

# INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE BIBLE

## A. OVERVIEW OF BIBLE HISTORY (see attached)

## B. INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

### 1. The Bible Claims To Be Inspired

#### a. Explicitly

2 Tim. 3:16 "God-breathed" (theopneustos)

2 Pet. 1:21 Spirit-moved writers recorded God-breathed writings

Heb. 1:1 God spoke TO the fathers BY the prophets

#### b. Implicitly

e.g. New Testament language re. Old Testament references

Old Testament Designation		New Testament Designation	
The psalmist said	(Ps. 95:7)	The Holy Spirit says	(Heb. 3:7)
The psalmist said	(Ps. 45:6)	God said	(Heb. 1:8)
The psalmist said	(Ps. 102:25,27)	God said	(Heb. 1:10-12)
Isaiah said	(Is. 7:14)	The Lord spoke by the prophet	(Matt. 1:22-23)
Hosea said	(Hosea 11:1)	The Lord spoke by the prophet	(Matt. 2:15)
Narrator's comment in Genesis	(Gen. 2:24)	God said	(Matt. 19:3-6)
Eliphaz' words	(Job 5:13)	God's Word	(I Cor. 3:19)

Cp. Paul in I Cor. 7:12

Conclusion: God's causality + prophetic agency = Scriptural authority

### 2. How Do We Know The Bible Is Inspired?

a. (Following Calvin Inst.I, vii, 4) As far as human reason goes, there are many proofs to establish the credibility of Scripture.

- ▶ Great wisdom, beauty, unity, heavenly character
- ▶ Fulfillment of prophecy
- ▶ Miracles
- ▶ Marvelous preservation
- ▶ Testimony of the Church

But all this only proves that it is a good, perhaps even amazing, book.

- b. Ultimately, Scripture authenticates itself through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

This is a deep down awareness of God speaking to us through the Bible.

*"We know the Bible is the Word of God because it is the Word of God."*

*-- Luther*

- c. e.g., Me and the Bible

### 3. Theories Of Inspiration

O.K., it's inspired. But what does that mean and what exactly is the process?

Questions:           Writer or writings?  
                          Autographs or copies?  
                          Words or message?

- a. Bible contains the Word of God (What is it?)
- b. Bible becomes the Word of God (Human-centered and subjective)
- c. Verbal Dictation (Deifies Scripture)
- d. Inspired Concept (Humanizes Scripture)
- e. Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Combination of both)

These are THEORIES; we're really not told HOW the Bible is inspired.

### 4. Comment on Theories of Inspiration: Let the Bible be what it is.

Don't make the Bible what YOU think it should be.

### 5. Incarnational Paradox and The Nature of Scripture.

- a. Incarnation and the Word of God
- b. Incarnation and the word of God.

The point here is just as Jesus Christ the Word of God is at once and fully both human and divine, so too are the scriptures. Let them be both.

## **C. FORMATION OF THE BIBLE**

### 1. Introduction: Structure and Divisions

- a. "Testament" = covenant

b. Old Testament

1) Hebrew Arrangement

- ▶ Mostly chronological
- ▶ Names comes from first word in book e.g., Bereshith (or “beginning”, i.e. Genesis 1), e.g., Bemidvar (In the Wilderness, i.e. Numbers)

The Law	The Prophets (Nebhiim)	The Writings (Kethubhim)
1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy	A. Former Prophets: 1. Joshua 2. Judges 3. Samuel 4. Kings B. Latter Prophets: 1. Isaiah 2. Jeremiah 3. Ezekiel 4. The Twelve	A. Poetical Books: 1. Psalms 2. Proverbs 3. Job B. Five Rolls (Megilloth): 1. Song of Songs 2. Ruth 3. Lamentations 4. Esther 5. Ecclesiastes C. Historical Books: 1. Daniel 2. Ezra-Nehemiah 3. Chronicles

2) Greek Arrangement (from Septuagint, c. 200 B.C.)

- ▶ Arrangement and names according to subject matter
- ▶ We get our order and names from the Greek Bible

The Law (Pentateuch) – 5 Books	Poetry – 5 Books
1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy	1. Job 2. Psalms 3. Proverbs 4. Ecclesiastes 5. Song of Solomon

History - 12	Prophets – 17 Books	
1. Joshua 2. Judges 3. Ruth 4. I Samuel 5. II Samuel 6. I Kings 7. II Kings 8. I Chronicles 9. II Chronicles 10. Ezra 11. Nehemiah 12. Esther	A. Major 1. Isaiah 2. Jeremiah 3. Lamentations 4. Ezekiel 5. Daniel	B. Minor 1. Hosea 2. Joel 3. Amos 4. Obadiah 5. Jonah 6. Micah 7. Nahum 8. Habakkuk 9. Zephaniah 10. Haggai 11. Zechariah 12. Malachi

c. New Testament

- 1) Gospels -- Matthew popular in Early Church; John seen as different
- 2) Acts
- 3) Pauline Epistles
- 4) "Catholic" (i.e. universal) or General Epistles

d. Canon (How did they come to be assembled in just this collection?)

Greek word "kanon" = literally, "rod or measuring rod";  
 Metaphorically, "a standard or norm"

Cp. Irenaeus (c.180 AD) "the canon of the Church; the truth; the faith"

First applied to Scripture c.350 AD by Athanasius. This also was the approximate time of the finalization of the collection as per the bishops.

2. Old Testament

a. Development of Hebrew Canon

- 1) Moses
  - ▶ From tablets, to skins, to scrolls
  - ▶ Certainly firmly in place by the time of David, but possible that modest amounts of revision took place up until the time of Ezra.

- 2) Prophets
  - ▶ How long after Malachi (450 BC) the later prophets were gathered uncertain. Probably many of the pre-exilic prophetic writings like Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah and others had been drawn into an authoritative collection during the Exile, when the destruction and captivity had stunned the people into realizing that God Himself had spoken through these prophets.
  
- 3) Writings
  - ▶ Diverse character of books makes situation even more complex. Most of the material appears to have been written or collected during the Exile, although some of it, especially in Psalms and Proverbs, dates from the Monarchy (1000-586 BC).
  - ▶ Situation remained open through 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

#### b. Differing Approaches

- 1) Samaritans  
Down on the prophets, who condemned the northern kingdom, and the Writings, centered around the Jerusalem Temple, they only accepted the Pentateuch.
  
- 2) Greek Old Testament (i.e. Septuagint, c. 200 B.C.)  
Accepted other books among the Writings, now known as "The Apocrypha".

Conclusion: Some speculation continued into Christian Era.

Esther (doesn't mention name of God)

Ecclesiastes (bursts of skepticism and hedonism)

Song of Solomon (passionate expressions of love)

Proverbs (supposed contradictions)

Ezekiel (held by some to conflict with Law)

Consensus of rabbis c.90 AD = 39 (no Apocrypha)

#### c. Apocrypha

- 1) Popular usage, even among Christians.
  
- 2) Jerome rejected it for the Vulgate (c.370AD).

- 3) Reformers rejected it; Catholics affirmed its canonicity at Trent (1546) and then at Vatican I (1870).
- 4) Arguments for it:
  - ▶ New Testament quotes mostly from LXX/Septuagint, which seems to have included it.
  - ▶ New Testament reflects thought, even passages from Apocrypha, even quotes Apocryphal books a couple of times.
  - ▶ Many of the Fathers (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria) accepted it.
- 5) General Protestant approach has been they are useful for history, even edifying, but not on par with authoritative Hebrew Canon.

### 3. New Testament

- a. Formation And Collection Of Gospels And Acts
  - ▶ Stages in transmission of Gospels material  
e.g., Lk 1:1-4 Identifies three stages (eyewitnesses, "others", Luke)  
How many different written accounts of Jesus' ministry were there?
- b. Formation And Collection of Paul's Letters
  - ▶ Circulation: Collection indicated by Clement of Rome (95 AD) and Ignatius (110 AD). Note, "The Apostolic Fathers" (Lightfoot collection).
- c. General Epistles
- d. Finalization of New Testament Canon
  - ▶ Death of Apostles and rise of heretics seem to have stimulated Canon issue.
  - ▶ By middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> century, we have references in Apostolic Fathers to every book.
  - ▶ But through first 300 years, lists would sometimes vary  
e.g., Muratorian Canon c.170 AD omit Hebrews, James, and 1 and 2 Peter

Disputed books = Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation

  - ▶ First list like ours in Athanasius, 367 AD.

Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) recognized our 27, though they also sanctioned Old Testament Apocrypha and allowed to be read aloud such books as Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Judith, Tobit, The Didache, and Shepherd Of Hermes.

- e. Final Matters
  - ▶ Criteria for selection
  - ▶ Determination or Recognition (Roman vs. Protestant)

## **D. TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE**

### 1. Languages

- a. Old Testament Hebrew
- b. Aramaic
  - ▶ From Babylon colloquial e.g., The Targumim
  - ▶ Passages Ezra 4:7-6:18, 7:12-26, Dan. 2:4-7:28
- c. Old Testament Greek c.200
  - ▶ Important influence on New Testament
- d. Koine Greek

### 2. Chapters And Verses

- a. Old Testament chapters variously divided until standardized in 1330 AD. Old Testament verses, indicated by spacing, standardized in 900 AD.
- b. New Testament chapters appear in Greek manuscripts before 325 AD, but not same as ours. Ours done by Stephen Langdon, professor at University of Paris, in 1227 AD. Verses first appear in Greek New Testament of Robert Stephanus, a Parisian printer, in 1551.

### 3. Texts

- a. Old Testament (Hebrew)
  - ▶ Scarce until recently (7), Earliest from 1000 AD. Why so scarce?
  - ▶ Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) Documents from time of Jesus.
- b. New Testament
  - ▶ Papyrii
    - e.g., John Rylands Papyrii-little scrap of John 18:31-33 from 117 AD
    - e.g., Chester Beatty Papyrii 3 Codices, most of New Testament from 250 AD
  - ▶ Codices
    - e.g., Vaticanus 325 AD

e.g., Sinaiticu 340 AD  
Caesar's Gallic Wars, 9 copies, earliest 900 years later  
Tacitus, 2 copies, earliest 800 years later  
New Testament, 5,000 copies, from as early as 200 years later

4. Translations

- a. Ancient
- b. Latin
- c. Reformation
- d. English
  - ▶ KJV 1611
  - ▶ RSV 1957
  - ▶ New Jerusalem 1961
  - ▶ Living Bible 1962
  - ▶ Phillips 1958
  - ▶ NIV 1973
- e. Ideas and principles of translation

**E. SUBJECT OF THE BIBLE (Scripture As Witness To Jesus)**

TEXT: John 5:39-40

Of all the purposes of the Scripture the highest purpose is to point us to the Person of Jesus Christ, from Whom we may receive “life.”



## OVERVIEW OF BIBLE HISTORY

	Primeval History	Gen. 1-11
c. 2000	Wandering Nomads (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)	Gen. 12-50
c. 1500	Slavery in Egypt and Exodus	Ex. 1-15
	Wilderness Wandering, Giving of Law	Ex. 16-Lev.- Num.-Deut.
c. 1250	Conquering/Settling of Canaan	Josh-Judges
c. 1000	Kingdom (David and Solomon)	I Sam.-I Ki 12
931	Divided Kingdom Kings-ups and downs, mostly downs	I Ki 12-II Ki 25
	<u>Prophets</u>	
	Jonah c. 780 (?)	Jonah
	Amos C. 760	Amos
	Hosea c. 750-725	Hosea
	Isaiah c. 740-701	Isaiah
	Micah c. 735-700	Micah
721	Northern Kingdom Falls to Assyria	II Ki 17
	Judah (Southern Kingdom) continues	
	<u>Prophets</u>	
	Zephaniah 639-609	Zeph.
	Jeremiah 627-560	Jer.
	Nahum 621-612 (?)	Nahum
	Habakkuk c. 605 (?)	Hab.
	Obadiah c. 605 (?)	Obadiah
	Joel c. 600 (?)	Joel
586	Southern Kingdom Falls to Babylon -- EXILE	II Ki. 25
	<u>Prophets</u>	
	Ezekiel 593-571	
	Daniel c. 550	

538	First Return from Exile (Zerubbabel) Rebuilding of Temple and Jerusalem begins	Ezra
	<u>Prophets</u>	
	Haggai 520	Haggai
	Zechariah 520	Zech.
	Malachi 460	Mal.
c. 445	Walls of Jerusalem Rebuilt	Neh.
c. 333	Intertestamental Period	
	Excepting one brief period of freedom, Jews in Palestine are under Greek, then Egyptian, then Syrian, then Roman rule.	
c. 1 BC-28 AD	Life of John the Baptist	Matt-John
c. 1-30	Life of Jesus	Matt-John
c. 30-33	Pentecost and Dispersion	Ac. 1-8
c. 33-65	Conversion and Ministry of Paul	Ac. 9-28
	<u>Paul's Letters</u>	
	Galatians 48?	Gal.
	I & II Thess. 50	I & II Thess.
	I & II Corinthians 55-56	I & II Cor.
	Romans 57	Rom.
	Ephesians 60-62	Eph.
	Philippians 60-62	Philip.
	Colossians, Philemon 60-62	Col., Phil.
	Pastoral Letters 65	I & II Tim, Titus
c. 60-100	<u>Non-Pauline Letters</u>	
	Hebrews	Heb.
	James	Ja.
	I & II Peter	I & II Peter.
	Jude	Jude
	I, II, III John	I, II, III John
	The Revelation	Rev.

## APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

### Apocrypha

1 Esdras	Wisdom of Solomon	Susanna
2 Esdras	Ecclesiasticus	Bel and the
Dragon		
Tobit	Baruch	Prayer of
Manasseh		
Judith	Letter of Jeremiah	1 Maccabees
Additions to Esther	Prayer of Azariah and Song of Three Young Men	2 Maccabees

### Pseudepigrapha

#### Palestinian

Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs	Martyrdom of Isaiah
Psalms of Solomon	Paralipomena of Jeremiah
Lives of the Prophets	Life of Adam and Eve
Jubilees	Assumption of Moses
Testament of Job	Apocalypse of Baruch
Enoch	Testament of Abraham
	Apocalypse of Abraham

#### Alexandrian

Aristeas	IV Maccabees
Sibylline Oracles	Slavonic Book of Enoch (2 Enoch)
III Maccabees	Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch)

There are also a good number of intertestamental works discovered at Qumran which I will not list (see IDB Vol. 3, p. 962).

Apocrypha = "things hidden" -- confusing!

With the exception of I and 2 Esdras, all composed during the last two centuries B.C.

Pseudopigrapha = "false writings", so called because, although they were written in the period 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. most of them claim to be the work of some ancient worthy of Israel.

## TOOLS FOR BIBLE STUDY

The first, and by far the most, important tools for Bible study are your own physical, intellectual, and emotional senses; a Bible, paper, and pen! With these, you perform a thorough observation of the passage or book. As a result of this process, certain questions may arise concerning grammar, word meanings, or historical, cultural, or geographic information.

### LANGUAGE

#### Grammar:

Translations

#### Words:

Concordances

R. Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible

J. Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance to the Bible

A. Cruden, Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments

How to use a concordance.

Check occurrence of words: (a) elsewhere in the same writing, (b) in other writings by the same author, (c) in the rest of the New Testament/Old Testament.

Dictionaries

W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

Most others require a basic knowledge of Greek or Hebrew

Caution: (a) leading words, (b) etymologies

A word's meaning is determined by its context

### HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GEOGRAPHICAL

General:

H.H. Halley, Halley's Bible Handbook

Bible Dictionaries:

P. Achtemeier, ed. Harper's Bible Dictionary

W. Smith, Smith's Bible Dictionary

J. Douglas, Ed., The New Bible Dictionary

Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia

Others

Commentaries:

One volume

Sets

(Only use commentaries after you have done all your own work!)