

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE (Part II)

As stated in Part I, how the Bible has come down to us is a story of adventure and devotion. This is the conclusion of that story.

Note that all divine revelation mentioned in the Bible is in writing. Joshua, successor to Moses, wrote words in the Book of the Law (Josh. 24:26). Samuel *"explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD"* (1 Sam. 10:25, NIV).

God told Jeremiah, *"Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now"* (Jer. 36:2, NIV).

Also, Daniel searched the writings of the prophets and found out their Babylonian captivity was determined to be 70 years (Dan. 9:2).

When Paul preached at Berea, Scripture was used to prove his words. *"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures (O.T.) every day to see if what Paul said was true"* (Acts 17:11, NIV). Many Greek men and women consequently believed.

Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian of the first century, indicated that no book of Scripture was added after Malachi (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1. 8.).

400 Years between the Covenants

The 400 years of 'Silence' as it is called, only refers to the fact that we find no record of any work of divine inspiration during the time period from 400 B.C. to the birth of Christ. However, history has not left us without the recording of major events such as the story of Alexander the Great, Roman control, and the evolvement of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots. Also during this time, Jewish synagogues were constructed in most Roman cities while rabbis and chief priests developed their own political identity.

The Septuagint translation, a Greek version of our Old Testament, was made about 300 B.C. This is because Hebrew was replaced by Aramaic as the common language and Greek as language of commerce.

In 175 B.C., the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanies conquered Jerusalem. He despised the Jews and desecrated the altar. He tortured Jews who tried to hide Scripture from him. All this and more led to one of the most heroic feats in history---the Maccabean Revolt.

The Apocrypha

There are 14 books called 'The Apocrypha' (Hidden books) which were written during the 'silent years' and possibly extended into the time of the Apostles. Today they are not found in our Bibles. Most all Protestant versions eventually dropped these books; the KJV removed them in 1629.

Why? These books do not meet the standards of divine inspiration. They reflect notions of mysticism and demonology, maybe of Persian influences, inconsistent with either Jewish or Christian belief.

Despite their lack of credibility, they are generally moral in nature and do give insight into some of the history, customs, and religious developments during the 'silent years'.

The titles of these books include: 1st and 2nd Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Susanna, Song of 3 Children, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, 1st and 2nd Maccabees.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls have probably had the greatest Biblical impact of all discoveries. They provided Old Testament manuscripts approximately 1000 years older than our previous oldest manuscripts. These Scrolls have demonstrated that the Old Testament was accurately translated. There was no need for a new Old Testament Bible. I waited patiently in 1947 for a publication of a "Dead Sea Scroll Bible" but we already had it. Praise God!

The scribes of Qumran who wrote the scrolls were men of great faith and sacrifice. They believed in the coming of a

Prophet, Priest and King, perhaps in three different persons. They would have been surprised to know that the coming Messiah was all three in ONE!

The New Testament Books

Our New Testament consists of 27 books: 5 historical, 21 letters to the churches or individuals, and one book of prophecy, the book of Revelation.

Just as the Old Testament begins with 5 historical books it is interesting that the New Testament also begins with 5 historical books. These are the four Gospels -- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John -- which describe the Life of Christ as he lived and died under the Old Law, and the book of Acts, which tells the story of the early church.

Jesus, after His resurrection and after 40 days instructing His disciples, ascended to His Father and sat down at His right hand. Seven days later he sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. They all began to preach salvation through Jesus.

The day is Pentecost. Since Jews had gathered from all over the known world to celebrate this Feast, God chose this day, through miracles and preaching, to establish the Church. Christ became Head over all things to it. That same day the Lord added 3000 baptized believers to His church (Acts 2:41).

Jesus Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King!

Remember, Jesus Christ is the heart and center of the Bible, Old and New.

In the Old Testament Moses said, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him."* (Deut. 18:15, NIV; Acts 3:22-23)

In the New Testament, *"For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life"* (Heb. 7:14-16, NIV).

In Revelation 19:13-16, John wrote that He is "*King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*"

Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away*" (Luke 21:33, NIV). The story of the Bible is one beautiful demonstration of that.

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Although we try to serve the Lord acceptably, every once in a while someone hurts our feelings - or even worse, we hurt the feelings of someone else. Why do such things happen and make us feel so guilty and uncomfortable?

ANSWER: Such matters occur in our lives today, but they were not unknown in Bible days. For instance, there was the conflict between Sarai and Hagar (Gen. 16:1-6).

Rather than his intended Rachel, Leah through deceit of her father became Jacob's first wife. Genesis 29:21-31 describes the problem and concludes by stating, "*And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated...*" We note the desperate feeling of Rachel in Genesis 30:1, "*And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.*"

Paul's admonition to the Galatians expressed his concern, "*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of God unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ*" (Gal. 1:6-7). He then continued his instructions and admonition saying in 4:16, "*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*" Hurt feelings could result from our not desiring to hear, even though what is said is really the truth.

Martha complained to Jesus about Mary in Luke 10:38-42. A simple, yet positive and meaningful answer to this problem is found in Jesus' statement, "*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her*" (41-42). "That good part" was evident in Mary. What do we note about her that was

missing in Martha? Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word" (39). "Martha was cumbered [troubled, perplexed] about much serving" (40). Martha was not in error in attending to those domestic duties such as cooking, serving tables, and doing the dishes. But such duties as these should not take precedent over the really important matters of life.

What is the identity of the desirable characteristics then?

- A mind centered on spiritual matters.
- Thoughts on truth, love, peace, and the higher calling in life.
- An attitude void of jealousy, but anxious to see and commend the good in others.
- Desire to be of assistance rather than to be the object of attention.
- To be pleased when others succeed.
- Spending precious time with your children's endless needs, for soon enough they will be gone from your care.
- To encourage rather than find fault and criticize.
- Be pleased with second best rather than dispute who is best.
- Pursue being humble rather than displaying pride.

If we can maintain such an outlook, it will prepare us to receive and overlook that which might otherwise have hurt our feelings. With this attitude we can suppress the tendency to yield to self pity and forge ahead to better understanding. With this attitude we can better control our own tendency to think and say and do that which may hurt others.

Patience and longsuffering are key to conquering our behavior, both within ourselves and how we appear to others.

"In your patience possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19)

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect [complete] work. that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4)

"That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." (Ephesians

4:1-2)

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

After Jesus had departed this world to never again be in her presence in this life, I wonder how often Martha might have wished she had spent more time listening to Jesus.

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

| <u>DATES</u> | <u>PLACE</u> | <u>SPEAKER</u> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| May 30 - June 2 | 741 Chestnut St. Scotland Neck, NC | Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL) |
| June 6 - 11 | Taylor's Cross Roads Roanoke, AL | Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) |
| June 7 - 11 | Estesburg Eubank, KY | Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) |
| June 13 - 18 | Mt. Carmel Woodland, AL | Sam Dick (Cave City, KY) |
| June 18 - 20 | Antioch Greenup, IL | Mike Daniel (Douglasville, GA) |
| June 20 - 25 | Ephesus Ephesus, GA | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| June 23 - 25 | Fellowship Conference Desoto State Park Fort Payne, AL | Various Speakers |

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. When the Amalekites attacked the Israelites at Rephidim, upon what was the Israelite victory dependent?

2. What frustrated Ezra so much that he tore his garment and plucked hair from his head and beard?
3. What city did Hosea say would bury the Israelites?
4. What did Paul assure Timothy that all who desire to live godly in Christ will experience?
5. In the book of Revelation, after the fifth angel sounded his trumpet and the bottomless pit was opened, what emerged from the smoke?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Which of Noah's sons was cursed for seeing his father's nakedness? HAM (Gen. 9:22-25)
2. How did Ruth meet Boaz? WHILE WORKING IN ONE OF BOAZ'S FIELDS (Ruth 2:3)
3. What was Solomon's opinion of childhood and youth? THEY ARE VANITY (Eccl. 11:10)
4. According to Luke's account, what was Zacharias' punishment for not believing the angel Gabriel concerning the birth of Zacharias' son, John the Baptist? HE WOULD BE MUTE UNTIL THE CHILD WAS BORN (Luke 1:20)
5. The Corinthian Christians were instructed not to associate with those who referred to themselves as brothers yet were what? FORNICATORS, DRUNKARDS, AND IDOLATERS (1 Cor. 5:11)