

## Making of the Bible

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## Introduction

The Bible enjoys the highest circulation of any book in the world. It has been translated into more languages, and read by more people than any other book. The Old and New Testament are and have always been the most quoted literature in all of history.

At the same time, the Bible is the most attacked book in all of history. Today the Bible is banned in 38 countries, and restricted in many others. In the western world, liberals try to forbid Bible reading in school, or any other part of public life. You can read anything else; this is the only book that universally offends them. These attacks are not new. Theologian John Wycliffe, the first person to translate the Bible into English in the 1380s, was in his last days persecuted by the church. In 1428 his remains were dug up, burned, and the ashes cast into the a river. In 1536 William Tyndale was also martyred (He was strangled to death and his remains burned on a stake) for translating the Bible into English. Many others in both ancient and modern times have come to untimely ends because they believed the Bible was the Word of God. In fact, the Word of God has been under attack since the very beginning of recorded history. This first recorded attack is in the Book of Genesis,

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, **hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die:** - Genesis 3:1-4*

The serpent starts by misquoting God, and he finishes by plainly contradicting God with the intention of causing Eve to doubt and finally to disbelieve God's word. From that time until now, Satan has not changed; he is still trying to undermine the Word of God.

Christians who share the Bible as the Word of God often receive the comeback, "The Bible was only written by men". Actually since this is also true, we should spend a little time to learn how the Bible was made in the first place and then later preserved. The Goal of Apologetics is to show a sincere seeker that while the Bible was penned by men, it is authored by God. And since this is so, we should be able to show that the Bible is accurate historically, scientifically, and when God speaks of future events, prophetically.

For those individuals who believe that there are other sacred writings, I would challenge them to see if they can hold their scriptures up to the same standard. At the end of this study, I will briefly look at a few of the scriptures from the other major religions for contrast.

## A Description of the Bible

The Bible is comprised of sixty-six books, thirty-nine are in the Old Testament, twenty-seven are in the New Testament. There are about forty different authors with various backgrounds; shepherds Kings, scholars, fishermen and Prime Ministers. Yet there is continuity, as they all tell the same story. From, the first book,

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. - Genesis 1:1*

To the last book,

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. - Revelation 21:1a*

And as the **Old Testament prophesied** of the Messiah's first coming, the entire Bible prophecies His second coming.

*[Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day:] Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. - John 5:39*

Though the books of the Bible span fifteen hundred years, there is no disagreement on history, science or moral absolutes between the different writers. On the question of religion, the two testaments give a progressive revelation of God and what He expects from us.

Starting in Genesis God gave Adam one simple command:

*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat of it.** - Genesis 2:16b-17a*

After the flood, God made a covenant with mankind and gave Noah and his sons some additional commands (Genesis 9). Later God entered into a special relationship with Israel at this time He offered them the chance to be saved by doing good works. All one had to do was keep the Law.

*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD. - Leviticus 18:5*

Unfortunately, no one was able to keep the Law. Since no one could keep the Mosaic Law, as the Old Testament foretold, God made a new one.

***Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; **which my covenant they broke**, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD: - Jeremiah 31:31-32*

In the New Covenant, the price for our sin was paid for by God himself.

*Likewise also [Jesus took] the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. - Luke 22:20*

**AND**

*For by grace are ye **saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: - Ephesians 2:8*

We see that the Bible gives a progressive revelation of God when Jesus said:

*But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That **many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.** - Matthew 13:16-17*

Though God revealed himself progressively, it was His plan from the beginning for the Messiah to die for our sins. From Genesis,

*And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. - Genesis 22:8*

To Revelation

*... the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.  
- Revelation 13:11b*

God did not reveal all the details in the beginning, nor has he done so even now. However, if you will study carefully, you will see that the writers, without contradiction, have presented the same message of salvation from Genesis to Revelation.

## **The Making of the Old Testament**

### **The Books of the Bible**

The Old Testament was written from about 1,400 years before Christ until 400 years before His birth. However, there is a school of thought that believes portions of Genesis were written from the very beginning. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew language except parts of Daniel and Ezra that were written in Aramaic. Even so, Hebrew and Aramaic are very similar. The Old Testament in the Christian Bible is organized thus:

The Law:                   The first five books written by Moses.

History:                   Starting with Joshua bringing the children into the Promised Land, to Esther who was a queen of the Persian Empire.

Wisdom and Poetry:    These include, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastics, Song of Solomon.

The prophetic books:    These are the books from Isaiah to Malachi.

Our Old Testament is the Jewish Bible, though it is organized differently. Some of the books have a different name, and sometimes they put two or more books into one volume. The Jewish Bible is organized thus:

The Law:                   The first five books are called The Torah and are written by Moses.

Former Prophets:        This category includes; Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings. If you are familiar with the Books of the Christian Bible you will notice Samuel and Kings are one large book rather than two smaller ones.

Later Prophets:         Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and The Book of Twelve. This book contains the twelve prophets, Hosea through Malachi.

The Writings:            Poetry and wisdom, the Book of Daniel and several books on history.

### **Finalizing the Old Testament**

There are several possibilities as to which person placed the scrolls into a single collection to become the Hebrew Bible and when this happened. Nehemiah as the governor of Jerusalem could have put together the Old Testament. The cannon was completed in his time with the book by his name, however, he does not mention this as one of His accomplishments. Ezra may also be a candidate, as a

descendant of Seraiah the high priest, and a leader he could have been the one to keep the temple scrolls and genealogical records.

*This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. - Ezra 7:6*

Zechariah may have been instrumental in collecting and organizing the Jewish canon of scripture, for in chapter five he hints at the mission as well as the success of such a book.

*Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying [scroll]. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying [scroll]; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, **This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth:** for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. - Zechariah 5:1-4*

Most Jews believed that the books, that would later become the Bible, were inspired by God, Though they could not have been bound into a single volume until after the invention of the *codex*, a book format with binding, until sometime in the first century AD.

Today, there is no consensus among scholars as to when the Jewish canon was finally settled; the latest date is around 90 AD. At this time, some claim that for nearly all Jews, the Council of Jamnia closed the canon and authoritatively established their Bible ever since. Even so, this council only affirmed what was already thought to be the Bible for Jews and Christians. We can prove this by looking at two examples:

First, Archeologists have uncovered a vast library that once belonged to religious sect known as Essenes. Archeologists have discovered about 850 separate scrolls and about forty percent of the scrolls that have been identified, are books of the Hebrew Bible. This library now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, contains every book in the Old Testament except Esther. This shows the preeminent place that these scriptures had in their lives. Also, many scrolls have been identified as commentaries on the Bible. Yet, the community did not have commentaries on any of their other scrolls, this also shows that the Bible scrolls were special.

The second example is in the words of Jesus.

*Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. - John 5:39*

It would have been impossible for Jesus to expect the Jews to examine every scroll that was ever written, so the word Scripture had to refer to a special collection. In addition, for this verse to have meaning, the Jews had to believe that this collection of Scripture had a divine origin, or the Jews would not have thought that, in them, they had eternal life.

## Preservation of the Old Testament

The Old Testament started out as five books, the Torah, written by Moses. While Israel was commanded to read it publicly every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:11), this seldom if ever happened. The original copy was kept in the tabernacle and later in Solomon's Temple where it was preserved along with the Ark (its contents) and the temple furniture that Moses made. There is an interesting story relating to the Law in 2nd Chronicles:

*And Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, **I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.** And Hilkiyah delivered the book to Shaphan. [...]*

*Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiyah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. - 2 Chronicles 34:15, 18-21*

This may well have been an original manuscript of the Law written by Moses himself. Though sadly from disuse, this Book of the Law could have been perfectly intact till King Josiah, who died eleven years before Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon first invaded Judah.

The other Old Testament manuscripts, like prophecy and histories, were collected by the religious leaders and in the later temple period corrections were made to individual manuscripts by comparing a manuscript to the majority of the other manuscripts. (Tov 1992, Pg 32)

While the Jews were always careful with their Bible, during the Masoretic period, between the 5th and 11th centuries, the Jews are recognized for their meticulous copying of their scriptures. Because of their care in making a new copy and because of scuffs or thin spots on an older copy, they considered the new copy to be more accurate than the original.

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest partial manuscript of the Hebrew Bible was dated to between 800 and 1,000 A.D. The oldest complete Bible, the Leningrad Codex, dates to 1008 A.D. These and other manuscripts verify the accuracy of the Old Testament through to modern times.

Now with the Dead Sea Scrolls, the accuracy of some Old Testament manuscripts can be verified to as early as 250 BC. A complete copy of Isaiah was found and it is virtually identical to our modern versions excepting spelling and grammar variations. For instance, in modern versions of Isaiah (like Isaiah 7:14) YHWH is replaced with adonai (which means Lord).

As to spelling and grammar variations, if you compare a King James Version to a Modern King James Version, you will see many differences in spelling and grammar. Was the modern version created to correct the mistakes of the original scholars? Or does the modern version have all the errors? Or, a third possibility is that both translators worked diligently to place a Bible in a language that could be understood by people who do not have master degrees in theology. While it is deeper than I am going to discuss in this first draft, there are reasons why variations exist, and yet we can believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. And, if God is the author of the Old Testament, He is able to keep it in tact, and He can expect us to read and obey it.

*Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, **This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth:** for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and **it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name:** and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. - Zechariah 5:1-4*

## **The Old Testament's Authority**

For Christians the important thing is not who collated the Old Testament, as it gets its authority from another source, actually three of them.

First, the prophecies in the Old Testament prove it's divine origin. This is covered in the study on [The Bible's Prophetic Accuracy](#).

Second, the apostle Paul indorses the Old Testament to teach doctrine.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

All the books of the Old Testament except; Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon are quoted by Jesus or one of His apostles to teach doctrine or in reference to fulfilled prophecy.

Finally, Jesus venerated the Old Testament as the Word of God. Jesus often quoted the Old Testament as an authority on Spiritual matters, and He never quoted any other book or rabbi. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said:

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.** - Matthew 5:17-18*

In many passages of the New Testament, Jesus showed that He believed the Scriptures could not be broken. For instance at the time of His arrest, He said to Peter.

*Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? **But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?** - Matthew 26:53-54*

In fact, Jesus went so far as to say.

*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. **But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?** - John 5:45-47*

Therefore, for us it is all or nothing. God can expect the skeptic to believe because of the fulfilled prophecies, for the Christian it is enough that Jesus expects us to believe it.

As a side note, some Bibles add additional books to the Old Testament, most are part of a collection called The Apocrypha. While these books may shed light on the inter-testament period, the Apocrypha is not the Bible. It was never recognized by the Jews as being part of their Bible. It is not part of the New Testament nor was it ever quoted by Jesus or any of His apostles to teach doctrine. While there are exceptions, like the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 pronouncing the Apocrypha as sacred, Christians do not recognize these books as having special inspiration.

## **The Making the New Testament**

### **The Books of the Bible**

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament are organized into five categories.

- The Gospels:               The first four books share the life and teachings of Jesus.
- History:                    The Acts of the Apostles, which describes how the church came into existence at the hands of the Apostles.
- The Epistles of Paul:     We can divide these letters into the categories, letters to the churches, pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus and a letter to his personal friend Philemon relating to a slave.
- General Epistles:        Eight other letters written by the apostles or church elders.
- Prophecy:                 The Book of Revelation: A book that uses symbolic language to tell us the events leading up to the end of the age.

### **How the New Testament Was Collated**

The Bible in the first century: The books and letters that later became the New Testament were first penned in Greek, though some scholars argue that they, or at least some of them, were first penned in Aramaic, a language that closely resembles Hebrew, if so, none of these manuscripts have yet been discovered. Once, in the Book of Acts, when Paul spoke Hebrew in the Temple it seemed to surprise the Jews. This implies that the Jews spoke the Greek language in the Temple and therefore it was a common enough language among the Jews.

*And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith, - Acts 22:2*

The books and letters of the New Testament were written between 33 AD and 69 AD. Admittedly, there is not a consensus among scholars on these dates, yet the evidence does point to the original manuscripts being written before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD. This is important because early dates leave no time for fables to creep into the church. The early dating of the original manuscripts can be proved by both internal and external evidence. For example:

- While the book of Acts mentions a great drought in Jerusalem, no book in the New Testament mentions the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD an event that could not have been missed.
- Save Paul writing letters while imprisoned, Nero's atrocities against the church are never mentioned in any New Testament manuscript. Nero died in 68 AD.
- All of the names, places, dates, and events, from the time of Christ are accurate. Many of these facts would have been nearly impossible to reconstruct after the fall of Jerusalem by none witnesses. While I could make a story about St Peter's Cathedral, never having been there, my story would be vague or my facts fictitious.
- Archeologists have uncovered manuscript fragments and letters quoting from the New Testament dating to the first century.

While there was no conscious effort by the apostles to create a New Testament, they wrote the Gospels in obedience to the command preach the Good News to the whole world. They would have seen early that it was necessary to put the facts on parchment to keep them from being distorted and to expedite their Great Commission. Also, as Jesus predicted, false prophets did appear, it is not likely that the apostles would have waited forty years before writing letters to rebuke them.

*[Jesus said,] Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. - Matthew 7:15*

AND

*As also in all [Pauls] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which **they that are unlearned and unstable wrest**, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. - 2 Peter 3:16*

From 33 AD to about 65 AD, while there were false teachers, the apostle's presence kept the church pure as Luke recorded:

*And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. **And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.** - Acts 5:11-13*

In 64 AD, there was *The Great fire of Rome*. Nero blamed this on the Christians and made this an excuse to persecute them. Though false teachers existed in the first century, yet because of this persecution and the persecution of the church by the Jews (Mentioned throughout the Book of Acts) they were not common. As all the apostles except John met untimely deaths, there was no rush at this time by the false apostles to fill their place. The biggest resistance to the Gospel was by false teachers who were trying to bring the gentiles under the law. Though they did cause local problems, like the church in Galatia, false teachers did not make inroads into the church. Nor did their epistles become popular in the church. In contrast, the letters from the apostles spread swiftly from church to church as Paul instructed.

*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. - Colossians 4:16*

AND

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. - 2 Timothy 2:2*

Peter's first epistle was also broadcast all over.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers [pilgrims] scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, - 1 Peter 1:1*

In Peter's second epistle (written to all who were in the faith), he refers to Paul's letters in a way that assumes the reader is already familiar with them, thus implying that Paul's letters are already in wide circulation in the church.

*As also in all his [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. - 2 Peter 3:16*

The Bible in the second century: Though the New Testament was not yet bound into a single volume, the church adhered to all the books that would become the New Testament. The church also held other manuscripts, so what made the books that would later become the Bible special?

First, the book or letter had to be authored by an apostle, a person closely associated with an apostle or someone who witnessed Jesus ministry from the beginning. For example, though Mark was not an apostle, he worked closely with Peter. Though Luke was not an apostle, he worked with closely with Paul and was present from the beginning. Luke's gospel starts:

*Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, **which from the beginning were eyewitnesses**, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things **from the very first**, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. - Luke 1:1-4*

A second prerequisite to become part of the Bible was the universal acceptance of a book or letter by all the churches. Did the people of God read it during worship and abide by its teachings? A modern example could be made of the writings of Joseph Smith or Ellen G White. While some, professing to be Christian, believe their writings are inspired by God or as in the case of the book of Mormon, equal to the Bible. Christianity as a whole has rejected the inspiration of these manuscripts (they will never become part of the Bible).

*Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? - Jeremiah 23:29*

A third test was if the writing squared with the apostle's doctrine. The early church was constantly admonished to watch out for wolves in sheep's clothing. While some individuals were deceived by heretics such as the Gnostics (the same is true today), the church as a whole took heed and compared any books with the doctrine taught by the apostles.

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates<sup>14</sup> of hell shall not prevail against it. - Matthew 16:18*

We should be careful what we use for doctrine today. Especially as Paul warned,

*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; **And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.** - 2 Timothy 4:2-4*

The reason this was not a problem in the second century is that, as fire purifies gold, heavy persecution purified the church. In the second century, those who turned *away their ears from the truth* also left the church.

Thus in the second century, though the Bible was not bound into a single volume, understanding the importance of the apostle's doctrine, the church held their books and letters above all their other religious literature.

The Bible in the Third Century: The fourth and final test to become part of the Bible; only the books that continued to be used and passed down generationally by the church were considered.

From Nero, until Emperor Constantine (306AD), Rome persecuted the church. To be a Christian, you had to be willing to die for the faith. This and that there was no political or monetary gain before Constantine became emperor, with few exceptions, kept the church free from false teachers.

It is important to note that the church fathers and councils did not push their favorite books on the church. No one man or group of men made a certain book canonical. When the early church councils discussed this question, they simply eliminated the books that did not meet the above four mentioned tests.

It was through this process that God determined the canon of scripture; man only discovered it through long and steady usage. The New Testament emerged through the combined conviction of church leaders and church members guided by the Holy Spirit.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: - 2 Timothy 3:16*

### **The Preservation of the New Testament**

*Question: If we don't have any original manuscripts and have to rely on copies, how do we know there are no errors?*

I will be the second to admit (Peter was the first) that some of the ancient manuscripts have been tampered with, just as some modern versions of the Bible are corrupt. Nevertheless, what is the chaff to the wheat? The church has the responsibility of its manuscripts, what the others do with theirs is not our concern. God will judge them.

*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, **which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.** - 2 Peter 3:16*

As for the preservation of the New Testament, there are over 5,300 known ancient Greek manuscripts and fragments of the New Testament that have survived until today.

Counting an additional 10,000 Latin Vulgate and over 9,300 other early manuscript versions in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Gothic, and Ethiopic, totaling over 24,000 surviving manuscripts of the New Testament. We also have 32,000 quotes from before 325 AD, all but eleven verses of the New Testament could be reconstructed through these writings alone. (Chapel)

No other document in history even begins to approach such numbers; the closest one appears to be Homer with 643 copies. Here are some examples of other manuscripts being preserved through history.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Written</b>	<b>Earliest Known Copy</b>	<b>Known Manuscripts</b>
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A. D.	37
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	10
Catullus	54 B.C.	1550 A.D.	3
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	9
Homer (Iliad)	850 B.C.	900-1000 AD	643
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	7
Pliny the Younger	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	7
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	8
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	193
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	8
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	20

(Use this chart with care as some dates are only approximate and I have not personally verified most)

Some critics point out the different spellings and grammar variations in the New Testament, trying to discredit it. Sort of like the difference between the King James Version and the New King James Version. There are many reasons for these differences; one is that Jesus commanded the church to spread The Gospel throughout the whole world. Translating the Bible is necessary to expedite this command. No doubt, some copyists adapt spelling and punctuation for the different regions for the same reason. The following chart shows some of the different Greek alphabets that were in use at that time depending on where you lived in the Roman Empire.

	Ionia	Athens	Corinth	Argos	Euboea	Modern
alpha	ΑΑ	ΑΑ	ΑΑ	ΑΑ	ΑΑ	Α α
beta	Β	Β	Ɱ	Ϛ	Β	Β β
gamma	Γ	Λ	<C	ΓΛ	<C	Γ γ
delta	Δ	Δ	Δ	∅	▷	Δ δ
epsilon	ϜΕ	ϜΕ	Β	ϜΕ	ϜΕ	Ε ε
digamma		Ϟ	Ϟ	ϞϜ	Ϟ	
zeta	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ	Ζ ζ
eta	ΘΗ					Η η
heta		ΘΗ	ΘΗ	ΘΗ	ΘΗ	
theta	⊕⊗⊙	⊕⊗⊙	⊕⊗⊙	⊕⊗⊙	⊕⊗⊙	Θ θ
iota	Ι	Ι	Ξ	Ι	Ι	Ι ι
kappa	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ	Κ κ
lambda	Λ	λ	Λ	Ϝ	λ	Λ λ
mu	ΜΜ	ΜΜ	ΜΜ	ΜΜ	ΜΜ	Μ μ
nu	ΝΝ	ΝΝ	ΝΝ	ΝΝ	ΝΝ	Ν ν
xi	Ξ		Ξ	Ξ	Χ	Ξ ξ
omikron	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο	Ο ο
pi	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π	Π π
san			Μ	Μ	Μ	
koppa	Ϟ	Ϟ	Ϟ	Ϟ	Ϟ	
rho	Ρ∅	ΡΡ	ΡΡ	ΡΡ	Ρ	Ρ ρ
sigma	Σ	Σ		Σ	Σ	Σ σς
tau	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ	Τ τ
upsilon	ΥΥ	ΥΥΥ	ΥΥΥ	ΥΥΥ	ΥΥΥ	Υ υ
phi	Φ	Φ⊕	Φ⊕	Φ⊕	Φ⊕	Φ φ
chi	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	ΥΨ	Χ χ
psi	ΥΨ		ΥΨ	Ψ		Ψ ψ
omega	Ω					Ω ω

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There are also other variations in manuscripts, such as the inserting of a comment for clarity. We must remember that the first century church was using these manuscripts for teaching as well as trying to spread the gospel. In a hypothetical example, the teacher may have tried to clarify his teaching by taking a verse like Luke 9:23 which reads thus:

*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. - Luke 9:23*

For teaching purposes he may have altered it to this:

*And [Jesus] said to [the 5000 men that were present], If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. - Luke 9:23*

Such alterations may have served the teacher's purpose; therefore, if we find an altered manuscript 2,000 years later it does not prove there are errors in the Bible.

Before the invention of the printing press, honest mistakes were also common, yet we can correct these by comparing the individual manuscript to the majority of manuscripts in existence to recover from any errors.

While there are variations in some of the ancient manuscripts, especially the [Alexandria manuscripts](#) that go beyond spelling and grammar to actually missing whole words or passages, none of the differences change any of the doctrines in Christianity.

### **The New Testament's Authority**

*As [Jesus] was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things?  
- Mark 11:27b-28a*

Since Christians put the words of the New Testament above that of any other person, where it gets its authority is important. For me, as a Christian, the New Testament gets its authority from seven places, and these, from least to greatest are:

1. The historical accuracy of the Bible establishes the antiquity, honesty and authorship of the manuscripts. It also provides evidence that the manuscripts have not been tampered with. This will be covered in *The Bible's Historic Accuracy* as soon as it is finished.
2. The Bible's scientific accuracy provides evidence of divine inspiration. This is covered in the study [The Bible's Scientific Accuracy](#).
3. The apostles themselves believed the gospel that they preached and this helps verify that they spoke the truth. We know that they believed the gospel because they were willing to suffer tribulation and die for the gospel's sake. For example, here is a partial list of what the apostle Paul went through:

*Are they ministers of Christ? I (speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. **Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ...**  
- 2 Corinthians 11:23-25*

Not only were their lives full of hardships, most of the apostles were martyred for preaching the gospel. Paul said,

*For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. - Acts 21:13b*

While Paul did not die in Jerusalem, he did die for the name of the Lord Jesus.

1. The Gospel exhorts us follow truth. There is no other religion that places the same emphasis on truth as does Christianity. Even in Judaism you are still a Jew though you are not an honest person. However, Christianity teaches,

*And all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. - Revelation 21:8b*

The apostle's message to walk in truth would make no sense, then or now, if the Gospel expected us to embrace fables. God expects us to believe the truth, even if this means believing that He can perform miracles.

*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. - 3 John 1:4*

2. The miracles give the Bible its authority. If Jesus had not done any miracles, the skeptics would argue that His words are only an opinion and that one opinion is as good as another. It is because Jesus performed miracles, that he had every right to expect to be listened to.

*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. **If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.** - John 15:22-24*

Skeptic may claim that we cannot verify these miracles today. Yet there is one exception, the prophecies that are in the Bible prove it has a divine origin (this is covered in the study [The Bible's Prophetic Accuracy](#)). The same God that has perfect knowledge of the future and hates lying does the miracles. Therefore, those who believe that the miracles are fables have not thought very hard.

3. The transformation of the believers lives. From the first century church to my own life, the gospel has taken broken lives and given them meaning.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I [Paul] am chief. - 1 Timothy 1:15*

**AND**

*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: **but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.** - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

Every Christian has a personal testimony, for those who have known Jesus from a young age, this includes their purity, for those who come to Jesus later in life, this includes a remarkable transformation.

4. Jesus said, "My words shall not pass", therefore it is all or nothing.

Yet it goes deeper than this. Jesus spoke with power. In fact while he did not quote other rabbis or religious leaders, throughout the common era, every religious leader and, at one time or another, most secular leaders have quoted Him. When Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount, he closed with.

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.*

*And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. - Matthew 7:24-27*

It was by the words which Jesus spoke that we are to judge whether or not He came from God. And conversely how God will judge us.

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. - Matthew 24:35*

AND

*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But **these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.** - John 20:30-31*

## Comparing the Bible to Other Holy Books

I will try to not be disrespectful to Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus However, since what we believe determines where we will spend eternity, you must look at the evidence for divine inspiration in your holy books for yourself. Finally, if any of my facts are wrong, please send me a comment, with your sources and your email address, so they can be corrected.

### The Qur'an

**The Making of the Qur'an:** The Qur'an is the holy book of the Muslims. While the Christian Bible has forty authors that share the same message, Mohammad is the only author of the one author of the Qur'an. According to the following hadith, He received seven different versions of the Qur'an. A hadith among other things, are rules used to understand the Qur'an.

Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith Hadith 9.640 Narrated by Umar bin Al Khattab

I heard Hisham bin Hakim reciting Surat-al-Furqan during the lifetime of Allah's Apostle, I listened to his recitation and noticed that he was reciting in a way that Allah's Apostle had not taught me. I was about to jump over him while He was still in prayer, but I waited patiently and

when he finished his prayer, I put my sheet round his neck (and pulled him) and said, "Who has taught you this Sura which I have heard you reciting?" Hisham said, "Allah's Apostle taught it to me." I said, "You are telling a lie, for he taught it to me in a way different from the way you have recited it!" Then I started leading (dragged) him to Allah's Apostle and said (to the Prophet), "I have heard this man reciting Surat-al-Furqan in a way that you have not taught me." The Prophet said: (O 'Umar) release him! Recite, O Hisham." Hisham recited in the way I heard him reciting. Allah's Apostle said, "It was revealed like this." Then Allah's Apostle said, "Recite, O 'Umar!" I recited in the way he had taught me, whereupon he said, "It was revealed like this," and added, "**The Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in seven different ways, so recite of it whichever is easy for you.**" See Hadith No. 514, Vol. 6 (Seven Versions of Quran:)

Today there are still seven different versions of the Qur'an. You must go to a Muslim apologist if you want an explanation of how this has no effect on its inerrancy.

**The Preservation of the Qur'an:** Oldest Qur'an manuscripts are dated to about 200 years after the death of Muhammad in 632 AD.

**The Authority of the Qur'an:** While both Old and New Testament require two or three witnesses to establish every fact, Muhammad was the only witness that Qur'an was divine.

*This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. - 2 Corinthians 13:1*

When Mohammad died Islam divided into two factions, the Shia and the Sunni. Both the Shia and Sunni believe that they are the ones who are Mohammad's rightful heir. Each sect has a different opinion for the validity of specific collections of hadith. However, by using a set of rules to understand the Qur'an, this in effect means the Qur'an is no longer the highest authority for Muslims, rather this authority is transferred to the rules that you use to interpret it.

### **The Tripitaka**

The Tripitaka, the holy scriptures of the Buddhists contains the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama who is more commonly known as Gautama Buddha (the enlightened One). Some of the teachings in the Tripitaka may have originated from his disciples. The Tripitaka is a three-volume set and has about eleven times the volume of the Christian Bible.

The first Tripitaka was committed to writing in 29 BC during the Fourth Buddhist Council in Sri Lanka. Since Buddha died in or around 483 BC this means that the Tripitaka would have been passed down orally for over 450 years.

There are very few manuscripts before the eighteenth century; the oldest known complete manuscript is from late in the fifteenth century, with another two-page fragment from the eighth or ninth century. (Pāli Canon, 2011)

### **Vedas**

The Vedas are the Hindu's holy knowledge from God. The Hindus claim an origin for the Vedas as early 2000 BC, However the Vedas were passed down orally during the Vedic period. In fact, the written word does not appear in India until the third century BC. While the Hindus believe that the Rigveda is the oldest Veda manuscript; the oldest Rigveda in existence today is dated to 1464 AD.

Many people have translated or written commentaries on the Vedas, yet it appears that most if not all have not read any actual manuscripts. Swami Ramswarup has written nine commentaries on the Vedas. He has also given a very candid interview:

**Question:** Which is the oldest "veda books" available today? Which place is it? Who wrote it? When?

**Swami Ramswarup:** Vedas have not written by anybody please but emanated direct from God as stated above. And this knowledge right from the beginning of the earth was being preached to the aspirants/ public traditionally by ancient rishis Munis. Who also studied traditionally. The knowledge of Vedas was by heart. However before five thousand three hundred years i.e., during the time of Mahabhart war Vyas Muni who also had knowledge of the four Vedas by heart traditionally, he wrote first time on Bhoj patra and then printed in 18th century. Now explanation of four Vedas in Hindi by late Shri swami Dayanand Saraswati is available and can be sent to you on demand.

**Question:** Which is the world "oldest manuscripts" of Veda's? Which museum has it? Many people said it's in Britain, Germany, Pennsylvania, Southern India. Which place(s) is it exactly? Does anyone have list of official record of Veda's oldest manuscripts?

**Swami Ramswarup:** I am not certain but it is perhaps in the museum of Britain, please.

**Question:** Today on what basis publishers print Veda books? Which author/version of Veda's do they mostly refer?

**Swami Ramswarup:** To spread the knowledge of Vedas please. I have also written about 9 books on Vedas motto being to spread the truth. Mostly the author is late Shri swami Dayanand Saraswati.

Vedas' knowledge is divine. The fundamental of the Vedas is this that it was not written or spoken. The knowledge by the power of God was originated about one Arab 96 crore, 8 lakhs and 53,000 years ago. Then first time the four rishis of unsexual creation started pronunciation of the mantras by the power of God. God wanted to make them known to know word meanings and senses of the mantras. and therefore the rishis knew all. Then first time the four rishis started pronunciation of the mantras. They taught the mantras to other ignorant people. Then another rishis were produced who knew the Vedas by heart by listening only. There was no paper, ink or pen there. The Vedas were being learnt by mouth to mouth and traditionally this process is yet in force. But mostly not by heart but taking help of the printed book. ... [The emphasis is mine.] (Vedas' origin - comments, 2005)

According to another source, actual copies of Veda texts cannot be found in any library, temple, Brahmins house or museum. If someone claims to write a commentary or translation of the Veda, none can falsify or oppose him, they themselves not having a copy of the Veda text. As this is an extraordinary claim, I am open to a Hindu providing me evidence that proves otherwise.

## Conclusion

The Bible was penned by men, yet it is the Word of God. Its authorship, compilation and preservation stand in sharp contrast to every other book in history. Throughout history, there were people who hated the Word of God. Yet there were others who were skeptics because of their culture and how they were taught. These people can come to know God if they will just do an honest study.

*And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.  
- Jeremiah 29:13*

AND

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  
- John 8:31-32*

After you look at [The Bible's Prophetic Accuracy](#), I hope you will look at the teachings and person of Jesus Christ. As there has been no other book in history like the Bible, there has been no other man in history like the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you richly, as you learn of Him,

Written by Jeff Barnes

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