

What Do You Believe? – “The Ologies”
Study Notes #2, January 24, 2016
Revelation & Bibliology

What do you believe? If asked about anything essential to your faith, do you have an answer? Not what your parents believe – your momma, your daddy, your grandmother; not what your church believes; not what your pastor believes; not what your favorite Bible teacher believes; but **what do YOU believe?** When life gets hard and trials come, you will ask yourself those questions and be challenged on what you really believe. Most importantly, what beliefs do you hold so firmly that you are willing to die for them?

This is a study to help us all ponder, study and learn what God Himself would have us to believe. We will look at many aspects of a systematic set of beliefs about God and His Word (Theology). Things like the “ology” of God, His Word, Man, Sin, Salvation, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and even End Times. This is not intended to be scholastic, but more life application, so that we not only have a “ready defense” and can share that with others, but that we have peace and a sure faith, resting securely in the “once for all delivered” Faith. **Everyone has a system of belief, whether stated or not, that they are living and betting their eternity on – what is yours?**

- ***What Do You Believe?***
- ***REVIEW:***
- **Illustrations – the Penny Jar and our Favorite Movies**

The first question is ***“How much money is in this jar?”*** *What is your answer?*

The second question is ***“What is your favorite movie of all time?”*** *What is your answer?*

Sadly, most of us chose our faith like we do our movies, rather than taking the time and effort to find the right answer? And many of us think, even if subliminally, that the answer to the question is subjective, like our taste in movies. *“Well – for me, I think Ben Hur is the greatest movie of all time and it is my favorite!”*

- ***How do we decide what we believe? (subjectively or objectively)***
- ***Watch 2 minute video of the “Red Balloon”***

Now watch it again, and have four groups of people – one to focus on each actor in the skit. Then discuss how each one portrays a right or wrong view of the truth and how to find it.

- ***But – there is a right answer to what we should believe? There is a correct “faith!” There is a “once for all delivered faith.” There is “one faith” that delivered “once” for “all” people!***
- ***Is that an arrogant statement to make or a wrong position to take? Why or why not?***

Jude 1:3 (ESV) ³ Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for **the faith** that was **once for all** delivered to the saints.

Ephesians 4:4-6 (NASB) ⁴ ***There is one body and one Spirit***, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ ***one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*** ⁶ ***one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.***

- ***So is there a right and a wrong belief about everything? YES!
(Even when we don’t know which is correct or not, one belief is correct and ALL others are wrong!)***
- ***There are many “Religions”, but ONE Faith!***

Therefore, the SUMMARY is that -

- ***We ALL BELIEVE in SOMETHING about EVERYTHING!***

Therefore, the question is not only –

“WHAT do you believe?”

But also –

“WHY do you believe ... it?”

And –

“WHERE does that belief come from?”

“What is the source of that belief?”

“What is the basis of that belief?”

“What is your authority for your beliefs?”

So what we are dealing with or pursuing is the **source** of a truth in which we will put our trust? In other words, from ***where*** do we get the truths in which we will faith or believe and trust our lives and eternity?

By very definition, GOD is the Source of all truth! If “theology” is the “science” or study, or logic, or word about God, shouldn’t we look to Him as the ultimate source of

that truth? Doesn't what God reveals about something or what God says about some topic outweigh and trump everything else?

- **Ultimate Absolute Truth MUST come from God – The Ultimate Absolute Being!**
- **Has God REVEALED Truth? HOW? WHERE?**

I. God is the Creator Who “Speaks!”

1. Thankfully, God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in several ways and means.
2. As the One True Living God, God should be defined by HIMSELF, not by men or their ideas of God.
3. As the Creator, God is the ONLY ONE Who really knows man and can fully reveal man fully to him.
4. Only God's revelation of Himself can be trusted as true and worshipped as God.
5. Only God's revelation of man can be trusted as true and used as a guide for our lives.
6. The purpose of His revelation is that we might have a high view of Him, and an accurate view of ourselves, that we might know and love Him as His children bringing glory to Him.
7. God's power is inherent in His revelation.

II. Man is a creature designed to “Listen!”

1. We are created with the ability to “hear” in many ways and gather information through our senses, conscience and spirit.
2. As finite and limited creatures, we could not know anything about our Creator that He did not choose to reveal to us.
3. We are dependent upon God's revelation for LIFE, physically and spiritually.
4. We are responsible for what God reveals to us, whether we believe it or not!
5. The message of God's revelation is a matter of life and death to us!

III. The Doctrine (teaching) of “Revelation”

- What is *revelation*?
- What are the major *sources* of *revelation*?
- *Why* has God spoken?

- **How** has God spoken?
- What is the message that God desires and determines to reveal to His own?
 - The Doctrine of Revelation:

Revelation – a making plain or an unfolding of that which is hidden.

Revelation defined: *the self-disclosure of God to man of what is otherwise unknowable by any other means*

- This (Revelation) is the **Message** that God has determined to reveal to men.

2 Major Sources of Revelation:

- General - External & Internal, Creation & Conscience**
- Special - The Word of God: Christ and the Scriptures**

Sources of Revelation about God

<u>General Revelation</u>		<u>Special Revelation</u>
<u>Inner Revelation</u>	<u>Natural Revelation</u>	
Conscience	Creation	Christ (The Word)
Internal to us	External to us	Both External & Internal
Given to All, Effective for Few	Given to All, Effective for All	Given to Few, Effective for All
Sufficient for Accountability	Sufficient for Condemnation	Sufficient for Salvation
Declares God's Goodness	Declares God's Greatness	Declares God's Grace
Revealed in our Spirit	Revealed in our Body	Revealed in our Soul
Revealed to our Conscience, Intuition,	Revealed to our Consciousness, Flesh,	Revealed to our Mind, Will,

Communion	Senses	Emotions
Revealed through Moral Impulse Existence Intuition Desire for Purpose	Revealed through Man Universe History	Revealed through Law & Prophets Apostles The Incarnation
Examples -	Examples -	Examples -
Rom. 1:19 Rom. 2:14-15 Acts 24:16 Adam & Eve	Rom. 1:20 Psa. 19:1 Psa. 8:3-5 Israel	Heb. 1:1-4 John 1:1-4 1Pet. 1:10-12 The Scriptures

IV. The Doctrine of the Scriptures: **"Bibliology"** – the study of the Bible

Bible – from the Greek root *"biblios"*, meaning books or scrolls

The Bible is a very unique book. This evidences its Divine origin.

1. **Unique in its Production.** A unified book from 66 books, 1500 years, and 40 authors with very diverse occupations, backgrounds, settings, and personalities.
 2. **Unique in its Preservation.** Written over 1500 years, passed down over 2000 years, attacked from the beginning until now, it still survives and flourishes.
 3. **Unique in its Proclamations.** From heaven to hell, from eternity past to eternity future, it covers all things for all people for all times.
 4. **Unique in its Product.** Nothing has ever influenced the history, culture, law, thought, morality, thought or changed lives more than the Bible.
 5. **Unique in its Positions.** It claims to be the very "Word of God" many, many times, and as such is inerrant, infallible, true, and authoritative.
- **Why has God spoken?** In a word for us: **Grace (Salvation)**; for Him: **Glory!**
 - **How has God spoken?** Through the miraculous process known as **"inspiration."**

V. The Doctrine of **"Inspiration"**

- What is *inspiration*?
- What is *inspiration not*?

- How can **both** God and men be the authors of the Bible?
- **Inspiration** or “**expiration**”, which is it?
- How do we know that the Bible is **inspired**? What witnesses do we have?

- **The Doctrine of Inspiration:**

Inspiration defined: God superintending human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, experiences, thought processes and vocabulary, they composed and recorded without error His revelation in the original copies of Scripture.

This is the **Means** of delivering or communicating the *message* to man.

- How can we understand this concept of *inspiration*? Perhaps by considering what *inspiration* is not:
 1. Inspiration is not a high level of human achievement. (Natural inspiration)
 2. Inspiration is not only in the thoughts of the writers. (Thought inspiration)
 3. Inspiration is not the act of God on the readers. (Existential inspiration)
 4. Inspiration is not mechanical dictation. (Dictation inspiration)
 5. Inspiration is not only in some parts. (Partial inspiration)
- How can **both** God and men be the authors of the Bible?

God formed the authors into the men He wanted them to be. He created and shaped their personalities, experiences, intellects, vocabularies and emotions. He directed and controlled their “free choice” so that they wrote the very words of God. God selected the words of each author’s life, which He Divinely controlled.

Example and analogy of the virgin birth:

Jesus was both God and man, Son of both God the Father and Mary. Although she was a sinner and imperfect, He was sinless and perfect, although still her’s.

- **What is inspiration?**

2Tim. 3:16 “*pasa graphe theopneustos*”

1. Theopneustos

a. Theos	“God”	b. pneuma	“breathed”
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2. **Graphe** “writings” (as defined by the preceding verse)
3. **Pasa** “all” (past, present, and future)

Therefore, all Scripture is **“expired”** by God, or **“God-breathed”**.

Scripture references: 2Tim. 3:16, Mat. 5:18, Acts 4:13, Deu. 4:2, Deu. 6:1, Deu. 12:32, Amos 3:7, Rom. 15:4, 2Pet. 1:20-21, Heb. 1:1, Jam. 4:5, Acts 1:16, 2Pet. 3:15-16, Gal. 1:11-12, Eph. 3:3, 1Cor. 11:23, 1Cor. 15:3, 1Ths. 2:13, 1Ths. 4:15, Col. 1:25, 1Tim. 4:1, Tit. 1:3, Rev. 19:9, Rev. 21:5, Rev. 1:3, Rev. 22:18-19, John 5:39, Luke 24:27, Mat. 5:17, Mat. 26:24, Mat. 26:54, John 10:35, Luke 16:17, Luke 18:31, Mat. 22:29-33, Mat. 19:4, Mat. 24:37-38, John 8:56, Luke 16:29, Mark 12:24-27, Rom. 10:14-17, 1Cor. 2:9-16, Col. 3:16

Testimonies:

1. **The Bible Writers** repeatedly spoke with an “air of infallibility and authority”; never apologetically nor defensively second, but most important objective witness;
2. **Jesus Christ** His statements proved that He believed Himself to be the theme of all Scripture, that it was literally and verbally inspired, and confirmed it over and over
3. **The Holy Spirit** subjective, but most “convincing” witness; as the One who really enables us to take all the Scriptures as God’s Own Word.

VI. The Doctrine of **“Illumination”**

- What is *illumination*?
- Why is *illumination important*?
- What are the *results* for us?
- **The Doctrine of Illumination:**

Illumination defined: The process by which natural, imperfect men are able to comprehend and understand the supernatural and perfect words, precepts and principles of the Bible. This is a supernatural work of God, not man, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, through the body, within the soul, so that it can be deposited in the spirit of man.

This is the **Method** by which men may “hear” God and understand the Bible.

- **What is the application to our lives for the three terms above?** God has given man a special **revelation**, through the process of **inspiration**, that can only be understood through **illumination**. It is infallible, inerrant, complete, authoritative, sufficient, and effective for all men for all things for all time.

- **WHAT IS THE BIBLE?**
 1. How would you explain **what the Bible is** to someone who had *no knowledge whatsoever* about it?

 2. How is it **different** from other books or even other “sacred writings”?
 - a.) Koran of Islam - believed to be the true words of God; given by Gabriel to Mohammed at age 40; 6666 verses in 114 sutras or chapters; written in Arabic over 23 years by one person in the fifth century; with the five pillars of Islam of confession of faith, regular prayer, charity, observance of Ramadan, and pilgrimage.
 - b.) Book of Mormon – believed to be given to Joseph Smith in 1830 on leaves of gold from an ancient prophet or angel named Moroni; about 6205 verses in 15 books; with the story of Jews who left the old world and traveled to the new world.
 - c.) Others

 3. What is the **significance** of God’s “word” or revelation **being written** in a book?

- **WHAT DO WE BELIEVE AND TEACH ABOUT THE BIBLE AT GRACE FELLOWSHIP?**

Grace Fellowship’s Bylaws:

A. Scripture

We believe that the Bible is God’s written revelation of Himself. These Holy Scriptures are perfect as originally given by and from God (“God-breathed”), and are the eternal, inspired, inerrant, infallible, verbal and plenary very Word of God for man. We agree with the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* as further explanation on our view of the Scriptures. They are the sole authority and truth for all men for all times for all matters of faith and practice. Properly interpreted, they support or supersede all that follows.

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy:

Summary Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in

order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

APPLICATION:

Personal examples –

- 1. Why is this topic (the Word of God – the Bible) the first thing to study and consider when deciding “what we believe?”***

(Story of my Personal Doctrinal Statement – Why I listed this article first, before God!)

- 2. How my personal view of the Bible and the Scriptures has changed over my life.***

Examples of beliefs or views on *Election & Divorce*

Increasingly convinced and firm in my belief that the Bible is the very word of God; even though increasingly less sure about some specific beliefs derived from it!

- 3. God’s “speaking” is His way of doing everything!***

Creation & Redemption & the Consummation!

Not only does He “speak” all things into existence in creation, not only does He “speak” and dwell among us in flesh that He might redeem us, but His greatest and final work, the consummation, the re-creation and making all things “new”, He will also speak that into completion!

Isaiah 40:5 (NASB) ⁵ **Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; (Why?) For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.**

Supplemental Information:

VII. The Doctrine of Scripture

A. Transmission

- How did God transmit His Word to us?
- Why is *writing* so important?
- What were some of the materials used for the writings?
- What were the languages used for the original writings?
- Do we have any of the original writings (autographs) today?
- Why is this important? What does this mean about *everything* that we do have today? How does that affect your faith in the Bible?

The Doctrine of Scripture:

A. **Transmission**

1. How did God transmit His Word to us?

Consider some of the ways God has revealed Himself in the past:

1. **Speech** – sometimes direct, like at Mt. Sinai
2. **Dreams** – sometimes directly, sometimes through another's dream, like Nebuchannezzer's for Daniel
3. **Visions** -
4. **Theophonies** – the Angel of the Lord that visited Abraham and Sarah, the One who wrestled with Jacob at Peniel (face to face with God), the burning bush, the One in the fire with S. M. & A.,
5. **Angels** -
6. **Signs, wonders, miracles**
7. **Spokesmen** - prophets

So, God has been speaking, but man cannot understand. Why? Because he is ignorant. (Eph. 4:18)

Ephesians 4:18 ¹⁸ being **darkened** in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

God has been revealing Himself, but man cannot see. Why? Because he is blind. (Eph. 4:18)

God has been speaking, but man cannot hear. Why? Because he is dead! (Eph. 2:1)

Ephesians 2:1 ¹ And you were **dead in your trespasses and sins**, (NASB)

God has been speaking, but man cannot comprehend. Why? Because he is natural, and God is spiritual. (1Cor. 2:14)

We understand the cry of Isaiah, that we need some *special* revelation:

Isaiah 64:1-2 ¹ **Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens *and come down***, That the mountains might quake at Thy presence-- ² As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil-- **To make Thy name known** to Thine adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Thy presence! (NASB)

In the prophetic picture of the deliverance of the nation of Israel from the Egyptians, God said:

Exodus 3:8 ⁸ **"So I have come down to deliver them** from the power of the Egyptians, **and to bring them up** from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, ...

This was fulfilled in the Person of God the Son, who said:

John 6:38 ³⁸ **"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.** (NASB)

Listen to what the Apostle Paul says that we have in this text:

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know **the things freely given to us by God**, ¹³ which **things we also speak**, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴ But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.** ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For **who has known the mind of the Lord**, that he should instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ.** (NASB)

***What is this mind of Christ, God the Son, which Paul says we have?
What is the special revelation of God that answers the cries of all who, like Isaiah, have longed for God's revelation and presence in a special way?***

- **The Answer:**

Hebrews 1:1-4 ¹ **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is **the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. ...****

1 Peter 1:10-12 ¹⁰ As to this salvation, **the prophets** who prophesied of **the grace** that *would come* to you **made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating** as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. ¹² **It was revealed to them** that they were not serving themselves, **but you**, in these **things which now have been announced** to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- **things into which angels long to look.** (NASB)

John 1:18 ¹⁸ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained *Him*.** (NASB)

John 14:6-10 ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. ⁷ **"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."** ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that **I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me**? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. (NASB)

- Notice that all of the means that God used in the past were culminated, completed and perfected in God the Son, Jesus Christ:

He is **The Prophet** spoken of in Deut. 18:

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 ¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' ¹⁷ "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. ¹⁸ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ 'And it shall come about

that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him. (NASB)

He is **The Angel of the Lord** in many OT passages

He is **The Ultimate Theophony**, God in the flesh!

He lived an entire life of wonder that was **The Sign, The Wonder, and The Miracle!**

All of God's revelation has Christ at the center. He is the central character in all of it. From Genesis to Revelation, it is *His Story!*

John 1:1-4 ¹ In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word was God**. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.** (NASB)

John 1:14 ¹⁴ And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His **glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB)

Therefore, we have this special revelation as believers, as His children. Notice that this revelation comes to us by Divine grace through faith;

It is the **revelation of God the Father**,

Which is the mind of **God the Son**,

Delivered to (**inspired**) and made alive (**illuminated**) to us by **God the Spirit!**

God has been speaking to man since He created him!

- **But *how* did God transmit His *written Word* to us?**

By **WRITING!**

The starting point is **the history of writing itself**. It is as God developed writing specifically for the purpose of bringing His Word to us in the Bible!

The earliest known examples of writing come from the lands of Egypt and Mesopotamia. An early Sumerian sandstone tablet with writing on it exists that has been dated about 3500BC. In spite of some skeptics, **writing was a well-developed art and form long before** any of the earliest estimated dates of Biblical writings (Moses and Job).

The next condition necessary for the written word to be transmitted to us was the material on which the writing was to be recorded.

Consider **some of the materials** used for ancient writing purposes, and even referred to in the Bible itself:

1. Stone (Exo. 24:12, 31:18, 34:1, 28)
2. Clay (Eze. 4:1,
3. Wood (Isa. 30:8, Hab. 2:2)
4. Metal – gold, lead (Exo. 28:36, Job 19:24)
5. Papyrus (“paper”) (2Jo. 12)
6. Animal Skins (2Tim. 4:13)
 - Leather - cowhide
 - Vellum – calves (veal) or antelopes skin
 - Parchment – sheep or goats skin

How were these materials formed to produce the written documents?

1. Tablets – early forms, oblong in shape, baked to harden and preserve
2. Scrolls – for papyri and skins, usually about 30’ long and about 9 to 10 inches high, with writing in columns averaging about 3 to 4 inches in width
3. Codex, Codices – for skins; rectangular sheets stacked to form a “book”; usually about 10 to 15 inches in dimensions (Codex Sinaiticus is 13.5”W X 15”H); usually had about 3 or 4 columns of writing on each page; could be easier preserved, carried, and contained more writing; Christians may have helped develop this “book” form!

What were the languages used for the original writings?

1. Hebrew – most of OT, pictorial symbolic language, personal to the heart, the language of the Jews and “heaven”
2. Aramaic – (Ezra 4:8-6:18, Daniel 2:4b-7:28, Jeremiah 10:11) sister language to Hebrew, a language that was the language of man for state matters between nations
3. Greek – all of the NT, (except for Aramaic quotes like Abba, Eli eli lama sabachthani, Maranatha); exact, precise, & technical language; intellectual to the mind the ‘universal’ language of the “world”

Do we have any of the original “autographs” still extant today? NO!

Why? Probably by design of God! If we did they might be worshipped as idols, or they might have been used to change His word.

B. Translation

1. **Old Testament (Covenant)**
2. **New Testament (Covenant)**

3. The Bible

B. Translation

Everything we have today is a TRANSLATION! That is very important to remember as we approach the Bible and its study. So how were the original “autographs” translated and reproduced to bring us the Bibles we have today? How does this process of translation affect the accuracy of the Scriptures compared to the originals, and consequently our reliability and trust in them?

How did the “translation” process evolve?

Through different copies of “manuscripts” A Manuscript is anything written by hand! (As opposed to printed or produced as today, so they all predate the printing press circa 1435AD.)

Types of Manuscripts:

1. **Uncials** – Written all in large capital letters, with no spacing, punctuation, or proportional spacing in columns. About 375 NT uncials today, most dating from the fourth to the ninth centuries
2. **Cursives** – Also called “minuscules”. Written all in smaller running hand styles, with very beautiful pages and artistic decorations, often in color. About 2800 NT cursives today, most dating from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries.

1. **Old Testament** (“Testament” is an unfortunate translation of the Greek *diatheke*, which may be better rendered “contract” or “Covenant”)

Books or writings of the OT period were gradually written, collected and acknowledged as the very Word of God. This occurred over a long time, but generally from about 1500BC to 400BC.

The progression of the development of the Hebrew Bible was:

1. Speeches & Sayings
2. Individual Books
3. Collections of Books
4. A Fixed and Complete Canon

Contrast of format of the Hebrew OT to that found in our modern Bibles:

Original Collections:

Protestant Collections:

1. The Law (Torah) 5 Books – Pentateuch	1. The Law 5 Books - Pentateuch
2. The Prophets (Neviim) 8 Books (7 plus Minor)	2. History 12 Books
3. The Writings (Ketuvim) 11 Books	3. Poetry & Wisdom 5 Books
	4. Prophecy 17 Books (5 plus minor)
24 Books	39 Books

Differences in order and groupings, but the same text and canon!

OT Translation Progression:

1. Samaritan Pentateuch – A form of the Hebrew text itself. Dated about 400BC, and used by the Samaritans at Mt. Gerizim as their Bible. Some variants from the Massoretic text accepted today, and only covered the first five books.
2. Septuagint – From the Latin *septuaginta* meaning “seventy.” Greek translation of the Hebrew OT performed by 72 Jewish scholars about 250BC in Alexandria, Egypt. Some minor mistakes of translation and variants from the Massoretic text.
3. Aramaic Targums – Aramaic (popular spoken language of the Jews after the exile) translations, dated about the fifth century AD. Two major targums cover the Pentateuch and the Prophets.
4. Syriac Peshitta – Syriac translations, from about first century AD. The earliest forms are in good agreement with the Massoretic text.
5. Latin Versions –
 - a. The Old Latin – 150AD, Latin translation from the Septuagint, limited due to the Septuagint being its basis.
 - b. Vulgate – 400AD, Jerome’s very famous, scholarly and important work of translation directly from the Hebrew.
6. The Dead Sea Scrolls - Discovered in 1948, with many partial scrolls of numerous books, including Isaiah, Samuel, & Psalms, dating back to about 100BC. Very important in verifying the accuracy of translation from that time until the latest complete manuscripts of the Massoretic text about 1000 years later.
7. The Massoretic Text – The common name for the most accepted text today. Derived from the name (*Massorettes*) of the scholarly Jewish scribes that sprang up around Tiberias about 500AD and continued for about 4 or 5 centuries. The latest edition of the current Hebrew Bible (Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica*) is based upon

the most important and oldest manuscripts from about 900 to 1000AD. The canon is virtually undisputed and the accuracy is almost totally secured by textual criticism of the many above progressions. The lack of more recent manuscripts is due to the procedures of the Scribes in destroying any worn or damaged manuscripts.

Importance of the Scribal Process:

The order and profession of scribes developed after the Babylonian captivity of 586BC. They followed VERY STRICT rules for copying the manuscripts and preserving their accuracy. (List and read the Talmud rules for scribes.)

2. New Testament

a. NT Manuscripts:

We have over 5800 total today! Including all textual documents, such as manuscripts and versions, there are many more; at least 20,000! Due to the fact that a complete hand-written copy of even just the NT would be too bulky for practical use, most are partial or single books. The Bible and the NT in particular is without question the most supported and verified ancient writing in the world!

1. Uncials – Oldest and Most Important!

A. The 3 Most Important Bibles in the World (The “Big Three”)

(The 3 oldest and most complete uncial manuscripts)

1. The Vatican Manuscript (Codex B, or Codex Vaticanus)

Dated about 330AD, and first known to exist about 1481, when listed in a catalog of the library of the Vatican in Rome. Carried off by Napoleon to Paris where it remained until 1815. It was desired to be studied by many scholars, including Tischendorf, but was kept under wraps until the late 19th century. A complete photographic facsimile was made in 1889. A Greek version of practically all of the OT and NT, consisting on 759 leaves of fine vellum, with three columns of text traced over. It does not contain Mark 16:9-20.

2. The Sinaitic Manuscript (Codex Aleph, or Codex Sinaiticus)

Dated about 350AD, and discovered accidentally in 1844 by the great German scholar Constantin Tischendorf at St. Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. He did not secure them from the monastery until 1859 with the help of the Russian Czar, who received them as a gift. Russia sold it

to England in 1933 for 100,000 pounds. Since then it has remained until today at the British Museum in London. Contains most of the OT and all of the NT with two non-canonical books (Barnabas and Hermas).

Note: The Roman Emperor Constantine ordered that 50 copies of Bibles be produced in Greek. The above may be two of them that remain!

3. The Alexandrian Manuscript (Codex A, or Codex Alexandrianus)

Dated about 450AD, and named for Alexandria, Egypt, the place from which it originally came. Originally offered by the Greek church as a gift to King James I of England, but James died before it could arrive, so it was given to his successor, King Charles I in 1627. Contains the complete OT less only ten leaves, and most of the NT. When presented to King Charles it caused as much excitement as the Dead Sea Scrolls has in our day.

B. Two Other Important Bible Manuscripts (Uncials)

1. The Ephraem Manuscript (Codex C)

A palimpsest (“scraped again” or rescripted) manuscript with a 12th century copy of the works of Ephraem of Syria over the top of a 5th century copy of the Scriptures (uncial). Published in 1845 due to the efforts of Tischendorf, and now preserved in the National Library of Paris. Contains most of the OT and the NT.

2. The Bezae Manuscript (Codex D)

Named for Theodore Beza who presented this document to the University of Cambridge in 1581. It is the earliest known Biblical copy in two languages, Greek and Latin, and as such the oldest known “parallel Bible.” The two texts face each other, with the Greek on the left and the Latin on the right. It contains only the Gospels and Acts, with part of 3 John in Latin. It is the most curious and suspicious of all the above, and the *only* one available to the King James translators when their version was made. But, it was used very little due to the speculation surrounding it.

C. Other (Primary) Sources for the Greek NT:

1. Cursives (“minuscules”)

Over 2800 are cataloged, dating from the 9th to the 16th century. Smaller running hand scripts, with beautifully adorned pages or leaves and some illustrations or drawings.

2. Lectonaries

Lectons were selected passages of the Scriptures to be read during the worship services, and were often written down in collections. Most Lectionaries are of the Gospels, but some contain Acts or the Epistles.

D. Other (Secondary) Sources for the Greek NT:

1. The Versions

These are early translations of the Greek NT that are used for comparisons with the above primary sources. The most important of these are the Syriac, the Peshitta, and the Latin versions.

2. Quotations of Christian Writers

These are direct quotes from the NT contained within other manuscripts of Christian writers and also can be used for comparisons with the above primary sources. The most important of these lived late in the 1st and early within the 2nd century. Some of these are Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tatian, and Irenaeus. Others who lived later include Tertullian, Cyprian, and Jerome.

E. Non-Greek Translations:

3. The Bible

A. The **Canon** of the Scriptures

“Canon” goes back to the Greek word “*kanon*” and then to the Hebrew word “*qaneh*.” Its basic meaning is “reed”, (as our English word “cane” derives from it). Since a reed was used as a standard measuring rod, the word *kanon* came to mean a standard or a rule. It was also used as a list or index. Therefore the Canon of the Scriptures are the books received as Holy Scripture.

- Please note there is a difference between the *canonicity* of a book and the authority of that book! A book’s *canonicity depends upon* its authority, *not the other way around!* For example the letters of Paul that were Holy Scripture, possessed and were acknowledged as possessing Divine authority, from the moment they were written. (1Cor. 14:37, 1Ths. 2:13, 2Pet. 3:15-16)
They were later acknowledged as having *canonicity* or as being a part of the canon, *only because they already had the inherent divine authority!* No decree of man or his churches can give to a book what only God can give (Divine authority). The books of the Canon already had their authority as Holy Scripture long before any councils of the church declared that they did.

“The Bible is not an authorized collection of books; the Bible is a collection of authorized books!”

“The church does not control the canon; the canon controls the church!”

“The Bible (or any of its books) is not inspired of God because men say so; men say so because the Bible is inspired of God!”

Canon of the OT:

This was fixed long ago and has never really been an issue. The best objective external source of this is Jesus Himself! He stated in Luke 24:44 that the Scriptures were composed of (3 sections) the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is undoubtedly equivalent to the 3 divisions of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings in the OT Canon. Jesus also spoke of the time “from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.” (Luke 11:44, Mat. 23:35) The first martyr of the OT was Abel and the last was Zechariah in 2Chr. 24:20-21. But remember that in the Hebrew arrangement and order that Chronicles is at the end of the Writings and their canon!

In the first century, Josephus wrote of the books received as Scripture by the Jews. (Read quote on page 107 of *How We Got the Bible*) Considering that most scholars agree that Josephus joined Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah, his 22 equals the Jewish 24 books of canon.

In the third century, Origen confirms the testimony of Josephus. A little later, Jerome also points to the same books as the canon of the OT.

Canon of the NT:

About the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr wrote that on Sundays the Christian worship assemblies read the “memoirs of the apostles” together with the “writings of the prophets.”

The Letters of Paul were first gathered into a single collection, then the 4 Gospels were gathered together, and then the other NT books followed.

As early as the third century, Origen named all of the 27 NT books, (but added that Hebrews, James, 2&3 John, & Jude were questioned by some).

Eusebius of the fourth century names all of the 27 NT books.

In 367AD Athanasius of Alexandria published his official list of the 27 books of the NT that were recognized and accepted as Scripture at the time.

In 397AD the 3rd Council of Carthage declared the 27 NT books as canonical and to be added to the OT.

Apocrypha & Others:

“Apocrypha” means “hidden.” It was used early in the sense of being “secretive” or “concealed.” They were added to the Roman canon in 1596 by the Council of Trent.

Others like the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, Esdras, Tobit, Baruch, The Wisdom of Solomon, etc. were added by some at some times, but were never received as canonical.

Why? Why were these books rejected? What were the criteria for determining “canon” by the early church?

Criteria for Canon:

1. **Authorship** – Especially important for NT Canon; were they written by an apostle or an apostolic delegate or follower
2. **Acceptance** – Important for OT and NT. The above OT additions were never accepted by Jesus, His Apostles, or Josephus or any of the ancient writers for over a thousand years. They were added to the OT in the 16th century.
The NT additions were never accepted by the early church or its ancient writers. The early “Church Fathers” were men of Scriptures in the second century after Christ and had direct connection to the Apostles. They never accepted any of these writings and affirmed the canon we have today.
They cannot be maintained without false authority and compromise!
3. **Subject Matter** – They did not evidence the intrinsic qualities of Scripture in two ways. They were either legendary, mythical or fictitious in nature, and did not contain doctrinal or life instructional matters. They also contained errors in chronology, geography, and other facts. (They were not inerrant!)
4. **Personal Edification** – They did not contain the ability to inspire, teach doctrine, or change lives. The changed lives of millions of believers over the last two millennia are the greatest testimony to the books accepted as canonical.

Please note that the above criteria must be considered together, as no one criteria or element can satisfy the test for canon!

Other Misc. Information on the Bible:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1228 | Bible divided into chapters. Stephen Langton did this with the Latin Vulgate. |
| 1551 | Chapters divided into verses. Robert Estienne (aka Stephanus) did this into the Greek NT. This versification was first used in the 1557 Geneva translation of the NT, and the 1560 translation of the whole Bible. |
| 1571 | Bible verses numbered. |