

BIBLE INTRODUCTION

Names of the Bible

The word Bible is not in the English version of Scripture. It is the equivalent of the Gr. word biblia, meaning books. The term the books (tabiblia in Gr.) occurs in Daniel 9:2 of the Septuagint, referring to the prophetic writings.

The usage was taken up by the Christian church for the O.T., and later was extended to mean the whole of the Scriptures. The Bible came to be termed such by Clement (of Rome) in the middle of the 2nd century; he called the sacred writings tabiblia-The Books. Jerome's name for the Bible (4th century) was The Divine Library. Afterward there was an important change from the plural to the singular meaning. In the 13th century The Books by common consent became The Book-The Bible.

How the Bible Was Given

Nine Ways the Bible Was Given

Audible voice of God (Ex. 19:19; Dt. 5; Mt. 3:16-17 Jn. 12:28) Angels (Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:2) Prophets (Acts 3:21; Heb. 1:1) Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1; Rev. 1) Apostles (Acts 1:2; Eph. 4) Visions (Isa. 6; Dan. 7-8 Ezek. 1) Dreams (Dan. 2; Mt. 1:20; 2:12) Revelation, Inspiration (2Tim. 3:15-17)

2 Timothy 3:16;

In Many Parts and Ways, Hebrews 1:1; how received, 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Languages of the Bible

1. The O.T., with the exception of Ezra 4:8-6:18; Ezra 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11; Daniel 2:4-7:28, was written in Hebrew. These passages were written in Aramaic (the so-called Chaldee), a dialect related to Hebrew which gradually took its place as the spoken language after the exile.

2. The language of the N.T. was the common (Hellenistic) Greek or Hebrew-Greek, so-called because the Jews introduced so many of their own idioms into the Greek which became well known through the influence of the Septuagint and Jewish businessmen who traveled everywhere. This was the commercial language spoken throughout the Roman Empire at the time of Christ, and it was the most adapted to express Christian doctrine. The Bible is now printed in over 1,100 languages and dialects.

Divisions of the Bible

1. The O.T. Five divisions-Thirty-nine books:

(1) The Pentateuch-5 books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

(2) The twelve historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

(3) The five poetical books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (Canticles)

(4) The five books of the major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

(5) The twelve books of the minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

2. The N.T. Five Divisions-Twenty-seven Books:

(1) The Four gospels-History of the Messiah: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

(2) The historical book: Acts of the Holy Spirit and the apostles

(3) The fourteen Pauline epistles: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews

(4) The seven general epistles: James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

(5) The Prophetical book: Revelation

Dispensations

(1) Dispensation of Innocence (Genesis 2:15-3:21)

(2) Dispensation of Conscience (Genesis 3:22-8:14)

(3) Dispensation of Human Government (Genesis 8:15-11:32)

(4) Dispensation of Promise (Genesis 12:1-Exodus 12:37)

(5) Dispensation of Law (Exodus 12:38-Matthew 2:23). See Matthew 11:10-13; Luke 16:16

(6) Dispensation of Grace (Matthew 3:1-Rev. 19:10)

(7) Dispensation of Divine Government-the Millennium (Rev. 19:11-20:15)

What the Bible Is

1. The Bible is God's inspired revelation of the origin and destiny of all things. Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

2. The Bible is the power of God unto eternal salvation and the source of present help for body, soul, and spirit (Romans 1:16; John 15:7). Christ is its grand subject, man's good its design, and the glory of God its end. It is a mine of wealth, the source of health, and a world of pleasure.

3. The Bible is God's will or testament to men in all ages, revealing the plan of God for man here and now, and in the next life. It will be opened at the judgment, and it will last forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward for the least to the greatest of labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

4. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with man in the past, present, and future. It contains His message of eternal salvation for all who believe in Christ, and eternal damnation for all who rebel against the gospel.

5. As a literary composition, the Bible is the most remarkable book ever made. It is a divine library of 66 books, some of considerable size, and others no larger than a tract. These books include various forms of literature-history, biography, poetry, proverbial sayings, hymns, letters, directions for elaborate ritualistic worship, laws, parables, riddles, allegories, prophecy, and all other forms of human expression.

6. The Bible is the only book that reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories true, and its decisions immutable. It contains light to direct, spiritual food to sustain, and

comfort to cheer. Man should read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. He should read it that it might fill his memory, rule his heart, and guide his feet in righteousness and true holiness. He should read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally; and study it constantly, perseveringly, and industriously-through and through, until it becomes a part of his being, generating faith that will move mountains.

Canon of the Bible

Formation of O.T. Canon:

The O.T. Canon was at first gradual and not created by ecclesiastical authority. The beginning was made by Moses. In David's time the office of recorder was established and detailed records were kept by all the kings of Israel. The final collection of writings and the Canon of the O.T. was completed during the time of Ezra, Nehemiah (Ezra 7:6; Ezra 8:1-8; 2 Macc. 2:13), the Great Synagogue, and Simon the Just (about 292 B.C.). At least the O.T. Canon of Scripture was completed by the time of the Septuagint translation of the O.T. accepted books into Greek (294-289 B.C.).

After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Sanhedrin moved to Tiberius and later to Jamma, a small town 13 mi. south of Joppa where in A.D. 90 the Canon of the O.T. was again decided upon, the apocryphal books (most of which were written the last 3 centuries B.C.) being rejected from the Jewish Canon of Scripture. This list of O.T. books called the Palestinian Canon has been universally accepted by the Protestant Church.

Many N.T. scriptures prove that the present O.T. Canon of Scripture was accepted in the days of Christ and the apostles (Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:29; Matthew 23:33; Luke 11:51; Luke 24:27-32,44; John 5:39; John 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). Not once is there a reference to a controversy over the O.T. Canon. It was a settled subject at that time and should have never been brought up again by any church in this age.

Formation of N.T. Canon

Of the 8 authors who wrote the 27 books of the N.T. not one ever suggested that he was adding to a collection of holy Scriptures (Luke 1:1-3; John 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 15:1-9; 1 John 1:4; 1 John 2:1,7,12,25; 1 John 5:13; 2 Peter 3:13-16; Jude 3; Rev. 1:11-19); nevertheless, the N.T. books written by the apostles and other inspired men were soon held to be as sacred and inspired as the O.T. books; and together they became the rule of faith for the church.

In the formation of the N.T. Canon, 20 out of 27 books were universally accepted immediately as genuine. Only Hebrews, 2 John and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, James, and Revelation were questioned by some. The main objections were that Hebrews did not bear the name of its author; 2 Peter differed from 1 Peter in style; the writers of James and Jude called themselves servants instead of apostles; and the writer of 2 John and 3 John called himself an elder instead of an apostle. The book of Revelation was questioned because of its peculiar character. After deliberate examination,

however, these books were also received as genuine and authentic. By the beginning of the 4th century all 27 books of the present N.T. had been received by most churches; and by the end of that century, they had been received by all churches without further doubt. There being many in those days who were writing novels and fantastic stories about Jesus Christ, His life and His parents, and other Bible characters, it became a problem for the early church to decide which books were inspired. The question was finally settled at the Councils of Nicaea, A.D. 325 (Canon has already been established), Hippo, A.D. 394, and Carthage, A.D. 397. One can therefore wholeheartedly reject the So-Called Lost Books of the Bible and the Apocrypha as being uninspired.

The Apocryphal Books

In some large family Bibles there is a section of 14 books called the Apocrypha—a group of spurious books that were rejected from our present canon of Scripture because they did not pass the tests required of inspired books:

1. They were not written or approved by a prophet.
2. They were not recognized by the Jews as inspired and a part of Scripture.
3. They were not recognized or quoted by Christ and the apostles, a fact that is more striking when we realize that Paul even quoted twice from heathen poets.
4. The last O.T. prophet predicted that the next messenger coming to Israel from God would be the forerunner of Christ (Malachi 3:1). Most of the Apocryphal books were written during the period between Malachi and Christ.
5. Divine authority is not claimed by their authors, and by some it is virtually disowned (2 Macc. 2:23; 2 Macc. 15:38).
6. The books contain statements at variance with the Bible history.
7. They are self-contradictory and, in some cases, opposed to doctrines of Scripture.
8. Josephus, who lived at the time of the apostles, did not regard the Apocryphal books as Scripture. He stated that the O.T. books (the ones in our present version) were the only inspired writings (Josephus, Against Apion, I:8).
9. The Apocryphal books were not a part of the ancient versions of Scripture. They were first added after A.D. 300. The Laodicean Council in A.D. 363 rejected them as being uninspired, thus proving that by that time some were claiming inspiration for them. (They first appeared in the Vatican Version of the 4th century. At the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546 Catholics accepted 6 of these books as inspired and added them to their modern versions of Scripture. They are Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees).
10. Philo and others did not regard the Apocryphal books as inspired.
11. There is a lack of prophetic element in them; and there is an apparent imitation of the inspired O.T. books.
12. They show too free use of the imagination which has given rise to silly stories and the lack of spiritual force and power.

Inspiration of the Bible

God-Breathed.

The Bible a Revelation

Man could never have known about ages of eternal past, the pre-Adamite world, Lucifer's past, the creation of the spirit and material worlds, the future eternal ages, and many other things related to God's plan for man except by direct revelation of these things through the Holy Spirit (Romans 16:25; Ephes. 3:3; Col. 1:26; Col. 2:3; Rev. 1:1). The many hundreds of prophecies are a direct revelation of things to come, which God alone could give (Acts 15:18; Ephes. 2:7; Ephes. 3:9-10; Rev. 1:1).

Revelation discovers new truth while inspiration superintends the communication and recording of it. Revelation guarantees that what God has revealed is truth; inspiration guarantees that not only all revelation, but all other records of Scripture are truth-that what is recorded actually happened, as recorded. All the Bible is inspired whether each passage is a revelation or not (2 Tim. 3:15-17). Furthermore, inspiration records with equal accuracy the language of God, Satan, angels, demons, and men; but it does not place all that is said on the same level. For example, when Satan, evil spirits, or men are recorded as speaking lies to deceive, inspiration only records what was actually said; it does not affirm what was said was truth. No lie can be truth, but inspiration can faithfully record both.

The ignorance of man regarding his origin, past, and eternal future; his lack of knowledge concerning the will of God; and the fact that all philosophers have failed to construct a complete, coherent, and adequate religion-these things make revelation absolutely necessary.

Genuineness and Authenticity of the Bible

Genuineness defined. By genuineness we mean that the books of the Bible were actually written by the men whose names they bear, or that there is sufficient proof of their authorship, and that they were written at the time claimed.

Authenticity defined. By this we mean that the Bible relates truthfully the matters it deals with, and the contents are as originally written.

Six Proofs Bible Genuine and Authentic:

1. Claims of the Bible Itself:

(1) The prophets of the O.T. claimed they were sent by God and that their messages were given to them by God (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 2 Peter 1:21). Over 2,500 times the prophets claimed that God spoke by them (Isaiah 8:5; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 2:4; etc.).

(2) The whole Bible centers around the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the O.T. we have hundreds of predictions, and in the N.T. we have the fulfillment and continuation of His life and ministry. He Himself claimed to have been sent by God (John 8:42; John 7:16; John 17:8). He performed miracles to confirm His mission (Acts 10:38); what He foretold came to pass and will yet come to pass. He put His seal upon the genuineness and authenticity of the O.T. (Matthew 5:17-18; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 12:40-42; Luke 24:44; John 5:39).

(3) The Bible also represents the commission of the apostles as divine. God confirmed their ministry by signs and wonders (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:41-46; Acts 5:1-15; Hebrews 2:1-4). In all their writings they confirmed the teachings of Christ, and their declaration thereof was by supernatural powers.

(4) The testimony of the N.T. to the genuineness and authenticity of the O.T. is plain to see. The O.T. is quoted about 250 times in the N.T. and alluded to about 850 times. All O.T. books are either quoted or alluded to except Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

2. Testimony of Secular History: The events of Bible history were well known among all nations. Happenings of the N.T., having come to the knowledge of the then known world, were referred to by various secular authors of the first 4 centuries of the Christian era. Jerome, in A.D. 392, mentioned about 50 other authors as making quotations about and referring to N.T. events. They belonged to all parts of the world, but they agreed on one thing-that the Jewish scriptures were genuine and authentic, referring to them as a distinct volume universally received as such. No event in ancient history can produce more than a fraction of the evidence by which the Bible in its entirety is sustained as genuine and authentic.

3. Ancient Manuscripts: No original MS can be produced due to the perishable material written on, such as paper and vellum (skins of animals). However, because of the dry climate of Egypt and Palestine, many thousands of copies-whole books or parts thereof-have been preserved for us. It is not necessary to produce original MSS to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible any more than it would be necessary to produce the original Declaration of Independence to prove the many copies we have contain the statements of the original. Scholars are willing to admit the genuineness and authenticity of other writings if there are as many as 10 copies of the originals to be found. On this basis the Bible can be proved genuine and authentic thousands of times.

Number of Manuscripts:

(1) Uncial (ancient writing style) Manuscripts. All letters of uncial copies are 1 in. high; they are the oldest MSS before the 9th century A.D.

Gospels 101 Acts; General Epistles 22 Pauline Epistles 27 Apocalypse (Revelation) 9 _____ Total 156

(2) Cursive Manuscripts. Cursive copies are those in running handwriting as introduced about the 9th century A.D. and used in Bible-making up to the invention of the printing press in A.D. 1456.

Gospels 1,420 Acts; General Epistles 450 Pauline Epistles 520 Apocalypse (Revelation) 195 _____ Total 2,585

Since the catalog of these MSS was made there have been many new discoveries of whole books and portions of the Bible-the Dead Sea scrolls of Isaiah and other ancient writings, for instance. Some Bible texts have been found which are at least 100-200 years earlier than the above. Besides these Greek MSS there are many in Syriac, Coptic, Latin, and other languages, of both testaments, some dating back to the 3rd century, B.C. In 1897 literally tons of papyri were found in the Nile valley about 120 mi. south of Cairo, thousands of pieces being written in the language of the N.T. In another discovery there were at least 1,000,000 papyri; of these many thousands have never been edited. Other collections have also been located, some dating back to A.D. 100-600, and new

discoveries are being made all the time. A recent report says that there are about 5,000 Greek MSS of the N.T. in all, and from 20,000 to 30,000 in other languages besides 100,000 to 200,000 quotations in the writings of the early church fathers.

Uncial Manuscripts:

(1) Sinaiticus or Codex Aleph, dating back to the 4th century. It was discovered by Dr. Tischendorf in the St. Catherine convent on Mt. Sinai in 1859. It contains the whole Bible besides the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas, in part. We have discussed that this as well as Alexandrus and Vitacanus has some issues that we don't find in the Textus Receptus (or the "Received Text")

(2) Alexandrinus or Codex A, dating back to the 5th century. It contains the whole Bible, except for parts of Genesis, 1 Kings, Psalms, Matthew, John, and 2 Corinthians.

(3) Vaticanus or Codex B, dating back to the 4th century. It contains almost all of the O.T., and the N.T. down to Hebrews 9:14.

(4) Ephraem or Codex C, dating back to the 5th century. It contains part of the O.T. and all the N.T. books except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John.

(5) Bezae or Codex D, dating back to the 6th century. It is written in Greek and Latin parallel columns and contains most of the gospels, Acts, and the epistles.

(6) Claromontanus or Codex D, also in Greek and Latin like the Codex Bezae, and dating back to the 6th century. It contains most all the epistles.

Besides these there are many more dating back from the 6th to the 10th centuries which space will not permit the listing of.

4. Lectionaries: These are collections of the gospels and epistles for reading in churches, some dating back from the 7th to the 10th centuries. They help in determining the exact text. Of these there are more than 1,000 of the gospels and 300 of the Acts and epistles.

5 Patristic Quotations: These are quotations of the Bible by early Christian writers-those of the first 3 centuries. They help in determining the exact text, filling the gap between the time of the apostles and the earliest MSS of the 4th century. If the N.T. were destroyed it could be practically reproduced from these quotations of the early fathers alone.

6 Ancient Versions: The many ancient versions of Scripture in many languages, dating from the 3rd century B.C. to the 12th century A.D., add much to the proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible.

(1) Septuagint in Greek, 3rd century B.C.

(2) Chaldee targum, paraphrases of portions of the O.T., 8th-11th centuries A.D.

(3) Samaritan Pentateuch, 1st or 2nd century A.D.

(4) Version of Aquila, Greek of the O.T. about A.D. 160

(5) Version of Theodotian, O.T. in Greek, 2nd century A.D.

(6) Version of Symachus, O.T. in Greek, 2nd century A.D.

(7) Peshitta Syriac version, 2nd century A.D.

(8) Arabic version, 8-12th century A.D.

(9) Armenian version, 5th century A.D.

(10) Egyptian version, 4th century A.D.

(11) Ethiopic version, 4th century A.D.

(12) Gothic version, 4th century A.D.

- (13) Georgian version, 6th century A.D.
- (14) Latin version, 4th century A.D.
- (15) Persian version, 2nd century A.D.

The Bible text as we now have it is the same as that passed down through all these sources from the earliest times, so there should be no question in the mind of anyone regarding the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures.

How We Got Our English Bible

Our English Bible is the result of 1200 years of work by all kinds of learned men. Portions were translated from the Vulgate, the Latin version, beginning as far back as A.D. 700 when Aldhelm translated the Psalms into Saxon. Egbert translated the 4 gospels sometime later. In A.D. 735 Bede translated parts of the Scriptures into Saxon. King Alfred undertook a translation of the Psalms but died in A.D. 900 before it was finished. Elfric translated the Pentateuch and some of the historical books in the 10th century. Nothing else was done about translation from then to the time of John Wycliffe, who made the first complete English Bible from the Vulgate in A.D. 1380. The next was a N.T. by William Tyndale in 1535 and the Pentateuch in 1530. In 1535 Miles Coverdale made the first complete printed English Bible. Then came the Geneva Bible in 1560, followed by Bishop's Bible in 1563 and revised in 1568. The Roman church came out with Douay version of the N.T. in 1582 and the whole Bible in 1609 which has been used by that church up until now. In 1604 King James authorized 47 men to make a complete translation of the Bible from the original languages. It was finished in 1611 after 7-8 years of diligent work. It has been the most popular and accepted version of the English-speaking world from that day until now. There have been several revised versions since then, and a number of Bibles in modern English, but none have been as well accepted and as lasting as the King James version and perhaps never will be.

Here at Word and Worship Ministries we are solely reading from the King James Version because it is the best English Translation from the early translators.