

THE AUTHORITY



OF THE BIBLE

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what the “latter days” talk about (compare Isaiah 2:2—*acharith*; Job 19:25—*acharon*; 2 Timothy 3:1—*eschatos*; compare John 11:24)

- (c) When the term “the time of the end” is used (in Hebrew, *eth*), it describes the end of this age. In the New Testament, the phrase is, “the end of the world,” but it is a reference to the end of this *age* (*aion* in Greek), and the beginning of a new age, under God’s rulership (compare Daniel 11:40; 12:4, 9–10; Matthew 24:3, where the Greek word *sunteleia* is used, which means, “full end,” compare Matthew 28:19–20).
- (d) When the term “the day of the Lord” is used, it is a reference to God’s intervention in the affairs of this world, just prior to the establishment of His kingdom here on earth, and the events at and after Christ’s return.
- (e) When the terms “in that day” or “the day,” or “that day,” or “the last day” are used, they refer to the time just prior to Christ’s return, including the time at and after Christ’s return (compare Isaiah 2:11, 20).
- (f) When the term “time of trouble for Jacob” is used, it refers to the time beginning with the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation will be followed by the heavenly signs and the Day of the Lord. The time order of these three events is described in Joel 2:10–11, 30–31; 3:14–16.
- (g) We must also understand the prophecies regarding the future of the modern houses of Israel and Judah. This would require, of course, an understanding that many of the statements about Israel and Judah were meant for our time today.
- (h) Some claim that all the blessings and curses (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) were already fulfilled in ancient times and that all the prophecies to Abraham, as to how his descendants would be blessed, were fulfilled at the time of Solomon.
- (i) But notice Genesis 49:13 and Deuteronomy 33:18–19. Any map will show that ancient Zebulon was not situated at the sea at the time of Solomon. But modern Zebulon would be—as mentioned before, Zebulon today is the Netherlands.
- (j) Also notice Genesis 48:19. Under Solomon, Ephraim was only one tribe; Ephraim was not then a multitude of nations,

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Chapter 13

Understanding Biblical Prophecy

Bible prophecy is clearly an inspired part of the Holy Bible. The following sets forth important principles helping us to understand prophecy.

1. We must study the Bible (compare 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16; Isaiah 28:9–13).

2. We must be careful when we study, that we do not read something into Scripture by trying to uphold *our own understanding* of what should happen (compare 2 Timothy 3:7; Proverbs 3:5–7).

3. We must be obedient to God’s Word. Truth is not in those who do not keep God’s Word (compare John 8:31–32; 1 John 2:3–4).

4. We must be converted and led by God’s Spirit, as the Holy Spirit makes prophecy known to us (compare John 16:13; John 14:26). God will reveal the understanding of prophecy to us, if we ask Him (compare Matthew 7:7). Today, God does not generally reveal understanding of prophecy to us through an angel, but directly through His Holy Spirit. The testimony of Christ is the spirit of prophecy, compare Revelation 19:10).

5. We must listen to God’s true servants for the basic prophetic understanding. We cannot understand unless someone teaches us (compare Romans 10:13–17; John 13:20).

6. The Bible interprets the Bible (compare Revelation 1:16, 20; Revelation 12:3, 9).

7. We must understand the meaning of certain key prophetic phrases:

(a) When the term “the latter days” is used (in Hebrew, *acharith*), it refers to the end of this age, the resurrection, and the beginning of the Millennium (compare Daniel 10:14; Daniel 2:28).

(b) When the term “the last days,” is used (in Hebrew, *acharith* or *acharon*, and in Greek, *eschatos*), it is basically describing

Ishmael — Saudi-Arabia
 Javan — Greece
 Lot — Jordan
 Magog — China
 Moab — Jordan, perhaps also Western Iraq
 Pathros — India
 Put — Libya
 Shinar — Iraq
 Teman — Turkey
 Togormah — Siberia
 Tubal — Russia

Bible prophecy clearly speaks of many nations which will be the focus of end-time events. These nations can be traced through both the foundation of the biblical record and the verification of secular history. National identities are being revealed in our generation by those who actually fulfill the very events that God foretold. Therefore, it is especially important that we continue to carefully watch world events in order to fully understand their true meaning, along with the identity of individuals and nations spoken of by God in the remarkable prophecies of the Bible!

For further information, please read our free booklet, *“The Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord.”* If you can read and understand German, you may also want to download from our German webpage (www.aufpostenstehen.de) our free German booklet, *“Deutschland in der Prophezeiung.”*

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610 B.C. They headed west into the Roman Empire. They settled in northern Italy, southeastern France, and parts of Spain and northern Africa. The ancient Chaldeans of Babylonia were also sent into exile to Syria in the Greek period. The Latin Romans often bought these people as slaves; afterward, their descendants were freed.

Assyrians

The ancient Assyrians can be found today among some of the Germans, Austrians and other German-speaking countries. Small portions of ancient Assyrians can also be found today in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. The Assyrians had settled, around 550 B.C., at the southern shores of the Black Sea, and then moved north. They migrated into Central Europe. Historical works point out that Germanic tribes had migrated into Europe from the countries around the Black Sea.

The ancient tradition of the city of Trier has it that the city was founded by the Assyrian king Trebeta, son of Ninus. Josef K.L. Bihl writes, *"In Deutschen Landen"*: "The inhabitants of Trier maintain that their city is the oldest in all Europe... Trier was founded by Trebeta, a son of the famous Assyrian king Ninus. In fact, one finds... in Trier the inscription reading, 'Trier existed for 1300 years before Rome was rebuilt.'"

Poles

The modern people of Poland are descendants of Elam, a son of Shem. The Elamites named the most famous mountain in their land Elwend. The Germans used to refer to the Poles as "Wends."

Other Modern Nations

In addition, strong evidence suggests, or proves, depending on the case, that the following biblical terms describe, or may prophetically refer to these modern nations:

Amalek — PLO

Ammon — Jordan

Aram — Syria

Cush — India, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia

Elam — Iran

Esau or Edom — Turkey, perhaps also, in some instances, Palestinians

a large number now living in the modern state of Israel.

Other ancient tribes of the house of Israel seem to be located in the following areas:

Other Tribes from the House of Israel

Reuben can be found today in parts of modern France; Dan in Ireland and part of Denmark; Benjamin in Norway and Iceland; Zebulun in the Netherlands; Issachar in Finland; Gad in Switzerland; Asher in Belgium and Luxembourg; and Naphtali in Sweden. We are unable to determine the modern identity of Levi and Simeon, as they were prophesied to be scattered among the rest of the tribes of Israel (compare Genesis 49:7). Strong evidence suggests that many in Wales are descendants of Levi, and some Scots—especially around Glasgow—are descendants of Simeon, as well as of Levi.

We should mention, of course, that people from many other countries have joined with and settled among all of the above-mentioned nations. This means that not everyone living in the United States, for example, is a descendant of the tribe of Manasseh.

American Indians

Some have claimed that the American Indians are the descendants of the “lost tribes” of the ancient house of Israel. This is incorrect. Biblical research, history and archeology reveal that the American Indians are descendants of Tiras, son of Japheth, one of the three sons of Noah. Tiras was one of Noah’s grandsons. Tiras is referred to in Genesis 10 and in 1 Chronicles 1:5. He became the most isolated branch of Noah’s grandsons. The American Indians are closely related to groups of Asiatic peoples in eastern Asia, who likewise descended from Japheth. Certain American Indian tribes are also closely related linguistically to peoples of northeastern Asia. We find the name “Tiras” preserved among various New World Indian tribes, such as, Tauri, Taras, Turas, Dures, Dorasques, and Atures.

Chaldeans and Babylonians

Ancient Chaldeans or Babylonians can be found today in central and northwestern Europe. Some of the ancient Chaldeans were driven northward out of the Near East by the Assyrians and Medes prior to

Introduction

The Bible seems to be a book that very few people really understand. Many do not even care to grasp the teachings of God’s Word, let alone acknowledge that it is God’s instruction to us. Many who claim to understand, have differing ideas and opinions about what it means. Why is this? How can we be sure that the Bible IS God’s Word, and that it speaks to us with divine authority?

Considering the history of the Bible, how can we know which books and passages belong in the inspired text and which do not? And who had the authority to make this kind of decision? How can we ascertain whether or not the translations from the original Hebrew and Greek texts are reliable? How can we even know whether the original texts have been faithfully preserved?

Can we truly understand the doctrines and prophecies of the Bible? Or did God intend to keep His Book a mystery to us? Did He intend that the “seven unopened seals” of Revelation remain unopened to our understanding?

Not at all! It does not have to be a mystery to us! We CAN TRULY UNDERSTAND the Bible!

This booklet is intended to guide you to an unwavering conviction that God’s Word—the Holy Bible—is true, and reliable, and infallible, and that it tells you, with authority—the authority of God Himself—what to believe and how to live.

Chapter 12

The Modern Identity of Biblical Nations

The Bible contains end-time prophecies, involving many modern nations and peoples, referring to them with ancient names.

The following is a very brief summary and only relates, in passing, a few pieces of the biblical, historical or archeological evidence, to raise interest and curiosity:

Ephraim and Manasseh

The ancient tribe of Manasseh, son of Joseph, is dominant in the United States of America. Ephraim, another son of Joseph, basically constitutes the English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon member countries of the Commonwealth of Nations (formerly known as the British Commonwealth). This includes modern countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, as well as part of South Africa. There are actually many proofs which establish these facts.

As discussed before, we read in the Bible that a descendant of the house of David would always rule over the house of Israel, throughout all generations, until the return of Jesus Christ (who will then, as a descendant of David, rule over the house of Israel forever). In Ireland, tradition marks the arrival in the first half of the sixth century B.C. of a small group of people led by a white-haired prophet, known as Ollamh Fodhla. Irish tradition identifies this man as the prophet Jeremiah. The traditional belief of the kings of Scotland and England is that the house of David was transferred, through Jeremiah, to northwestern Europe from Palestine. When Jerusalem fell, Jeremiah brought with him the daughter of the last king of Judah—Zedekiah—who then became queen of Ireland. Today, the throne of David can be found in England.

Judah

The tribe of Judah (the Jews) is scattered among all nations, with

subsequent royal rulers in England all descended from King David, and so the throne of David is today in England. Queen Elizabeth sits on that throne, and Prince Charles or his firstborn son are expected to sit on it soon.

Nowhere else could the existing throne of David be today, but in England. It is not in the state of Israel [which is part of the house of Judah], nor is it vacant. Jesus Christ will occupy it when He returns (compare Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6–7). He has not occupied it thus far. It is a literal throne here on the earth—not somewhere in heaven. Christ—from the house of Judah—will come back to this EARTH, and it says that He will then SIT on the throne of His father David, here on earth. Jesus will once again establish rule over Israel, in Jerusalem (compare Zechariah 1:17; 2:12). Remember, the scepter would not depart from Judah.

All of these events and fulfilled prophecies clearly show the Godly inspiration of the Bible.

Chapter 1

Proofs About Bible Teaching

The original writings of the Bible are, in fact, God’s infallible Word. However, in the face of such a myriad of beliefs—all claiming the Bible as their source—most people dismiss the real authority of the Book that God has inspired.

Both Catholics and Protestants use the Bible as the basis for what they believe and teach. To this end, various translations and versions of the Bible are available, which, unfortunately, grossly differ in their accounts, thereby reflecting the bias of those organizations and individuals who have authored them.

The Bible Transcends Language and Translation

However, the Bible transcends both language and translation issues. For example, consider the record found in Acts 2, where the disciples on the Day of Pentecost were led by God’s Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. In particular, note what occurred for those who heard this message:

“Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we HEAR, EACH IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE IN WHICH WE WERE BORN? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—WE HEAR THEM SPEAKING IN OUR OWN TONGUES THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD!’” (Acts 2:7–11).

It is God who caused different languages to arise (compare Genesis 11:1–9), and He has also made it possible to understand His truth in the language of our birth! In addition, Jesus commissioned His Church to preach the Gospel all over the earth (compare Matthew 24:14).

The Word of God has been translated and published in written form throughout the earth in our time!

Dismissing the Old Testament?

Aside from those who flatly reject the Bible as myth, many people claiming to practice Christianity dismiss the Old Testament (as well as some books of the New Testament, such as the Book of Revelation)—all of which are part of the enduring Word of God (compare Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119:89). In fact, many who embrace Jesus as their Savior have never even read the prophetic Scriptures about His first appearance, and they are, likewise, unaware of the dramatic prophecies concerning His return that are recorded throughout the Bible.

Add to this the fact that people READ INTO the Bible what they want to believe, usually based on what they were taught as a child. A very striking example of this is found in the observance of the Sabbath. Many choose to give credence to the doctrine orchestrated by the Catholic Church, on its own authority, when they changed the true Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week, Sunday, in direct opposition to Scripture. They quote Scriptures to justify this position, thereby rejecting the commandment of God, the example of Jesus Christ, AND the practice of the Church of God as documented in the New Testament. (For a more detailed account of this, please read our booklet, *“God’s Commanded Holy Days.”*)

How, then, can we know what is true and what is false?

The Bible Proves Itself

The answer to that question is simply, THE BIBLE PROVES ITSELF! Human interpretation is not the final authority when it comes to the Word of God! But that is exactly how those who selectively pick and choose what they want to believe, view the Bible. It is also the position taken by so many who simply reject the Bible.

So, again, how can we know what is true and what is false?

Jesus Christ made an utterly profound statement in answer to Pilate’s questioning: “Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice’” (John

reign on his throne... [David’s] descendants [will be] rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Jeremiah was to be instrumental in uprooting the throne over the house of Judah, and to plant it over the house of Israel. As mentioned above, David’s descendants were to rule over Israel or Jacob; that is, over ANY descendants of Jacob. That INCLUDED the house of Judah, of course. But from the time of Jeremiah’s prophecy, David’s descendants were to rule over the HOUSE of Israel—which EXCLUDED the house of Judah.

Jeremiah “uprooted” the throne of David over the house of Judah by bringing the last remaining descendants of King Zedekiah—his DAUGHTERS [compare Jeremiah 43:6]—to IRELAND [where, as was mentioned before, some of the “lost tribes” of the house of Israel had settled].

According to historical records of Ireland, one daughter, Tea, married the Irish king—who was a descendant of Judah, but not of David. In this way, through the son of the king and the daughter of Zedekiah, Jeremiah “planted” the throne of David and the scepter of Judah over a tribe of the house of ISRAEL—in Ireland. The historical records confirm that subsequent kings of Ireland KNEW that they were descendants of King David!

Zedekiah’s other daughter, Scota, married into a noble family and gave the name Scotland to the land where they settled.

- (a) The throne of David was to be transferred three times before Christ would return to occupy it. Ezekiel 21:27 states: “Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it [the crown, compare verse 26] overthrown!” The crown or throne of David was overthrown first in Judah and transferred to or planted in Ireland.
- (b) The throne or rule of David’s descendants was later overthrown in Ireland and transferred to Scotland [where some of the tribes of the house of Israel had settled]. It was transferred to the royal house of the descendants of David in Scotland—to the offspring of Scota, the other daughter of Zedekiah.
- (c) Thirdly, it was overthrown in Scotland and transferred to England, where the Stewart line of David had settled around 1600, in the person of James I. Also, descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, had settled there. The

it is located today, let us consider the following facts:

1. We are told that the scepter—a symbol of kingship (compare the margin in the *New King James Bible*) was given to Judah. Genesis 49:10: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah... Until Shiloh [the Messiah, Jesus Christ] comes.”

2. We are told that David’s “seed” or descendants would rule or have dominion over Israel. This could be fulfilled in ANY of the tribes of “Israel”—the name given to Jacob by God (compare Genesis 32:28; 35:10). We are specifically told that God would establish the throne of David’s kingdom forever over Israel, in his son Solomon (2 Samuel 7:12–13; 2 Chronicles 13:5; Psalm 89:4).

3. When Christ returns, He will take over and sit down on an existing throne of David, here on earth (compare Luke 1:32). □

4. Until the last King of Judah—Zedekiah—the descendants of David ruled as kings over the house of Judah. The house of Judah consisted of the tribes of Judah, Levi and part of Benjamin. They are the “Jews” and are called “Jews” in the Bible.

5. The Babylonians killed all the sons of Zedekiah and placed Zedekiah into captivity. Since then, there has never arisen a descendant of David to rule as king over the house of Judah, the Jews. Today, the state of Israel is not ruled by a king. Where, then, is the throne of David today? In which country do we find a descendant of David ruling as king?

6. The prophet Jeremiah lived at the time when the Babylonians enslaved the house of Judah, and when King Zedekiah—the last king of the house of Judah—was captured. God gave Jeremiah the commission to uproot the throne of David, but also to plant it (Jeremiah 1:10).

7. God gave Jeremiah a prophecy regarding the kingship or throne of David, which was to be transferred from the nation or house of Judah to the house of Israel. [The house of Israel, the “Northern Kingdom,” consisted of descendants from the other sons of Israel or Jacob, including Joseph, and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians more than 100 years prior to Jeremiah. They never returned to the Promised Land and subsequently became known as the “Lost Ten Tribes.”]

Jeremiah 33:17, 21, 26 states: “David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel... he shall [always] have a son to

18:37). Jesus Christ Himself bore witness of the Word of God, and that included the Holy Scriptures—the Old Testament at that time. The prophecies of His birth, death and resurrection proved to be true!

Truth vs. Falsehood

Truth—as opposed to falsehood and deception—was the focus of what Jesus taught. He made this statement to the Jews of His day, many of whom were the religious leaders of the nation: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Jesus very poignantly stated that the religious practices of the Jews did not stand in the truth—that they were no longer following the Word of God:

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God” (John 8:43–47).

In another encounter, some of the scribes and Pharisees challenged Jesus: “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread” (Matthew 15:2).

The response by Jesus went straight to the heart of why these religious leaders were not teaching the truth: “He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?’” (Matthew 15:3). Jesus adds this powerful indictment: “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (Matthew 15:7–9).

In Matthew 23, Jesus very specifically reveals the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees—the ones who were the religious leaders and who claimed to derive their authority and practices from the Word of God. In verse 3, Jesus pinpoints the problem: “...they say, and do not do.”

Because they were unwilling to obey what God commanded, these

people did not understand what was true in God's Word. Caring more for what people thought of them, they lost their fear of God.

How to Understand

Christ reveals to us an important key for the proper understanding of the Word of God. He says in John 7:17: "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority." Christ adds in John 13:17: "And if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

So we see, then, that in order to prove what is true in the Bible, we must begin with a reverence for God: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments..." (Psalm 111:10). Psalm 119, verse 100, adds: "I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts."

In a discussion with His disciples, Jesus asked what the public said about who He was. He then asked that question of them, and Peter answered: "...You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). In Christ's response, we find this stunning statement: "...Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

Revealed Knowledge

Jesus here speaks of knowledge that is REVEALED! By whom? His Father! This revealing transcends any knowledge that one might gain in reading any other book! To really understand the Bible, which is, by its own claim, the Word of God, understanding must come from God Himself. Paul taught this same truth to the Church as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:4-14:

"And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written:

of America, while those from the modern tribe of Ephraim migrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and other nations.

Yair Davidi wrote in his book, *"The Tribes: The Israelite Origins of Western People"*: "In the course of time they [some of the tribes of Israel] reached the British Isles and north-west Europe."

Even Christ told His early apostles to go to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel* (compare Matthew 10:6). It is interesting that historical records prove that the apostles Peter, Simon the Zealot, and James actually preached the gospel in *Britain*.

For instance, Caves wrote in *Antiquitates Apostolicae* that Peter stayed for a long time in Britain; that Simon the Zealot preached in Britain; and that James reached England and Ireland. Eusebius reports in *Evangelical Demonstrations* that some of the apostles preached the gospel in the British Isles. Jesus most certainly knew where the lost ten tribes were located, and so did the early apostles. James wrote his letter "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). He undoubtedly knew where they were and felt confident that his letter would reach them.

So we can actually trace the migration of ancient Israel—under the names of Celts, Scythians and Anglo-Saxons—from Assyria (northeast of Jerusalem in what is now Iraq), passing northwest through Europe, and centuries later, to the British Isles. Ultimately, part of ancient Israel would then migrate to the United States of America. So the "lost" ten tribes are not lost at all. They are identifiable if one follows the records of history and the biblical accounts.

The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh settled in the British Isles. But later, the tribe of Manasseh emigrated to the New World, which is today known as the United States of America.

The fact that the Bible prophesied thousands of years ago where the modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel would live in these last days, proves that the biblical writings are divinely inspired.

Proof #5—The Throne of David

As mentioned, the Bible also prophesied that the ancient throne of David would still exist today, and that Jesus Christ would take over that existing throne when He returns.

The throne of David does, indeed, exist on the earth. To show where

the future, appoint a place for the house of Israel from which they would no longer have to move. Where was this place to be located? "Listen, O isles (Ephraim)...Behold, these [tribes] shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west..." (Isaiah 49:1, 12, *Authorized Version*).

Keep in mind that geographical references are always to be judged from the location of Jerusalem. That is, when we read that someone appears "from the north," we understand that the meaning is "north of Jerusalem." The appointed place was northwest of Jerusalem in the "isles of the sea;" that is, the British Isles (compare Isaiah 24:15 in the *Authorized Version*).

God prophesied that He would uproot the house of Israel from the Promised Land and "scatter them beyond the [Euphrates] River" (1 Kings 14:15). But they would not stay there. Rather, God's Word was to be proclaimed in these last days to God's people "toward the north" (Jeremiah 3:11–12). They would come back to the Promised Land, in the future, "from the north and the west" (Isaiah 49:12). That is, from an area "northwest" of Jerusalem. We are also told that Israel would have migrated to the west: "Ephraim... pursues [or follows] the east wind" (Hosea 12:1), the wind that comes from the east and blows west. David was also inspired to write that his throne would be established "over the sea" (Psalm 89:20, 25).

Also, Jeremiah 31:8 (*Authorized Version*) states that God would, in the future, gather modern Israel from "the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth," and that He wants His Word proclaimed in "the isles afar off" (verse 10). Isaiah 41:1 addresses modern Israel (compare verse 8) in saying: "Keep silence before me, O islands (*Authorized Version*)."

If we were to take a world map and draw a line from Jerusalem in a northwest direction, it leads us to the British Isles, where the throne of David would be located. But we are also told that once some of the ten tribes of the house of Israel, especially Ephraim and Manasseh, had reached the British Isles, they would continue to colonize other countries, to possess land and sea gates—strategically important ports and passages—controlling crucial military and trade routes, such as Gibraltar, the Suez and Panama canals (compare Genesis 22:17). And so we see that the modern tribe of Manasseh settled in the United States

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit [which] is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Jesus Christ continued to teach His disciples the true meaning of God's Word even after His resurrection. Luke records an account in which Jesus explained prophecies from the Old Testament to two of His disciples that even they had not understood: "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

Jesus appeared to these two men for the very purpose of revealing understanding to them. This account continues in verse 30: "Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He OPENED THE SCRIPTURES TO US?'" (Luke 24:30–32).

After this occurrence, Jesus met with several more of His disciples. In preparation for the work He gave His followers to accomplish, Jesus provided this vital element: "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

These disciples had undoubtedly read the Scriptures. At that time, Judaism was the vibrant religion of the nation. Synagogues existed throughout the region, and the Temple served as the focus of Jewish life. Yet even with this rich background, the true understanding of the Messiah had to be *revealed!*

Another account of the necessity for spiritual knowledge to be

revealed is found in the story of Philip being sent to preach to a faithful man from Ethiopia. Reading from Isaiah, this man was at a loss to understand the meaning: “So the eunuch answered Philip and said, ‘I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:34–35).

Paul also understood that the Church of God had been given a special understanding and responsibility to preach the truth of God’s Word: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:14–15).

Preaching is a grave responsibility, and it is not something that should be done by those who just decide, on their own, to preach—to represent God and to explain His Word: “And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was” (Hebrews 5:4). James offers this caution: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

Right Attitude

Here is what God says is an absolute prerequisite for not only preaching, but also for understanding His truth: “...But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And WHO TREMBLES AT MY WORD” (Isaiah 66:2).

An example of this kind of attitude is found in the record of individuals in Berea who had the Gospel preached to them by Paul and Silas: “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

The fruits of this approach were that many believed the Gospel (compare Acts 17:12)!

By this example left for us, we understand that we must check up in our own Bible whether what is preached is true or not. A lie cannot be proven; however, people can be deceived. Paul warns us of those who would lie—of those people who would even falsely claim their authority from the Word of God:

Then the fifth resurrection of the last seven occurred under Napoleon Bonaparte, who was also crowned by a pope (in fact, Napoleon took the crown from the pope and placed it himself on his head).

The sixth of the last seven resurrections occurred under Hitler and Mussolini. Although neither Hitler nor Mussolini were crowned by a pope, a close partnership existed between the city of Rome under Pope Pius XI and Italy and Germany. In this partnership, Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty with the papacy in 1929, establishing papal sovereignty over Vatican City. This event affirmed Roman Catholicism as the only religion of Italy and, in turn, the papacy officially recognized Mussolini as the rightful Italian governor. Later, Mussolini would proclaim that he had revived the Roman Empire and would call himself a Roman emperor. Also, the Vatican signed a concordat with Hitler in 1933, protecting the rights of the church under the Nazi regime. This gave Hitler’s government an outward semblance of legitimacy.

The seventh and last resurrection of the Roman Empire, though yet ahead of us, is already beginning. As with the previous six resurrections, the woman—the papal city of Rome—will “ride” or cooperate and to an extent direct the activities of the seventh resurrection as well.

Proof #4—Biblical Modern Identity of the House of Israel

As we explain in our free booklets, “*The Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord*,” and “*The Fall and Rise of Britain and America*,” the Bible prophesied that the ancient house of Israel (and especially the two leading tribes, the two sons of *Joseph*—Ephraim and Manasseh) would survive and play an important role in our time. The aforementioned booklets explain the modern identity of these tribes of Israel. They are indeed very powerful nations today, but their power is in steady decline, which was also prophesied in Scripture.

After the Assyrian captivity, the ancient house of Israel did not return to the Promised Land. They migrated to other areas—to a new land. In prophetic context, God said to King David: “...I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and *move no more*; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously...” (2 Samuel 7:10). When David wrote these words, ancient Israel had already taken possession of the Promised Land. But God inspired David to write that God would, in

He adds, in his comments to Revelation 12:3: "Rome was built, as is well known, on seven hills... and was called the seven-hilled city (Septicollis)... Tertullian: 'I appeal to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwell on the seven hills' (Apol. 35). And again, Jerome to Marcella, when urging her to quit Rome for Bethlehem: 'Read what is said in the Apocalypse of the seven hills'..."

Halley's Bible Handbook points out: "This description of Babylon the Great Harlot, Seated on the Seven-Headed Ten-Horned Beast, while it may have ultimate reference to a situation yet to appear, Exactly fits Papal Rome. Nothing else in World History does fit."

Unger's Bible Handbook states: "The revived Roman Empire with its end-time emperor (the beast) appears as the agent of the harlot's destruction... The revival of the Roman power under the beast will occasion great wonder and deception... The woman (ecclesiastical Babylon) has her headquarters in the beast's capitol... which is the seven-hilled city of Rome... He rules over a ten-kingdom federation... and makes war against the Lamb... The harlot who has dominated and exploited the peoples of the earth... and who has ridden into last-day power on the beast, shall find the beast turning against her at the end to utterly destroy her... Destruction is her judgment... because of her evil desire to dominate earthly rulers for her own selfish and deceptive interests."

Note that it is the seven last revivals of the Roman Empire that are ridden by the woman, a religious power.

The first of the seven last resurrections of the Roman Empire occurred under Justinian in A.D. 554. He was the one mainly responsible for wiping out the barbarian tribes, but he did so at the behest of a succession of Roman popes.

The second of the seven last resurrections occurred under Charlemagne or Charles the Great, who was crowned in A.D. 800 by Pope Leo III.

The third of the seven last resurrections occurred under Otto the Great, under whose name the "Roman Empire of the German Nation" was coined. He was crowned in 962 by Pope John XII.

The fourth of the seven last resurrections occurred under Charles V Habsburg, who was crowned in 1530 by Pope Clement VII. By this time, the name "Holy Roman Empire" was in popular usage because of the close contact between the state and the so-called Holy Roman Church.

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

The Bible also reveals a way for us NOT to be deceived but to prove what is only true: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Jesus prayed for His followers, and He asked God to set them apart: "Sanctify them by Your truth. YOUR WORD IS TRUTH" (John 17:17).

Paul reminded Timothy to stay anchored to God's Word: "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2 Timothy 3:14-16).

Deception Prophesied

However, there are those who set themselves apart FROM the Truth, and this kind of approach was prophesied to become prevalent just before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in LATTER TIMES some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Note this further warning from Paul to Timothy: "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Jesus answered His disciples when they asked about the time of the end, and He began His answer with this somber warning: "...Take

heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4–5). Also: “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (verse 24).

Only the truth is contained in God’s Word, because God cannot lie (compare Titus 1:2). He even truthfully exposes the lies of Satan, demons, and certain people, but He makes it clear, of course, that we are not to follow those lies and fall prey to deception. The truth we are to embrace can be proven from the Bible! Nonetheless, God has clearly revealed that liars would arise and claim that what they teach is true. That has happened and it continues to happen, but we must use God’s Word as the only measure for the truth.

Here is a vital key for each of us to use to prove what is true in the Bible: “Be diligent to *present yourself* approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING [or handling, compare the *Revised Standard Version*] THE WORD OF TRUTH” (2 Timothy 2:15).

under Napoleon (which lasted from 1804 A.D. until 1814 A.D., when Napoleon abdicated at the battle of Leipzig). Following Napoleon, two more resurrections were to occur, as the fourth beast in Daniel 7 and the beast in Revelation 13 had TEN horns. The ninth resurrection happened under Mussolini and Hitler. We are observing right now the beginning of the tenth, and final, resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire in continental Europe.

Proof #3—Fall and Rise of European Religious Power

As we explain in our free booklet, “*Europe in Prophecy*,” the Bible prophesied that the seven last resurrections of the ancient Roman Empire were influenced by a religious power.

Revelation 17 describes a fallen woman who sits on a scarlet-colored beast with seven heads. Revelation 17:18 explains: “And the woman whom you saw is that GREAT CITY which reigns over the kings of the earth.” Again, in Revelation 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21, Babylon is identified as a prosperous and wealthy “great city” and a “mighty city” (compare, too, Revelation 14:8). Revelation 17:9 says: “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.”

According to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the Greek word for “mountain,” “oros,” means “mountain” or “hill” (see Strong’s No. 3733). *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* agrees, defining the Greek word used in Revelation 17:9 as “mountain, mount, hill.”

The *Living Bible* gives the following interpretation of the verse: “And now think hard: his seven heads represent a certain city built on seven hills where the woman has her residence.”

Verse 10 of Revelation 17 explains that the seven mountains, or hills, symbolize seven kings—seven military and political rulers. They describe the seven last resurrections of the ancient Roman Empire—with the last king, or revival, of the Roman Empire still to appear in the near future (compare verse 10).

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible states: “Seven mountains - the seven hills on which Rome stands...”

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible agrees: “The seven heads are seven mountains—Referring, undoubtedly, to Rome—the seven-hilled city—Septicollis Roma.”

conglomeration of those four beasts in Daniel. It has seven heads because it combines the head of the lion, the head of the bear, the four heads of the leopard, and the head of the fourth beast with ten horns. Virtually all Bible scholars confirm the historical fact that this fourth beast was the Roman Empire. It was to be divided (Daniel 2:41). This division happened in 286 A.D. under Diocletian. By the fourth century, the Roman Empire had two capitals—one in Rome and one in Constantinople.

According to Daniel 7:24, ten kings were to arise out of the Roman Empire; that is, the Roman Empire would have ten successive resurrections or revivals. Revelation 13:3 explains that one of the seven heads of the beast would be mortally wounded and then be healed. This is a reference to the head of the fourth beast in the book of Daniel—the Roman Empire—which was all but destroyed, but which was subsequently healed, or revived. None of the previous three empires or kingdoms in the book of Daniel were restored after they had been destroyed. They just ceased to exist. It was different, however, with the fourth beast—the Roman Empire. It would receive a deadly or mortal wound, but it would be healed.

The deadly wound refers to the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. But as we saw, that mortal wound would be healed. The ancient Roman Empire “died”—but it re-appeared on the world scene in successive revivals. The first three resurrections, or revivals, of the Roman Empire after its fall, occurred under Geiseric of the Vandals; Odoacer of the Heruli; and Theodoric of the Ostrogoths. But they did not yet “heal” the deadly wound. Rather, historians refer to these three initial revivals as the “transition age” of the Roman Empire. They temporarily “revived” the Roman Empire to an extent, but they did not bring it back to its earlier power and influence.

The actual “healing” of the deadly wound signifies the fourth resurrection of the ancient Roman Empire, which occurred in 554 A.D., when Justinian, who was heavily influenced by his Roman Catholic wife, defeated the Ostrogoths and marched into Rome. He united the Eastern and Western parts of the ancient Roman Empire and restored the entire Empire. Historians refer to this event as the “Imperial Restoration.” The fifth resurrection occurred under Charlemagne in 800 A.D.; the sixth under Otto the Great in 962 A.D.; the seventh under Charles V of Habsburg in 1530 A.D.; and the eighth

Chapter 2

Validity and Reliability of Translations

Bible translations are most certainly the way we can understand the Word of God in our own language. The Bible offers proof of this fact, and it further reveals additional keys that will determine whether or not we have true understanding of what is written.

On the Day of Pentecost, miraculous events took place that included the giving of God’s Holy Spirit to the New Testament Church of God. Note again what occurred:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with OTHER TONGUES, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone HEARD THEM SPEAK IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, EACH IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE IN WHICH WE WERE BORN? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking IN OUR OWN TONGUES the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’” (Acts 2:4–12).

Those assembled heard the Gospel being preached in their own language. They heard the truth of God in their own native language, or tongue, and as the account shows, there were *many* who came from other countries and spoke other languages.

The very fact that God caused this miracle in order to teach His truth also places great importance on the fact that people would be able to understand God’s Word as it was taught in their own native

tongue. Remember, it is God who first caused a mixture of languages to be spoken (compare Genesis 11:7, 9).

On certain occasions, God has supernaturally enabled the disciples to speak in another language, which they had not studied before (compare Acts 10:46; 19:6). These miraculous occurrences served to reinforce what happened on the Day of Pentecost—that the Gospel would be taught *in all of the world* and *in all languages*.

Paul had apparently studied many different languages and was able to speak and understand them (compare 1 Corinthians 14:18)—including Hebrew, the ancient language used by the religious leaders of Judah (compare Acts 21:37–40). However, he made a point of explaining that the spoken words should be easy to understand:

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me” (1 Corinthians 14:10–11).

While no original manuscripts of the Bible—neither Hebrew nor Greek—are presently extant, we do have the faithfully preserved copies that have survived impossible odds over many, many centuries! None of the original writings from any of the writers of the New or Old Testaments are available today, yet we have the Bible after all these centuries. We have it because it was faithfully preserved and partly because it was translated into understandable languages.

Different Translations

An example is the Septuagint, a Greek translation from the Hebrew that was popular among Greek-speaking Jews around the time of Christ. It contains more books than the accepted Hebrew (Masoretic) text, but through careful scholarship, those have been classified as apocryphal and are not a part of the accepted books that comprise the Old Testament—at least not among translations that follow the pattern of those such as the *Authorized Version* or *King James Bible*. One reason is that the apocrypha contradicts the inspired and preserved Word of God—and we know that **God’s Word cannot, and does not, contain errors or contradictions** (compare John 10:35).

Early Christians were more familiar with the Greek and Aramaic languages than that of Hebrew. The online encyclopedia, Wikipedia,

What Are The Odds?

A former Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy, Peter Stoner (1888–1980), set out to compute the odds of “one man,” namely Jesus, fulfilling prophecies written well in advance of His birth. Mr. Stoner took only 48 fulfilled prophecies and conservatively assigned probabilities to them. His work was vetted by nearly 600 students from 12 classes and then further examined by skeptics and scientists before submitting it for review to a committee of the American Scientific Affiliation. It was concluded that the calculations met the criteria for dependability and accuracy.

His findings? Conservatively, the odds that “one man” could have executed all that was predicted about him, much of which was beyond human control, is 1 in 10^{157} . This number is beyond astronomical, when one considers that the estimated total number of electrons in the universe is *only* 10^{79} !

What makes the Bible even more amazing is the fact that some have counted over 450 prescient references to the first coming of Christ. Combine this with all the other foretold events in the Bible that have come true, and we cannot help but see the divine inspiration of the Bible.

Proof #2—Fall and Rise of Europe

As we explain in our free booklet, “*Is That in the Bible—The Mysteries of the Book of Revelation*,” there are prophecies about the fall and rise of Europe, some of which have been partly fulfilled, and others that are awaiting a final fulfillment in our time.

In Revelation 13:1, John sees, in a vision, a fantastic beast rising out of the sea, which has seven heads and ten horns, and on his head ten crowns. The beast was like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion (Revelation 13:2). In the book of Daniel, chapters 2, 5, 7 and 8, we are told that, beginning with the ancient Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, there would arise four world-ruling empires on this earth. These are identified as: The Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:36–38); the Medo-Persian Empire under Cyrus, Xerxes and others (Daniel 5:28); the Greco-Macedonian Empire under Alexander the Great and his generals (Daniel 8:21–22); and finally, a fourth Empire (Daniel 2:33; 7:7). In Daniel 7:3–24, these four empires or kingdoms are compared with a lion, a bear, a leopard with four heads, and a terrible beast with ten horns (Daniel 7:7).

Comparing these four beasts in the book of Daniel with the one beast in Revelation 13, we can see that the beast in Revelation is a

Isaiah 50:6 prophesied that Christ would be beaten and spit on (compare Matthew 27:26, 30). Isaiah 53:1 prophesied that the people would not believe the report or warning message brought by the Messiah (compare John 12:37–38). Isaiah 53:3–5 prophesied that the Messiah would heal people, due to His own physical suffering and the stripes He would receive from the Romans (compare Matthew 8:16–17). Isaiah 53:8 states that He would be “taken from prison and from judgment,” foretelling that His “trial” and “conviction” would be illegal, even according to human law (For more information on the illegality of Christ’s “trial” and “execution,” please read our free booklet, “*Jesus Christ—A Great Mystery.*”)

Zechariah 9:9 reports that Christ, the just King offering salvation, would appear lowly, “riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.” The fulfillment of that prophecy is recorded in John 12:14–15. Zechariah 9:9 also shows that His entrance in Jerusalem would be triumphant, as we read: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!” This prophecy was fulfilled just prior to Christ’s betrayal and arrest, compare Mark 11:8–10.

In Zechariah 11:12–13, we are told that Jesus would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (compare Matthew 26:14–16), and that the money would be thrown into the house of the LORD—the temple—for the potter. This was fulfilled, exactly as stated; compare Matthew 27:3–10.

Zechariah 13:7 foretells that all of Christ’s disciples would leave Him at the time of His arrest, prior to His crucifixion and resurrection: “... Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered...” Compare, for the exact fulfillment of that prophecy, Matthew 26:31–32 and Mark 14:27–28.

Just as Christ came as a humble servant to die for us, so He WILL come again as the KING of kings to rule for, and with us (Revelation 5:8–10; 20:4, 6; Daniel 7:13–14, 26–27; compare also 1 Corinthians 6:2–3). He said, time and again, that He WILL return—and soon (John 14:3; James 5:8–9; Revelation 22:12, 20).

in an article about the New Testament, points out: “The common languages spoken by both Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land at the time of Jesus were Aramaic, Koine Greek, and to a limited extent a colloquial dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew. Despite this, it is generally believed that the original text of the New Testament was most likely written in Koine Greek, the vernacular dialect in 1st century Roman provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean, and later translated into other languages, most notably, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic.”

Types of Translations

Bible translation has occupied entire lifetimes of countless individuals, and it has been the focus of various religious organizations, as well as kings and governments. Translations available to us today fall into three general categories: (1) a literal, word for word translation from the earliest known copies in Hebrew and Greek into modern languages—such as the *Authorized Version* and the *New King James Bible*; (2) so called “thought for thought” translations, or dynamic-equivalent versions, that focus on contemporary language usage in equivalent words and phrases—such as the *New International Version*; and (3) paraphrased editions that attempt to restate words and phrases with the introduction of added statements—such as the *Living Bible*.

While using all three types of translations when studying the Bible can be beneficial, only literally translated editions—such as the *New King James Bible* (for English)—should be depended upon for doctrinal clarity. Even so, there may be errors due to inaccurate translation. It is, therefore, necessary and important that a faithful minister of God explain and correct such errors (compare Romans 10:14–15).

Additional Study Tools

Available resources for Bible study are virtually unlimited and are useful in clarifying translation errors. Such resources include Bible dictionaries, and study Bibles, which provide added cross references and historical explanations. There are also computer programs with commentaries, as well as a myriad of translations that are instantly accessible in a variety of languages. For example, www.searchgodsword.com along with live.e-sword.net and www.biblegateway.com are some of the sites that expand our ability to research the Word of God online.

Yet for all of these remarkable resources, to truly understand the original meaning of Scripture, another dimension must be available to us! As we already saw in chapter 1, **we must stand in awe of the true Author of the Bible**, for it is God who has both inspired and then preserved His Word throughout man's history. His Word also reveals the starting point for anyone who seeks to know about God and what He has written:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments" (Psalm 111:10).

How and When Understanding Comes

Obedience to God is the unfaltering key that is necessary if we really do *want to understand!* In addition, it is God who decides WHEN to reveal certain aspects of His understanding.

Daniel was told by Michael, an archangel and spirit being of immense power and responsibility before God, "...Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9). Daniel wrote about what he saw, but, at that time, he did not understand—*nor could he* (verse 8)! Compare also Matthew 13:16–17 and Ephesians 3:8–12.

More is explained by Peter about the fact that the Word of God *has been preserved* to reveal God's will at the times of His choosing: "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ [which] was in them was indicating when [it] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10–12).

Also note, in passing, that "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20–21). Compare also Psalm 45:1.

As pointed out previously in chapter 1, we find that the disciples of Jesus Christ—those who had followed Him throughout His

Chapter 11

The Sure Word of Prophecy

There are indeed many biblical prophecies which were written sometimes thousands of years ago, and which were fulfilled exactly as predicted. This shows, of course, the INSPIRATION of God's Word. It also shows that prophecies for the end time and beyond, which have not yet been fulfilled, will come to pass as well.

Proof #1—Old Testament Prophecies Christ's First Coming

As we explain in much more detail in our free booklet, "*The Book of Zechariah—Prophecies for Today!*" there are numerous Scriptures in the Old Testament that give precise details on the appearance of the Messiah about 2,000 years ago. Those passages can be found throughout the pages of the Old Testament, and this fact alone, proves the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

Just to give a few selected examples here:

Isaiah 7:14 states that "the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (which means, literally, God with us.)" This prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, as Matthew 1:18–23 tells us. Isaiah 6:9–10 foretells the fact that the people would not listen to the Messiah's preaching and warnings (compare Matthew 13:14–15). Isaiah 9:1–2 states that the Messiah would stay temporarily in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali (compare Matthew 4:13–16).

Isaiah 11:1 foretold that the Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse and David (compare Matthew 1:5–6, 25; Luke 3:23, 31–32). Isaiah 29:13 foretold that the people had rejected the commandments of God and replaced them with the traditions of men (compare Matthew 15:7–9). Isaiah 42:1–4 foretold the exact manner of the Messiah's preaching (compare Matthew 12:16–21). Isaiah 49:8–9 [and also Isaiah 61:1–2] foretold that the Messiah would preach the gospel and proclaim spiritual liberty (compare Luke 4:16–19).

ministry—did not understand certain prophecies in the Old Testament about Christ until He opened their minds: “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

On the other hand, Peter testified at one time that Jesus was “... the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). How did he know? Jesus explained to him: “...Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father, who is in heaven” (verse 17).

Paul understood that the record of God’s Word holds a tremendous purpose and that God is communicating to us through it: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

In the book of Revelation, we find this explanation about the purpose of the Book: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:1–3).

Consider how few really do understand the book of Revelation, or any of the books of the Bible for that matter! While estimates range into the billions of Bibles that have been printed and distributed all over the earth in all the major languages, still, understanding remains the issue, because people are not willing to obey what God says (compare John 7:17).

God can reveal His Will to you! He can do it through the voice of a true minister, through the example of a true follower of Christ; or through His written Word—even through words written *about* the Bible! To help you understand the momentous times we are now living in—referred to as the “end of the age” in the Bible—please read our free booklet, entitled, “*Is That in the Bible?—The Mysteries of the Book of Revelation.*”

with “Christian.” Those who have maintained the word “catholic” in their version of the Creed claim that it just means “universal.”

Apostles’ Creed Refers to Numerous False Doctrines

The doctrinal problems with the “Apostles’ Creed” are numerous.

First of all, it clearly suggests the belief in the Trinity—a belief which is a human invention and which cannot be found in the Holy Scriptures. For more information, please read our free booklet, “*Is God a Trinity?*”

It also suggests that Christ went to “hell,” while He was dead and in the grave for three days and three nights, apparently, so it is said, to preach to demons. This concept is false—Christ had NO CONSCIOUSNESS while in the grave, and He did not go anywhere. For more information, please read pages 26–28 of our free booklet, “*Do We Have an Immortal Soul?*”

Rather than following human attempts to create an “Apostolic Creed,” you might want to review our *Statement of Beliefs*, which is set forth as an Appendix at the end of this booklet, summarizing the essential doctrines of the Bible, which Christians should believe in and adhere to.

rituals are derived from the Latin rite (i.e. The Apostles' Creed holds a special place in Roman Catholic tradition as the 'ancient Baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome')...

"Many hypotheses exist concerning the date and nature of the origin of the Apostles' Creed. The earliest known concrete historical evidence of the creed's existence as it is currently titled (Symbolum Apostolicum) is a letter of the Council of Milan (390) to Pope Siricius..."

In its present form, the Apostles' Creed, as used by the Roman Catholic Church, reads as follows:

"I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit [or Holy Ghost],
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen."

As mentioned, this Creed, as used by the Catholic Church, is not substantially different from the versions of many of the Protestant churches. It is widely used by a number of Christian denominations for both liturgical and catechetical purposes, most visibly by liturgical Churches of Western tradition, including Lutheranism, the Anglican Communion, and Western Orthodoxy. It is also used by Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and many Baptists.

Most even use the term "catholic" in the phrase, "I believe in the... holy catholic Church," with the exception of a few Lutheran churches, especially those in Germany, which have replaced the word "catholic"

Chapter 3

A Complete Bible

The entire Word of God that was written down to become a part of what is called the "Bible," has been preserved through various copies and translations and is available to us, today!

What to Include

However, the question arises as to which manuscripts should be included. Which manuscripts actually constitute the true Scriptures of the Bible? Major religions differ on this most vital consideration. For instance, the Jewish religion uses only those books commonly called the Old Testament, Hebrew Bible or *Tanakh*. Modern copies are primarily based on the Masoretic Text that dates from between the seventh and tenth centuries A.D. None of the New Testament books are accepted as a part of the Hebrew Bible.

A Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, was developed sometime during the 3rd and 2nd century B.C. While this was commonly used by Jewish communities throughout the Middle East, well past the time of the founding of the Church of God on Pentecost in 31 A.D., additional, spurious books (called the "Apocrypha") were also translated and included in some copies. Of the 15 apocryphal books then extant, all appear in this Greek translation, with the exception of 2 Esdras. They were not included in the canonical Hebrew Bible (Masoretic Text).

The Jewish nation still looks for a Deliverer, not understanding the prophetic declarations from the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. However, the record of Jesus precisely and exactly fulfilling the messianic prophecies is revealed in the New Testament (compare Matthew 21:33-46; Acts 4:8-12). Jesus very boldly declared that HE fulfilled the promises of God, as recorded in the Old Testament (John 5:37-40; Luke 24:25-27, 44). Based on the fact the Jews have utterly rejected

Jesus Christ as their Messiah, they have cut themselves off from parts of the written Word of God—they do not have the complete Bible!

Jews Preserved Old Testament Scriptures

On the other hand, let us also understand that the preservation of the Old Testament was a responsibility that was given to the Jews, and it is one that they have certainly fulfilled. Paul states, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles [sayings, Scriptures] of God” (Romans 3:1–2).

We have this additional statement from Jesus regarding the role given to those of Judah (including Levites): “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes AND TO HIS DISCIPLES, saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do’” (Matthew 23:1–3). As mentioned, they did not include or preserve the apocryphal writings in the Old Testament Scriptures, showing that those writings are not part of the inspired Hebrew Bible.

In preserving the oracles of God, the Jews have also preserved the Hebrew calendar. True Christians who observe the *annual* Feast Days and the weekly Sabbath, still refer to the Jewish oversight of the Hebrew calendar in order to know when to observe these commanded Holy Days!

How the “New Testament” Came Into Existence

How about the New Testament? Is it complete, or have some important books been left out? Does the New Testament contain apocryphal additions like the ancient Septuagint? The Bible itself provides foundational answers to these questions! Consider what the apostle John wrote concerning his own account of Jesus Christ in the book of John:

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30–31).

By John’s statement we understand that only certain aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ were recorded—that many other things could have been written—but that what is written is for the purpose

Chapter 10

The “Apostles’ Creed” and the Bible

We do not consider the “Apostles’ Creed” as inspired—neither in the form used by the Roman Catholic Church, nor in its numerous variations used by Protestant churches. Some claim that the “Apostles’ Creed” is the oldest of all the Christian creeds. It is considered the basis of all other creeds in non-Catholic churches. As fairy tales would have it, some allege that each of the apostles supplied one article to the Creed. This claim is totally without merit. The apostles had nothing to do with formulating this Creed.

When the Apostles’ Creed Was Written

In “*The Lost Books of the Bible*,” the following is explained:

“Mr. Justice Bailey says [in Mr. Justice Bailey’s Common Prayers, 1813]: ‘It is not to be understood that this Creed was framed by the Apostles, or indeed that it existed as a Creed in their time,’ and after giving the Creed as it existed in the year 600... he says, ‘how long this form had existed before the year 600 is not exactly known...’ The most important ‘addition,’ since the year of Christ 600, is that which affirms, that Christ ‘descended into hell.’ This has been proved... to have been an invention... after the time of Eusebius.”

The *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, Volume 6, explains that the Apostles’ Creed is “a statement of Christian faith widely used in Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, and recognized by the Orthodox Churches. It stresses the (incorrect) trinitarian nature of God (as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)... In its present form, it dates from the 8th [century] but its origins go back to the 3rd [century].”

The encyclopedia continues:

“Many Lutheran sources label the Apostles’ Creed as ecumenical since the essential tenets of the creed are held in common by all Christians, though its practical use appears to be limited to Churches whose

of revealing God's plan of Salvation.

In the first generation of the Church of God, letters were written and circulated to the churches in various areas (compare Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; and 2 Peter 3:15–16). Some of these letters also now make up a part of the New Testament. Peter referred to Paul's epistles as part of Scripture (compare again 2 Peter 3:16). By writing down the record of events about Jesus Christ and of His teachings, the authors were doing exactly what they were commissioned by Jesus to accomplish:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8; also, compare Luke 24:46–48; Acts 10:39–43; 13:31).

More than One Gospel Account

We have four accounts, called the gospels, which introduce the New Testament. One reason for this might include a principle given in the Old and New Testament, “...by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Matthew 18:16; compare Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; 2 Corinthians 13:1). Although this principle applies primarily to the words of men, Luke nevertheless refers to it in regard to Holy Scripture, thereby echoing the same objective for his account as we have already read from John:

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” (Luke 1:1–4).

Even so, there arose certain individuals who sought to change the teachings of these witnesses. Paul warned that “...from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:30; also, compare 2 Corinthians 11:13–15). False ministers also wrote counterfeit letters—even forging Paul's name to them (2 Thessalonians 2:2). John was confronted by such a false leader who not only rejected him, but also many others

who were brethren of his—the true followers of Christ (compare 3 John 9–10).

So then, who brought the New Testament writings together to form the New Testament as we know it today?

The Establishment of the New Testament Canon

As will be more fully discussed in chapter 6 of this booklet, it is the *apostle John* who is credited with ultimately assembling the final canon of the New Testament.

In Floyd Nolen Jones' book, *"Which Version Is The Bible?,"* this remarkable statement is made: "The apostle John's long life enabled him to bear apostolic witness to the true text of Scripture and canon until almost the year 100 at which time his hand-trained associates carried forward that same witness. Upon returning from his banishment to the isle of Patmos, John completed the sacred Canon by composing his Gospel, epistles and Apocalypse. Then combining these with the writings of the other Evangelists, he sanctioned them all with apostolic authority."

While this quote reflects the studied opinion of the author following extensive research, his view is supported by Halley's Bible Handbook, 24th edition, 1965, page 743, in which writers such as Clement of Rome (95 A.D.), Polycarp (110 A.D.) and Ignatius (110 A.D.) already quote various books that are a part of the New Testament canon.

John was most likely the last of the apostles to die, and he is the one who received the vision of the Book of Revelation—the final book of the New Testament (Revelation 1:1–2). Consider, though, that the true Church of God was being supplanted by a false Christianity, and those who remained faithful did so out of public, and for the most part, historical view.

Beware of False Teachings

While we don't have many specific historical records beyond the books of the New Testament themselves concerning the writing of the New Testament, we do find many documents that date from after the time of the apostles and those who were their contemporaries. Later writers make reference to the books of the New Testament, but there are also many spurious or false writings claiming to have equal status.

Error #4—"Defamation of the Early Apostles"

The Epistle of Barnabas alleges that the Twelve Apostles were the most unrighteous of all people prior to their conversion. It says in chapter 5, verse 9:

"But when he chose out his own Apostles, who were about to preach his gospel, they were men unrighteous beyond all sin, that he might show that he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Nowhere do we read anything like this in Scripture. To state that the apostles Peter, John and James, for example, were more unrighteous men than others—in fact, "beyond sin"—is utterly ridiculous.

For all the foregoing reasons, we must in no way view the Epistle of Barnabas as inspired. It is a book, which contains some truth and many errors, and should not be viewed as a manual for Christian living or doctrine.

others, being destructive by reason of their wickedness.

“(10:5) And thou shalt not eat, he saith, of the lamprey, or the polypus, or the cuttle-fish. Thou shalt not, he meaneth, cleave to or become like unto men of this sort, who are impious unto the end, and have been already condemned to death, even as these accursed fish alone swim in the depth, not floating as the others do, but dwelling in the earth below the depth of the sea. (10:6) Thus, he saith, Thou shalt not eat the hare, meaning thou shalt not indulge in unnatural lusts; (10:7) nor shalt thou eat the hyaena, meaning thou shalt not be an adulterer; (10:8) nor shalt thou eat the weazel, meaning thou shalt not do uncleanness with thy mouth concerning food; (10:9) therefore Moses spake in the spirit these three doctrines. But they, according to the lusts of their flesh, received them as being about meat.”

This is utter nonsense and totally contradicted by Scripture. For more information, please read our free booklet, *“And Lawlessness Will Abound.”*

Error #3—“Mischaracterization of the Azazel Goat”

The Epistle of Barnabas alleges that the “Azazel” goat to be sent alive into the wilderness at the time of the annual Day of Atonement was a symbol of Christ, not of Satan. We read in chapter 7, beginning in verse 6:

“(7:6) How, then, did he give his commands? Attend ye. Take ye two goats, fair and like each other, and offer them up. And let the priest take one of them as a whole burnt offering for sin. (7:7) But what shall they do with the other? Let the other, he saith, be accursed. Now attend ye, how the type of Jesus is made manifest. (7:8) And do ye all spit upon it and pierce it, and put scarlet wool around its head, and so let it be cast out into the wilderness... One is brought to the altar, the other is accursed, and the accursed one is crowned, because they shall see him in that day, who had the scarlet robe about his flesh, and they shall say, Is not this he whom once we set at naught and crucified, and spat upon and pierced? Truly this was he who at that time said that he was the Son of God.”

The Azazel goat was NOT a symbol for Christ, but for SATAN. For more information, please read our free booklet, *“The Sacrificial System and the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.”*

Examples of early apocryphal works are the Gospel of Thomas, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistle to the Laodiceans.

Partial copies of the New Testament proliferated in the centuries following the founding of the Church of God, along with an abundance of apocryphal writings—especially, the second and third centuries. Deciding what was true and what was false fell on issues of historical accuracy along with whether or not there was agreement with the doctrines of the Bible—both in regard to the Old and New Testaments.

John 17:17 states, “...Your word is truth.” Based on this consistent teaching throughout Scripture, there can be no example of opposing doctrines being taught. Christ emphasized that Scripture cannot be broken and that it cannot be contradictory (John 10:35). This fact has helped to rule out the inclusion of those fanciful stories and legends that arose from humanly conceived philosophies and religions.

A guiding admonition about the written Word of God is given in the Bible: “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Deuteronomy 12:32; also, Deuteronomy 4:2).

Note, too, Revelation 22:18–19: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Those who break this solemn warning, not only bring judgment upon themselves, but they will be held accountable for deceiving others with their falsehoods. People who accept extraneous writings as inspired do not rely on and follow the complete Bible!

Remember what the purpose of the written Word of God is [and we have this promise from Jesus Christ—our way of proving what is “... that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2)]: “... If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31–32).

Also, as quoted before, note Christ’s statement in John 7:17: “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether [someone speaks] on [his] own authority.”

H. Hoole," we read in chapter 15, verses 8 and 9:

"(15:8) And, further, he saith unto them, Your new moons and your sabbaths I cannot endure. See, now, what he meaneth. The sabbaths, that now are, are not acceptable unto me, but that which I have made is, even that in which, after that I have brought all things to an end, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, which thing is the beginning of another world. (15:9) Wherefore we keep the eighth day as a day of gladness, on which also Jesus rose from the dead, and after he had appeared ascended unto heaven."

Nowhere does the Bible teach that the Sabbath was replaced by Sunday; nor, that Sunday is the "eighth day"; nor, that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday. For more information, please read our free booklets, "*Jesus Christ—a Great Mystery*," and "*God's Commanded Holy Days*."

Error #2—"No Literal Application of Dietary Laws"

The Epistle of Barnabas alleges that the dietary laws (as contained, for instance, in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) were never meant to be understood literally and that they were never binding, in their literal application, on anyone, including Jews or Christians.

We read in chapter 10, verses 1–9:

"(10:1) But in that Moses said, Thou shalt not eat the swine, nor the eagle, nor the hawk, nor the crow, nor any fish that hath not scales in itself... The commandment of God is not, therefore, that they should not eat; but Moses spake in a spiritual sense. (10:3) He spake of the swine with this meaning: Thou shalt not cleave, he meaneth, unto men of this sort, who are like unto swine, for when they become wanton they forget their Lord, but when they are in want they think upon the Lord; even as the swine when it eateth knoweth not its lord, but when it is hungry it crieth, and when it hath received it is again silent. (10:4) Nor shalt thou eat of the eagle, nor of the hawk, nor of the kite, nor of the crow. Thou shalt not, he meaneth, cleave to, nor be like to men of this sort, who know not how to provide sustenance for themselves by labour and sweat, but in their iniquity seize the property of others, and, as though they walked in innocence, watch and observe whom they shall plunder, through their covetousness; even as these birds alone provide not sustenance for themselves by means of toil, but, sitting idle, seek out how they may eat the flesh of

contain some interesting concepts. For instance, the author speaks out against abortion. It says in chapter 19, verse 5 (We should note that some divide the epistle in different chapters than the ones given in this booklet): “thou shalt not kill a child by abortion, neither shalt thou destroy it after it is born...”

Abortion is indeed wrong. For more information, please read our free booklet, *“Are You Already Born Again?”*, pages 13–15.

In addition, the author seems to refer to the correct biblical belief of a 7,000 year plan—the concept that God assigned man six “days” of 1,000 years each to rule himself, followed by the Millennium or the seventh “day” of one-thousand years, which is referred to in the book of Hebrews as a “Sabbath” rest (compare Hebrews 4:1–10).

We read in chapter 15 of the Epistle of Barnabas: “(15:3) He speaketh, too, of the sabbath in the beginning of the creation: And God made in six days the works of his hands, and finished them on the seventh day, and rested in it and sanctified it. (15:4) Consider, my children, what signify the words, He finished them in six days. They mean this: that in six thousand years the Lord will make an end of all things, for a day is with him as a thousand years. And he himself beareth witness unto me, saying: Behold this day a day shall be as a thousand years. Therefore, my children, in six days, that is in six thousand years, shall all things be brought to an end. (15:5) And the words, He rested on the seventh day, signify this: After that his Son hath come, and hath caused to cease the time of the wicked one, and hath judged the ungodly, and changed the sun and the moon and the stars, then shall he rest well on the seventh day.”

Doctrinal Errors

However, the doctrinal errors contained in the Epistle of Barnabas are quite striking, showing that this book could not possibly be “inspired” by God. We are setting forth below some of its major errors:

Error #1—“Replacement of the Sabbath”

The Epistle of Barnabas alleges that the Seventh-Day Sabbath has been replaced by the “eight day” Sunday, on which “Jesus rose from the dead.”

Quoting from the 1885 translation of the *“Apostolic Fathers, Charles*

Chapter 4

The Preservation of the Bible

As we mentioned previously, God made sure that the Bible would be preserved throughout the history of mankind. In the previous chapter, we have already alluded to the fact that the Apostle John was given the ultimate authority to canonize the New Testament, while the Jews were authorized to preserve and canonize the Old Testament Scriptures, and we will explain this in more detail in the following chapters.

In this chapter, though, we will examine more closely just exactly *how* the Scriptures were preserved.

Again, we go back to the Bible itself for the answer to this question. There are numerous passages in the Old and New Testaments revealing how the Scriptures were preserved, in plain sight of all the people, so that alterations would be avoided.

Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 6:8–9 and Deuteronomy 11:20 all report that portions of the Old Testament were to be written down in books to be preserved.

Deuteronomy 17:18 commands the king to write down the law exactly as the LEVITES had preserved it, in accordance with God’s commission to do so. The king was not supposed to just copy the writings of a prior king, but rather, he had to write it down as it was preserved by the Levites.

Deuteronomy 27:2–8 reports that the Israelites had to write the Ten Commandments, the statutes and judgments on huge stones that would remain until the destruction of the nation. God’s writings were no secret that could be changed or modified; they had been written down publicly and openly for everyone to see!

Deuteronomy 31:19 shows that that particular portion of Scripture, relating to a new song, was written down by the people themselves, so that they all could sing this new song.

Isaiah 34:16 shows that the “book of the LORD” was accessible to the people.

Jeremiah 30:1–2 reports that Jeremiah was asked to write down for himself particular words of God in a book.

Jeremiah 36:4, 27–28, 32 reveals that certain writings, which had to be re-written after the king had destroyed the previous ones, would later be published, but not during the lifetime of the king who had burned the scrolls.

Matthew 17:10 shows that, at the time of Christ, the scribes were charged with the preservation and the copying of the Scriptures. They knew what the Scriptures said. They told the people what the Scriptures said. They were so diligent in the process of copying the Scriptures that they had to destroy a particular page or scroll if the scribe made an error. He had to recopy that scroll.

Acts 17:10–11 shows that the early New Testament Church was mainly Greek-speaking, at least many educated Christians in the Church spoke and understood Greek. Greek copies of both the New Testament and the (translated) Old Testament Scriptures were available in Berea. It was, therefore, possible for people outside the Church who had enough interest, to own and/or study the Scriptures in Greek. Those who spoke Greek became the preserver of the New Testament Scriptures. Of note is that neither the Catholic Church nor the Church of God was ever made responsible in that regard.

We see, then, that the New Testament Scriptures were publicly available for all who spoke Greek, while the Old Testament Scriptures were publicly available for all who spoke Hebrew, in order to preserve the Scriptures and to prevent changes and alterations.

Chapter 9

The Epistle of Barnabas and the Bible

The “Epistle of Barnabas” is not inspired. It was clearly not written by the Apostle Barnabas. Mosheim states in his “Ecclesiastical History” that the author “must have been a very different person from the true Barnabas, who was St. Paul’s companion.”

The epistle contains numerous Scriptural errors and should therefore not be considered as inspired. It was never referred to by Jesus or any of the New Testament writers as Scripture, and it was not included in the New Testament by the apostles. As we have explained before in chapter 6, the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John canonized the New Testament Scriptures, but the Epistle of Barnabas was not one of those books.

When the Epistle of Barnabas Was Written

The Catholic Encyclopedia explains that a reference in the Epistle of Barnabas (in chapter 4, verse 4) pertains to a command given by Adrian in A.D. 130 for the reconstruction, in honor of Jupiter, of the Temple at Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Titus. Adrian had also forbidden the Jews to practice circumcision. The epistle must, consequently, have been written in A.D. 130–131—long after the canonization process of the New Testament writings was completed.

It is further explained that “the extremely allegorical character of the exegesis leads to the supposition that the author of the letter was an Alexandrian. His way of constantly placing himself and his readers in opposition to the Jews makes it impossible to believe that either he or the larger part of his readers were of Jewish origin. Besides, he is not always familiar with the Mosaic rites... The history of the epistle confirms its Alexandrine origin. Up to the fourth century only the Alexandrians were acquainted with it...”

Some Interesting Concepts

Even though the Epistle of Barnabas is clearly not inspired, it does

Chapter 5

The Preservation of the New Testament

What, exactly, is the New Testament? Why is there even such a collection of books and letters that report on events from the first century A.D.? Are these merely the random writings of an influential religious movement that have found their way into the literature of the present time?

Or, as the New Testament claims for itself, is this part of the inspired Word of God? When we understand who preserved the New Testament, it lends even more proof about the unquestionable authority of this part of the Bible that we now possess!

Catholic Church Did Not Establish Canon

In regard to the New Testament of the Bible, consider the following summary statement given in the *“Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible,”* Herbert Lockyer, Sr., Editor, 1986:

“...the second major division of the Bible. It tells of the life and ministry of Jesus and the growth of the early church. The word testament is best translated as ‘covenant.’ The New Testament embodies the new covenant of which Jesus was Mediator (Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 9:15)...

“The 27 books of the New Testament were formally adopted as the New Testament canon by the Synod of Carthage in A.D. 397, thus confirming three centuries of usage by the church.”

This traditional overview of the New Testament places formal acceptance of the “books” as occurring some three hundred years after the lives of the apostles and of their contemporaries. **However, this selection, done by what had become the Catholic Church, is merely an example of a religious organization choosing to accept what already existed—much as did later movements within “Christianity,” such as Protestantism.**

The earlier history of the Church that was established by Jesus Christ,

through His chosen ministry, also shows the source of the writings we now have in the canon of the New Testament. An important test of what truly constitutes the inspired Word of God is true for both the Old and the New Testaments:

“...the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (2 Timothy 3:15–16).

False New Testament Teachers and Their Deceiving Doctrines

To this end, individuals inspired by God wrote the record of the life of Jesus Christ, the founding of the Church and the subsequent growth of the faith of Christianity, along with instructions concerning the doctrines of God. We must note that the New Testament also contains the record of false teachers with deceiving doctrines who began to infiltrate the body of true worshippers of God and Jesus Christ:

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6–9).

Along with this stern rebuke from Paul, others whose letters became a part of the New Testament, recorded similar warnings and admonitions concerning a growing departure from the original faith (compare 2 Peter 2; 1 John 4:1–6; 3 John 9–12, and the letter of Jude).

Additionally, note carefully what Peter said, showing that in his lifetime it was necessary to warn the brethren—and this message was written down in order that it would endure beyond his own lifetime:

“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease” (2 Peter 1:12–15).

preaches falsehood and doctrinal error; for instance, that allegedly angels married humans, and that the giants became evil spirits dwelling on earth (Book of Enoch, chapter 15, verses 8–10).

The Pseudepigrapha books also abound in even more historical errors than the Apocrypha.

Finally, the book of Enoch was not included by the apostles in the *canonized* New Testament Scriptures. As we saw in chapter 6 of this booklet, the Apostles Paul, Peter and John canonized the New Testament Scriptures, but the book of Enoch was not one of those books.

from Enoch 1:9, then this still does not indicate that he thought the entire book was inspired or true. All it means is that the particular quoted verse was true.

Jude May Have Just Quoted Enoch's Words

It is more likely, however, that Jude did not even quote from the book of Enoch. No scholar believes that the book of Enoch was written by the Enoch of the Bible. But it is obvious that the words of Enoch, as quoted by Jude, were something that the true Enoch prophesied. Jude related the prophecy of Enoch, as it had been preserved orally. Notice that Jude introduces Enoch's words as follows, in verse 14: "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, SAYING..." This introduction is then followed by the exact wording of Enoch's oral prophecy, as quoted in verses 14 and 15.

Note, too, that Jude is not even referring to the book of Enoch in the context. He is just making the point that Enoch had made an oral prophecy, under godly inspiration. That one of the authors of the book of Enoch wrote down the substance of Enoch's prophecy (even though with slight changes) does not render the book of Enoch inspired.

Consider the additional fact that Moses is quoted in Deuteronomy 33:2, using a similar statement as that of Jude: "...The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand Came a fiery law for them."

While this quote does not reference Enoch, it does verify the same truth of what Jude wrote about.

Pseudepigrapha Books Not Inspired

We can safely say, then, that the Pseudepigrapha books, including the book of Enoch, are NOT inspired writings.

As is the case with the Apocrypha, the Jews never considered any of the Pseudepigrapha books inspired. And as we pointed out in chapter 7, God entrusted the Jews with preserving the "oracles of God," including the *INSPIRED* Old Testament writings. They did not include the book of Enoch in the *Hebrew* canon.

In addition, many parts of the Pseudepigrapha contain heresies that are condemned in the Old Testament. Especially the book of Enoch

While most people who study the history of the Bible agree that the canon—the entire New Testament as commonly accepted—is complete, and they agree that the preservation of these writings was first accomplished by the Church of God, which began on the Day of Pentecost with the giving of the Holy Spirit of God in 31 A.D. While the Church grew with powerful impact in the decades that followed, heresy, nonetheless, arose to such an extent that the next century records a much different kind of Christianity.

Note what Jesse Lyman Hurlbut states in his book, *"The Story of the Christian Church,"* 1967, page 33:

"For 50 years after... Paul's life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of... Peter and... Paul."

In fact, the true and faithful Christians all but disappeared from the annals of history in those times. These followers of the true faith depended on the copies of the letters that were to become a part of the New Testament, which they continued to preserve through handwritten documents. As already mentioned, the Roman Church was able to avail itself of pre-existing copies of the New Testament books several centuries later.

Multiple Copies

A very poignant example of multiple copies of a part of the New Testament being distributed among various congregations is found in the Book of Revelation. The resurrected Jesus Christ is quoted by John as saying: "...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, and, 'What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: To Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea'" (Revelation 1:11).

If we are to believe that John carried out what he was instructed to do, then we know that this information went to these churches—and, since they received this inspired "book" of Revelation, they then were instrumental in preserving it. The very intent of this book is primarily focused on the future and was to be preserved for our time—prophesying of events leading to the return of Jesus Christ (For further explanation,

please read our free booklet: *“Is That in the Bible—The Mysteries of the Book of Revelation!”*).

Other letters were commonly circulated among the churches (compare 2 Peter 3:15–16; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). However, not all of these “letters” were genuine (compare 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2). In fact, this very process of writing letters continued well past the lifetime of the first generation of the apostles. False writings made claims to inspiration on a par with that of the New Testament books; however, when closely examined for authorship and for agreement with foundational biblical teachings, these documents were eventually rejected.

The True Author and Preserver

Beyond the rather blurry record that marks the transition of the early Christian faith into history’s background and the subsequent emergence of the Roman Catholic Church, another factor supersedes in accounting for WHO preserved the New Testament. The real AUTHOR of the inspired writings of the New Testament has also sustained His written Word throughout the ages. The proof of this statement is found in the words of Jesus Christ, when He said, “Sanctify them [set them apart] by Your truth, Your word is truth” (John 17:17); and, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35; also, compare parallel statements in 1 Peter 1:23, 25).

These Scriptures, along with many others, point to the fact that the New Testament record would be preserved. Another quote from Jesus shows that His teachings would come before all men in all generations: “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Consider one final answer as to who preserved the New Testament. The teachings of Christianity became a way of life for those who embraced what they learned! Note this statement by Paul: “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13; also, compare a parallel statement in 1 John 2:5).

careful in quoting it verbatim. But apart from the inconsistencies between the letter of Jude and the book of Enoch, and assuming that Jude had quoted from the book of Enoch, this still does not mean that he felt that the entire book had to be inspired.

Biblical Reference to a Book Does Not Make it “Inspired”

For an example, Paul quoted a Cretan prophet (whom scholars have identified as Epimenides) in Titus 1:12, but that does not mean that Paul considered the writings of that prophet as godly inspired, or that we should give any additional authority to his writings. Other New Testament quotations from, or allusions to, non-biblical works include Paul’s quotations of some Greek poets in Acts 17:28 (one of those poets has been identified as Aratus).

In fact, both the Old and the New Testament mention quite a number of books which were not preserved, but which were known to the particular biblical author at the time of his writing. It is obvious that God did not see fit to preserve those books, and they never became part of the canonized Holy Scriptures.

For instance, Numbers 21:14–15 mentions “the Book of the Wars of the Lord.” Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18 refer to and quote from the “Book of Jasher.” 1 Kings 11:41 refers to the “book of the acts of Solomon.” 1 Chronicles 29:29 refers to the “book of Samuel the seer,” “the book of Nathan the prophet,” and “the book of Gad the seer.” 2 Chronicles 12:15 refers to “the book of Shemaiah the prophet” and of “Iddo the seer.” The “book of Jehu the son of Hanani” is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 20:34.

We can deduce from 1 Corinthians 5:9 that Paul wrote another letter to the Corinthians which was not preserved. There is also a reference by Paul to a letter which the Corinthians wrote to him, which is likewise not preserved (compare 1 Corinthians 7:1). Paul makes reference in Colossians 4:16 to an unpreserved “epistle from Laodicea,” which he even instructed the Church at Colossae to read. Luke makes reference to “many” who wrote down events pertaining to the life of Jesus (Luke 1:1–4).

The fact that reference is made in Scripture to some other book or a statement within another book does not mean that those writings were inspired. The same is true for Jude 14. Assuming that Jude quoted

from fragments found at Qumran and was written before 100 B.C.

Catholics and Protestants Reject Pseudepigrapha Books

In chapter 7, we discussed the reasons why the Apocrypha is not to be considered as inspired. Similar reasons exist for the Pseudepigrapha books, including the book of Enoch. In addition, unlike the Apocrypha which is, to an extent, considered as inspired by the Catholic Church, none of the Pseudepigrapha books are considered inspired by either Protestants or Catholics.

From the evidence provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls, we see that this religious Jewish community located at Qumran had writings that included much of the Old Testament. However, other non-biblical books were also discovered, and this included 1 Enoch along with Tobit, Ecclesiasticus and Baruch 6.

Jude Did Not Regard Book of Enoch as Inspired

The book of Enoch was quoted in the apocryphal book of Baruch, and in several early writings, including the “epistle of Barnabas,” as well as by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. Some have speculated that Jude 14–15 is a quote from the book of Enoch and concluded that Jude regarded Enoch as inspired Scripture. The following two quotes compare Jude 14–15 to the suspected passage in the book of Enoch:

Jude 14–15 reads: “... Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Enoch 1:9 reads: “...Behold he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all of flesh for every thing which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him.”

Even though both passages are close, they are not identical. Jude says that God will “convict” all of the ungodly, but Enoch says that they will be “destroyed.” The rest of the two passages disagree in wording in minor ways.

Therefore, it is not compelling to conclude that Jude quoted from the book of Enoch. Even if he did, he would not have been particularly

By taking to heart their calling to salvation, the faithful ones of countless generations have helped sustain and preserve a true understanding of the written Word of God. That same responsibility now falls upon us. We, too, must endeavor to uphold the teachings we have been given, just as those before us helped preserve the New Testament: “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, HAVE KEPT MY WORD, and have not denied My name” (Revelation 3:8).

Chapter 8

The Book of Enoch and the Bible

The book of Enoch belongs to the so-called Pseudepigrapha books and was apparently written during the first century B.C.—even though some claim that it was written before then.

What Are Pseudepigrapha Books?

The term “Pseudepigrapha” was given to Jewish writings, which were attributed to authors who did not actually write them, but who misappropriated the names of famous people by pretending that they were the authors of those writings. Known “Pseudepigrapha books” include “the Apocalypse of Abraham,” which was probably written in the second century A.D.; “the Apocalypse of Adam,” which was perhaps written in the first or second century A.D.; the “Fourth Book of Ezra (2 Esdras),” which was probably written between 95 and 100 A.D.; and “the Testament of Moses” (or, “Assumption of Moses”), which was written in the first century A.D.

The Pseudepigrapha books also include the Book of Enoch, which is a compendium of four or five Jewish apocalypses, all of which were composed before the destruction of the Second Temple. The book of Enoch is now usually designated as I Enoch, to distinguish it from the later II Enoch, or the “Secrets of Enoch.” The book of Enoch was written by many different writers in different time periods. The whole book is found only in an Ethiopic language, but parts of it have been discovered in Greek and in Aramaic.

In addition, the Pseudepigrapha books include the book of the Secrets of Enoch (2 Enoch or Slavonic Enoch), which is a Jewish apocalypse from the time before the destruction of the Temple. Closely connected to it is the Books of Giants, a writing allegedly associated with Enoch, relating the deeds of the giants who were born by the daughters of men (descendants of Cain) to the sons of God. It is known

Chapter 6

The Canonization of the New Testament

In regard to how the Bible was put together, we may find something like the following narrative, as adopted from sources published on the Internet:

How The Story Goes...

The process of canonization was complex and lengthy. In the first three centuries of the Christian Church, there was no New Testament canon that was universally recognized. Nevertheless, by the 2nd century there was a common collection of letters and gospels that a majority of church leaders considered authoritative. These contained the four gospels and many of Paul's letters. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian (all 2nd century), held these to be on par with the Hebrew Scriptures as being divinely inspired. Other books were held in high esteem, but were gradually relegated to the status of New Testament apocrypha.

In about 170 A.D., Irenaeus cited 23 of the 27 New Testament books, omitting only Philemon, James, 2 Peter and 3 John. The *Muratorian* fragment, written about the same time, attests to the widespread use of all the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter.

However, other "church fathers" had already cited those omitted books in various writings defending against Gnostic doctrines. The *Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae* from 206 A.D. includes 64 of the 66 books of today's Bible. Esther and Revelation were omitted, but they had already been declared as inspired Scripture by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian and the *Muratorian* Canon. In 230 A.D., Origen declared that all Christians acknowledged as Scripture, the four Gospels, Acts, the epistles of Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation.

By the early 300s, all of the New Testament books were being used in the mainstream church body. The New Testament canon as it is

now, including all 27 books, was first listed by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in 367, in a letter written to his churches in Egypt. The Synod of Hippo (393 A.D.) and the third Synod of Carthage (397 A.D.) also recognized these 27 books as canonical. In addition, during this time, the highly influential “church fathers,” Jerome (340–420 A.D.) and Augustine (354–430 A.D.), published their lists of 27 books completing the New Testament.

Certain books continued to be questioned, especially James and Revelation. As late as the 16th century, theologian and reformer Martin Luther questioned (but in the end did not reject) the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation. Today, German-language Luther Bibles are printed with these four books at the end of the canon.

This is how far the story goes.

However, even though many of those who claim that the canonization of the New Testament books took place as described above, they admit that the recognition of the sanctity of Scripture was not the result of any pronouncement by Roman Catholic Church officials in the late fourth century. **Rather, they clarify that the canon was determined by the authoritative use of these books by the first and second century church.** It is claimed that the New Testament canon was merely a process of formal recognition of already recognized Scripture.

Canonization at the Time of the Early Apostles

We do not believe that God gave the Roman Catholic Church the task to decide which books of the New Testament were inspired and should be included. Even though it RECOGNIZED their inspired status at a later date, the “canonization” took place much earlier—in **the lifetime of the apostles Peter, Paul and John.**

In 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul asked Timothy to “bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.” This appears to be a reference to letters which Paul had written, and which he wanted to be preserved. The commentary of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown states:

“He was anxious respecting these that he might transmit [the books] to the faithful, so that they might have the teaching of his writings when he should be gone... ‘especially the parchments’—containing

and liver are useful medicines... As for the fish’s heart and liver, you must burn them to make a smoke in the presence of a man or woman afflicted by a demon or evil spirit, and every affliction will flee away and never remain with that person any longer.”

We must, therefore, conclude that the Apocrypha is NOT inspired, and that it does not belong in the Bible. This is not to say that it must never be read. Especially historical records, for instance the first two books of the Maccabees, can give us valuable information. But as is the case with every book other than the inspired writings contained in the Holy Bible (the writings of Josephus, for example, are of historical value, but they are not “inspired”), we need to be aware that we will be reading, to a larger or smaller degree, truth mixed with error.

ANY of the Apocrypha, while it quotes extensively from EVERY section of the Old Testament Scriptures, which Jesus referred to as “ALL the Scripture” (Luke 24:27). In fact, there are allegedly 263 quotations and 370 allusions to the Old Testament in the New Testament and not one of them refers to the Apocrypha.

Apocrypha Does Not Claim Inspiration

While the inspired Scriptures make the claim for themselves that they ARE inspired and infallible, the Apocrypha does NOT make this claim for its own writings.

For instance, the author of 2 Maccabees writes:

“... At this point I shall bring my work to an end. If it is found to be well written and aptly composed, that is what I myself aimed at; if superficial and mediocre, it was the best I could do” (2 Maccabees 15:37–38, *Revised English Bible*).

Apocrypha Contradicts Itself

The Apocrypha contains blatant contradictions, but God’s inspired Word does not contradict itself (compare John 10:35). For example, in the two books of the Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes dies three different deaths in three different places.

Apocrypha Contradicts Holy Scripture

The Apocrypha includes teachings, which contradict the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, showing that the Apocrypha could not possibly be inspired. For instance, 2 Maccabees 12:42–45 states in the *New Revised Standard Version*, that 2,000 drachmas of silver were sent to Jerusalem for a sin-offering and to “pray for the dead,” so that “atonement” or reconciliation for the dead could be made, so that “they might be delivered from sin.” The *Revised English Bible* translates that they were praying and giving the silver drachmas “to free the dead from their sin.” This concept of praying and paying for the dead is contrary to the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures (and to the teaching of the New Testament).

A terrible example of wrong teaching is included in Tobit 6:5, 8, where the “angel Azariah” gave the following “healing” advice: “Cut open the fish and take out the gall, heart, and liver... For its gall, heart,

perhaps some of his inspired Epistles themselves.”

In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter considered the letters of Paul, which can be found in the New Testament, as part of the Scriptures. He also stated in 2 Peter 1:15 that he was anxious to ensure that the brethren would “always have a reminder of these things after my decease,” referring to his death. He went on to explain in 2 Peter 1:18, in regard to the transfiguration on the mount, that “we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.” Only three apostles were on the holy mountain when Christ was transfigured and when, in that vision, Elijah and Moses appeared. These disciples were Peter, John and James. By the time of Peter’s writing, James had died, and only John and Peter were still alive.

Peter continued, in verse 19, that “we have the sure word of prophecy” (*Authorized Version*). The use of the word “we” would include the two early apostles who were still alive at the time of Peter’s writing; that is, Peter and John. It would be Peter and John who preserved and would leave behind the inspired “word of prophecy” or “inspired writings.” Note that the word “prophecy” can also refer to inspired preaching. Peter said that John and he had, or possessed, the inspired writings—the New Testament. This referred to the writings of the New Testament which were already in existence at that time, but it also allowed for those writings that would still be added by the apostle John, before his death.

At the time of Peter’s writing, Paul had died, and Peter spoke of Paul’s letters as “Scripture,” showing that they were recognized as such. Who recognized them? Obviously, Paul must have recognized them before his death (as he did Luke’s writings, compare 1 Timothy 5:18 and Luke 10:7). Subsequently, these writings were recognized by the last remaining two original apostles, Peter and John, and they did so under godly inspiration.

After Peter’s death, John survived as the last of the early apostles. Before he died, he wrote the gospel of John, the three letters of John, and the book of Revelation, which concluded the sacred writings of the New Testament.

Revelation—the Last Book!

That the book of Revelation was meant to be the last and final

book of the New Testament can be seen by its very claims. We read in Revelation 22:18: “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.”

In other words, those who would claim that additional future writings should become part of the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament would have to face God’s punishment. We also read in verse 19 that punishment would befall those who would try to take away from the words of the book of Revelation—who would claim that portions of the book of Revelation, or the entire book, was not inspired.

We have every reason to believe that the books of the New Testament, as we have them today, were recognized as inspired by the apostles Paul, Peter and John, as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. God saw to it that the New Testament books would be preserved, as He also preserved the sacred writings of the Old Testament.

God’s Word Endures Forever!

Jesus Christ Himself promised that God would ensure that His Word would be preserved for all eternity. He said in Matthew 5:18: “... one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Peter explained that “the word of the LORD endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25). Paul instructed Titus to only ordain an elder if he would hold “fast the faithful word as he has been taught” (Titus 1:9), expecting, of course, that “the word” would be preserved. Jude challenged the brethren to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Again, true brethren were asked to stand up for the faith which had been taught and preserved in the sacred writings.

We read that God’s end-time disciples would keep His Word (Revelation 3:8)—which requires that God’s Word had been preserved and would be available in the end time. In fact, some living in the end time would even be killed for keeping the Word of God (Revelation 20:4).

Jesus is the personified Word of God (Revelation 19:13; John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1). As He is still alive today, so He made sure that His written Word—the entire Bible—would stay ALIVE as well. After all, the Word of God is “LIVING and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12).

Who canonized the New Testament? It was God, but He inspired

WE MUST STATE THAT THE APOCRYPHA ARE NOT INSPIRED WRITINGS.

Although there are many reasons why this is the case and why the Apocrypha must not be viewed as inspired, we are setting forth several striking examples for this conclusion:

Hebrew Canon Without Apocrypha

The Jewish Canon never included the Apocrypha. This is important, as Romans 3:1–2 tells us that the Jews were given the godly responsibility to preserve the “oracles,” including the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Jewish scholars of Jamnia (90 A.D.) rejected the Apocrypha as divinely inspired. Philo, a Jewish teacher from Alexandria (20 B.C.–40 A.D.), quoted extensively from virtually every canonical Hebrew book but never once quoted from the Apocrypha.

Josephus (30–100 A.D.) said that the prophets wrote from the time of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, and that no writing since that time had the same authority. In fact, the Jewish people reportedly destroyed the Apocrypha after the overthrow of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The Jewish Talmud teaches that the Holy Spirit departed from Israel after the time of the prophet Malachi, who lived about four centuries before Christ. While the proof of this assertion is not directly stated in the Word of God, the evidence is that no further inspired writings were given by God until Jesus Christ established the New Testament Church of God.

Jesus Confirmed Hebrew Canon

Jesus Himself confirmed the inspired canon of the Hebrew Bible and its correct order (which is divided into the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms). When speaking about the violent death of righteous people, He said in Luke 11:51: “... from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple...” The death of Abel is recorded in Genesis, the first book in the Hebrew canon. The death of Zechariah is included in 2 Chronicles 24:20–22, the last book of the Hebrew canon.

No New Testament Scripture Quotes Apocrypha

It is also worthy to note that the New Testament never quotes from

Hot Debate

When the Catholic Church decided in 1546 to treat some of the Apocrypha as inspired, their decision had been preceded by a hot debate among early “Church Fathers.” Hilary (bishop of Poitiers, 350 A.D.) rejected as inspired, the Apocrypha (Prologue to the Psalms, Sec. 15), and so did Epiphanius (360 A.D.). Referring to the Wisdom of Solomon and the book of Jesus Sirach, he said: “These indeed are useful books and profitable, but they are not placed in the number of the canonical.” In addition, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius and Jerome spoke out against the inspiration of the Apocrypha.

In his preface to the Wisdom of Solomon, Jerome (340–420 A.D.) rejected the Apocrypha as godly inspired, stating: “As the Church reads the books of Judith and Tobit and Maccabees but does not receive them among the canonical Scriptures, so also it reads Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus for the edification of the people, not for the authoritative confirmation of doctrine.”

According to Edward Hills in “*The King James Version Defended*,” page 98, other famous Catholics with this viewpoint included Augustine (354–430 A.D., who at first defended the Apocrypha as canonical), Pope Gregory the Great (540–604 A.D.), Cardinal Ximenes, and Cardinal Cajetan.

Protestants Reject Apocrypha

The Protestant Churches have rejected as inspired all of the Apocrypha. It has been said that the translators of the early *King James Bible* (*Authorized Version*) felt that some of the books of the Apocrypha were inspired, but this is incorrect. It is true that in early editions of the King James Bible, the Apocrypha was placed between the Old and New Testaments. But this was done as an appendix of reference material. The Apocrypha began to be omitted from the Authorized Version in 1629 A.D.

Luther stated: “Apocrypha—that is, books which are not regarded as equal to the holy Scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read” (compare, “*The King James Version Defended*,” page 98). Calvin wrote: “I am not one of those, however, who would entirely disapprove the reading of those books.” His objection was to “placing the Apocrypha in the same rank” with inspired Scripture (“Antidote” to the Council of Trent, pp. 67, 68).

His apostles Paul, Peter and John to pronounce the decision which books and letters should be considered as sacred and infallible. And so, God ultimately used the apostle John to canonize the writings of the New Testament.

Chapter 7

The Apocrypha and the Bible

The Apocrypha is a collection of books that were written in Greek by various individuals from about 400 to 200 B.C. The Catholic Church considers some of these books as inspired Scripture.

At the Council of Trent (1546 A.D.), the Catholic Church declared that some apocryphal books, together with unwritten Catholic tradition, are of God. It was stated that those who disagreed with this decision were to be considered “anathema.”

The Roman Catholic Church (as well as the Greek Orthodox Church) consider the following books of the Apocrypha (also referred to as Deuterocanonical books) to be inspired:

Tobit or Tobias

Judith Wisdom of Solomon

Jesus Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Baruch (including the letter of Jeremiah, Baruch 6)

First and Second Maccabees

Additions to Esther and Daniel [i.e., added chapters at the end of the book of Esther; and added chapters to the book of Daniel, including the Prayer of Azariah (Daniel 3:24–50); the Song of the Three Young Men (Daniel 3:51–90); Susanna (Daniel 13); and Bel and the Dragon (Daniel 14)].

The Catholic Church rejected as inspired the apocryphal books of Third and Fourth Maccabees, Psalm 151, First and Second Esdras, and the Prayer of Manasseh, as well as the so-called Pseudepigrapha, which were written between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. and which contain, among other writings, the books of Enoch, Michael the Archangel, and Jannes and Jambres. There are additional Pseudepigrapha books, which were possibly written after Christ’s death and which were likewise rejected as inspired, such as the Assumption of Moses, the Apocalypse of Elijah, and the Ascension of Isaiah.