

TRANSMISSION (HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE)

- * Scripture certainly has more than enough content to be interrogated. How many?
 - * _____ books * _____ chapters * _____ verses * _____ words.
- * We've already asked and answered several of the questions, like ...
 - * Who wrote the Bible – whose thinking does it reflect?
 - * Where did the Bible come from?
 - * What does the Scripture claim for itself?
 - * Does it live up to its claims?
 - * Who determined, and on what basis, that the Bible would be composed of the traditional list of 66 books (Canon)?
- * A few questions we've touched on but hope to at least partially answer today
 - * How was the Bible transmitted through time?
 - * Has Scripture been protected from human tampering over the centuries?
 - * How close to the original manuscripts are today's translations?
 - * How did the Bible get to our time and in our language?
 - * Did any books of the Bible get lost in time past?
 - * Is there more Scripture to come, beyond the current 66 books?
 - * If the Scriptures were written over a period of 1,500 years (ca. 1405 B.C. - A.D. 95), passed down since then for almost 2,000 years, and translated into several thousand languages, what prevented the Bible from being changed by the carelessness or ill motives of men?

Scriptures' Self Claims

- * Does the Bible, when it comes to authenticity, speak for itself?
- * Does it claim to be God's Word?
 - * How many times in the OT?
- * How many times does "the Word of God" occur in the New Testament?
 - * It is equated with the Old Testament (Mark 7:13)
 - * It is what Jesus preached (Luke 5:1)
 - * It was the message the apostles taught (Acts 4:31; 6:2)
 - * It was the Word the Samaritans received (Acts 8:14) as given by the apostles (Acts 8:25)
 - * It was the message the Gentiles received as preached by Peter (Acts 11:1)
 - * It was the word Paul preached on his 1st, 2nd & 3rd missionary journeys (1-Acts 13:5,7,44
48,49; 15:35,36) (2-Acts 16:32; 17:13; 18:11) (3-Acts 19:10)
 - * It was Luke's focus in the book of Acts in that it spread rapidly and widely (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20)
 - * Paul was careful to tell the Corinthians that **he spoke the Word as it was given from God**, that it had not been altered, and that it was a manifestation of truth
 - * 2 Cor 2:17¹⁷ *For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

* 2 Cor 4:2² *But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

- * Paul acknowledged that it was the source of his preaching (Col 1:25; 1 Thess 2:13)
- * Psalms 19 and 119, plus Prov 30:5-6, make powerful statements about God's Word which set it apart from any other religious instruction ever known in the history of mankind.
- * **It makes the case for being called "sacred"** (2 Tim 3:15) & "holy" (Rom 1:2)
- * **The Bible claims it is infallible** with ultimate spiritual authority in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness because it represents the inspired Word of Almighty God (2 Tim 3:16,17)
- * **Scripture asserts its spiritual sufficiency**, so much so that it claims exclusivity for its teaching (cf. Is 55:11; 2 Pet 1:3,4)
- * **God's Word declares that it is inerrant** (Ps 12:6; 119:140; Prov 30:5a; John 10:35).
- * All of these qualities are dependent on the fact that the Scriptures are God-given
 - * 2 Tim. 3:16¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...*
 - * 2 Pet. 1:20-21²⁰ *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,*²¹ *for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*
- * The **"Person of God"** & **"Word of God"** are interrelated throughout scripture
 - ** What a person thinks about God's Word, reflects what a person thinks about God ****
- * Deut 8:3³ *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that **man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.***
- * Job 23:12¹² *I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; **I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.***

The Publishing Process

- * Every generation of skeptics have challenged the self-claims of the Bible
 - * Its own explanations and answers, however, have been more than equal to the challenge.
- * What did God use to give and distribute His word to the human race?

Revelation

- * God took the initiative to disclose or reveal Himself to mankind
 - * Heb. 1:1¹ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*² *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.*
 - * General Revelation: Through the created order
 - * Special Revelation:
 - * Dreams, visions, angels, direct speech, miracles, and ultimately Christ himself.

* The most complete and understandable self-disclosures were through the propositions of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

Inspiration

* Man penned "God Breathed" truth in the writings of Scripture by means of "inspiration."

* 2 Tim 3:16¹⁶ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. . ."*

* Peter explains the process, 2 Pet 1:20-21²⁰ ". . . knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man,²¹ but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit".

Canonicity

* As we discussed last week: **By the time of Christ**, the Old Testament Canon had been divided up into two lists of 22 or 24 books respectively, each of which contained all the same material as the 39 books of our modern versions.

* In the 22 book canon, Jeremiah and Lamentations were considered as one, as were Judges and Ruth.

* How the 24 book format was divided.

The Hebrew Old Testament

Law

1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy

Prophets

A. Former Prophets: 6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) Samuel (1 & 2) 9) Kings (1 & 2)

B. Latter Prophets: 10) Isaiah 11) Jeremiah 12) Ezekiel 13) The Twelve "Minor" prophets

Writings

A. Poetical Books: 14) Psalms 15) Proverbs 16) Job

B. Five Rolls (Scroll): 17) Song of Solomon 18) Ruth 19) Lamentations

20) Ecclesiastes 21) Esther

C. Historical Books: 22) Daniel 23) Ezra-Nehemiah 24) Chronicles (1 & 2)

* A review from last week: 3 key tests of canonicity that applied to the New & Old Testaments

1) Authoritative Authors : Recognized prophet or apostle or very close associate as an author

2) Corporate Reception: General Consensus by the Churches as an inspired book

3) Divine Qualities: No Contradiction to previous scriptures

Preservation

* How can we be sure that the revealed and inspired, written Word of God, which was recognized as canonical by the early church, has been handed down to this day without any loss of material?

* Since one of the Devil's prime concerns is to undermine the Bible, have the Scriptures survived his destructive onslaught?

* In the beginning, he denied God's Word to Eve

- * *Gen 3:4*⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- * Satan later attempted to distort the Scripture in his wilderness encounter with Christ
 - * *Matt 4:6-7*⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”⁷ Jesus said to him, “*It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’* ”
- * Through King Jehoiakim, he even attempted to literally destroy the Word
 - * *Jer 36:23*²³ And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe’s knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.
- * God guarantees the continued existence of Scripture:
 - * *Is 40:8*⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever
 - * *1 Pet 1:25*²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever.”
- * The content of Scripture will be forever preserved, both ...
 - * In heaven: *Pss 119:89*⁸⁹ Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.
 - * And earth: *Matt 24:35*³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
- * Thus the purposes of God, as published in His sacred Word, will never be thwarted, even in the least detail
 - * *Matt 5:18*¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
 - * *Luke 16:17*¹⁷ And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.
 - * *Is 55:11*¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, & it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Transmission

- * Since the Bible has frequently been translated into multiple languages and distributed throughout the world, how can we be sure that error, even unintentional, has not crept in?
 - * As Christianity has spread, people have desired to have the Bible in their own language requiring translations from the original Hebrew & Aramaic languages of the **Old** Testament & Greek of the **New** Testament.
 - * Not only did the work of translators provide an opportunity for error, but publication, which was done by **hand copying** until the printing press arrived ca. A.D. 1450, also afforded continual possibilities of error.

* Through the centuries, the “practitioners of **textual** criticism”, a precise science, have discovered, preserved, catalogued, evaluated, and published an amazing array of biblical manuscripts from both the Old and New Testaments.

* In fact, **the number of existing biblical manuscripts dramatically outdistances the existing fragments of Any Other ancient literature.** By comparing text with text, the textual critic can confidently determine what the original prophetic/apostolic, inspired writing contained.

* Although existing copies of the main, ancient Hebrew text date back only to the 10th Century A.D., two other important lines of textual evidence bolster the confidence of textual critics that they have reclaimed the originals.

1) The 10th Century A.D. Hebrew Old Testament can be compared to the Greek translation called the Septuagint (written 200-150 B.C.; the oldest existing manuscripts dating back to A.D. 325). There is amazing consistency between the two, which speaks of the accuracy in copying the Hebrew text for centuries.

2) The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947-1956 (manuscripts that are dated 200-100 B.C.) turned out to be monumental discoveries.

* After comparing the earlier Hebrew texts with the later ones, only a few slight variants were discovered, **none of which changed the meaning of any passage.**

* Although the Old Testament had been translated and copied for centuries, the latest version was essentially the same as the earlier ones.

* The New Testament findings are even more decisive because a much larger amount of material is available for study

* There are over **5,000** Greek New Testament manuscripts

* Ranging from the whole testament to scraps of papyri which contain as little as part of one verse.

* A few existing fragments date back to within 25-50 years of the original writing. New Testament textual scholars have generally concluded that

1) 99.99% of the original writings have been reclaimed

2) of the remaining one hundredth of one percent (0.01%), there are no variants substantially affecting any Christian doctrine.

* With this wealth of biblical manuscripts in the original languages and with the disciplined activity of textual critics to establish with almost perfect accuracy, any errors which have been introduced and/or propagated by the thousands of translations over the centuries can be identified and corrected by comparing the translation or copy with the reassembled original.

* By His providential means, God has made good His promise to preserve the Scriptures.

English Translations

* The 1st English translation of the full Bible began with John Wycliffe (1330-1384)

* Later, William Tyndale was associated with the 1st complete, printed New Testament in English, 1526.

* Myles Coverdale followed in 1535, by delivering the 1st complete Bible printed in English.

* By 1611, the King James Version (KJV) had been completed.

* Today, the better English translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures include:

- 1) New King James Version (NKJV) – 1611
- 2) New American Standard Bible (NASB) - 1971
- 3) English Standard Version (ESV) - 2001
- 4) Legacy Standard Bible (LSV) [Master's University] - 2021

** God intended His Word to abide forever (Preservation). Therefore, His written, Propositional, Self-Disclosure (Revelation) was protected from error in its Original Writing (Inspiration) and collected in 66 books of the Old and New Testaments (Canonicity) **

* Through the centuries, tens of thousands of copies and thousands of translations have been made (Transmission) which did introduce some error.

* Because there is an abundance of existing ancient Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts, however, the exacting science of textual criticism has been able to reclaim the content of the original writings (Revelation and Inspiration) to the extreme degree of 99.99%, with the remaining one hundredth of one percent having no effect on its content (Preservation).

Truths Transmitted by God - to Us - Through His Word, The Bible

* The Bible Contains:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| * The Mind of God | * The State of Man | * The Way of Salvation |
| * The Doom of Sinners | * The Contentment of Believers (through Eternal Hope) | |

* It Gives:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| * Light to Direct You | * Spiritual Food to Support You | * Comfort to Cheer You |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|

* Its

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| * Doctrine is Holy | * Precepts are Binding | * Histories are True |
| * Decisions are Immutable | | |

* Continually

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Read it to be wise | * Believe it to be saved | * Practice it to be Holy |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

* Use it like:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| * The Pilgrim's Staff | * The Pilot's Compass | * The Soldier's Sword |
| * The Christian's Charter | | |

* Follow it like the traveler's map

* Herein Heaven is Open, and the Gates of Hell are Disclosed.

* Christ is:

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * The Grand subject | * Our Good: Its Design | * The Glory of God: Its End |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|

* It should

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| * Fill the Memory | * Rule the Heart | * Guide the Feet. |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|

- * It is
 - * A Mine of Wealth
 - * Health to the Soul
 - * A River of Pleasure.
 - * Given Here in this Life
 - * Will be Opened at the Judgment
 - * Is established forever
- * It involves the highest responsibility
- * Will reward the greatest labor
- * It will Condemn all who trifle with its contents
- * Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.
- * *1 Thess 2:13¹³ For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe*
- * God help us to be loyal contenders of the faith. Let us stand with God and the Scripture alone.