

The Bible

“How We Got It”

“The first link in the chain of revelation ‘from God to us’ is inspiration, which concerns what God did, namely, that He breathed out the Scriptures. The second link in the chain is canonization, which relates to the question of which books God inspired. Inspiration indicates how the Bible received its authority, whereas canonization tells how the Bible received its acceptance. It is one thing for God to give the Scriptures their authority, and quite another for men to recognize that authority”

Norman Geisler in “A General Introduction to the Bible” page 203.

“How the Bible came down to us is a story of adventure and devotion. It is a story of toil and faith by those who, sometimes at great cost, passed down from generation to generation the message of salvation. The Bible did not just happen nor has it been preserved through the years by mere chance. The Bible is a marvel all its own. Living in a day when books are written and printed by the thousands, we are apt to overlook the fascinating drama that lies behind our Bible. How and when did the books of the Bible have their origin? In what sense are these books different from other books? How have these books been preserved and transmitted to us? These are some of the questions that arise in the mind of every thoughtful student of the Bible; and the answers to these questions compose a story which spans thousands of years, that takes us to various regions of the world and into the hearts of countless unnamed people whose first love was the word of God.”

Neil Lightfoot in “How We Got the Bible” page 1.

Ancient Writing

1. Clay tablets have been discovered from Mesopotamia that date back to 3,500 BC.
2. Hieroglyphics were used in Egypt and are dated back to 3,100 BC.
3. Pictographs were used in the Mediterranean region as early as 2,500 BC.

Ancient Writing Materials

1. Stone – Deuteronomy 27:1-3.
2. Clay – Ezekiel 4:1.
3. Wood – Isaiah 30:8.
4. Leather – Jeremiah 36:23.
5. Papyrus – It is known from history that this was one of the most frequently used materials for writing.
6. Parchment – 2 Timothy 4:13. This material was used for hundreds of years in the making of thousands of copies of NT manuscripts.
7. Stylus – used to make marks/letters on clay or wax tablets.

Languages of the Bible

Hebrews 1:1-2

God could have continued to communicate in various ways

1. Through angels – Genesis 18-19; Acts 8:26.
2. Through visions/dreams – Daniel 2, 7.
3. Through Urim and Thummim and casting of lots – Exodus 28:29-30; Acts 1.
4. Through direct speaking – 1 Samuel 3.

However, God CHOSE to use written languages

1. Hebrew – Most of the OT was written in this language.
2. Aramaic – Small parts of the OT and NT contain this language.
3. Greek – Referred to a *koine* or common Greek.

Why would God use written/spoken languages?

1. Precision. Present/past tense. Singular/plural.
2. Propagation. It is possible to produce more copies and accurate copies when things are written down as opposed to being handed down orally. An example of this is seen in John 21:23. John then wrote down what the Holy Spirit inspired him to write.
3. Preservation.

“The Canon of Scripture”

“The original meaning of the term canon can be traced to the ancient Greeks, who used it in a literal sense: a kanon was a rod, ruler, staff, or measuring rod. The Greek word kanon is probably a derivative of the Hebrew kaneh (reed), an Old Testament term meaning measuring rod (Eze. 40:3; 42:16). This literal concept provided the basis for a later extended use of the word kanon, meaning “standard” or “norm.”.....In early Christian usage, it came to mean rule of faith, normative writings, or authoritative Scripture. The Fathers, from the time of Irenaeus (120-202 AD), referred to the canon of Christian teaching, which they called “The Kanon of the Church.”

Who determined the *canonicity* of the books of the Bible?

One author made several points in reference to it being Jesus:

1. He subjected the authority of tradition to the superior and normative authority of the Old Testament. Mark 7:9-13
2. He emphasized that He Himself fulfills the Messianic promise of the inspired writings. Luke 4:16-21
3. He claimed for Himself an authority not below that of the Old Testament and definitively expounded the inner significance of the law. Matthew 5
4. He inaugurated the New Covenant escalating the Holy Spirit’s moral power as an internal reality.
5. He identified Himself wholly with the revelational authority of Moses and the prophets, that is, with the Old Testament as an inspired literary canon, insisting that Scripture has sacred, authoritative, and permanent validity, and that the revealed truth of God is conveyed in its teachings. John 5:44-47

Determining what books belong in the Bible:

1. Was the book written by a prophet of God? Exodus 7:1; Amos 3:8
2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God? Acts 2:22; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Mark 16:17-20
3. Did the message tell the truth about God? Deuteronomy 13:1-3
4. Does it come with the power of God? Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:17; Isaiah 55:11
5. Was it accepted by the people of God? 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Deuteronomy 31:26; Joshua 24:26; 1 Timothy 5:18

The canon is closed:

1. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4
2. The immediate successors of the apostles did not claim new revelations nor did they claim supernatural gifts. For example, Clement of Alexandria (153 AD) depended heavily on over 40 books of the Bible in his writings and teachings.

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“The Development of the Canon”

“The fact that the canon developed is indisputable, but how it developed and when it was completed is a matter that must also be considered. Although inspiration determines canonicity, men are actively involved in the recognition of the canon. The process of recognition is a historical study.”

1. There are three preliminary steps in the process of canonization:
 - a. Inspiration by God. 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - b. Recognition by men of God. Exodus 24:3
 - c. Collection and preservation by people of God. 1 Samuel 10:25; Ezra 7:6
2. There is a distinction between the canon and other books mentioned in the Bible.
 - a. The book of the wars of the Lord - Numbers 21:14-15
 - b. The book of Jasher – Joshua 10:13
 - c. The book of the acts of Solomon - I Kings 11:41
 - d. 2 Chronicles 9:29 mentions three different writings.
 - e. These books were not included in the Law and the prophets or in the books of Hebrew poetry (Luke 24:44).
3. The continuity of the Old Testament books help us understand the development of the canon:
 - a. The book of Judges refers to Joshua and Moses (1:1, 20-21; 2:7-8).
 - b. The events of Ruth are spoken of as taking place in the days when the judges ruled (1:1).
 - c. 1 Samuel continues the history of the judges (4:18).
 - d. 1 & 2 Kings, which were originally one book, along with 1 & 2 Chronicles, often refer to the Law of Moses (2 Kings 14:6).
 - e. Ezra and Nehemiah refer to the law of Moses (Ez. 3:2; Neh. 13:1).
 - f. Job is mentioned by Ezekiel (14:14, 20). The book of Job, therefore, existed before Ezekiel's day (590 BC).
 - g. The Psalms appear throughout Samuel and Chronicles. David claimed to have spoken by the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 23:2).
 - h. The Prophets are quoted excessively in the NT. They also refer to the writings in the law of Moses.
4. Early church “fathers” (Origen, Jerome) confirmed that the Jewish Scriptures were divided into 22 books:
 - a. 1-5 – Genesis-Deuteronomy.
 - b. 6 – Joshua.
 - c. 7 – Judges-Ruth.
 - d. 8 – 1-2 Samuel.
 - e. 9 – 1-2 Kings
 - f. 10 – 1-2 Chronicles.
 - g. 11 – Ezra-Nehemiah
 - h. 12 – Psalms.
 - i. 13 – Proverbs.

- j. 14 – Ecclesiastes.
 - k. 15 – Song of Solomon.
 - l. 16 – Isaiah.
 - m. 17 – Jeremiah-Lamentations.
 - n. 18 – Daniel.
 - o. 19 – Ezekiel.
 - p. 20 – Job.
 - q. 21 – Esther.
 - r. 22 – Minor Prophets.
5. There are many ancient witnesses to the canon of the OT:
- a. The Samaritan Pentateuch. Seems to have appeared in the 4th or 5th century BC. Contains only Genesis-Deuteronomy. Several copies of this were made throughout the years.
 - b. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the OT. Produced in Alexandria, Egypt around 250-210 BC. Listed the books by subject matter rather than chronologically. This is what Jesus and the apostles quoted and Jesus referred to it as Scripture (Lk. 4:21) showing that an accurate translation is God's word.
 - c. Ecclesiasticus is a book in the Apocrypha. It was written around 170 BC and mentions the entire canon of the OT.
 - d. The Dead Sea Scrolls. Discovered by an Arab shepherd boy who was throwing rocks into caves in 1947. Discoveries were made in 11 different caves from 1947-1956. Located 7.5 miles S. of Jericho and 1 mile W. of the Dead Sea.
 - i. Cave 1 produced fragments of Gen., Lev., Deut., Jud., Sam., Isa., Eze., Ps., and many other historical Jewish writings.
 - ii. Cave 2 produced 100 fragments of Ex., Lev., Num., Deut., Jer., Job, Ps., Ruth.
 - iii. Cave 3 produced a copper scroll with directions to other caves.
 - iv. Cave 4 produced 1,000's of fragments. It contained copies of Bible books, except Esther. The oldest existing copy of Samuel (3rd century BC). The most productive cave.
 - v. Cave 5 produced several books from the Bible but they were in an "advanced stage of deterioration."
 - vi. Cave 6 produced papyrus pieces of Dan., 1 & 2 Kng.
 - vii. Caves 7-10 produced nothing relative to textual criticism.
 - viii. Cave 11 produced a well preserved copy of Psalms 93-150 and an Aramaic Paraphrase of Job.
 - e. How old are the Dead Sea Scrolls?
 - i. Carbon 14 dated some linen discovered in the caves to 168 BC.
 - ii. Paleography (ancient writing forms) and orthography (spelling) dated them to before 100 BC.
 - iii. Archaeology dated the pottery from 150-100 BC.

- f. Another series of caves (Murabba'at Discoveries – caves SE of Bethlehem) produced many things. A scroll of the Minor Prophets in Greek. www.thewaytoyahuwah.com/tag/wadi-murabbaat
 - g. According to paleography these scrolls date to the 2nd century AD.
6. Are these copies and fragments reliable, accurate copies of the originals?
- According to history there were 17 rules that had to be followed:
- a. A synagogue scroll must be written on the skin of clean animals.
 - b. Prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew.
 - c. They must be fastened together with strings from clean animals.
 - d. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex (pages held together by stitching).
 - e. The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 nor more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of 30 letters.
 - f. The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words should be written without a line, it is worthless.
 - g. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe.
 - h. An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate.
 - i. No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him.
 - j. Between every consonant the space of a hare or thread must intervene.
 - k. Between every new section, the breadth of nine columns.
 - l. Between every book three lines.
 - m. The 5th book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
 - n. Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress.
 - o. He must wash his whole body.
 - p. He must not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink.
 - q. Should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.

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“The Preservation of Scripture”

“There are four links in the chain ‘from God to us:’ inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation. In the first, God gave the message to the prophets who received and recorded it. Canonization, the second link, dealt with the recognition and collection of the prophetic writings. In effect, the objective disclosure was complete when the 66 books of the Bible were written, and then recognized by their original readers. However, in order for succeeding generations to share in this revelation the Scriptures had to be copied, translated, and recopied, and retranslated. This process not only provided the Scriptures for other nations, but for other generations as well. The third link is known as transmission of the Bible.”

Various passages teach the preservation of Scripture:

1. 2 Kings 10:10.
2. Psalm 12:6-7.
3. Psalm 33:11.
4. Psalm 119:89.
5. Isaiah 40:8.
6. Matthew 24:35.

Keith Mosher wrote, *“A failure to grasp the doctrine of preservation of the words of Scripture is the starting point for all other kinds of apostasy.”*

John 12:48 – If His words have not been faithfully preserved then this passage means nothing!

The OT was preserved by the faithful priests and scribes (Rom. 3:1-2).

Deuteronomy 17:18-19

Early Manuscripts that have been discovered:

1. Codex Vaticanus (B). A copy of the entire Bible produced in the 4th century AD. Catalogued in Vatican Library in 1475. It has 759 leaves. Leaves contain 3 columns of 42 lines per page.
2. Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph). A copy of the entire Bible produced in the mid-4th century. Discovered in St. Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai in 1844. Has 364 pages of four columns that are 2.5 inches wide. Written on vellum made from antelope skins.
3. Codex Alexandrinus (A). Produced in 5th century in Alexandria, Egypt. Contains 773 leaves written with two columns of 50-51 lines each.
4. Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C). Originated in Alexandria, Egypt. It is a palimpsest (rubbed out) rescriptus (rewritten). By chemical reactivation the writing was deciphered. Has 209 leaves with one wide column on each containing 40-46 lines.

There are 362 uncial (all caps) manuscripts of sections of the NT. The four listed above are the most important because of their age, condition, and contents.

An interesting fact: There are 643 MSS by which the Iliad (720 BC) was reconstructed. There were 9-10 MSS from which Caesar’s Gallic Wars was

produced. The oldest extant copy of Gallic Wars is 900 years after Caesar! There are now over 6,000 ancient MSS from which the NT has been reproduced! There are many (2,795) minuscule (small letters) MSS that are all dated from the 9th-15th centuries. Most of the NT MSS are less than 200 years from the original!

Understanding the Translation of the Text

Translation – the rendering of a given composition from one language into another. $\cong * \gamma * 46 \zeta 4 \bar{H} \gamma 6 B 4 \Phi 9 \gamma T H . 0 \Phi \gamma 9 \zeta 4$ - Romans 1:17. Translation “But the righteous shall live by faith.”

Literal translation – expresses, as far as possible, the exact meaning of the original words. $\cong * \gamma * 46 \zeta 4 \bar{H} \gamma 6 B 4 \Phi 9 \gamma T H . 0 \Phi \gamma 9 \zeta 4$. Literal translation “The but righteous by faith shall live.”

Transliteration – the rendering of the letters of one language into the corresponding letters of another. *Baptidzo* = *Baptize*; *Angelos* = *Angel*; *Apostolos* = *Apostle*; *Biblos* = *Bible*.

Version – a translation from the original language of a literary text into another language.

Revisions, Revised Versions – translated from one language, carefully and systematically reviewed and examined for the purpose of correcting errors.

Paraphrase – free translations or restatements of sentences. NIV is a good example of a paraphrase.

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Did the Catholic Church Give Us the Bible?

The following quotes are from the Catholic Church:

- "The only authority which non-Catholics have for the inspiration of the Scriptures is the authority of the Catholic Church." (**The Faith of Millions**, p. 145)
- "It is only by the divine authority of the Catholic Church that Christians know that the scripture is the word of God, and what books certainly belong to the Bible." (**The Question Box**, p. 46)
- "It was the Catholic Church and no other which selected and listed the inspired books of both the Old Testament and the New Testament...If you can accept the Bible or any part of it as inspired Word of God, you can do so only because the Catholic Church says it is." (**The Bible is a Catholic Book**, p. 4).
- "Because it never was a Bible, till the infallible Church pronounced it to be so. The separate treatises, each of them inspired, were lying, as it were dispersedly; easy to confound with others, that were uninspired. The Church gathered them up, selected them, pronounced judgment on them; rejecting some, which she defined and declared not to be canonical, because not inspired; adopting others as being inspired, and therefore canonical." (**What Is the Bible?** p. 6).
- "And since the books of the Bible constituting both the Old and the New Testament were determined solely by the authority of the Catholic Church, without the Church there would have been no Bible, and hence no Protestantism." (**The Faith of Millions**, p. 10).

If the Bible is a product of the Catholic Church:

- Why does it condemn clerical dress? (Matt. 23:5-6).
- Why does it teach against the adoration of Mary? (Luke 11:27-28).
- Why does it show that all Christians are priests? (1 Pet. 2:5,9).
- Why does it condemn the observance of special days? (Gal. 4:9-11).
- Why does it teach that all Christians are saints? (1 Cor. 1:2).
- Why does it condemn the making and adoration of images? (Ex. 20:4-5).
- Why does it teach that baptism is immersion instead of pouring? (Col. 2:12).
- Why does it forbid us to address religious leaders as "father"? (Matt. 23:9).
- Why does it teach that Christ is the only foundation and not the apostle Peter? (1 Cor. 3:11).
- Why does it teach that there is one mediator instead of many? (1 Tim. 2:5).
- Why does it teach that a bishop must be a married man? (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5).
- Why is it opposed to the primacy of Peter? (1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- Why does it oppose the idea of purgatory? (Luke 16:26).
- Why is it completely silent about infant baptism, instrumental music in worship, indulgences, confession to priests, the rosary, the mass, and many other things in the Catholic Church?

Why would a “religious movement” preserve and produce a book that provides literature that condemns the very teaching of that movement?

Finally, the Catholic Church could not have given us the Bible for the very simple reason that it did not exist for centuries after the Bible was completed!

- The status of the Bishop of Rome was a gradual digression from the NT patter of church organization.
- In 451 AD the Council of Chalcedon was held and it was determined that the Bishop of Rome and of Constantinople should have equal right and honor.
- In 588 AD the Bishop of Constantinople proclaimed himself to be Universal Bishop. He was rebuked by Gregory, Bishop of Rome, who called the Universal Bishop “vain, anti-Christian, blasphemous, and diabolical.”
- In 606 AD Boniface III was identified as Universal Bishop.
- All of these events were taking place centuries after the Lord’s church had been established and in opposition to the Biblical plan of church organization!

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Review

Why would God use written/spoken languages?

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Can we trust our English Bible?

There are two issues that must be addressed:

1. Has the word of God been faithfully preserved?

2. How do we apply that truth to our lives?

John 8:31-32 – If the truth has been lost over time no one can be a disciple of Christ.

John 17:20-21 – If truth has not been preserved there can be no unity.

Psalms 119:89

Isaiah 40:8

Christ made arguments from Scripture based on the tense of a verb – Matthew 22:29-32.

Paul made an argument from Scripture based on the singular term – Galatians 3:16.

If the text has not been faithfully preserved these passages mean nothing.