

Is The Bible God's Word?

1. The God of the Bible is claimed to be the only true God!

Jeremiah 10:10-12 is typical of a host of Scriptures that affirm this fact. This passage states, "*But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God, the eternal King... [then God declared to the prophet, Jeremiah, in verse 11]... 'Tell them this: `These gods [these false gods] who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.' But God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding.*"

2. Christ claims to be the only way to God...to salvation...and to heaven

John 14:6 is one Scripture that affirms this claim. It states, "*Jesus answered, `I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'*"

3. The Bible is claimed to be the only way true revelation from God

Isaiah 8:20, presents a concept that runs throughout the Old Testament. It states, "*If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light in them.*"

An example of this concept which runs, also, through the New Testament is found in the last book of the Bible, Revelation 22:18-19, which states, "*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them. God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*"

4. The Bible claims to present the only way of salvation

Acts 4:12 clearly states, "*Salvation is found in no one else [other than, Christ Jesus] for there is no other name under haven given to men by which we must be saved.*"

Galatians 1:9 states, "*If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*"

Because other religions are based solely upon the religious teachings of their founders, there is necessarily a strong subjective element in all of their teachings. Christianity, on the other hand, is based upon historical facts and its truth stands on the validity of the great facts of creation, the fall of man, redemption and Christ's resurrection. The historical records of which are subject to examination by the ordinary criteria of objective investigation because *Christianity is based upon "objective" facts!*

Like the Apostle Paul, Christians today should not only be able to point out the flaws of the non-Christian position, but they should also be able to present factual evidences that, likewise, point out the *validity...and credibility...of the Gospel*. God does not ask one to commit *intellectual suicide* in order to become a Christian because one is to "*love God with all of his mind*" as well as with all of his heart!

Man *has* a **body** to live in, and, according to Scripture, he also has a **spirit** which, when in "*union with God*," gives him "*spirit-life*," however, man **IS** a "*soul*."

Man's soul is his **mind**, his **will** and his **emotions**. Man loves Christ with his "*heart*" [or, emotions], and...by an act of his "*will*"...he accepts Christ with his "*mind*."

Christianity is based on **evidence**! Faith, in the Christian sense, goes *beyond* reason, however, it does not go *against* reason!

Christians faith is an **objective faith** because it has an **Object**. Saving faith is a faith that establishes one's relationship with Jesus Christ..**THE OBJECT!**

The authenticity of the Bible is based, not only upon its **ethical** teachings, but also upon its **historical** events, which is another fact that makes Christianity unique.

Skeptics consistently seek to attack and refute the *true historical facts* of the Bible because, if these events recorded in the Bible did not actually happen, then the whole structure of Christianity collapses. However, the evidence for the truth of Christianity is overwhelming because, as we will see, the New Testament documents are, in fact, authentic. One of the purposes of these lessons is to give indisputable evidence that all the deeds and words of Christ...and the Apostles...as recorded in the New Testament, really happened just as they said it happened.

Because, in a later lesson, we will study whether or not the Bible is *Divinely inspired* and *Verbally infallible*, we will not deal with this subject in our present lesson, but, rather, we will concern ourselves with: Whether or not the Bible is valid as an **historical** document which describes authentic historical facts...and...whether or not the New Testament describes the person, and work, of Jesus Christ as being Divine...rather than human...in origin and essence.

SINCE THE BIBLE'S TREMENDOUS IMPACT UPON HISTORY PROVES IT TO BE A THING OF UNIQUE POWER, SOMETHING OF IMPORTANCE HAD TO TAKE PLACE TO GET IT STARTED...[Effects must have adequate causes!]

I. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY

1. Written over a 1600 year span
2. Written over a period of 60 generations
3. Written by 40-plus authors from every walk of life...which includes kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, farmers, poets, statesmen, etc.
4. Written in different places - wilderness, dungeons, palaces, etc.
5. Written at different times - war, peace, etc.
6. Written during different moods - joy, sorrow, despair, etc.
7. Written on three continents - Asia, Africa, and Europe
8. Written in three languages - Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic

9. Written in harmony...and with continuity...from Genesis to Revelation despite the fact that it contains hundreds of controversial subjects which would create opposing opinions when discussed.

II. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS CIRCULATION

The Bible has been read by more people...and has been published in more languages... than any other book. There have been more copies produced of the Bible ...in its entirety as well as just some of its portions and selections...than any other book in the history of mankind...and it is *because* absolutely no other book even begins to compare to the circulation of the Bible that it is unique in its circulation!

III. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS TRANSLATION

The Bible was not only the first book to be translated [In 250 B.C. the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek and called the Septuagint], but it has also been translated, and retranslated, more than any other book in history.

IV. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL

Despite the fact that the Bible was written on material that perishes...and had to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years *before the invention of the printing press*, it did not diminish in style, correctness, or the extent of its existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined!

The Bible's survival through time, persecution, and criticism certainly shows that it is unique...it is **one of a kind!**

V. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHINGS

1. *Prophecy*

Despite the fact that there are differing opinions on the authority of the Bible, nevertheless, there is world-wide agreement that, in more ways than one, the Bible is the most remarkable volume that has ever been produced in the 5000 year span that mankind has been writing simply because the Bible not only contains prophecies about individual nations...such as Israel and certain specific cities... but it also contains prophecies that relate to all peoples of the earth, as well as the Messiah...all of which have proven to be true...and accurate.

The ancient world had many different devices [devices which were known as "*divination*"] for determining the future, but not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature can one find any documented account of a specific prophecy, of any historical event, that was accurate, or that came to pass as it had been *prophesied* it would

2. *History*

Because in their Scriptural writings the Israelites not only manifested a genius for historical records, but also excelled all other nations in their clear picture of tribal and family

origins, one looks in vain for any comparable history of Egypt...Babylonia...Assyria... Phoenicia ...Greece...Rome...not to mention the fact that...in the tradition of the Germanic...Indian...or Chinese...people... there is no historical record that can begin to compare to the record to Israel's history as it is recorded in the Bible.

Even in the earliest Greek historical accounts there isn't even a hint of the fact that both Indo-Aryans and Hellenes were once nomads who immigrated into their later abodes from the north and, even though the Assyrians do vaguely mention their earliest rulers, their accounts are so without detail that where these rulers came from has long been forgotten.

3. *Personalities*

Since man, in the natural, tries to cover up...overlook...or ignore...his wrong doings, great literary geniuses In their literary writings, they paint men as "*saints*" ...relating only their good points...when being viewed by the public at large. However, God's perspective of man is different from *man's* perspective of man. Since God is the author of the Bible...this "*cover-up*" is not true of the Bible which ...telling it like it is...deals frankly with the sins of even its holiest of characters and *best* of men!

Man would not write the Bible if he could...or
...could not write the Bible if he would.

VI. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS AUTHENTICITY

It has been observed that...because we are surrounded by a "*great literary river*" that has been inspired by the Bible, if every Bible, in any place in the world, were destroyed, it could still be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of our public libraries.

Once we establish the fact that the Bible is historically authentic...and that it was written by contemporaries and often eyewitnesses of the events described...we are then able to examine Biblical events, and personages, with the genuine confidence that we can determine their real nature and significance. The historical authenticity of the Bible can be established as fact simply because the Bible, rather than dealing with theological or philosophical questions, deals with matters of fact, determinable by objective investigation. As an affirmation of this reality, Peter states, "*We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty* [2 Peter 1:16]. John declares, "*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you*" [1 John 1:3], and also, "*Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples.*" [John 20:30. Luke writes, "*We are witnesses of all things which He...(Jesus)...did*" [Acts 10:39], and, "*Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses* [Luke 1:1-2]. After Christ's resurrection, Luke writes, "*He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them (the apostles) forty days*" [Acts 1:3]. The apostle Paul also states, "*After He...(that is Jesus after His resurrection)..was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present...after that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also*" [1 Corinthians 15:6-8].

The following Scriptures also show that the apostles indeed were *eyewitnesses* of Christ's resurrected life:

Luke 24:48	Acts 3:15	Acts 10:41	1 John 1:2
John 15:27	Acts 4:33	Acts 13:31	Acts 22:15
Acts 1:3	Acts 5:32	1 Corinthians 15:4-9	Acts 23:11
Acts 2:32	Acts 10:39	1 Corinthians 15:15	Acts 26:16

These writers of the New Testament not only said, "*We saw...we heard*" ...but they also said to their contemporary critics, "*You also know these things are true.*" [Acts 2:22 and 26:24-28]

Certain men known as "*Church Fathers*"...who lived either in the time *immediately* following...or overlapping...the time of the Apostles themselves...by exhibiting a remarkable grasp of the New Testament Scriptures and by quoting abundantly from all of its books...have also helped to establish the authenticity of the Bible.

In fact, we have some papyrus fragments of the New Testament which are dated from about 150 A.D. and which assure us that there can be no doubt, whatever, that the New Testament...as we have it today...is essentially identical with the New Testament which was possessed by Christians at the close of the first century.

Some have used...as an argument against the authenticity of the Bible...the fact that we do not have the *original* manuscripts...however, because the interval between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence is so small as to be negligible, it removes any foundation for doubt that the Scriptures have substantially come down to us as they were written and, therefore, they are able to establish both the authenticity...and the general integrity...of the Bible.

If this doesn't prove to the skeptic mind that the Bible we today is, indeed, the original Bible passed down by the Apostles, the recent find of the "*Dead Sea Scrolls*" should erase all doubt.

HOW THE BIBLE WAS PREPARED

1. The reason we are not able to recover many of the ancient Old Testament manuscript is because the *material* that they were written on was a *perishable* material called "*papyrus*." The oldest fragments of these papyrus manuscripts date back to 2400 B.C.

In an endeavor to produce a more durable writing material, "*parchment*," which was made from the prepared skins of sheep, goats, antelope, and other animals that were *shaved* and *scraped*, was used for the Old Testament manuscripts around the third century B.C.

Some of the Old Testament manuscripts we have today are of "*vellum*"...calf skin dyed purple...which was used from about 1500 B.C.

Other ancient writing materials were "*ostraca*"...known as "*potsherd*"...and *unglazed pottery*...or...stone, and clay tablets.

2. The writing instruments which were used to write the Old Testament manuscripts were the *chisel*, the *metal stylus*, and the *pen*...which used ink that was a compound of *charcoal*, *gum*, and *water*.

3. The Old Testament...and other forms of ancient books...were first written on scrolls.

4. Types of Writings were:

A. **Uncial writings**...script which used capital letters and which was deliberately, and carefully, executed. [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and uncial manuscripts].

B. **Minuscule writings**...script which used small letters in a running hand and which was "*connected*." It was initiated in the 9th century.

The Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were written without any break between the words and the individual Hebrew words were written without vowels until 900 A.D.

5. Divisions:

The Law

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

The Prophets

A. Former Prophets

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Samuel
4. Kings

B. Latter Prophets

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. Ezekiel

4. The Twelve

The Writings

A. Poetical Books

1. Psalms
2. Proverbs
3. Job

B. Five Rolls

1. Song of Songs
2. Ruth
3. Lamentations
4. Esther
5. Ecclesiastes

C. Historical Books

1. Daniel
2. Ezra-Nehemiah
3. Chronicles

THE CANON

The word "*canon*" comes from the Greek word "*reed*" ...or "*rod*" ...which means "*standard*" and it is the word that was given to those religious writings which came up to the high standards that were required in order to be included in the Old Testament. The work of canonizing the Old Testament was done during the "*silent years*" between Malachi and the birth of Christ.

In the days of Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, a council of 120...with Ezra as its president...was formed to reconstruct the worship, and religious, life of the people after their

return from Babylonian Captivity. This group of spiritual leaders...and their successors... combined the many religious writings...which had been handed down for the past 1500 years... into the Old Testament. Josephus, a noted Jewish historian, in his writings, mentions 22 books which these canonizes "*believed to be divine*" and then he goes on to list them. It is significant to note that, although they combined many books which we have divided [1 and 2 Kings, for instance], our **39 books are exactly the same in content as their 22 books!**

This word "*canon*," when applied to Scripture, means "*the official list of books accepted as being divinely inspired*" ...or..."*the standard by which one measures, or evaluates, whether or not a book is divinely inspired.*"

The Church did **not** create the canon, but, rather, it recognized the books that were inspired from their inception...the books that were inspired by God when they were written.

There were, basically, **five guiding questions** that were asked of any particular book to determine whether or not it was canonical...or Scriptural:

1. **Was it divinely inspired?** - Did it come from the and of God?
2. **Was it prophetic?** - Was it written by a prophet or a spokesman for God?
3. **Was it authentic?** - Did it relate actual...genuine...facts that could be traced back to the time and place of the writer? The early Church fathers had the attitude, "*If in doubt, throw it out!*"
4. **Was it dynamic?** - Was it permeated with the life-transforming power of God
5. **Was it received, collected, read, and used?** - Was it accepted by the people of God

The fact that our Lord...and His apostles...referred to over 600 quotations of the Old Testament as the "**law and the prophets**" certainly indicates that He approved of the books that were accepted as being Scriptural. Therefore, it is with utmost confidence that we accept the Old Testament as God's divinely inspired Word.

Note Christ's witness to the Old Testament canon in Luke 24:44; John 10:31-36; Luke 11:51 and Matthew 23:35.

Other New Testament Scriptures that give witness to the Old Testament Canon are:

Matthew 21:24	Acts 17:2 & 11	Romans 16:26
Matthew 22:29	Acts 18:28	1 Corinthians 15:3-4
Matthew 26:54-56	Romans 1:2	Galatians 3:8 & 22
Luke 24	Romans 4:3	Galatians 4:30
John 2:22-26	Romans 9:17	1 Timothy 5:18
John 5:39	Romans 10:11	2 Timothy 3:16
John 10:35	Romans 11:2	2 Peter 1:20-21
		2 Peter 3:16

WHAT ABOUT THE APOCRYPHA?

The "*Apocrypha*" is the title given to the 14 books...[written before Christ was born, concerning the time period between the Old Testament and the New Testament]...that are contained in the Roman Catholic Bible. They consist of fanciful stories...as well as contradictory thoughts that immediately establish that they are **not** on a par with Scripture. These books were never accepted by the Jews as inspired writ...were not quoted by Jesus nor any of the apostles... and were not recognized by the early church. These books were "*slipped in*" with a translation of the Greek Septuagint in the fourth Century A.D. and, although they were finally recognized by the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent, 1546 A.D., they have never been accepted by the Protestant Church.

Reason for rejecting the Apocrypha books as inspired by God:

1. They abound in historical and geographical inaccuracies and anachronisms ...that is, they contain wrong times and dates.
2. They teach doctrines which are false and foster practices which are at variance with inspired Scripture.
3. They resort to literary types...and display an artificiality of subject matters and styling...that are out of keeping with inspired Scripture.
4. They lack the distinctive elements...such as prophetic power and poetic and religious feeling...which give genuine Scripture its divine character.

ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS...VERSIONS...OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. THE MASORETIC TEXT

The masoretes were a group of Jewish scribes who, around A.D. 500, developed a more or less official text from the systematic sorting out, and comparing, of the various manuscripts that had come down to them...and...as they were writing this text...they were careful to write down...in the margins of the text...all the variant readings which had been accumulated up to that time. Since there are scarcely any variations of significance from other sources, these manuscripts [Thousands of which are in existence today...the oldest dating back to A.D. 916] warrant our confidence in the original Masoretic text.

II. THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION

In about 280 B.C., seventy scholars were brought to Alexandria from Palestine to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language...which was the first time the Hebrew Old Testament was to be translated into another language. This Greek translation (the Septuagint) was completed around 380 B.C. and was used by the Jews of the Dispersion. The Septuagint is important to us not only because it proves the Old Testament was canonized by this time, but also because its agreement with the Hebrew shows the faithfulness with which early translators did their work.

III. THE SYRIAC VERSION

In about 200 A.D., this version was written by Christians to meet the need of the Syrian Christians to have the Scriptures translated into their own language.

IV. THE LATIN VULGATE

In about 400 A.D., Jerome translated the Old Testament...from the Hebrew and Greek language...into the Latin language, giving us this Latin Translation.

V. THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

These ancient manuscripts...the discovery of which began in 1945 and is continuing on in the present...actually date from the time of Christ...or earlier...and are the oldest actual manuscripts known to man. After their discovery, the careful work of textual comparison began, and it was soon found that there was no difference between the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls and that of the Masorettes...that...even though these scrolls were copied almost 1000 years earlier... they were almost identical to the Masoretic text. On the basis of this astounding evidence, we can be assured that the Old Testament text has been accurately preserved and that we can read it as the reliable Word of God.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is not arranged chronologically, the first book being James, written in about 50 A.D. The New Testament is divided into five parts:

1. The Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
2. The History of the Church - Acts
3. Paul's Epistles - 13 books...from Romans to Hebrews
4. General Epistles - written by authors other than Paul
...17 books...from James to Jude
5. Prophecy - The book of Revelation

THE NEW TESTAMENT AS "*SCRIPTURE*"

From the beginning, the Early Church used the Old Testament in its services with the same authority as did the Jews use it in the synagogue. As the New Testament books appeared, the Church gave them the same respect as it gave to the Old Testament books written by the prophets...or by Moses...so the New Testament Scripture was used right along with the Old Testament Scripture. In 1 Timothy 5:18, the passage that Paul refers to as "*Scripture*" is found in Luke 10:7. Paul, evidently, regarded Luke's Gospel as "*Scripture*" before he wrote his great message on inspiration in 1 Timothy 3:16. In 2 Peter 3:1-2, Peter placed his...and the other apostles'...writings on a par with the Old Testament prophets. In 2 Peter 3:15-16, Peter also shows us that he was familiar with Paul's writings and that he regarded them with the same degree of authority that he regarded the Old Testament writings...as attitude which seemed to be the common one of all Early Church readers as well.

THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Because the original manuscripts were written on a non-durable writing material known as *papyrus* [which was two slices of Egyptian water plant pressed together], they have not been preserved, however, because a much improved writing material...known as *vellum* ...began to be used around the Fourth Century, there are several manuscripts from this era that are still in existence.

ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS...VERSIONS...OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. THE PESHITO...OR...SYRIAC

Written in Syrochaldaic, or Aramaic, before 150 A.D., this translation...because it was regarded with utmost respect...became the official Scriptures of the eastern churches. The Syriac has also been translated into Arabic, Persian and Armenian.

II. THE OLD LATIN VERSION

For more than a thousand years, this Second-Century translation became the Bible of the western churches and was the chief source of reference for nearly every version of the Scripture made in the west. Jerome made the Latin Vulgate from this version.

WHAT HAS BEEN GAINED FROM THE SYRIAC AND THE *LATIN* VERSION IS THE FACT THAT:

1. Because between these two versions all 26 of the New Testament books are included, [2 Peter being the exception] and completely compiled by the Second Century.
2. Our New Testament can be traced back to within 40 years of the time of the Apostles.

During the Second and Third Centuries, there appeared hundreds of other manuscripts that had been translated...from both the Syriac and Old Latin version... into still other languages, but they were destroyed by the Roman Emperors, particularly by Diocletian who ordered the destruction of "*the sacred writings of the Christians.*"

In 315 A.D. when Emperor Constantine began to establish Christianity in the Roman Empire, he authorized Eusebius [who was known as the Father of Church History] to prepare 50 copies of the "*Scriptures*" that were to be used in the churches. The question that naturally arose was, "*Which religious books are regarded as Scripture?*" Through his research, Eusebius discovered that the books that were regarded as Scripture were the 27 New Testament books that we have in our Bible today because these were the books that had been universally accepted since the earliest days of the Church. Eusebius also discovered that the doubt...which had been cast upon some of the books...was of such little significance that it did not warrant the omission of these books...in addition to which, their use...along with the other books...had long established their being recognized as "*inspired Scripture.*" The tests of canonicity for the New Testament books seem to be much the same as were the tests of the canonicity for the Old Testament books because they asked the same questions:

1. "*Was the book written by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle?*"
2. "*Does the book agree with the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles?*"

3. *"Is the book genuine as to facts, date of writing, and author?"*
4. *"Was it accepted for use in the Early Church?"*

The formal gratification of our present 27 New Testament books...by the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D...only recognized the books which had been used by the Church for over three centuries.

The most ancient existing manuscripts of the entire Bible comprise only a fraction of those which are in existence today. It has been stated by scholars that we have more than 4000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament...8000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate...and at least 1,000 manuscripts of other ancient versions. All told, we have more than 13,000 manuscripts of all...or parts ...of the New Testament, not to mention the 1,700 fragments of the Hebrew Old Testament and the 350 copies of the Greek Septuagint.

III. THE SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT

This Greek manuscript written in 340 A.D., was discovered in 1844 in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai when, quite by accident, Dr Constantine Tischendorg happened to see some of the pages of the manuscript in the monastery hall waiting to be used to light the monastery fires and decided to rescue them. Eventually the manuscript was given to the Czar of Russia and, after the Revolution of 1917, was sold to the British Museum for the sum of \$500,000.

IV. THE VATICAN MANUSCRIPT

Although this Greek manuscript...which was written in 350 A.D...was revealed for the first time in a Vatican Library catalogue in 1481, it was not opened to the public until 1889 when it was agreed that its public release was contingent upon Tregelles...a famous Biblical scholar... being permitted to study it for several days. Then...after Tregelles revealed that he had memorized it and could reproduce it...the pope permitted it to be photographed and it was, at last, released to the libraries of the world. This manuscript is now in the Vatican Library in Rome.

V. THE ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT

This Greek manuscript was probably written in Alexandria, Egypt...in 450 A.D...and was presented to King James I of England in 1627. It is now located in the British Museum.

VI. THE EPHRAEM MANUSCRIPT

This Greek manuscript...**also** probably written in Alexandria, Egypt in 450 A.D. It was scrubbed clear by someone who...not recognizing its worth...copied the discourses of Ephraem [a Syrian Father of the Fourth Century] on it. The manuscript was given to the France Library in Paris where...because a student noticed the faint writings underneath the Syrian discourse... chemicals were applied to it which brought out much of the original writing.

Besides the above mentioned, we have many other ancient manuscripts...including ...the BEZA MASS written in 550 A.D., and now in Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England; - THE CLAORMONTANUS, also, written in 550 A.D., and now in the National Library of Paris; - THE WASHINGTON MANUSCRIPT written 550 A.D., and now in the National Library, Washington D.C., U.S.A; - and many others.

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

The early Church Fathers were the first leaders of the Christian Church after the days of the Apostles and, for the most part they were well-educated men who were voluminous writers.

THEIR WRITINGS COMPRISE A GREAT BRIDGE BETWEEN THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS NOW IN EXISTENCE AND THE ORIGINAL NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS.

The Early Church Fathers quoted repeatedly from the New Testament: Clement refers to Matthew, Luke, Romans, Corinthians, Hebrews, 1 Timothy and 1 Peter... Ignatius refers to the Gospels as "*the word of Jesus*"...Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John...in a very short letter that takes only ten minutes to read...quotes from two-thirds of the books of the New Testament... Irenaeus quotes from the New Testament 1,800 times while Tertullian does so 7,200 times. In fact, although we have only a small percentage of the writings of the Early Church Fathers preserved for us to the present day, these writings still contain all but eleven verses of the New Testament...which means that we can trace the actual words of the New Testament within a very few years of their writing.

VII. THE LATIN VULGATE

This Latin translation was compiled from Hebrew, Greek and Latin manuscripts by Jerome in 450 A.D.

VIII. THE WYCLIFFE VERSION

This English translation was made from the Latin Vulgate...in 1382...by John Wycliffe who was called "*the Morning Star of the Reformation.*"

IX. THE COVERDALE BIBLE

In 1533 A.D., this version of Miles Coverdale, was the first publication of an English translation of the Bible in its entirety.

X. THE KING JAMES VERSION

Because when King James severed ties with the Catholic Church there arose a need for an English version of the Bible that could be used in the Protestant Churches, on July 22, 1604, he announced that he had appointed 54 men to translate the Scriptures, of whom the only thing he required was that they should be "*proficient as Bible scholars.*" These scholars were organized into six different groups...each group being given only a certain section of Scripture to translate...and, when each group had completed its translation, not only was it gone over by the other five groups, but, also, a committee of six was then selected from all the translators to be the final authority in making the revision complete. This process of revising the Scripture was the most thorough of any to that date.

The King James Version of the Bible...which was completed in 1611 ...stands in a class by itself because its smooth, flowing, "*Old English*" language has given it a majesty not shared by any other translation to date. It is still the favorite Bible of many Bible students and, although some of its archaic words are cumbersome, it is doubtful that any existing translation will ever, completely, replace it. - [However, the New International Translation, is easier reading and may come very close to replacing the King James Translation of the Bible.]

If you would like to study more fully on the subject of, "*How We Got Our Bible*"...and original Biblical texts...I would suggest that you obtain a copy of Josh McDowell's "*Evidence that Demands a Verdict.*"

THE NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

In the year 63 B.C., when Pompey, the Roman general, captured Jerusalem...the provinces of Palestine were made a tributary of Rome and while part of the time the Jewish local government was entrusted to princes who had political influence at Rome, at other periods it was entrusted to procurators who were appointed by the Roman emperors.

The diagram on the following page gives the names of the Roman provinces...their rulers...and the approximate dates of their rulership.

In the times of Augustus, the realm...or "*province*"...of Herod the Great...who was king of Judea in 37 B.C...was enlarged to include a considerable territory east of the Jordan.

Herod the Great...who was the ruler of all Palestine at the time of Christ's birth... probably died the same year that Christ was born...at which time his province was divided between his sons.

After the writing...in 96 A.D...of Revelation...the last book of God's inspired Word ...the Peshito [or Syriac] Version of the Bible was written in 150 A.D., while the Old Latin Version was written in about 200 A.D.

During the Dark Ages, the Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts were written in 340 A.D... and the Wycliffe version was written in 1382. The first *printed* Bible came with the invention of the printing press in 1455...followed by the printing of the Tydale version in 1534...the Coverdale version in 1535...the Geneva version in 1560...the Bishops version in 1568...the King James version in 1611...the American Standard version in 1901...the Revised Standard version in 1952...and, now many, many, other versions today.