

Church of Christ

3361 West State Street, Fremont, OH 43420

Worship Services

Sunday Bible Study	10:00 am
Sunday Worship	10:45 am
Sunday Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 pm

Classes for all ages

February 14, 2020

Sunday Morning

Speaker: Ted Bowen

No Sunday Evening Worship

Preachers: Ted Bowen and Sean Rizor

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

1. Learn the truth (Hear) (John 8:32; 17:17; Rom 10:14-18)
2. Believe in Christ (John 8:24; 20:31; Heb 11:6)
3. Repent of all sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:9,10)
4. Confess faith in Christ (Rom 10:10; Acts 17:30; Matt 16:16)
5. Be baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
6. Live faithfully (Revelation 2:10)

7 THINGS TO REMEMBER DURING THE LORD'S SUPPER!

- 1 LORD. "There is one Lord." (Ephesians 4:5)
- 2 THIEVES. "There were also 2 others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death."
(Luke 23:32)
- 3 CROSSES. (Luke 23:39-43; Ephesians 1:7)
- 4 PARTS of HIS GARMENTS. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier, a part, and also the tunic." (John 19:23)
- 5 WOUNDS. His head was crowned with thorns. His back was scourged.
His side was cut open. His hands were pierced. His feet were pierced. (John 19-20)
- 6 HOURS of AGONY. Christ was crucified at the 3rd hour and died at the 9th hour.
(Mark 15:25-37)
- 7 SAYINGS of The CROSS. (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:34, 43-46; John 19:26-30)

CAN YOU TRUST YOUR BIBLE?

Dan Bunting

We learned in the article What Does the Bible Say About Itself? that the Scriptures contained in the Bible are God's words, not the words of men. Questions sometime arise about how the collection of books we call the Bible came together. How do we know that each book really is inspired by God and really belongs in the collection? How do we know the book we have today is the same as what was written a long time ago?

In this article, we will look at three things: the collecting of the books, the preserving of the books, and the translation of the books.

Birthdays

- 11 Sean Rizor
- 17 Jean Adkins
- 25 Nora Wiseman

Anniversaries

- 9 Paul & Debbie Rowan

Prayer List

Kaitlin Baker
Gen Stanley
Nora Wiseman
Jean Adkins
Jamie Hall
Kaitlyn Hall
Ashley Hall
Nick Hall
Tina Smith
Kathy Grove
Paul Runion
Mary Schimming
Betty Davis
Mike Foos
Connie Runion
Debbie Rowan

THE COLLECTION:

How were these books gathered into a collection?

In thinking of the books of the New Testament, many of them are letters. Those letters were meant to be shared by churches in the region. The collections of New Testament books began with this sharing.

Colossians 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

In the following passage, we see evidence that these letters were shared and also were well known among the Christians during the time they were written.

2 Peter 3:15-16- "... just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things,..."

One may ask, "Why are both the Old and New Testaments included? Why don't we just have the New Testament by itself?"

The answer is that both contain Scripture inspired by God, so both Testaments are worthy of our study. In the following passage, there are two quotes, one from the Old Testament and one from Jesus-and both are called "Scripture".

1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

The phrase about muzzling the ox is quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4, which is part of the Old Testament and was written by Moses. The phrase about the laborer is quoted from Luke 10:7 and it was Jesus who was speaking that phrase. Therefore to have the complete Scriptures, we need the Old Testament, the words of Jesus (the Gospels), as well as those shared letters we've already learned about.

What we can learn from this is that there was not one person or even a group of people that put together the books and then labeled it the "Holy Bible", but rather it was just understood by the early Christians, who lived 20-80 years after Christ, that the books and letters that they were sharing and passing around were "Scripture". Early Christian writers, men who some call the "church fathers", quoted from this very same collection, yet these men did not all know one another and geographically they were located in different regions. This helps us to see that this collection was understood from the beginning of the church to be "Scripture".

The organization of the Scriptures was not decided by some group of men in a council, though some discussed the collection. There are some writings, such as the "Gnostic" books, which appeared 100-300 years after Jesus, that are not included in the collection. This is because after examination, they were rejected as Scripture because their content contradicted the earlier collection that was known to be Scripture.

These books and letters were copied through the ages. These copies we call "manuscripts". These New Testament manuscripts were generally in 4 sections-the Gospels, Acts and the General Epistles, Paul's Epistles, and Revelation. There are many of these manuscripts, and they share the same letters, which serves as another proof that this collection is Scripture.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTION:

If these books are close to 2000 years old, how do we know they are the same as what was originally written 2000 years ago?

Sometimes when we think about the "telephone game" where one person whispers a phrase, who in turn whispers it to the next person, who in turn whispers it to the next, we can see how easily words get distorted and meaning is changed. So how do we know this didn't happen in Scripture?

The men whose lives were spent in making copies of the Scriptures were dedicated to accurately copying it word for word, line for line. Because of the number of careful copies, or manuscripts, that grew over time, then future copies could be compared with other manuscripts to check for accuracy. These copies took different forms over the years as men learned new writing techniques, but from the papyrus, to the Uncials, to the late manuscripts, the words remained the same throughout time.

About 1500 years after Jesus, a man named Erasmus printed a Greek New Testament. His print version was based on a limited number of manuscripts from the 1100s and the 1400s. Even though it referenced a limited number of manuscripts, it is an accurate version and the King James Version is translated from this work.

In the next couple of centuries after Erasmus, more research and digging was done and a great number of old manuscripts were found. In the 1620s, a collection called the Alexandrian, was discovered, which dated from the 400s AD. In 1860-1880, the Vatican and Sinai was discovered, which dated from the 300-400s. In 1890-1900s, Papyrus writings were found, which are some of the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, dated from 100-400 AD. In comparing all of these manuscripts, each new discovery showed many more parallels than differences.

But what about those differences?

Most are trivial, such as they're instead of their, or color rather than colour, or "the" dog rather than dog. That is termed a variant. If that single variant is copied 400 times, then that is 400 variants. Some claim the Bible is full of mistakes, but these small variants are what they are referring to. The meaning is not affected.

There are a few differences that are more substantial, such as phrases rather than just a different spelling. However, these added phrases are only found in a couple of manuscripts, which are not generally considered to be trusted manuscripts.

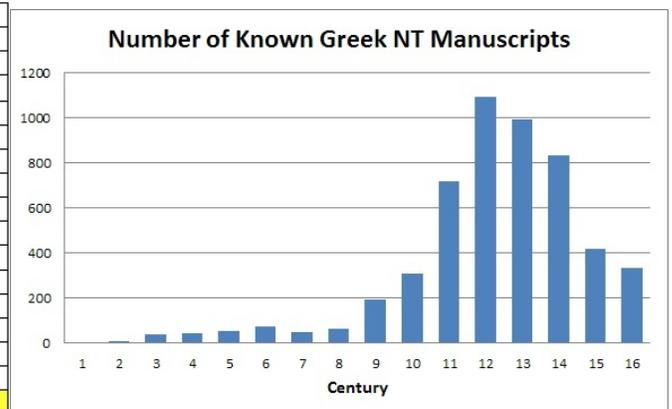
There a few which are even more substantial additions to the text, such as Mark 16:9-20. But even these are not significant, as they do not add new doctrine, nor do they contradict the other Scriptures. In this graphic from Wikipedia, one can see the huge amount of manuscripts available from across history. This number is constantly changing as more are discovered, yet the content does not change.

Bible Manuscripts through the centuries

Compare the number of manuscripts of the Bible versus these other ancient writings. The number of copies of the Bible significantly overwhelm the number of copies of those writings.

Comparing quantities of manuscripts

Author	Original Date	Copy Date	Time Span	# Copies
Lucretius	50 B.C.	A.D. 800	850 yrs	2
Pliny	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750 yrs	7
Plato	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,200 yrs	7
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	A.D. 1100	800 yrs	8
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs	8
Suetonius	A.D. 75-160	A.D. 950	800 yrs	8
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 yrs	8
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,300 yrs	9
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	A.D. 900	1200	10
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,000	10
Livy	59 BC-AD 17	----	???	20
Tacitus	100 A.D.	A.D. 1100	1,000 yrs	20
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400	49
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1,400 yrs	193
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643
New Testament	A.D. 50-100	A.D. 130	<100 yrs	5600



Logically, we can see that with the increase in the number of manuscripts there would be an increase in the number of variants (those trivial misspellings, etc) yet what is significant is the exactitude with which the overwhelming majority of words are preserved across the hundreds of years that those manuscripts were made. The preservation of the collection of Scripture absolutely can be trusted.

THE TRANSLATION FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE:

The New Testament is written in Greek, but there are many translations available to us today. We call these different translations "versions" like the New King James or the New American Standard. These versions are translated by groups of men who are experts in language. They represent many theological ideologies so that there is no bias in the translation, but rather the goal is for the original meaning to be preserved in the translation. These translations can be verified in that Greek is a language that can be studied and learned.

There are also interlinear Bibles that show the Greek and the English line by line next to one another. Comparing the translations also helps you to capture the meaning of the original language. Some books calling themselves "Bibles" are not translations attempting to preserve the original meaning in a more literal sense, but rather are "paraphrases" which attempt to translate thoughts rather than words. These can be faulty and are not as reliable as a more literal translation.

God's word stands true over time. It promises to remain forever. Consider this passage of New Testament Scripture that quotes an Old Testament Scripture showing the enduring nature of God's word:

1 Peter 1:22-25 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

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