors of the university required from Hus and his adherents an approval of their conception of the Church, according to which the pope is the head, the cardinals the body of the Church, and that all regulations of this Church must be obeyed. Hus protested vigorously against this conception since it made pope and cardinals alone the Church. Nevertheless the

Hussite party seems to have approached the standpoint of their opponents as closely as possible. To the article that the Roman Church must be obeyed, they added "so far as every pious Christian is bound." Stanislaus of Znaim and Stephan of Palecz protested against this addition and left the convention. The king exiled them, with two other spokesmen.

Of the writings occasioned by these controversies, that of Hus on the Church (*De ecclesia*) has been most frequently quoted and admired or criticized, and yet it is in the first ten chapters but a meagre epitome of Wycliffe's work of the same title, and in the following chapters an abstract of a work by the same author (*De potentate pape*) on the power of the pope. Wycliffe had written his book to oppose the common view that the Church consisted only of the clergy, and Hus now found himself in a similar condition. He wrote his work at the castle of one of his protectors in Kozi hradek, near Austie, and sent it to Prague, where it was publicly read in the Bethlehem chapel. It was answered by Stanislaus of Znaim and Palecz with treatises of the same title. After the most vehement opponents of Hus had left Prague, his adherents occupied the whole ground. Hus wrote his treatises and preached in the neighborhood of Kozi hradek. Bohemian Wycliffeism was carried into Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and Austria; but at the same time the papal court was not inactive. In John., 1413, there assembled at Rome a general council which condemned the writings of Wycliffe and ordered them to be burned.

The Council of Constance

On Dec. 4, 1414, the pope had entrusted a committee of three bishops with a preliminary investigation against Hus. The witnesses for the prosecution were heard, but Hus was refused an advocate for his defense. His situation became worse after the catastrophe of John XXIII., who had left Constance to evade the necessity of abdicating. So far Hus had been the captive of the pope and in constant contact with his friends, but now he was delivered to the archbishop of Constance and brought to his castle, Gottlieben on the Rhine. Here he remained seventy-three days, separated from his friends, chained day and night, poorly fed, and tortured by disease.

The Trial of John Hus

On June 5, 1415, John Hus was tried for the first time, and for that purpose was transferred to the Franciscan monastery, where he spent the last weeks of his life. He acknowledged the writings on the Church against Palecz and Stanislaus of Znaim as his own, and declared himself willing to recant, if errors should be proven to him. Hus conceded his veneration of Wycliffe, and said that he could only wish his soul might some time attain unto that place where Wycliffe's was. On the other hand, he denied having defended Wycliffe's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, or the forty-five articles; he had only opposed their summary condemnation. The king admonished him to deliver himself up to the mercy of the council, as he did not desire to protect a heretic. At the last trial, on June 8, 1415, there were read to him thirty-nine sentences, twenty-six of which had been excerpted from his book on the Church, seven from his treatise' against Palecz, and six from that against Stanislaus. Almost all of his articles may be traced back to Wycliffe. The danger of some of these doctrines as regards worldly power was explained to the emperor to incite him against Hus. Of course, Hus had declared himself willing to submit if he could be convinced of errors.

He desired only a more fair trial and more time to explain the reasons for his views. If his reasons and Bible texts did not suffice, he would be glad to submit. This declaration was considered an unconditional surrender, and he was asked to confess:

- that he had erred in the theses which he had hitherto maintained;
- that he renounced them for the future;
- that he recanted them; and
- that he declared the opposite of these sentences

He asked to be exempted from recanting doctrines which he had never taught; others, which the assembly considered erroneous, he was willing to revoke; to act differently would be against his conscience. These words found no favorable reception. After the trial on June 8, several other attempts were made to induce him to recant, but he resisted all of them.

Condemnation and Execution of John Hus

The condemnation took place on July 6, 1415, in the presence of the solemn assembly of the council in the cathedral. After the performance of high mass and liturgy, Hus was led into the church. The bishop of Lodi delivered an oration on the duty of eradicating heresy; then some theses of Hus and Wycliffe and a report of his trial were read. He protested loudly several times, and when his appeal to Christ was rejected as a condemnable heresy, he exclaimed, *"O God and Lord, now the council condemns even thine own act and thine own law as heresy, since thou thyself didst lay thy cause before thy Father as the just judge, as an example for us, whenever we are sorely oppressed."*

An Italian prelate pronounced the sentence of condemnation upon Hus and his writings. Again he protested loudly, saying that even at this hour he did not wish anything but to be convinced from Holy Scripture. He fell upon his knees and asked God with a low voice to forgive all his enemies. Then followed his degradation-- he was enrobed in priestly vestments and again asked to recant; again he refused. With curses his ornaments were taken from him, his priestly tonsure was destroyed, and the sentence was pronounced that the Church had deprived him of all rights and delivered him to the secular powers. Then a high paper hat was put upon his head, with the inscription *Haeresiarcha*. Thus Hus was led away to the stake under a strong guard of armed men. At the place of execution he knelt down, spread out his hands, and prayed aloud. Some of the people asked that a confessor should be given him, but a bigoted priest exclaimed, a heretic should neither be heard nor given a confessor.

The executioners undressed Hus and tied his hands behind his back with ropes, and his neck with a chain to a stake around which wood and straw had been piled up so that it covered him to the neck. Still at the last moment, the imperial marshal, Von Pappenheim, in the presence of the Count Palatine, asked him to save his life by a recantation, but Hus declined with the words *"God is my witness that I have never taught that of which I have been accused by false witnesses. In the truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached I will die to-day with gladness."* There upon the fire was kindled with John Wycliffe's own manuscripts used as kindling for the fire. With uplifted voice Hus sang, *"Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me."* Among his dying words he proclaimed, *"In 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed."* His ashes were gathered and cast into the nearby Rhine River.

Almost exactly 100 years later, in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) into the church door at Wittenberg. The prophecy of John Hus had come true!

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Story of Desiderius Erasmus

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/erasmus.html>

Erasmus



In considering the experiences of Linacre and Colet, the great scholar **Erasmus** was so moved to correct the corrupt Latin Vulgate, that in 1516, with the help of printer John Froben, he published a Greek-Latin Parallel New Testament. The Latin part was not the corrupt Vulgate, but his own fresh rendering of the text from the more accurate and reliable Greek, which he had managed to collate from a half-dozen partial old Greek New Testament manuscripts he had acquired. This milestone was the first non-Latin Vulgate text of the scripture to be produced in a millennium... and the first ever to come off a printing press. The 1516 Greek-Latin New Testament of Erasmus further focused attention on just how corrupt and inaccurate the Latin Vulgate had become, and how important it was to go back and use the original Greek (New Testament) and original Hebrew (Old Testament) languages to maintain accuracy.

Erasmus, a.k.a. **Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam**, (October 27, 1466 - July 12, 1536) was a Dutch humanist and theologian. He was born **Geert Geertsens** in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, Switzerland. One of the most famous and amusing quotes from the noted scholar and translator Erasmus was, *"When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes."*

The Early Life of Erasmus

Information as to his family and early life comes from a few meager accounts written or suggested by himself at a somewhat advanced age and from many but vague references in his writings at all periods of his life. He was doubtless born out of wedlock, well cared for by his parents till their early death, and then given the best education open to a young man of his day in a series of monastic or semi-monastic schools. All this early education is made by him in the light of later experience to appear like one long conspiracy to force him into the monastic life. He was admitted to the priesthood and took the monastic vows at about the age of twenty-five, but there is no record that he ever exercised the priestly functions, and monasticism was one of the chief objects of his attack in his lifelong assault upon the evils of the Church.

Studies and Travels of Erasmus

Almost immediately after his consecration the way was opened to him for study at the University of Paris, then the chief seat of the later scholastic learning, but already beginning to feel the influence of the revived classic culture of Italy. From this time on Erasmus led the life of an independent scholar, independent of country, of academic ties, of religious allegiance, of everything that could interfere with

the free development of his intellect and the freedom of his literary expression. The chief centers of his activity were Paris, Louvain, England, and Basel; yet it could never be said that he was identified with any one of these. His residences in England were fruitful in the making of lifelong friendships with the leaders of English thought in the stirring days of Henry VIII.—John Colet, Thomas More, Thomas Linacre, and William Grocyn. He held at Cambridge an honorable position as Lady Margaret professor of divinity, and there seems to have been no reason except his unconquerable aversion to a routine life, why he should not have spent his days as an English professor. He stayed at Queens' College, Cambridge and may have been an alumnus.

He was offered many positions of honor and profit in the academic world, but declined them all on one or another pretext, preferring the uncertain, but as it proved sufficient rewards of independent literary activity. In Italy he spent three years (1506-09), part of the time in connection with the publishing house of Aldus Manutius at Venice.

The residence at Louvain exposed Erasmus to the petty criticism of men nearer to him in blood and political connections, but hostile to all the principles of literary and religious progress to which he was devoting his life. From this lack of sympathy, which he always represented as persecution, he sought refuge in the more congenial atmosphere of Basel, where under the shelter of Swiss hospitality he could express himself with freedom and where he was always surrounded by devoted friends. Here he was associated for many years with the great publisher Froben, and hither came the multitude of his admirers from all quarters of Europe.

Erasmus's Literary Activity

Erasmus's literary productivity began comparatively late in his life. It was not until he had made himself master of a telling Latin style that he undertook to express himself on all current subjects of literature and religion. His revolt against the forms of Church life did not proceed from any questionings as to the truth of the traditional doctrine, nor from any hostility to the organization of the Church itself. Rather, he felt called upon to use his learning in a purification of the doctrine and in a liberalizing of the institutions of Christianity (at a point in time where "liberalization" actually meant the opposite of what it means today!) He began as a scholar, trying to free the methods of scholarship from the rigidity and formalism of medieval traditions; but he was not satisfied with this. He conceived of himself as, above all else, a preacher of righteousness. It was his lifelong conviction that what was needed to regenerate Europe was sound learning applied frankly and fearlessly to the administration of public affairs in Church and State. It is this conviction that gives unity and consistency to a life which at first sight seems to have been full of fatal contradictions. Erasmus was a marked individual, holding himself aloof from all entangling obligations; yet he was in a singularly true sense the center of the literary movement of his time. In his correspondence he put himself in touch with more than five hundred men of the highest importance in the world of politics and of thought, and his advice on all kinds of subjects was eagerly sought, if none too readily followed.

Writings of Erasmus

His more serious writings begin early with the *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, the "Manual (or Dagger) of the Christian Gentleman" (1503). In this little volume Erasmus outlines the views of the normal Christian life which he was to spend the rest of his days in elaborating. The key-note of it all is sincerity. The chief evil of the day, he says, is formalism, a respect for traditions, a regard for what other people think essential, but never a thought of what the true teaching of Christ may be. Another of Erasmus's books worthy of mention was, *Praise of Folly*, dedicated to his friend Sir Thomas More.

While in England Erasmus began the systematic examination of manuscripts of the New Testament to prepare for a new edition and Latin translation. This edition was published by Froben of Basel in 1516 and was the basis of most of the scientific study of the Bible during the Reformation period. It was the first attempt on the part of a competent and liberal-minded scholar to ascertain what the writers of the New

Testament had actually said. The Greek text produced by Erasmus is known as *textus receptus* and was the basis for the King James Version of the New Testament. Erasmus dedicated his work ironically, to Pope Leo X., and he justly regarded this work as his chief service to the cause of a sound Christianity. Immediately after he began the publication of his Paraphrases of the New Testament, a popular presentation of the contents of the several books. These, like all the writings of Erasmus, were in Latin, but they were at once translated into the common languages of the European peoples, a process which received the hearty approval of Erasmus himself.

Erasmus on the Reformation

The most significant contribution of Erasmus to the Protestant Reformation was undoubtedly his publication of his 1516 Greek-Latin New Testament. It was this book that was used as the primary source-text for Martin Luther to translate the New Testament into German for the first time in 1522. It was this book that was used as the primary source-text for William Tyndale to translate the New Testament into English for the first time in 1526.

The outbreak of the Lutheran movement in the year following the publication of Erasmus's Greek-Latin New Testament brought the severest test of Erasmus's personal and scholarly character. It made the issue between European society and the Roman Church system so clear that no man could quite escape the summons to range himself on one side or the other of the great debate. Erasmus, at the height of his literary fame, was inevitably called upon to take sides, but partisanship in any issue which he was not at liberty himself to define was foreign equally to his nature and his habits. In all his criticism of clerical follies and abuses he had always carefully hedged himself about with protests that he was not attacking church institutions themselves and had no enmity toward the persons of churchmen. The world had laughed at his satire, but only a few obstinate reactionaries had seriously interfered with his activities. He had a right to believe that his work so far had commended itself to the best minds and also to the dominant powers in the religious world.

There can be no doubt that Erasmus was in sympathy with the main points in the Lutheran criticism of the Church. For Luther personally he had and expressed the greatest respect, and Luther always spoke with admiration of his superior learning. Luther would have gone to great lengths in securing his cooperation in a work which seemed only the natural outcome of his own. When Erasmus hesitated or refused this seemed to the upright and downright Luther a mean avoidance of responsibility explicable only as cowardice or unsteadiness of purpose, and this has generally been the Protestant judgment of later days. On the other hand the Roman Catholic party was equally desirous of holding on to the services of a man who had so often declared his loyalty to the principles it was trying to maintain, and his half-heartedness in declaring himself now brought upon him the suspicion of disloyalty from this side. When Erasmus was charged—and very justly—with having *"laid the egg that Luther hatched"* he half admitted the truth of the charge, but said he *"had expected quite another kind of a bird!"*

Relationship with Luther

In their early correspondence Luther expressed in unmeasured terms his admiration for all Erasmus had done in the cause of a sound and reasonable Christianity, and exhorted with him now to put the seal upon his work by definitely casting in his lot with the Lutheran party. Erasmus replied with many expressions of regard, but declined to commit himself to any party attitude. His argument was that to do so would endanger his position as a leader in the movement for pure scholarship which he regarded as his real work in life. Only through that position as an independent scholar could he hope to influence the reform of religion. The constructive value of Luther's work was mainly in furnishing a new doctrinal basis for the previously scattered attempts at reform.

In reviving the half forgotten principle of the Augustinian theology Luther had furnished the needed impulse to that personal interest in religion which is the essence of Protestantism. This was precisely what Erasmus could not approve. He dreaded any change in the doctrine of the Church and believed that there

was room enough within existing formulas for the kind of reform he valued most. Twice in the course of the great discussion he allowed himself to enter the field of doctrinal controversy, a field foreign alike to his nature and his previous practise. One of the topics formally treated by him was the freedom of the will, the crucial point in the whole Augustinian system. In his *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (1524), he analyzes with great cleverness and in perfect good temper the Lutheran exaggeration, as it seemed to him, of the obvious limitations upon human freedom. As his habit was, he lays down both sides of the argument and shows that each had its element of truth. His position was that Man was bound to sin, but that after all he had a right to the forgiving mercy of God, if only he would seek this through the means offered him by the Church itself. It was an easy-going Semi-Pelagianism, humane in its practise, but opening the way to those very laxities and perversions which Erasmus and the Reformers alike were combating. The "Diatribe," clever as it was, could not lead men to any definite action, and this was precisely its offense to the Lutherans.

The Final Years of Erasmus

Thus, as the visible outcome of his reformatory activities Erasmus found himself at the close of his life at odds with both the great parties. His last years were embittered by controversies with men toward whom he was drawn by many ties of taste and sympathy. Notable among these was his passage at arms with Ulrich von Hutten, a brilliant, but erratic genius, who had thrown himself with all his heart into the Lutheran cause and had declared that Erasmus, if he had a spark of honesty about him, would do the same. In his reply, *Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni* (1523), he displays, better than almost anywhere else, his skill in twisting words and phrases to suit the purpose of the moment. He accuses Hutten of having misinterpreted his utterances about reform and reiterates his determination never to take sides in the division of parties.

When the city of Basel was definitely and officially "reformed" in 1529, Erasmus gave up his residence there and settled in the imperial town of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. It would seem as if he found it easier to maintain his neutrality under Roman Catholic than under Protestant conditions. His literary activity continued with out much abatement, chiefly on the lines of religious and didactic composition. The most important work of this last period is the *Ecclesiastes* or "Gospel Preacher" (Basel, 1535), in which he brings out the function of preaching as the most important office of the Christian priest, an emphasis which shows how essentially Protestant his inner thought of Christianity was. The same impression comes from his little tract of 1533 on "Preparation for Death," in which the emphasis throughout is on the importance of a good life as the essential condition of a happy death.

For unknown reasons Erasmus found himself drawn once more to the happiest of his homes, at Basel, where he returned in 1535 after an absence of six years. Here, in the midst of the group of Protestant scholars who had long been his truest friends, and, so far as is known, without relations of any sort with the Roman Catholic Church, he died.

The extraordinary popularity of his books, however, has been shown in the immense number of editions and translations that have appeared from the sixteenth century until now, and in the undiminished interest excited by his elusive but fascinating personality.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Story of William Tyndale

<http://greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/william-tyndale.html>

William Tyndale



William Tyndale was the Captain of the Army of Reformers, and was their spiritual leader. Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first man to ever print the New Testament in the English language. Tyndale was a true scholar and a genius, so fluent in eight languages that it was said one would think any one of them to be his native tongue. He is frequently referred to as the “Architect of the English Language”, (even more so than William Shakespeare) as so many of the phrases Tyndale coined are still in our language today.

William Tyndale (1494-1536) Biblical translator and martyr; born most probably at North Nibley (15 miles south-west of Gloucester), England, in 1494; died at Vilvoorden (6 miles north-east of Brussels), Belgium, Oct. 6, 1536. Tyndale was descended from an ancient Northumbrian family, went to school at Oxford, and afterward to Magdalen Hall and Cambridge.

William Tyndale Overview

Tyndale was a theologian and scholar who translated the Bible into an early form of Modern English. He was the first person to take advantage of Gutenberg’s movable-type press for the purpose of printing the scriptures in the English language. Besides translating the Bible, Tyndale also held and published views which were considered heretical, first by the Catholic Church, and later by the Church of England which was established by Henry VIII. His Bible translation also included notes and commentary promoting these views. Tyndale’s translation was banned by the authorities, and Tyndale himself was burned at the stake in 1536, at the instigation of agents of Henry VIII and the Anglican Church.

The Early Years of William Tyndale

Tyndale enrolled at Oxford in 1505, and grew up at the University. He received his Master’s Degree in 1515 at the age of twenty-one! He proved to be a gifted linguist. One of Tyndale’s associates commented that Tyndale was “so skilled in eight languages – Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, English, and German, that whichever he speaks, you might think it his native tongue!” This gift undoubtedly aided him in his successful evasion of the authorities during his years of exile from England.

Early Controversy Surrounding Tyndale

Around 1520, William Tyndale became a tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, at Little Sodbury in Gloucestershire. Having become attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, and devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures, the open avowal of his sentiments in the house of Walsh, his disputes with Roman Catholic dignitaries there, and especially his preaching, excited much opposition, and led to his removal to London (about Oct., 1523), where he began to preach, and made many friends among the laity, but none among church leaders.

A clergyman hopelessly entrenched in Roman Catholic dogma once taunted Tyndale with the statement, "*We are better to be without God's laws than the Pope's*". Tyndale was infuriated by such Roman Catholic heresies, and he replied, "*I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plow to know more of the scriptures than you!*"

William Tyndale First Prints The Scripture in English

He was hospitably entertained at the house of Sir Humphrey Monmouth, and also financially aided by him and others in the accomplishment of his purpose to translate the Scriptures into the commonly spoken English of the day. Unable to do so in England, he set out for the continent (about May, 1524), and appears to have visited Hamburg and Wittenberg. The place where he translated the New Testament, is thought to have been Wittenberg, under the aid of Martin Luther. The printing of this English New Testament in quarto was begun at Cologne in the summer of 1525, and completed at Worms, and that there was likewise printed an octavo edition, both before the end of that year. William Tyndale's Biblical translations appeared in the following order: New Testament, 1525-26; Pentateuch, 1530; Jonah, 1531.

His literary activity during that interval was extraordinary. When he left England, his knowledge of Hebrew, if he had any, was of the most rudimentary nature; and yet he mastered that difficult tongue so as to produce from the original an admirable translation of the entire Pentateuch, the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First Chronicles, contained in Matthew's Bible of 1537, and of the Book of Jonah, so excellent, indeed, that his work is not only the basis of those portions of the Authorized King James Version of 1611, but constitutes nine-tenths of that translation, and very largely that of the English Revised Version of 1885.

In addition to these he produced the following works. His first original composition, *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture*, is really a reprint, slightly altered, of his *Prologue* to the quarto edition of his New Testament, and had appeared in separate form before 1532; *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1527); and *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1527-28). These several works drew out in 1529 Sir Thomas More's *Dialogue*, etc. In 1530 appeared Tyndale's *Practyse of Prelates*, and in 1531 his Answer to the *Dialogue*, his *Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John*, and the famous *Prologue* to Jonah; in 1532, *An Exposition upon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Matthew*; and in 1536, *A Brief Declaration of the Sacraments*, etc., which seems to be a posthumous publication. Joshua-Second Chronicles also was published after his death.

All these works were written during those mysterious years, in places of concealment so secure and well chosen, that neither the ecclesiastical nor diplomatic emissaries of Wolsey and Henry VIII., charged to track, hunt down, and seize the fugitive, were able to reach them, and they are even yet unknown. Under the idea that the progress of the Reformation in England rendered it safe for him to leave his concealment, he settled at Antwerp in 1534, and combined the work of an evangelist with that of a translator of the Bible.

The Betrayal and Death of William Tyndale

Tyndale was betrayed by a friend, Philips, the agent either of Henry or of English ecclesiastics, or possibly of both. Tyndale was arrested and imprisoned in the castle of Vilvoorden for over 500 days of horrible conditions. He was tried for heresy and treason in a ridiculously unfair trial, and convicted. Tyndale was then strangled and burnt at the stake in the prison yard, Oct. 6, 1536. His last words were, "*Lord, open the king of England's eyes.*" This prayer was answered three years later, in the publication of King Henry VIII's 1539 English "Great Bible".

Tyndale's place in history has not yet been sufficiently recognized as a translator of the Scriptures, as an apostle of liberty, and as a chief promoter of the Reformation in England. In all these respects his influence has been singularly under-valued. The sweeping statement found in almost all histories, that Tyndale translated from the Vulgate and Luther, is most damaging to the reputation of the writers who make it; for, as a matter of fact, it is contrary to truth, since his translations are made directly from the originals, with the aid of the Erasmus 1516 Greek-Latin New Testament, and the best available Hebrew texts. The Prolegomena in Mombert's *William Tyndale's Five Books of Moses* show conclusively that Tyndale's Pentateuch is a translation of the Hebrew original.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The Origin of the English Bible

<http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/index.html>

English Bible History



The fascinating story of how we got the Bible in its present form actually starts thousands of years ago, as briefly outlined in our Timeline of Bible Translation History. As a background study, we recommend that you first review our discussion of the Pre-Reformation History of the Bible from 1,400 B.C. to 1,400 A.D., which covers the transmission of the scripture through the original languages of Hebrew and Greek, and the 1,000 years of the Dark & Middle Ages when the Word was trapped in only Latin. Our starting point in this discussion of Bible history, however, is the advent of the scripture in the English language with the “Morning Star of the Reformation”, John Wycliffe.



John Wycliffe

The first hand-written English language Bible manuscripts were produced in the **1380's** AD by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Wycliffe, (also spelled “Wycliff” & “Wyclif”), was well-known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teaching of the organized Church, which he believed to be contrary to the Bible. With the help of his followers, called the Lollards, and his assistant Purvey, and many other faithful scribes, Wycliffe produced dozens of English language manuscript copies of the scriptures. They were translated out of the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to Wycliffe. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug-up, crushed, and scattered in the river!



John Hus

One of Wycliffe's followers, John Hus, actively promoted Wycliffe's ideas: that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the Roman church that threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution. Hus was burned at the stake in **1415**, with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire. The last words of John Hus were that, "*in 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.*" Almost exactly 100 years later, in **1517**, Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) into the church door at Wittenberg. The prophecy of Hus had come true! Martin Luther went on to be the first person to translate and publish the Bible in the commonly-spoken dialect of the German people; a translation more appealing than previous German Biblical translations. Foxe's Book of Martyrs records that in that same year, **1517**, seven people were burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church for the crime of teaching their children to say the Lord's Prayer in English rather than Latin.



Johann Gutenberg

Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the **1450's**, and the first book to ever be printed was a Latin language Bible, printed in Mainz, Germany. Gutenberg's Bibles were surprisingly beautiful, as each leaf Gutenberg printed was later colorfully hand-illuminated. Born as "Johann Gensfleisch" (John Gooseflesh), he preferred to be known as "Johann Gutenberg" (John Beautiful Mountain). Ironically, though he had created what many believe to be the most important invention in history, Gutenberg was a victim of unscrupulous business associates who took control of his business and left him in poverty. Nevertheless, the invention of the movable-type printing press meant that Bibles and books could finally be effectively produced in large quantities in a short period of time. This was essential to the success of the Reformation.



Thomas Linacre

In the 1490's another Oxford professor, and the personal physician to King Henry the 7th and 8th, Thomas Linacre, decided to learn Greek. After reading the Gospels in Greek, and comparing it to the Latin Vulgate, he wrote in his diary, "Either this (the original Greek) is not the Gospel... or we are not Christians." The Latin had become so corrupt that it no longer even preserved the message of the Gospel... yet the Church still threatened to kill anyone who read the scripture in any language other than Latin... though Latin was not an original language of the scriptures.



John Colet

In 1496, John Colet, another Oxford professor and the son of the Mayor of London, started reading the New Testament in Greek and translating it into English for his students at Oxford, and later for the public at Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. The people were so hungry to hear the Word of God in a language they could understand, that within six months there were 20,000 people packed in the church and at least that many outside trying to get in! (Sadly, while the enormous and beautiful Saint Paul's Cathedral remains the main church in London today, as of 2003, typical Sunday morning worship attendance is only around 200 people... and most of them are tourists). Fortunately for Colet, he was a powerful man with friends in high places, so he amazingly managed to avoid execution.



Erasmus

In considering the experiences of Linacre and Colet, the great scholar Erasmus was so moved to correct the corrupt Latin Vulgate, that in **1516**, with the help of printer John Froben, he published a Greek-Latin Parallel New Testament. The Latin part was not the corrupt Vulgate, but his own fresh rendering of the text from the more accurate and reliable Greek, which he had managed to collate from a half-dozen partial old Greek New Testament manuscripts he had acquired. This milestone was the first non-Latin Vulgate text of the scripture to be produced in a millennium... and the first ever to come off a printing press. The 1516 Greek-Latin New Testament of Erasmus further focused attention on just how corrupt and inaccurate the Latin Vulgate had become, and how important it was to go back and use the original Greek (New Testament) and original Hebrew (Old Testament) languages to maintain accuracy... and to translate them faithfully into the languages of the common people, whether that be English, German, or any other tongue. No sympathy for this "illegal activity" was to be found from Rome... even as the words of Pope Leo X's declaration that "the **fable** of Christ was quite profitable to him" continued through the years to infuriate the people of God.



William Tyndale

William Tyndale was the Captain of the Army of Reformers, and was their spiritual leader. Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first man to ever print the New Testament in the English language. Tyndale was a true scholar and a genius, so fluent in eight languages that it was said one would think any one of them to be his native tongue. He is frequently referred to as the “Architect of the English Language”, (even more so than William Shakespeare) as so many of the phrases Tyndale coined are still in our language today.



Martin Luther

Martin Luther had a small head-start on Tyndale, as Luther declared his intolerance for the Roman Church's corruption on Halloween in **1517**, by nailing his 95 Theses of Contention to the Wittenberg Church door. Luther, who would be exiled in the months following the Diet of Worms Council in **1521** that was designed to martyr him, would translate the New Testament into German for the first time from the 1516 Greek-Latin New Testament of Erasmus, and publish it in September of **1522**. Luther also published a German Pentateuch in 1523, and another edition of the German New Testament in 1529. In the 1530's he would go on to publish the entire Bible in German.

William Tyndale wanted to use the same 1516 Erasmus text as a source to translate and print the New Testament in English for the first time in history. Tyndale showed up on Luther's doorstep in Germany in 1525, and by year's end had translated the New Testament into English. Tyndale had been forced to flee England, because of the wide-spread rumor that his English New Testament project was underway, causing inquisitors and bounty hunters to be constantly on Tyndale's trail to arrest him and prevent his project. God foiled their plans, and in **1525-1526** the Tyndale New Testament became the first printed edition of the scripture in the English language. Subsequent printings of the Tyndale New Testament in the 1530's were often elaborately illustrated.

They were burned as soon as the Bishop could confiscate them, but copies trickled through and actually ended up in the bedroom of King Henry VIII. The more the King and Bishop resisted its distribution, the more fascinated the public at large became. The church declared it contained thousands of errors as they torched hundreds of New Testaments confiscated by the clergy, while in fact, they burned them because they could find no errors at all. One risked death by burning if caught in mere possession of Tyndale's forbidden books.

Having God's Word available to the public in the language of the common man, English, would have meant disaster to the church. No longer would they control access to the scriptures. If people were able to read the Bible in their own tongue, the church's income and power would crumble. They could not possibly continue to get away with selling indulgences (the forgiveness of sins) or selling the release of loved ones from a church-manufactured "Purgatory". People would begin to challenge the church's

authority if the church were exposed as frauds and thieves. The contradictions between what God's Word said, and what the priests taught, would open the public's eyes and the truth would set them free from the grip of fear that the institutional church held. Salvation through faith, not works or donations, would be understood. The need for priests would vanish through the priesthood of all believers. The veneration of church-canonized Saints and Mary would be called into question. The availability of the scriptures in English was the biggest threat imaginable to the wicked church. Neither side would give up without a fight.

Today, there are only two known copies left of Tyndale's 1525-26 First Edition. Any copies printed prior to 1570 are extremely valuable. Tyndale's flight was an inspiration to freedom-loving Englishmen who drew courage from the 11 years that he was hunted. Books and Bibles flowed into England in bales of cotton and sacks of flour. Ironically, Tyndale's biggest customer was the King's men, who would buy up every copy available to burn them... and Tyndale used their money to print even more! In the end, Tyndale was caught: betrayed by an Englishman that he had befriended. Tyndale was incarcerated for 500 days before he was strangled and burned at the stake in **1536**. Tyndale's last words were, *"Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes"*. This prayer would be answered just three years later in **1539**, when King Henry VIII finally allowed, and even funded, the printing of an English Bible known as the "Great Bible". But before that could happen...



Myles Coverdale

Myles Coverdale and John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers had remained loyal disciples the last six years of Tyndale's life, and they carried the English Bible project forward and even accelerated it. Coverdale finished translating the Old Testament, and in **1535** he printed the first complete Bible in the English language, making use of Luther's German text and the Latin as sources. Thus, the first complete English Bible was printed on **October 4, 1535**, and is known as the **Coverdale Bible**.



John Rogers

John Rogers went on to print the second complete English Bible in **1537**. It was, however, the first English Bible translated from the original Biblical languages of Hebrew & Greek. He printed it under the pseudonym "**Thomas Matthew**", (an assumed name that had actually been used by Tyndale at one time) as a considerable part of this Bible was the translation of Tyndale, whose writings had been condemned by the English authorities. It is a composite made up of Tyndale's Pentateuch and New Testament (1534-1535 edition) and Coverdale's Bible and some of Roger's own translation of the text. It remains known most commonly as the Matthew-Tyndale Bible. It went through a nearly identical second-edition printing in 1549.



Thomas Cranmer

In **1539**, Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, hired Myles Coverdale at the bequest of King Henry VIII to publish the "Great Bible". It became the first English Bible authorized for public use, as it was distributed to every church, chained to the pulpit, and a reader was even provided so that the illiterate could hear the Word of God in plain English. It would seem that William Tyndale's last wish had been granted...just three years after his martyrdom. Cranmer's Bible, published by Coverdale, was known as the Great Bible due to its great size: a large pulpit folio measuring over 14 inches tall. Seven editions of this version were printed between April of **1539** and December of **1541**.



King Henry VIII

It was not that King Henry VIII had a change of conscience regarding publishing the Bible in English. His motives were more sinister... but the Lord sometimes uses the evil intentions of men to bring about His glory. King Henry VIII had in fact, requested that the Pope permit him to divorce his wife and marry his mistress. The Pope refused. King Henry responded by marrying his mistress anyway, (later having two of his many wives executed), and thumbing his nose at the Pope by renouncing Roman Catholicism, taking England out from under Rome's religious control, and declaring himself as the reigning head of State to also be the new head of the Church. This new branch of the Christian Church, neither Roman Catholic nor truly Protestant, became known as the Anglican Church or the Church of England. King Henry acted essentially as its "Pope". His first act was to further defy the wishes of Rome by funding the printing of the scriptures in English... the first legal English Bible... just for spite.



Queen Mary

The ebb and flow of freedom continued through the 1540's...and into the 1550's. After King Henry VIII, King Edward VI took the throne, and after his death, the reign of Queen "Bloody" Mary was the next

obstacle to the printing of the Bible in English. She was possessed in her quest to return England to the Roman Church. In **1555**, John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers and Thomas Cranmer were both burned at the stake. Mary went on to burn reformers at the stake by the hundreds for the "crime" of being a Protestant. This era was known as the Marian Exile, and the refugees fled from England with little hope of ever seeing their home or friends again.



John Foxe

In the 1550's, the Church at Geneva, Switzerland, was very sympathetic to the reformer refugees and was one of only a few safe havens for a desperate people. Many of them met in Geneva, led by **Myles Coverdale** and John Foxe (publisher of the famous Foxe's Book of Martyrs, which is to this day the only exhaustive reference work on the persecution and martyrdom of Early Christians and Protestants from the first century up to the mid-16th century), as well as Thomas Sampson and William Whittingham. There, with the protection of the great theologian John Calvin (author of the most famous theological book ever published, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion) and John Knox, the great Reformer of the Scottish Church, the Church of Geneva determined to produce a Bible that would educate their families while they continued in exile.



John Calvin

The New Testament was completed in **1557**, and the complete Bible was first published in **1560**. It became known as the Geneva Bible. Due to a passage in Genesis describing the clothing that God fashioned for Adam and Eve upon expulsion from the Garden of Eden as "Breeches" (an antiquated form of "Britches"), some people referred to the Geneva Bible as the Breeches Bible.



John Knox

The Geneva Bible was the first Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters, so that referencing specific passages would be easier. Every chapter was also accompanied by extensive marginal notes and

references so thorough and complete that the Geneva Bible is also considered the first English "Study Bible". William Shakespeare quotes hundreds of times in his plays from the Geneva translation of the Bible. The Geneva Bible became the Bible of choice for over 100 years of English speaking Christians. Between **1560** and **1644** at least 144 editions of this Bible were published. Examination of the **1611** King James Bible shows clearly that its translators were influenced much more by the Geneva Bible, than by any other source. The Geneva Bible itself retains over **90%** of William Tyndale's original English translation. The Geneva in fact, remained more popular than the King James Version until **decades** after its original release in **1611**! The Geneva holds the honor of being the first Bible taken to America, and the Bible of the Puritans and Pilgrims. It is truly the "Bible of the Protestant Reformation." Strangely, the famous Geneva Bible has been out-of-print since 1644, so the only way to obtain one is to either purchase an original printing of the Geneva Bible, or a less costly facsimile reproduction of the original 1560 Geneva Bible.

With the end of Queen Mary's bloody reign, the reformers could safely return to England. The Anglican Church, now under Queen Elizabeth I, reluctantly tolerated the printing and distribution of Geneva version Bibles in England. The marginal notes, which were vehemently against the institutional Church of the day, did not rest well with the rulers of the day. Another version, one with a less inflammatory tone was desired, and the copies of the Great Bible were getting to be decades old. In **1568**, a revision of the Great Bible known as the Bishop's Bible was introduced. Despite 19 editions being printed between **1568** and **1606**, this Bible, referred to as the "rough draft of the King James Version", never gained much of a foothold of popularity among the people. The Geneva may have simply been too much to compete with.

By the **1580's**, the Roman Catholic Church saw that it had lost the battle to suppress the will of God: that His Holy Word be available in the English language. In **1582**, the Church of Rome surrendered their fight for "Latin only" and decided that if the Bible was to be available in English, they would at least have an official Roman Catholic English translation. And so, using the corrupt and inaccurate Latin Vulgate as the only source text, they went on to publish an English Bible with all the distortions and corruptions that Erasmus had revealed and warned of 75 years earlier. Because it was translated at the Roman Catholic College in the city of Rheims, it was known as the Rheims New Testament (also spelled Rhemes). The **Douay Old Testament** was translated by the Church of Rome in **1609** at the College in the city of Douay (also spelled Doway & Douai). The combined product is commonly referred to as the "**Doway/Rheims**" Version. In **1589**, Dr. William Fulke of Cambridge published the "Fulke's Refutation", in which he printed in parallel columns the Bishops Version along side the Rheims Version, attempting to show the error and distortion of the Roman Church's corrupt compromise of an English version of the Bible.



King James I

With the death of Queen Elizabeth I, Prince James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. The Protestant clergy approached the new King in **1604** and announced their desire for a new translation to replace the Bishop's Bible first printed in **1568**. They knew that the Geneva Version had won the hearts of the people because of its excellent scholarship, accuracy, and exhaustive commentary. However, they did not want the controversial marginal notes (proclaiming the Pope an Anti-Christ, etc.) Essentially, the leaders of the church desired a Bible for the people, with scriptural references only for word clarification or cross-references.

This "translation to end all translations" (for a while at least) was the result of the combined effort of about fifty scholars. They took into consideration: The Tyndale New Testament, The Coverdale Bible, The Matthews Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, and even the Rheims New Testament. The great revision of the Bishop's Bible had begun. From **1605** to **1606** the scholars engaged in private research. From **1607** to **1609** the work was assembled. In **1610** the work went to press, and in **1611** the first of the huge (16 inch tall) pulpit folios known today as "The 1611 King James Bible" came off the printing press. A typographical discrepancy in Ruth 3:15 rendered a pronoun "He" instead of "She" in that verse in some printings. This caused some of the **1611** First Editions to be known by collectors as "**He**" **Bibles**, and others as "**She**" **Bibles**. Starting just one year after the huge 1611 pulpit-size King James Bibles were printed and chained to every church pulpit in England; printing then began on the earliest normal-size printings of the King James Bible. These were produced so individuals could have their own personal copy of the Bible.



John Bunyan

The Anglican Church's King James Bible took decades to overcome the more popular Protestant Church's Geneva Bible. One of the greatest ironies of history, is that many Protestant Christian churches today embrace the King James Bible exclusively as the "only" legitimate English language translation... yet it is not even a Protestant translation! It was printed to compete with the Protestant Geneva Bible, by authorities who throughout most of history were hostile to Protestants... and killed them. While many Protestants are quick to assign the full blame of persecution to the Roman Catholic Church, it should be noted that even after England broke from Roman Catholicism in the 1500's, the Church of England (The Anglican Church) continued to persecute Protestants throughout the 1600's. One famous example of this is John Bunyan, who while in prison for the crime of preaching the Gospel, wrote one of Christian history's greatest books, Pilgrim's Progress. Throughout the 1600's, as the Puritans and the Pilgrims fled the religious persecution of England to cross the Atlantic and start a new free nation in America, they took with them their precious Geneva Bible, and rejected the King's Bible. America was founded upon the Geneva Bible, not the King James Bible.

Protestants today are largely unaware of their own history, and unaware of the Geneva Bible (which is textually 95% the same as the King James Version, but 50 years older than the King James Version, and not influenced by the Roman Catholic Rheims New Testament that the King James translators admittedly took into consideration). Nevertheless, the King James Bible turned out to be an excellent and accurate translation, and it became the most printed book in the history of the world, and the only book with one billion copies in print. In fact, for over 250 years...until the appearance of the English Revised Version of **1881-1885**...the King James Version reigned without much of a rival. One little-known fact, is that for the past 200 years, all King James Bibles published in America are actually the 1769 Baskerville spelling and wording revision of the 1611. The original "1611" preface is deceptively included by the publishers, and no mention of the fact that it is really the 1769 version is to be found, because that might hurt sales. The only way to obtain a true, unaltered, 1611 version is to either purchase an original pre-1769 printing of the King James Bible, or a less costly facsimile reproduction of the original 1611 King James Bible.



John Eliot

Although the first Bible printed in America was done in the native Algonquin Indian Language by John Eliot in **1663**; the first English language Bible to be printed in America by **Robert Aitken** in **1782** was a King James Version. Robert Aitken's 1782 Bible was also the only Bible ever authorized by the United States Congress. He was commended by President George Washington for providing Americans with Bibles during the embargo of imported English goods due to the Revolutionary War. In **1808**, Robert's daughter, Jane Aitken, would become the first woman to ever print a Bible... and to do so in America, of course. In **1791**, Isaac Collins vastly improved upon the quality and size of the typesetting of American Bibles and produced the first "Family Bible" printed in America... also a King James Version. Also in **1791**, Isaiah Thomas published the first Illustrated Bible printed in America...in the King James Version. For more information on the earliest Bibles printed in America from the 1600's through the early 1800's, you may wish to review our more detailed discussion of The Bibles of Colonial America.



Noah Webster

While Noah Webster, just a few years after producing his famous Dictionary of the English Language, would produce his own modern translation of the English Bible in **1833**; the public remained too loyal to the King James Version for Webster's version to have much impact. It was not really until the **1880's** that England's own planned replacement for their King James Bible, the **English Revised Version(E.R.V.)** would become the first English language Bible to gain popular acceptance as a post-King James Version modern-English Bible. The widespread popularity of this modern-English translation brought with it another curious characteristic: the absence of the 14 Apocryphal books.

Up until the **1880's** every Protestant Bible (not just Catholic Bibles) had 80 books, not 66! The inter-testamental books written hundreds of years before Christ called "The Apocrypha" were part of virtually every printing of the Tyndale-Matthews Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishops Bible, the Protestant Geneva Bible, and the King James Bible until their removal in the **1880's**! The original **1611** King James contained the Apocrypha, and King James threatened anyone who dared to print the Bible without the Apocrypha with heavy fines and a year in jail. Only for the last **120** years has the Protestant Church rejected these books, and removed them from their Bibles. This has left most modern-day Christians believing the popular myth that there is something "Roman Catholic" about the Apocrypha. There is, however, no truth in that myth, and no widely-accepted reason for the removal of the Apocrypha in the 1880's has ever been officially issued by a mainline Protestant denomination.

The Americans responded to England's E.R.V. Bible by publishing the nearly-identical **American Standard Version (A.S.V.)** in **1901**. It was also widely-accepted and embraced by churches

throughout America for many decades as the leading modern-English version of the Bible. In the 1971, it was again revised and called **New American Standard Version Bible** (often referred to as the **N.A.S.V.** or **N.A.S.B.** or **N.A.S.**). This New American Standard Bible is considered by nearly all evangelical Christian scholars and translators today, to be the most accurate, word-for-word translation of the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures into the modern English language that has ever been produced. It remains the most popular version among theologians, professors, scholars, and seminary students today. Some, however, have taken issue with it because it is so direct and literal a translation (focused on accuracy), that it does not flow as easily in conversational English.

For this reason, in **1973**, the **New International Version (N.I.V.)** was produced, which was offered as a “dynamic equivalent” translation into modern English. The N.I.V. was designed not for “word-for-word” accuracy, but rather, for “phrase-for-phrase” accuracy, and ease of reading even at a Junior High-School reading level. It was meant to appeal to a broader (and in some instances less-educated) cross-section of the general public. Critics of the N.I.V. often jokingly refer to it as the “**Nearly Inspired Version**”, but that has not stopped it from becoming the best-selling modern-English translation of the Bible ever published.

In **1982**, Thomas Nelson Publishers produced what they called the “**New King James Version**”. Their original intent was to keep the basic wording of the King James to appeal to King James Version loyalists, while only changing the most obscure words and the Elizabethan “thee, thy, thou” pronouns. This was an interesting marketing ploy, however, upon discovering that this was not enough of a change for them to be able to legally copyright the result, they had to make more significant revisions, which defeated their purpose in the first place. It was never taken seriously by scholars, but it has enjoyed some degree of public acceptance, simply because of its clever “New King James Version” marketing name.

In **2002**, a major attempt was made to bridge the gap between the simple readability of the N.I.V., and the extremely precise accuracy of the N.A.S.B. This translation is called the **English Standard Version (E.S.V.)** and is rapidly gaining popularity for its readability and accuracy. The 21st Century will certainly continue to bring new translations of God’s Word in the modern English language.

As Christians, we must be very careful to make intelligent and informed decisions about what translations of the Bible we choose to read. On the liberal extreme, we have people who would give us heretical new translations that attempt to change God’s Word to make it politically correct. One example of this, which has made headlines recently is the Today’s New International Version (T.N.I.V.) which seeks to remove all gender-specific references in the Bible whenever possible! Not all new translations are good... and some are very bad.

But equally dangerous, is the other extreme... of blindly rejecting ANY English translation that was produced in the four centuries that have come after the 1611 King James. We must remember that the main purpose of the Protestant Reformation was to get the Bible out of the chains of being trapped in an ancient language that few could understand, and into the modern, spoken, conversational language of the present day. William Tyndale fought and died for the right to print the Bible in the common, spoken, modern English tongue of his day... as he boldly told one official who criticized his efforts, “*If God spare my life, I will see to it that the boy who drives the plowshare knows more of the scripture than you, Sir!*”

Will we now go backwards, and seek to imprison God’s Word once again exclusively in ancient translations? Clearly it is not God’s will that we over-react to SOME of the bad modern translations, by rejecting ALL new translations and “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”. The Word of God is unchanging from generation to generation, but language is a dynamic and ever-changing form of communication. We therefore have a responsibility before God as Christians to make sure that each generation has a modern translation that they can easily understand, yet that does not sacrifice accuracy in any way. Let’s be ever mindful that we are not called to worship the Bible. That is called idolatry. We are called to worship the God who gave us the Bible, and who preserved it through the centuries of people who sought to destroy it.

We are also called to preserve the ancient, original English translations of the Bible... and that is what we do here at WWW.GREATSITE.COM

Consider the following textual comparison of the earliest English translations of John 3:16, as shown in the English Hexapla Parallel New Testament:

- 1st Ed. King James (1611): "For God so loued the world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne: that whosoever beleueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life."
- Rheims (1582): "For so God loued the vworld, that he gaue his only-begotten sonne: that euery one that beleueth in him, perish not, but may haue life euerlasting"
- Geneva (1560): "For God so loueth the world, that he hath geuen his only begotten Sonne: that none that beleue in him, should peryshe, but haue euerlasting lyfe."
- Great Bible (1539): "For God so loued the worlde, that he gaue his only begotten sonne, that whosoever beleueth in him, shulde not perisshe, but haue euerlasting lyfe."
- Tyndale (1534): "For God so loveth the worlde, that he hath geuen his only sonne, that none that beleue in him, shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe."
- Wycliff (1380): "for god loued so the world; that he gaf his oon bigetun sone, that eche man that bileueth in him perisch not: but haue euerlastynge liif,"
- Anglo-Saxon Proto-English Manuscripts (995 AD): "God lufode middan-eard swa, dat he seade his an-cennedan sunu, dat nan ne forweorde de on hine gely ac habbe dat ece lif."

Timeline of Bible Translation History

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: Athenasius, 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.

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[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

THE ENGLISH BIBLE: The History of the King James Bible

<http://www.av1611.org/kjv/kjvhist.html>

A Brief History of the King James Bible

By Dr. Laurence M. Vance

As the reign of Elizabeth (1558-1603) was coming to a close, we find a draft for an act of Parliament for a new version of the Bible: "An act for the reducing of diversities of bibles now extant in the English tongue to one settled vulgar translated from the original." The Bishop's Bible of 1568, although it may have eclipsed the Great Bible, was still rivaled by the Geneva Bible. Nothing ever became of this draft during the reign of Elizabeth, who died in 1603, and was succeeded by James 1, as the throne passed from the Tudors to the Stuarts. James was at that time James VI of Scotland, and had been for thirty-seven years. He was born during the period between the Geneva and the Bishop's Bible.

One of the first things done by the new king was the calling of the Hampton Court Conference in January of 1604 "for the hearing, and for the determining, things pretended to be amiss in the church." Here were assembled bishops, clergymen, and professors, along with four Puritan divines, to consider the complaints of the Puritans. Although Bible revision was not on the agenda, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, John Reynolds, "moved his Majesty, that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reigns of Henry the eighth, and Edward the sixth, were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the Original."

The king rejoined that he:

"Could never yet see a Bible well translated in English; but I think that, of all, that of Geneva is the worst. I wish some special pains were taken for an uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned men in both Universities, then reviewed by the Bishops, presented to the Privy Council, lastly ratified by the Royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and none other."

Accordingly, a resolution came forth:

"That a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service."

The next step was the actual selection of the men who were to perform the work. In July of 1604, James wrote to Bishop Bancroft that he had "appointed certain learned men, to the number of four and fifty, for the translating of the Bible." These men were the best biblical scholars and linguists of their day. In the preface to their completed work it is further stated that "there were many chosen, that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise. Again, they came or were thought to come to the work, learned, not to learn." Other men were sought out, according to James, "so that our said intended translation may have the help and furtherance of all our principal learned men within this our kingdom."

Although fifty-four men were nominated, only forty-seven were known to have taken part in the work of translation. The translators were organized into six groups, and met respectively at Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford. Ten at Westminster were assigned Genesis through 2 Kings; seven had Romans through Jude. At Cambridge, eight worked on 1 Chronicles through Ecclesiastes, while seven others handled the Apocrypha. Oxford employed seven to translate Isaiah through Malachi; eight occupied themselves with the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation.

Fifteen general rules were advanced for the guidance of the translators:

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit.
2. The names of the Prophets, and the Holy Writers, with the other Names of the Text, to be retained, as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.
3. The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz. the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c.
4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the Propriety of the Place, and the Analogy of the Faith.
5. The Division of the Chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if Necessity so require.
6. No Marginal Notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek Words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the Text.
7. Such Quotations of Places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit Reference of one

Scripture to another.

8. Every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand.

9. As any one Company hath dispatched any one Book in this Manner they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful in this Point.

10. If any Company, upon the Review of the Book so sent, doubt or differ upon any Place, to send them Word thereof; note the Place, and withal send the Reasons, to which if they consent not, the Difference to be compounded at the general Meeting, which is to be of the chief Persons of each Company, at the end of the Work.

11. When any Place of special Obscurity is doubted of, Letters to be directed by Authority, to send to any Learned Man in the Land, for his Judgement of such a Place.

12. Letters to be sent from every Bishop to the rest of his Clergy, admonishing them of this Translation in hand; and to move and charge as many skilful in the Tongues; and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular Observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.

13. The Directors in each Company, to be the Deans of Westminster, and Chester for that Place; and the King's Professors in the Hebrew or Greek in either University.

14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops Bible: Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva.

15. Besides the said Directors before mentioned, three or four of the most Ancient and Grave Divines, in either of the Universities, not employed in Translating, to be assigned by the vice-Chancellor, upon Conference with the rest of the Heads, to be Overseers of the Translations as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the 4th Rule above specified.

The work began to take shape in 1604 and progressed steadily. The translators expressed their early thoughts in their preface as:

"Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one,...but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against, that hath been our endeavor."

They had at their disposal all the previous English translations to which they did not disdain:

"We are so far off from condemning any of their labors that travailed before us in this kind, either in this land or beyond sea, either in King Henry's time, or King Edward's...or Queen Elizabeth's of ever renowned memory, that we acknowledge them to have been raised up of God, for the building and furnishing of his Church, and that they deserve to be had of us and of posterity in everlasting remembrance."

And, as the translators themselves also acknowledged, they had a multitude of sources from which to draw from: "Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, CHaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch." The Greek editions of Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza were all accessible, as were the COMplutensian and Antwerp Polyglots, and the Latin translations of Pagninus, Termellius, and Beza.

Four years were spent on the preliminary translation by the six groups. The translators were exacting and particular in their work, as related in their preface:

Neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see.

The conferences of each of the six being ended, nine months were spent at Stationers' Hall in London for review and revision of the work by two men each from the Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford companies. The final revision was then completed by Myles Smith and Thomas Bilson, with a preface supplied by Smith.

The completed work was issued in 1611, the complete title page reading:

"THE HOLY BIBLE, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesties Special Commandment. Appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie. ANNO DOM. 1611."

The New Testament had a separate title page, the whole of it reading:

"THE NEWE Testament of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Newly Translated out of the Originall Greeke: and with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesties speciall Commandment. IMPRINTED at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestie. ANNO DOM. 1611. Cum Privilegio."

The King James Bible was, in its first editions, even larger than the Great Bible. It was printed in black letter with small italicized Roman type to represent those words not in the original languages.

A dedicatory epistle to King James, which also enhanced the completed work, recalled the King's desire that "there should be one more exact Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue." The translators expressed that they were "poor instruments to make GOD'S holy Truth

to be yet more and more known" while at the same time recognizing that "Popish persons" sought to keep the people "in ignorance and darkness."

The Authorized Version, as it came to be called, went through several editions and revisions. Two notable editions were that of 1629, the first ever printed at Cambridge, and that of 1638, also at Cambridge, which was assisted by John Bois and Samuel Ward, two of the original translators. In 1657, the Parliament considered another revision, but it came to naught. The most important editions were those of the 1762 Cambridge revision by Thomas Paris, and the 1769 Oxford revision by Benjamin Blayney. One of the earliest concordances was A Concordance to the Bible of the Last Translation, by John Downham, affixed to a printing of 1632.

The Authorized Version eclipsed all previous versions of the Bible. The Geneva Bible was last printed in 1644, but the notes continued to be published with the King James text. Subsequent versions of the Bible were likewise eclipsed, for the Authorized Version was the Bible until the advent of the Revised Version and ensuing modern translations. It is still accepted as such by its defenders, and recognized as so by its detractors. Alexander Geddes (d. 1802), a Roman Catholic priest, who in 1792 issued the first volume of his own translation of the Bible, accordingly paid tribute to the Bible of his time:

"The highest eulogiums have been made on the translation of James the First, both by our own writers and by foreigners. And, indeed, if accuracy, fidelity, and the strictest attention to the letter of the text, be supposed to constitute the qualities of an excellent version, this of all versions, must, in general, be accounted the most excellent. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude; and expressed, either in the text, or margin, with the greatest precision."

As to whether the Authorized Version was ever officially "authorized," Brooke Westcott, one of the members of the committee that produced the Revised Version, and the editor, with Fenton Hort, of an edition of the Greek New Testament, stated that:

From the middle of the seventeenth century, the King's Bible has been the acknowledged Bible of the English-speaking nations throughout the world simply because it is the best. A revision which embodied the ripe fruits of nearly a century of labour, and appealed to the religious instinct of a great Christian people, gained by its own internal character a vital authority which could never have been secured by any edict of sovereign rulers.

This article was taken from the book *A Brief History of English Bible Translations* by Dr. Laurence M. Vance.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

The History of the Bible Museum

<http://www.greatsite.com/about-us/company.html>

ABOUT US

Our Company History & Our Showroom



Inside our Bookvault

In 1987, the International Director of the World Bible Society, Dr. Craig Lampe, decided to create a very special company. He approached his long-time friend, Dr. Jonathan Byrd, and presented him the idea: to corner-the-market on rare and antique Bibles, and set up an organization that would restore and preserve the ancient printings of God's Word for future generations, and make these wonderful treasures available for sale. This new company would be the world's primary source for antiquarian Bibles.

Dr. Byrd had just sold off all seven of his Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises, and was preparing to build the largest cafeteria in the United States. You can read more about the intriguing story behind that cafeteria in this article from Guideposts Magazine. Jonathan Byrd Racing is also one of the biggest names in Indy Car Racing, and Dr. Byrd was the 2002 pick for the Indianapolis Speedrome Hall of Fame.



Dr. Byrd decided to fund Dr. Lampe's idea, and "Jonathan Byrd's Rare Books & Bibles" was born. Originally, the company had no public showroom or store-front. It was housed in a small

windowless storage room in the offices above Jonathan Byrd's Cafeteria in Greenwood, Indiana. The only way people found out about the company at all was essentially through word-of-mouth referral... yet by 1989, they were already the world's largest dealer of rare and antique Bibles!



John Jeffcoat

Five years later, in 1994, John Jeffcoat took up the hobby of collecting old Bibles. After visiting more than twenty "rare book dealers" he was very discouraged to find that Bibles printed prior to the 1800's seemed to be completely unavailable. In voicing this concern to one rare book dealer, he was told, "Of course you can't find any ancient Bibles... one man has them all... but he will sell you whatever you want if you call him. His name is Dr. Craig Lampe... here's his phone number." Two brief phone calls later, John was in his car, driving over 1,200 miles round-trip, to see this little shop above a cafeteria that had managed to become a world-wide-near-monopoly in the niche market of rare and antique Bibles. Two days later, he returned home, having made the first of what would be tens of thousands of dollars in purchases from this wonderful little shop over the next few years.



Molly Lampe (L) & Dr. Craig Lampe(R)

In 1996, John Jeffcoat approached Dr. Lampe with an idea: to build a website that would showcase a sampling of the company's inventory of ancient Bibles and Bible leaves, and through search engine listings and printed advertisements for the website, make this awesome material known and available to the public... world-wide. Through nothing less than divine providence, John was able to secure possession of the highly desirable URL address "GREATSITE.COM", and a few weeks later, the virtual store was open for business. The response was so great, that

within a few weeks, John quit his full-time job so he could handle the calls and emails that were coming in every day from around the world.

Much like John's own personal experience two years earlier in suddenly discovering the availability of these awesome rare Bibles... once the availability of this material was made known to the world... many people instantly became collectors. After all, what more rewarding hobby could there be than collecting the earliest printings of God's Word? What more valuable and precious commodity is there? What better investment or family heirloom?



Outside Our Showroom

With millions of dollars in annual sales, and a website drawing over 1,000 visitors per day, the world's largest for-sale collection of rare and antique Bibles now needed a store front showroom more elegant than an unmarked storage room above a cafeteria. Fortunately, Dr. Byrd had continued to expand his entrepreneurial ventures, and was now building three new luxury Hotels in suburban Phoenix, Arizona.



The Grand Lobby

In 1999, the company moved its headquarters from Greenwood, Indiana, to Goodyear, Arizona. Our Rare Bible Showroom is now housed in the Grand Lobby of one of Arizona's most beautiful new hotels, where the showroom is open for visitors 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, (though in-person purchases can only be made during regular business hours). You may want to read the article written about us in the Arizona Republic which details how more than 50% of Jonathan

Byrd's profit is given to missionary ministries each year, and so far the company profits have enabled us to fund the printing and distribution of several million Bibles for missionaries through groups like "The Bible League", and to help found the largest Christian Church in the predominantly Hindu nation of India. You may also want to read the Wall Street Journal article written about GREATSITE.COM. If you would like to visit us and tour our Rare Bible Showroom and "Bookvault", and perhaps even stay the night in our Hotel, just CONTACT US. We can also arrange to pick you up at the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, and give you free transportation to our facility which is only 20 minutes west of the airport, and less than one mile from Interstate 10.



Inside Our Showroom

Each suite features an oversized whirlpool tub, large screen televisions, and breathtaking views of the mountains and the world-class golf course that surrounds the hotel. A beautiful center atrium with a pool, hot tub, and exercise facility are on one side of the Rare Bible Showroom, and for your convenience an in-house Avis Car Rental office is right across the hallway by the 24-hour snack room and concierge desk. On the other side of our lobby is our banquet facility, which can hold up to 500 people for special events, such as our Bible History Symposium which we hold about three times a year.

In 2004, due to ongoing health concerns, Dr. Jonathan Byrd retired, leaving his business empire to his sons, and selling his interest in the Rare Bible business to his business partner of many years, Dr. Craig Lampe. "Jonathan Byrd's Rare Books & Bibles" was re-named "The Bible Museum, Inc.", and is now fully-owned by Dr. Craig Lampe. World-wide sales, marketing, and customer service, is still handled exclusively by "Greatsite Marketing" at GREATSITE.COM which is owned by John Jeffcoat, who is also the Director of Marketing for The Bible Museum.

[return to menu](#)

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE - - Discussion Guide

Dr. Paul Maier's Homepage

<http://www.paulmaier.com/>

Welcome to Paul Maier.com

Home

Contact Us

Fiction

Non-Fiction

Books for Children

Audio & Video Seminars

Arranging for Lectures
& Seminars

Seminar Topics

Dr. Paul L. Maier is the Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University and a much-published author of both scholarly and popular works. His novels include two historical documentaries — *Pontius Pilate* and *The Flames of Rome* — as well as *A Skeleton in God's Closet*, a theological thriller that became a #1 national bestseller in religious fiction when it first released. Sequels, *More than a Skeleton* and *The Constantine Codex* followed in 2003 and 2011.

His nonfiction works include *In the Fullness of Time*, a book that correlates sacred with secular evidence from the ancient world impinging on Jesus and early Christianity; *Josephus: The Essential Works*, a new translation / commentary on writings of the first-century Jewish historian; and *Eusebius: The Church History*, a similar book on the first Christian historian. More than five million of Maier's books are now in print in twenty languages, as well as over 250 scholarly articles and reviews in professional journals.

Dr. Maier lectures widely, appears frequently on national radio, television, and newspaper interviews, and has received numerous awards. He has also penned seven children's books and hosted six video seminars dealing with Jesus, St. Paul, the early church, and current Christianity.

[return to menu](#)