

# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXVII ISSUE 5

MAY 20, 2003

## Given by God, Written by Men

On the following pages is a simple introductory study of the Bible, written in 1995 and edited for this printing. While most of our readers are well past the material presented, some are in need of the basic teaching of the nature of the Book; and others require encouragement to continue the battle for the truth. I recall Dr. Bob Jones Sr. declaring forty years ago in the midst of the fight over ecumenical evangelism that the battle of the future would be fought on the word of God. He was prophetic in his perception. Liberals and the neo-orthodox attempted then to destroy the credibility of the word of God—they continue their fruitless warfare even now. However, within the ranks of those professing belief in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Book, have risen those actively engaged in weakening the testimony of the Book by constant reconsideration of what is and what is not “original,” continuous revision, and ceaseless correction. The unconditional authority of “thus saith the LORD” finds replacement with a timid suggestion that “*the greater probability is that He most likely meant to say or so scholars suggest today.*”

May this article affirm, challenge, and strengthen the conviction that (1) God gave the words, (2) men wrote them down, and (3) we have the word, the whole word, and nothing but the word of God.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to:  
THE BAPTIST HERITAGE, 2200 West Michigan Avenue, Pensacola, FL 32526-2379

THE BAPTIST HERITAGE  
2200 West Michigan Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32526-2379

PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE  
PAID AT  
PENSACOLA,  
FLORIDA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

a good place to visit  
and  
a better place to belong



# this and that

Editor and Staff

Jerald L. Manley Gary Roland  
Dorothy Gundersen J. Alan Wolf

## What in the world is going on?

We live in a strange world—a world that sociologists and philosophers now call “post-modern.” To most of us, such a term is meaningless; however, the concepts conveyed within this word are filled with meaning. One might wonder as to what there could be after (post-) modern. The world that we senior citizens knew was based upon ‘modernity’—the idea that the world system was mechanical in nature and character. This philosophy dominated the Western world for over four hundred years. The premise was that by discovering how the world functioned (the laws of science), one would know how to improve the world or to repair it. Much as knowing what made the watch tick enables one to fix the watch. (The problem now is that watches no longer tick.) Modernity held a hope of making this world a better place and thereby making a better humanity.

Post-modernity holds no hope of fixing the world or humanity. In this view, reality is only what any individual thinks that it is. Reality is different for every individual; thus, there are no absolutes—right for me is not necessarily right for any other person and probably will not be right for me tomorrow.

*(Continued on page 23)*

## THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

(428-290)

is published monthly by

THE HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH  
of PENSACOLA,

2200 West Michigan Avenue,  
Pensacola, Florida 32526-2379.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID  
AT PENSACOLA, FLORIDA.

THE BAPTIST HERITAGE is sent without charge to the members of the church and, by request, to interested friends of this church. There are no subscription charges and no paid advertisements are accepted.

This is VOLUME XXVII and  
ISSUE NUMBER 5 for MAY 20, 2003.



# this and that

*(Continued from page 2)*

The modernist had difficulty believing in miracles and in a God that was involved in the affairs of this world—everything was measured by the ability to reason a logical answer. Hence, both deism and evolution were attractive.

The post-modernist has difficulty with believing in reasoning or logic—all is measured by feeling. Words themselves have no settled definitions—“what ‘is’ is” becomes a matter of discussion. To the generations raised on post-modernism (beginning roughly in the latter 1960’s) (1) history is subject to revision and interpretation, (2) existence is totally subjective and fluctuating, and (3) religion is entirely the expansion of conscious realization of self fulfillment.

---

*This publication is mailed to you on purpose. Someone who knows of you believed that you would profit by receiving and reading it. If you do not agree, we will remove your name from the next possible mailing. We have no desire to intrude or to offend.*

---

In this world, the Bible believer is found still clinging to the absolutes of the word of God and finds no friendship in either modernity or post-modernity. As modernity produced liberals in Christianity, the effects of post-modernity are seen and heard within Baptist churches. ‘Right’ music, ‘right’ style, ‘right’ methodology are determined by the Pastors Junior to be that which was condemned by the Pastors Senior and the standards of the “old men” are dismissed as just outdated “interpretation”—“right for them, but not for us.” Sadly, the first victim in this ‘make-over’ is the Bible. Whereas the Senior said, “the Bible says,” Junior now says “it is highly likely that God might have caused the writer to think along this line.” We desperately need those who will remain faithful to the word of God and not follow the vain philosophies of the world. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Colossians 2:8

Phone: 850-944-5545

Fax: 850-944-9822

E-mail: JERALD.L.MANLEY@GTE.NET

—Pastor Manley

Lightfoot, and Saucy are decidedly not fundamentalists. They are noted for their scholarship and not their evangelical fervor. The position they espouse is simply the historical record.

This view is also certainly in keeping with the testimony of Scripture. Paul claimed for his teaching the inspiration of God;<sup>28</sup> so did John for his Revelation.<sup>29</sup> Peter classified the epistles of Paul with "other Scriptures."<sup>30</sup> Paul quoted as Scripture in First Timothy 5:18 "The laborer is worthy of his hire"—a direct quotation from either (or both) Mark 10:10 and Luke 10:7. (This is clear evidence to any willing to observe it for the existence of both books written and circulating while Paul was writing and that both books were accepted as Scripture *at that time*.) The Bible is the word of God inspired, inerrant, infallible, and eternal. It is complete with nothing added that ought not to be there and nothing left out that ought to be there. "The Lord gave the word" was the declaration of the Psalmist.

I am not willing to surrender one word from one verse.

Where did the Bible come from and what is its purpose? The Bible came from the mouth of God<sup>31</sup> to the ear<sup>32</sup> of man for the eye<sup>33</sup> of men to read<sup>34</sup> so that the person reading or hearing<sup>35</sup> might be converted<sup>36</sup> and then taught<sup>37</sup>. The Bible is the words that God spoke so that we might hear. Those words, spoken by God, are collectively the word of God (John 17, verse 8 compared with verse 14). He that hath ears to hear let him hear.<sup>38</sup>

Pastor Jerald L. Manley

REPRINT PERMISSION ALWAYS GRANTED: ACKNOWLEDGMENT APPRECIATED

<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:7-13; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

<sup>29</sup> Revelation 1:2

<sup>30</sup> 2 Peter 3:15-16

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 4:4, and the hundreds of "Thus saith the LORD" validate this verse's claim

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 32:32; 1 Samuel 8:15; 2 Chronicles 24:19; Isaiah 28:23

<sup>33</sup> Proverbs 7:7; 30:12; Ezekiel 12:2; Deuteronomy 11:18-20

<sup>34</sup> Isaiah 34:16; Jeremiah 36:6

<sup>35</sup> Exodus 24:7; Deuteronomy 31:11; 2 Kings 23:2; Nehemiah 8:8

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 13:15-17

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 12:3-8; 21:42-45; 22:31-32; Luke 4:16-27

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35

## Given by God, Written by Men

### A Simple Background

The Bible is the title given to the collection of those sixty-six individual Books<sup>1</sup>, that were specially and uniquely, directly and verbally, "given by the inspiration by God" and are thereby and therefore authoritative for all matters of faith (belief) and practice (behavior). The Bible is a written record, but it was not written by one person, in one place, at one time. Over some 1500 years<sup>2</sup>, more than forty individual men of God<sup>3</sup> were involved in writing down the word of God. None of the actual original writings—referred to by scholars as the "autographs" or "autographa"—of the individual books, psalms, and letters survives. Those 'originals' were written on papyrus, parchment (leather), and vellum (fine quality lambskin). The Ten Commandments, twice by the hand of God, were written on two tables of stone. No one claims to have even a scrap of papyrus, parchment, or vellum bearing the handwriting of a biblical writer. (If a genuine autograph were somehow discovered and

<sup>1</sup> These would be those identified by name beginning on page 10.

<sup>2</sup> That being the approximate time span between the Exodus from Egypt (1446 BC) and the Exile of John to Patmos (95 AD). The oldest Book, Job, in my view, was written before the lifetime of Moses; the unknowable date may have been about the time of Abraham, 2066 BC.

<sup>3</sup> "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" 2 Peter 1:21.

Over 32 men are identified by name as the Old Testament writers: Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Mordecai, (Job), Elihu, David, Solomon, Asaph, Sons of Korah (plural, hence the "more than"), Heman, Ethan, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi—and several Psalms have unidentified and unidentifiable writers that might add to the number.

Eight men are accepted by tradition or by direct claim in the text as the New Testament writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude.

could be 'authenticated,' undoubtedly, it would receive more veneration than does the fraudulent Shroud, or do the alleged nails and supposed slivers of wood from the cross, or as do the purported bones of saints; surely many would bow before that fragment, exactly as ancient Israel eventually worshipped the brazen serpent.) The 'original document' was, and remains, not as important as the words as given by God and written on whichever material. Before the 'originals' disappeared, whether through deterioration or discarding, they were copied; those copies were themselves copied, with this repetitive process continuing over generations of documents. Some copies were accurate and some were not. This series of reproductions of those 'originals' provides the basis for the Hebrew and Greek texts on which all translations of the Bible are based. The battle is over which are legitimate reproductions and which were altered.

The oldest handwritten copies of Bible texts that have been discovered are termed "manuscripts." The early manuscripts were written on animal skin or papyrus. Papyrus was manufactured from a reed plant that grew in the Nile Valley and similar environments; it was relatively inexpensive, but not very durable since it rotted quickly when exposed to dampness. However, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many papyrus manuscripts discovered in the dry sands of Egypt and other arid Middle East locations have been 'expertly' dated as originating very near the time of Christ and the Apostles. (Contrary to common belief, the 'dating' of these fragments is not an exact objective science, but is highly subjective.) Among these recovered ancient relics are a few scraps of papyri containing actual portions of Scripture. The skins of animals proved to be a much more durable nature than papyrus. Different qualities of writing material were manufactured from such skins. Sometimes coarse leather was used. Others, treated by a special refining process, emerged as a writing material known as parchment. Vellum, a highly valued material, was made from lamb or calfskin. Some important manuscripts found used this material. Its preservation qualities greatly exceed those of papyri. Until the middle of the 15th century and the advent of mechanical print-

"Instead of conferring canonicity on a book, the pronouncements were always statements of recognizing what the scattered congregations already considered canonical."<sup>23</sup>

J. I. Packer wrote,

"The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity, by His work of creation, and similarly He gave us the New Testament, by inspiring the individual books that make it up."<sup>24</sup>

Neil Lightfoot wrote,

"No church council by its decrees can *make* (italics in original) the books of the Bible authoritative."<sup>25</sup>

F. F. Bruce wrote,

"People frequently speak and write as if the authority with which the books of the Bible are invested in the minds of Christians is the result of their having been included in the sacred list. But the historical fact is the other way about; they were and are included in the list because they were acknowledged as authoritative.

Henry Halley wrote,

"We believe that, as these books were written, beginning with Moses, they were, at the time, recognized as Inspired of God, and placed in the Tabernacle or Temple along with the accumulating group of Sacred Writings.<sup>26</sup> As the Writings of the Apostles appeared, they were added to these Jewish Scriptures, and were held in the same sacred regard."<sup>27</sup>

These statements are not the ranting of 'unlearned' fundamentalists, 'untrained' in textual criticism, or 'unenlightened' by 'liberal' education or thought. Of those cited, only Dr. Rimmer could be labeled as a fundamentalist. Thomas was an ardent Bible believer, conservative and evangelical. Hailey would likely have accepted that designation. However, Doctors Bruce, Packer,

---

<sup>23</sup> Robert L. Saucy, *Is the Bible Reliable?*, SP Publications, Wheaton, page 94

<sup>24</sup> J. I. Packer, *God Speaks to Man*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1965 page 81

<sup>25</sup> Neil Lightfoot, *How We Got The Bible*, Second Edition, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1988

<sup>26</sup> Henry Halley, *Bible Handbook*, Henry Halley, Chicago, 1959, page 370

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* page 848

who claimed to speak for God was a true prophet or a false prophet (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22). People who spoke out of their own hearts and by their own independent wills were subject to the death penalty (Deut. 13:6-10). Genuine prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit as authentic spokesmen for God and God expected them to be accepted as such.

The Books of the Bible were recognized and accepted as the word of God as they were written. This has been and is the position of multiplied evangelical and fundamental Believers. The Bible is the word of God. A Book, chapter, verse, or word is in the Scriptures because God placed it there. He inspired and He has preserved His word. The Bible is the word of God whether it is read or not, acknowledged or not, believed or not, practiced or not and whether held in reverence or cast aside. Received or rejected, the word of God does not change. The Books in the canon are there because they are the word of God; the fact of being in the canon does not make a Book to be the word of God.

Griffith Thomas wrote,

"It was not the decision of the people that caused the Canonicity, but the Canonicity was the cause of their acceptance by the people. The authority came from God through the prophets, and the recognition by the people was the effect of Canonicity. The action of the people was the weighing of evidence, and the outcome was testimony rather than judgment . . . "It has been well said that *the Bible is not an authorized collection of books, but a collection of authorized books.* (italics in original) This distinction is vital. It is essential to remember that the quality which determines acceptance of a book is its possession of a divine revelation. So that Canonicity did not raise a book to the position of Scripture, but recognized that it was already Scripture."<sup>21</sup>

Harry Rimmer wrote,

"No man, or council of men, ever decided which books should be in that collection."<sup>22</sup>

Robert Saucy wrote,

---

<sup>21</sup> W. H. Griffith Thomas, *How We Got Our Bible*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1926, pages 24,25

<sup>22</sup> Harry Rimmer, *Internal Evidence of Inspiration*, Wm.. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1946, page 44

ing, all copies obviously were made by hand. This process was tedious, time consuming, and made the copies very expensive. With the invention of printing, copies were made far more quickly, in greater quantities, and with a more consistent accuracy. With the printing press, the Scriptures quickly became readily available to the common people, rather than the relative few wealthy individuals able to afford handmade copies.

The Bible is arranged in two testaments (We are most familiar with the use of "testament" in reference to a "will," the document bequeathing property and goods as an inheritance after the owner's death; but "testament" is a "settlement," "treaty," or "covenant"—perhaps our English word "covenant" comes closest to the this use of the word "testament"). The Old Testament with thirty-nine individual books is first, followed by the New Testament with twenty-seven books. Written by a series of more than thirty-two men over a period of at least one thousand years (from Moses, 1446 BC, to Malachi, 400 BC) in two languages—mostly in Hebrew with a few words and some brief passages in Chaldean, the Old Testament is the God-given record of the preparations for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. The greatest testimony to the authority of the Old Testament is that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>4</sup> Eight men were used to record the New Testament, mostly in Greek with only a few Aramaic and Hebrew words incorporated in the text. The writing of the New Testament involved a period of no more

---

<sup>4</sup> Followers of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will follow Him in His view of the Old Testament. He endorsed all three sections of the Hebrew Bible: the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Writings). He accepted as fact some of the most 'controversial' historical details: Adam and Eve at the beginning of time (Matt. 19:4); Abel's murder of Cain (Luke 11:51); Noah, the ark, and the Flood (Matt. 24:37-39); the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and of Lot's wife (Luke 17:28-30); and Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch (John 5:46). All things must be fulfilled," He said, "which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44). People were in error, Jesus said, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). He warned unbelievers: "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke 24:25).

than forty-five years<sup>5</sup> and concerns the incarnation of Christ,

<sup>5</sup> Latest approximate dates for writing for of the New Testament as generally accepted by 'conservative' scholars—my views are in parenthesis and are based on my reading and study.

Matthew	before 60 (closer to 40--I believe Matthew was the first Gospel written, perhaps in Hebrew and Greek, and copied for distribution very early.)
MARK	before 55 (I believe before 50)
LUKE	before 60 (I believe before 55)
JOHN	before 90 (I believe well before 70, perhaps even before Luke was written; else this Gospel would have identified the destruction of Jerusalem as an accomplished judgment rather than as prophecy.)
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES	before 60— (not very long after the Gospel of Luke)
(I would date all of Paul's epistles between 48 and 62 and wonder if all the Books were not completed before the fall of Jerusalem.)	
ROMANS	before 56
1 CORINTHIANS	before 56
2 CORINTHIANS	before 56
GALATIANS	before 50
EPHESIANS	before 62
PHILIPPIANS	before 60
COLOSSIANS	before 62
1 Thessalonians	before 52
2 THESSALONIANS	before 52
1 TIMOTHY	before 52
2 TIMOTHY	before 68
TITUS	before 52
PHILEMON	before 62
HEBREWS	before 69
JAMES	before 50
1 PETER	before 64
2 PETER	before 68
1 JOHN	before 90
2 JOHN	before 90
3 JOHN	before 90
JUDE	before 64
THE REVELATION	before 95

In A. D. 397, however, the 3rd (sic) Council of Carthage, in its Canon on the subject of the Scriptures . . . gives the contents of the NT as at present received.<sup>18</sup>

The Canon was synodically determined for the Catholic Church of East and West by the Quinisext. (sic) Council. A.D. 691, which confirmed the decrees of the 3rd Council of Carthage<sup>19</sup>

The Reformation of the 16th cent. (sic) made no change as to the books of (the) NT received as Scripture, opinions of individuals, such as that of Luther in regard to Ep. (sic) of James, having met with no general assent.<sup>20</sup>

However, that explanation leaves the most critical questions unanswered in that the content of the Bible, the actual Scriptures, is left to the ability of humanity to discern if God has spoken and to determine what He might have said. That concept is unsatisfactory in all regards since it makes certainty an impossible achievement. If such a premise were true, there would always be the possibility of a new discovery that could validate a previously rejected book or raise questions of authenticity about an included book. The authority of Scripture would be determined, controlled, and authorized by man. Man would be the judge of the word of God. Man would convey to particular words the designation of "the word of God" and deny that designation to other words. Not to be overlooked is that fact that the members of those councils were mostly avowed followers of false doctrine. Thus, the very concept of human acknowledgment becomes repugnant to the Bible believer.

The facts as relayed in Scripture are quite different. The word of God nowhere grants to any individual or assembly of men or churches the option to decide what is the word of God. Moses expected his writings to be accepted immediately as the work of God and the word of God. No Israelite or group of Israelites ever voted on whether or not to accept the canonicity of the Law. This same fact was true about all the writers of the Old Testament. Clear standards were given to test whether a person

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

recognized as a part of the canon of Scripture by evangelical Protestants or Baptists. They are in the Catholic Bibles because it is the position of the Roman Catholic Church that "the Church" (meaning the Roman Catholic Church) alone has the right to determine the "canon":

"Just as it is the prerogative of the Church to safeguard the interpretation of the Bible, so it is the Church alone which can declare what books are or are not inspired. . . They are the Church's books.<sup>15</sup>"

Clearly, Roman Catholic theology affirms that the Roman Catholic "Church" determines, owns, and controls the content of the Bible.

In similar fashion, the Latter Day Saints have their Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price and the Church of Christ, Scientist has the writing of Mary Baker Eddy, The Key to Science, Health, and the Scriptures and the Seventh Day Adventists have the varied writings of Ellen G. White, whom they continue to regard as an inspired prophet.

Some Protestants, even some Baptists, have conceded that various historical councils had the authority to determine the inclusion or exclusion of a particular Book. It is alleged that:

At length the public opinion of the Church found expression at the 3rd (sic) council of Carthage in A. D. 397, when the very same books as are contained in our NT (New Testament) were acknowledged to be canonical, and declared to be the only books that should be read in church.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest synodical decree on the subject belongs to the close, almost, of the century. The Acts of the Synod of Laodicea, according to some MSS (manuscripts), contain a catalogue of the books of Scripture, but it is probably a later addition. The date of this Synod has also been (a) matter of dispute, though it most likely took place A. D. 363.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Rev J. Edgar Bruns, Introduction, The Holy Bible, Douay and Confraternity Versions, Imprimatur Francis Cardinal Spellman

<sup>16</sup> New Testament, A Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, editor, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903

<sup>17</sup> New Testament Canon, A Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, editor, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1903,

His life and ministry, the growth of the early churches, contains the invitation to receive the Gospel, and provides instruction and prophecy for the edification of believers.

## The Simple Conclusion

The Bible<sup>6</sup> is unique among books. It is inspired<sup>7</sup> (verbally—

<sup>6</sup> From the Articles of Faith of Heritage Baptist Church:

THIS WE BELIEVE OF THE SCRIPTURES We believe that the Holy Bible was written by man divinely inspired and is a perfect treasury of heavenly instruction;<sup>a</sup> that Scripture has God for its Author, salvation for its end,<sup>b</sup> and truth without any admixture of error for its matter;<sup>c</sup> that Scripture reveals the principles by which God will judge us;<sup>d</sup> and therefore Scripture is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union<sup>e</sup> and the Supreme Standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16; Acts 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psalms 119:111; Romans 3:1,2.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Romans 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39.

<sup>c</sup> Proverbs 30:5,6; John 17:17; Revelation 22:18,19; Romans 3:4.

<sup>d</sup> Romans 2:12; John 12:47,48; First Corinthians 4:3,4; Luke 10:10-16; Luke 12:47,48.

<sup>e</sup> Philippians 3:16; Ephesians 4:3-6; Philippians 2:1,2; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Peter 4:11.

<sup>f</sup> 1 John 4:1; Isaiah 8:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3-5; Ephesians 6:17; Psalm 119:59-60; Philippians 1:9-11.

<sup>7</sup> Inspired: Two terms required for any discussion of the inspiration of the Bible are 'plenary' and 'verbal.' Plenary, "full" or "complete," means that each book, chapter, paragraph, and word of the Bible is equally derived from God. Verbal inspiration declares that the exact wording of the text, not merely the ideas conveyed, was given by the Holy Spirit. God directed the production of Scripture from its inception in such a way that all of Scripture is the word of God. Inspiration is a statement about the omniscience and omnipotence

word by word—and plenary—completely, in every word) in its nature, inerrant<sup>8</sup> in its content, infallible<sup>9</sup> in its message, and eternal<sup>10</sup> in its existence. Pastor Charles Spurgeon preached, regarding the Bible:

“This volume is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Al-

---

of God. God is intelligent and able to communicate with man, whom He created in His image. God knows everything about all reality and is absolutely faithful and true (Rev. 3:7; 21:5). It follows that ideas communicated by divine revelation are true and conform to reality. For God is truth, in Him dwelleth no darkness at all, and God cannot lie. God overruled all human limitations and sinful biases so that those men, whom He chose to use, wrote only the words God intended written—no more, but no less. God guided the writing, choosing the very words to be written. What role did the human writers of the Bible have in their transmission of God’s message? They were not passive as those whose hands move automatically in an unconscious state. Although some passages of Scripture were given by audible dictation (such as Ex. 4:12; 19:3-6; Num. 7:89), others were guided by a silent activity of the Holy Spirit (for instance Luke 1:1-4). To err is human; the participation of finite, sinful authors would have produced error if not for this supernatural inspiration by the Holy Spirit. God called the men, originated what they wrote—giving them the very words, and keeping them from any and all error in the totality of the writing process. Not one word originated with the will of men; every word came through the will of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21). All Scripture was given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

<sup>8</sup> Inerrant: errorless, incapable of having error as part of its composition. The Bible is true about everything of which it speaks. There is no error in any aspect of Scripture. The Bible is inerrant as to geography, customs, cultures, historical events and characters, census, all uses of numbers, etc. Inerrancy is concerned with the content of Scripture.

<sup>9</sup> Infallible: “not liable to fail in achieving its purpose.” Infallibility primarily refers to the teachings, the doctrinal declarations of Scripture and declares the effectiveness of the wording both in conveying the truth and the effectiveness of that truth (Is. 55:11).

<sup>10</sup> Eternal: used in relationship to the word of God, eternal conveys the concept of timeless and unchangeable.

the question of “Whose Book is the Bible?”

If a council (of whatever composition) is able to place a Book in the canon, can another council remove the Book from the canon?

If humanity (even regenerated, spiritual, enlightened and scholarly humanity) is the judge of what is canonized and what is not, could not humanity decide that a particular Book or portion (chapter, verse, phrase, or word) of that Book is not canonical—that it is not a part of the word of God and therefore not pertinent, relevant, or binding, and definitely not authoritative?

A corollary question, and equally as serious, is, “If the canon is determined by fallible humanity, how can we be certain that we have all the word of God or that what we have is really the word of God? Humanity has often made grievous mistakes; on what basis do we trust our spiritual life, our eternal destiny, to human determination?”

This is not a discussion in probabilities; this very issue divides professing followers of Christ<sup>13</sup> into groups to this very hour. This matter is the one that separates evangelical Protestants and Baptists from Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Christian Scientists, The Church of Jesus Christ—Latter Day Saints, and others who label writings beyond the sixty-six as being either part of the Bible or additional to, but equal with the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church includes a series of books or portions of book called the Apocrypha.<sup>14</sup> These books are not

---

<sup>13</sup> A “professing follower of Christ” is not to be confused with a true Christian. Many individuals and religious groups claim to follow Christ, but not all do so.

<sup>14</sup> THE APOCRYPHA [a POCK rih fuh]—a group of books written from roughly 200 B. C. to A. D. 100. These books fall into two divisions: Old Testament apocryphal books and New Testament apocryphal books. The 15 Old Testament Apocrypha, included in Catholic Bibles, were written approximately 150 B. C. to A. D. 70. Baruch, Bel and the Dragon, Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach, 1 and 2 Esdras, Additions to the Book of Esther, The Epistle of Jeremiah, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, The Prayer of Manasseh, Susanna, Tobit, and The Wisdom of Solomon.



individual or group of individuals meeting in a synod, council, or congregation. Scripture is authoritative because it is the word of God and not because it has been accepted as being the word of God. The word of God has authority regardless whether or not a certain individual or group considers the Scriptures to be inspired.

Second, canon (c-a-n-o-n, not c-a-n-n-o-n, which is a piece of artillery, a weapon of war) with the basic meaning of "a list" is simply the 'inventory' of those writings that are authoritative.

An interesting and a serious question is exactly how this *official* list or canon of authoritative Books developed. Who had or where was the authority to authorize a particular Book to be valued as authoritative and another to be rejected? This is a matter much debated. The individual issues involved in this question are critical to an understanding of what constitutes Scripture. For example,

Is the listing of a particular Book in "the canon" a result of the character of the Book itself?

Is this listing a decision by a council of bishops or by groups of churches or some combination of these?

Is a particular Book included in the Bible because it is to be found in the canon or is the Book listed in the canon because it is in the Bible?

These differences are not resolved by declaring, "What is the difference as to how a Book was made authoritative? We have an authoritative Bible." The root issue is, again, who has or where does that authority to authorize as authoritative reside?

Does canonicity arise from the divine nature of the Book or is it something bestowed by humanity upon the Book?

Was the Book the word of God when it was written or did it become the word of God when it was placed in the canon?

Is the Bible the Book that God gave or is it a Book that man has decided came from God?

Those questions are not mere quibbles over semantics, but are the issues that determine the very nature of the Bible. It is

beit, that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp and let sweet Psalms of melody drop from his fingers, but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. It may be that Solomon sang Canticles of love, or gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips, and made the Preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum when his horses plough the waters or Habakkuk when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction; if I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven; if I turn to the smooth page of John, who tells of love, or the rugged, fiery chapters of Peter who speaks of the fire devouring God's enemies; if I turn to Jude, who launches forth anathemas upon the foes of God, everywhere I find God speaking: it is God's voice, not man's, the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth."

"Oh, book of books! And wast thou written by my God? Then will I bow before thee. Thou book of vast authority thou art a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven; far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting thee. Reason! thy place is to stand and find out what this volume means, not to tell what this book ought to say. Come thou my reason, my intellect, sit thou down and listen, for these words are the words of God. I do not know how to enlarge on this thought. Oh! if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God! Oh! if ye had been let into the secret chambers of heaven, if ye had beheld God grasping his pen and writing down these letters, then surely ye would respect them. But they are just as much God's handwriting as if you had seen God write them. This Bible is a book of authority, it is an authorized book, for God has written it. Oh, tremble, tremble, lest any of you despise it; mark its authority, for it is the Word of God."

Sir Walter Scott wrote concerning the Bible:

This is the greatest book on earth,  
Unparalleled it stands;  
Its Author GOD, its truth divine,  
Inspired in every word and line,  
Tho' writ by human hands.  
This is the living rock of truth  
Which all assaults defies.  
O'er every stormy blast of time  
It towers with majesty sublime;

It lives, and never dies.  
This is the volume of the Cross;  
Its saving truth is sure;  
Its doctrine pure, its history true,  
Its Gospel old, yet ever new,  
Shall evermore endure.

Within this wondrous volume lies  
The mystery of mysteries;  
Happiest they of human race  
To whom their God has given grace  
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,  
To lift the latch, to find the way;  
And better had they ne'er been born  
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.

Perhaps, the best-known poem written about the Bible is that by John Clifford:

Last eve I paused beside the blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,  
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,  
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so," I thought, "The Anvil of God's Word  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,  
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

## THE BIBLE—1218 CHAPTERS, 31,102 VERSES

*The titles in the left margin, second column, (e.g. The Law) are the commonly accepted divisions of the Books of the Bible. While those titles are not inspired, they do date from ancient times. The third column records the full name (THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED GENESIS) of the Books of the Bible as given in the Authorized Version, as printed by Cambridge Press.*

### The Old Testament—958 chapters, 23,145 verses

THE LAW—187 chapters, 5,852 verses

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED GENESIS [50 chapters, 1,533

Moses." The significance of this section to the Jew is that it begins with the creation of the world and concludes with Israel ready to enter the Promised Land and establishes the relationship of Israel to the land and to her God.

The middle section is the Nebiim (The Prophets), which is further subdivided into the Earlier Prophets and the Later Prophets. The Earlier Prophets are the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel (as one book, not two), and Kings (as one book, not two). The Later Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and, what we describe as the Twelve Minor Prophets with the same names and in the same order as in the Authorized Version. These books to the Jew continue the history by placing the nation in the land of Canaan until the Exile and include prophetic messages delivered to the nation concerning judgments already fulfilled or that are now being fulfilled and the promise of a restoration yet to be accomplished.

The Kethubim ("The writings"), also referred to as The Psalms, from the Jewish perspective, contain the account of the return from Exile, collected wisdom literature from throughout the nation's history, and selected stories about God's leading in individual lives. In this section are found, in this order, The Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Kohelet ("The Preacher," our Ecclesiastes), Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles (as one book, not two).

## THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

No discussion of the canon of Scripture is reasonable until the two words, "authority" and "canon" are defined, and the concepts and principles involved in the use of those terms are acknowledged. It is the greatest of mistakes to use "authority" and "canon" as though they are interchangeable or to use an incorrect or confused definition of either term. The words are not interchangeable synonyms; they do not address the same concepts or issues of Scripture.

First, authority is the quality inherent in the Scriptures. It is not something assigned by the vote or acceptance of any

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS [3 chapters, 46 verses]

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON [1 chapter, 25 verses]

THE GENERAL EPISTLES—34 chapters, 734 verses

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS [13 chapters, 303 verses]

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES [5 chapters, 108 verses]

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER [5 chapters, 105 verses]

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER [3 chapters, 61 verses]

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN [5 chapters, 105 verses]

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN [1 chapter, 13 verses]

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN [1 chapter, 14 verses]

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE [1 chapter, 25 verses]

PROPHECY—22 chapters, 404 verses

THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE [22 chapters, 404 verses]

## The Hebrew Bible<sup>11</sup>

A brief overview of the differences between the Hebrew Bible and our Authorized Version may be profitable. The Bible, as used by the Jewish people, is the same Hebrew text<sup>12</sup> used to give us the Authorized Version, but the order of placement of the books and their arrangement of location are different. The Hebrew Bible has three fixed sections (Matthew 24:44), which are: the Torah (Instruction or Law), the Nebiim (Prophets), the Kethubim, (Writings). This division provides a modern title for the Hebrew Bible by the use of the first letter of each part, Ta-NaK.

The first section, the Torah, consists of the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch, which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and is sometimes titled "The Book of

<sup>11</sup> An informative chart is printed at the end of the paper to provide more information on the Hebrew Bible. The source is "At Home With The Hebrew," provided online.

<sup>12</sup> The Jewish Publication Society's translation of the Bible published as the 1917 edition (no longer in print, but easily obtainable in used condition) is an excellent tool to demonstrate this. In many places, the reading is identical.

verses]

THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED EXODUS [40 chapters, 1,213 verses]

THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED LEVITICUS [27 chapters, 859 verses]

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED NUMBERS [36 chapters, 1,288 verses]

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED DEUTERONOMY [34 chapters, 959 verses]

HISTORY—278 chapters, 7018 verses

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA [24 chapters, 658 verses]

THE BOOK OF JUDGES [21 chapters, 618 verses]

THE BOOK OF RUTH [4 chapters, 85 verses]

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL, OTHERWISE CALLED, THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS [31 chapters, 810 verses]

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL, OTHERWISE CALLED, THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS [24 chapters, 695 verses]

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS, COMMONLY CALLED, THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS [22 chapters, 816 verses]

[25 chapters, 719 verses] THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS, COMMONLY CALLED, THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES [29 chapters, 942 verses]

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES [36 chapters, 822 verses]

EZRA [10 chapters, 280 verses]

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH [42 chapters, 406 verses]

THE BOOK OF ESTHER [10 chapters, 167 verses]

POETRY or BOOKS OF WISDOM—243 chapters, 4,785 verses

THE BOOK OF JOB [42 chapters, 1,070 verses]

THE BOOK OF PSALMS [150 chapters, 2461 verses]

I understand that others disagree, but I personally consider the titles of the Psalms, as found in the Authorized Version, Cambridge edition, to be part of the inspired text.

Psalms has five divisions in the Hebrew text. These divisions are recognized as being most ancient in origin and, I believe, were included in the text from the time the Psalms were collected as a body.

Book 1      1-41

*The Baptist Heritage for May 20 2003*

Book 2	42-72
Book 3	73-89
Book 4	90-106
Book 5	107-150

These divisions compare interestingly with the Pentateuch as to themes and content. Each of the five books closes with a Doxology. As Psalm 1 serves as introduction to the first book and to the entire Psalter, so Psalm 150 is the conclusion to the final book and to the Psalter as well.

Psalms 42-83 are called the Elohistic Psalter (Elohim (Hebrew "God") is used 272 times in those 224 verses of these 42 Psalms as against only 156 times in the rest of the 108 Psalms with their 2237 verses.)

Psalms 96-99 are the Enthronement Psalms.

Psalms 120-134 are the Psalms of Ascent.

Psalms 42-49 are Psalms of the Sons of Korah.

Psalms 73-83 are the Psalms of Asaph.

THE PROVERBS [31 chapters, 915 verses]

ECCLESIASTES; OR THE PREACHER [12 chapters, 222 verses]

THE SONG OF SOLOMON [sometimes called CANTICLES, and SONG OF SONGS] [8 chapters, 117 verses]

MAJOR PROPHETS—183 chapters, 4,440 verses

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH [66 chapters, 1,292 verses]

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH [52 chapters, 1,364 verses]

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH [5 chapters, 154 verses]

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL [48 chapters, 1,273 verses]

THE BOOK OF DANIEL [12 chapters, 357 verses]

MINOR PROPHETS—67 chapters, 1,050 verses

HOSEA [14 chapters, 197 verses]

JOEL [3 chapters, 73 verses]

AMOS [9 chapters, 146 verses]

OBADIAH [1 chapter, 21 verses]

JONAH [4 chapters, 48 verses]

MICAH [7 chapters, 105 verses]

NAHUM [3 chapters, 47 verses]

HABAKKUK [3 chapters, 56 verses]

ZEPHANIAH [3 chapters, 53 verses]

*The Baptist Heritage for May 20 2003*

HAGGAI [2 chapters, 38 verses]

ZECHARIAH [14 chapters, 211 verses]

MALACHI [4 chapters, 55 verses]

The New Testament—260 chapters, 7,957 verses

THE GOSPELS—89 chapters, 3,779 verses

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW [28 chapters, 1,071 verses]

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK [16 chapters, 678 verses]

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE [24 chapters, 1,151 verses]

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN [21 chapters, 879 verses]

HISTORY—28 chapters, 1,107 verses

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES [28 chapters, 1,107 verses]

THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES—73 chapters, 1,766 verses

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS [16 chapters, 433 verses]

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS [16 chapters, 437 verses]

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS [13 chapters, 257 verses]

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS [6 chapters, 149 verses]

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS [6 chapters, 155 verses]

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS [4 chapters, 104 verses]

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS [4 chapters, 95 verses]

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS [5 chapters, 89 verses]

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS [3 chapters, 47 verses]

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES—14 chapters, 267 verses

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY [6 chapters, 113 verses]

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY [4 chapters, 83 verses]