HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

(Outlined from “How We Got The Bible” by Dr. Neil Lightfoot. Used by permission)

Lesson 1

THE MAKING OF ANCIENT BOOKS

I. Introduction

1. In order to understand how the Bible was handed down to us, we first must examine how books were made through the millennia of time.

2. There are some important questions to be asked about which Bible students think and examine::

   a. How and when did all the 66 books of the Bible come into existence?
   b. In what way are the books of the Bible different from other books?
   c. How did God preserve these books for man to study and obey? (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; I Peter 1:23-25)

3. The Bible is a very old book, but it is NOT the oldest writing that has come down to us

   a. The earliest writing comes from the regions of EGYPT and MESOPOTAMIA

   b. Clay tablets have been found in Mesopotamia that date back as early as 3,000 B. C..

   c. In Egypt, writing was done through “HIEROGLYPHICS,” or “picture writing.” This type of writing is found in temples, tombs, and monuments.

   d. We do not know exactly where or when writing first began in human history

4. The first ALPHABET seems to have come from the Syria-Palestine area about 1750 B. C.. From the first alphabet, all other alphabets were derived.

   a. One of the first examples of an alphabet being used is the “Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions” dated about 1500 B. C.
b. These are “graffiti” that were carved on a rock face

5. This is important, for at one time, unbelievers said that Moses could NOT have written the books, Genesis-Deuteronomy, for, they said, writing was NOT known in Moses’ time. However, it was known.

6. It is now known that at least 5 systems of writing existed in the Syria-Palestine area in the days of Moses.

II. EARLY WRITING MATERIALS

A. Writing on STONE

1. In almost every region of the world in ancient times, STONE was the earliest material on which writing was done

2. This was true in EGYPT and in BABYLONIA

3. For example, King Hammurabi, king of Babylonia, had written on his stone monument about 250 laws for his people. This was done about 1750 B.C.

4. The “Moabite Stone” is dated about the 9th century B.C., and was inscribed by order of King Mesha of Moab speaking of his rebellion against Israel. Read II Kings 3:4-27. This stone has the name of YHWH ("Yahweh") the sacred name of God.

5. The famous Hezekiah tunnel inscription, called the “Siloam Inscription.” This is about 700 B.C.

   a. The tunnel is about 1800 feet long, through the mountain, bringing water from the spring of Gihon into the city of Jerusalem.

   b. The inscription in stone helps us to know that, at the time of King Hezekiah, the “cubit” was about 18 inches long. Read II Kings 20:20 and II Chronicles 32:30.

   c. The tunnel where the inscription was located still brings water into the “Pool of Siloam.”

6. The MOST FAMOUS writing on STONE is the TEN COMMANDMENTS (Exodus 31:18; 24:27, 28, etc.)
B. WRITING with **INK on PLASTER** (Lime)  (Deuteronomy 27:2, 3)

C. WRITING on **CLAY TABLETS**  (Ezekiel 4:1)

1. Clay tablets were the most common writing material in the area of Mesopotamia.

2. About 500,000 clay tablets have been preserved.

3. 16,000 clay tablets were discovered at **EBLA in Syria**. These tablets were written in “cuneiform,” “wedge shaped” writing. These tablets are DATED as early as 2400 B.C..

4. A woman in **Tell-el-Amarna in central Egypt** found several hundred tablets written in “cuneiform.” These are dated about 1350 B.C. and contain correspondence between the Pharoahs of Egypt and rulers in Syria, Mesopotamia, and in Palestine.

5. Kings of other nations outside of Israel celebrated their DEEDS on clay tablets. Some of these kings are mentioned in the Old Testament. For example, Sargon, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar.
   a. **Sargon II** recorded his capture of Samaria in Israel on CLAY II Kings 18:13-19:37
   c. **Nebuchadnezzar** told of his building activities. Read Daniel 4:28-30.
   d. **Belshazzar** left clay tablets on various subjects. Read his story in Daniel 5.

D. WRITING ON **WOOD**  (Ezekiel 37:16, 17)

E. WRITING ON **METAL**. Archaeologists discovered a metal amulet on which was inscribed Numbers 6:24-26.

F. WRITING ON **“OSTRACA”** (Broken Pottery)

1. The “**Lachish Letters**,” found by archaeologists, are on ostraca. This was when Lachish was under attack by Nebuchadnezzar. Read Jeremiah 34:7.

2. Some ostraca have been found that contain New Testament verses.
3. We get the word “ostracized” from “ostraca.” In the 5th century B.C., people in Athens were “banished” by having their names placed on ostraca. They were “ostracized!”

G. WRITING ON PAPYRUS. (Job 8:11)

1. The Papyrus plant was used in Egypt for Fuel, Food, Boats, Ropes, Sandals, Clothing, Making Baskets, etc.. See Job 9:25, 26 for “Skiffs of reed” and “papyrus vessels” on the water (Isaiah 18:2)

2. The apostle John said, “Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper (“chartou”) and ink....” (II John 12). The word, “chartes” means a roll of papyrus. We get the English words “chart,” “charter” and “card” from this Greek word. The word “paper” comes from the word “papyrus.”

3. The Greek word “biblos” means papyrus. We get the word “BIBLE” from this word. See the word “book” (“biblos”) in Matthew 1:1; Mark 12:26; Luke 3:4.

H. WRITING ON PARCHMENT OR LEATHER

1. “Parchment” is the processed skins of ANIMALS

2. Paul requested that his “books” (“bobia”) and “parchments” (“membranas”) be brought to him (II Timothy 4:13). The “Parchments” were probably copies of portions of the Old Testament.

3. From the 4th century A.D. through the Middle Ages, the primary writing material was “parchment.” Another word used is “vellum” which literally means “calfskin.”

THE ORIGIN OR BIRTH OF THE BIBLE

Lesson 2

I. Introduction

1. The Bible is a “collection” of 66 books. This is indicated by the word “Bible” which means “books.”

2. The Bible grew over the centuries under the “favorable and directing influence
of our CREATOR! Read II Timothy 3:14-17.

3. For many centuries, writing was done on PAPYRUS, as noted above, and the papyrus was put in the form of a SCROLL or ROLL. Usually, writing was done on ONE SIDE, but, sometimes, on BOTH SIDES. See the scroll written on BOTH SIDES in Revelation 5:1.

4. Scrolls were usually no longer than 35 feet, and about 9 or 10 inches high. NOTE: Both Matthew (28 chapters), and Luke (24 chapters) would each fit on a SCROLL about 32-35 feet long.

5. The size of the SCROLL would explain why LUKE and ACTS would be ON TWO SEPARATE SCROLLS.

6. Just as PAPYRUS was gradually replaced by PARCHMENT, the SCROLL was replaced by the “CODEX.”

   a. The word “CODEX” referred to a Roman writing tablet a “BOOK WITH LEAVES” like our modern “book.”

   b. When the “CODEX” was used, Christians could make ONE BOOK for the “FOUR GOSPELS,” Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

   c. They could make ONE BOOK for the WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

   d. And, later, ONE BOOK for the ENTIRE BIBLE!

   e. Christians were the first people to “MAKE EXTENSIVE USE OF THE CODEX.”

   f. The “Codex” was widely used in the SECOND CENTURY A. D.

   g. This suggests that Christians may have started its use by 90 A. D. or before that time.

II. THE EARLY FORM OF THE BIBLE

A. **MOSES is the first person** mentioned in the Bible as a “WRITER.” Was he writing as early as 1500 B. C.?

   1. He wrote concerning the AMALEKITES (Exodus 17:14)
2. He wrote the **SINAITIC COVENANT** (Exodus 24:4)

3. He wrote the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** (Exodus 34:27, 28)

4. He wrote about the travels of the nation of Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 33:2)

5. Moses wrote the **book of the Law** which was to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24)

6. And, Moses wrote the **SONG** that is found in Deuteronomy 32:1-43; 31:22, 30..

B. According to strict Jewish tradition, **MOSES** is the inspired author of the books of Genesis-Deuteronomy

C. Other **WRITERS** of the BIBLE, and the **Lord Jesus Christ** HIMSELF gave witness to **MOSES’ AUTHORSHIP**


2. Ezra 6:18 states that certain commands were “written in the book of Moses”

3. In Mark 12:26, **JESUS** asked, “Have you not read in the book of Moses?”

4. Jesus asked, “**HAS NOT MOSES GIVEN YOU THE LAW?**” (John 7:19)

D. **JOSHUA** wrote some of the **words of God** (Joshua 24:26)

E. **SAMUEL** wrote as a **MAN OF GOD** (I Samuel 10:25)

F. **DANIEL** respected the “word of the Lord to Jeremiah” (Daniel 9:2)

G. **EZRA** brought forth the “Book of the Law of Moses” and read (Nehemiah 8:1)

III. FROM THE BEGINNING, the BOOKS of the NEW TESTAMENT were considered to be **AUTHORITATIVE**

A. Paul asked that his letter to the Thessalonian church be read to all the **brothers** (I Thessalonians 5:27)
B. Paul requested that his letter to the Colossians also be read to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16)

C. In addition to the EPISTLES, it was natural that the LIFE OF CHRIST would also be written, Matthew-John, followed by Acts

D. The writings of PAUL were considered to be “SCRIPTURES” (II Peter 3:15, 16)

IV. THE FORM of our BIBLE TODAY

A. The word, “COVENANT” is a better translation of the word “diatheke” instead of “testament.” Thus, “Old and New Covenants”

B. OUR MODERN ARRANGEMENT of the OLD TESTAMENT

1. FIVE BOOKS OF “LAW” — Genesis through Deuteronomy

2. TWELVE BOOKS OF HISTORY — Joshua through Esther

3. FIVE BOOKS OF POETRY — Job through Song of Solomon

4. SEVENTEEN BOOKS OF PROPHECY — Isaiah through Malachi

C. The HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT was ARRANGED DIFFERENTLY

1. FIVE BOOKS of “LAW” — Genesis through Deuteronomy

2. PROPHETS:
   
   a. Former Prophets — Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings

   b. Latter Prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 “Minor Prophets”

3. The “WRITINGS” — Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and I and II Chronicles

D. PLEASE NOTE: Jesus used this “threefold” division of the Old Testament
(Luke 24:44). Everything must be fulfilled from:

1. The “Law of Moses”
2. The “Prophets”
3. The “Psalms” (Evidently referring to the “Writings”)

E. THE “NEW COVENANT”

1. FIVE BOOKS OF HISTORY — Matthew through Acts

2. TWENTY ONE BOOKS OF DOCTRINE — Romans through Jude
   a. The first 13 are from Paul
   b. The author of the book of HEBREWS is not named

3. ONE BOOK OF PROPHECY — Revelation

F. The FIVE BOOKS OF HISTORY of the “NEW COVENANT”

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called “synoptic” gospels. They have similar content

2. John places great emphasis on the divinity of Christ as the Son of God


G. THIRTEEN BOOKS by the INSPIRED APOSTLE PAUL

1. May be divided by the books written BEFORE his first Roman Imprisonment, AND

2. Those written AFTER that IMPRISONMENT
   a. I Timothy
   b. Titus
   c. II Timothy
V. **THE LANGUAGES** in which the BIBLE WAS WRITTEN

A. The Bible was written in **Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek**

B. A **form of ALL** of these is **SPOKEN TODAY**!

   1. Hebrew is spoken in **ISRAEL**
   2. Aramaic is spoken in **SYRIA** and a few other places
   3. Greek is spoken in **Greece**, but is **much different** from the “**koine**” Greek of Jesus’ day

C. The **HEBREW** of the OLD COVENANT

   1. Almost all of the Old Testament / Covenant is written in **Hebrew**
   2. Hebrew is written “**BACKWARD**,” that is, from **RIGHT** to **LEFT**
   3. Old Hebrew had **NO VOWELS**
   4. **NOTE:** The Hebrew alphabet is given as the heading of sections in the King James translation of Psalm 119.

D. The **ARAMAIC** of the OLD COVENANT

   1. Jeremiah 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4b-7:28 are written in **ARAMAIC**
   2. Hebrew and Aramaic use the same alphabet, but the words are different
   3. **NOTE:** The famous Dead Sea Scrolls have the same Old Testament passages in **ARAMAIC** as seen above.
   4. **NOTE AGAIN:** While the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, they began to **SPEAK ARAMAIC**. That is the reason why part of **EZRA** and **DANIEL** are written in **ARAMAIC**
   5. Examples of **ARAMAIC** in the New Testament text:
      a. “**talitha cumi**” (“little girl arise”) (Mark 5:41)
b. “ephphatha” (“be opened”) (Mark 7:34)

c. “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” (“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”) (Mark 15:34)

d. “Abba” (“Father”) (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6). Jesus called His Father “Abba” (Mark 14:36)

e. “maranatha” (“Our Lord, come”) (I Corinthians 16:22)

E. The **GREEK LANGUAGE** of the NEW TESTAMENT

1. The New Testament was originally written in “koine” Greek, the “common” Greek spoken in the marketplace.

2. At one time, it was thought that the New Testament was written in a special, or “holy” type of language. This was proven incorrect by the discovery of papyri that used this “koine” Greek for a common, everyday language.

3. **NOTE:** It is true that common Greek words of the first century were given a “Christian flavor.”

   a. For example, the word, “ekklesia,” the word for “church” was used in ordinary life to refer to a “group of citizens” of a City like Athens who were “called out” for a certain purpose.

   b. The word “assembly” in the riot in Acts 19:32, 39, 41 is the Greek word “ekklesia.”

   c. Jesus said that He would “build” His “ekklesia” (Matthew 16:18). Jesus has HIS “group of citizens” purchased with HIS blood (Acts 20:28)

VI. **RESPECT for the ANCIENT “SCRIBE” or COPYISTS of the BIBLE**

A. Greeks and Romans wrote many books, had them copied, and sold them. These books would be hand copied.

B. They would be orally dictated and copied by several “scribes.”
C. The scribe sat on a bench or stool with the “codex” on his knees. This was very **HARD WORK**!

D. A stylus was used to draw faint lines on the page so that the writing would be **even and straight**.

E. The comment of a scribe has come down to us. He said, “With great sweat and toil” the work was completed.

F. Another scribe said, “The end of the book — thanks be to God!”

**MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Lesson 3

I. Introduction

1. Without doubt, the New Testament was first written on **PAPYRUS ROLLS** or **SCROLLS**
2. With constant use, these **SCROLLS** would perhaps **only last** for about **TEN YEARS**. Copies would then be made.
3. So, some time later, the original “**AUTOGRAPHS**” would perish.
4. The early disciples of Jesus **made many copies** of these precious, apostolic writings.
5. The word, “**MANUSCRIPT**” means “written by hand” and refers to documents in the **original language**, whether Greek, Hebrew, etc.
6. Therefore, a New Testament “manuscript” is a **GREEK COPY**.

II. The **FIRST CONSIDERATION** is the **AGE** of the **MANUSCRIPT**

A. On many manuscripts, the scribe would place the **DATE** when the document was copied.

B. Scholars posses different ways of determining the **AGE** of a manuscript that is **NOT DATED**.

1. One way is to note whether the **letters of the manuscript** are **large or small**

2. They note whether words are **written together**, or **are separated**.
3. The scholars will look at the number of columns on a page.

4. The note whether there is punctuation, and whether the document is divided into paragraphs.

5. Also, they will determine whether the script is simple or complex.

III. DIFFERENT KINDS OF MANUSCRIPTS

A. There are TWO KINDS of MANUSCRIPTS

1. “UNCIALS” — These are the OLDEST manuscripts. They are written in CAPITAL LETTERS.

2. “MINISCULES” or “CURSIVES” — The word “minuscule” means “small.” They were written in small letters, sometimes in a “cursive” style. They are “younger.” They date beginning in the 9th century A.D., and have less value than UNCIALS.

B. Sometimes, manuscripts would have New Testament books GROUPED TOGETHER in one of four categories.

1. Perhaps, the FOUR GOSPELS, Matthew-John would be together.

2. Or, Acts and the General Epistles

3. Paul’s Letters would be grouped together

4. And, the book of Revelation

5. Most of the manuscripts DO NOT contain the entire New Testament

IV. The NUMBER and NATURE of MANUSCRIPTS

A. There are about 5,300 manuscripts of the New Testament available. About 650 of these are UNCIALS.

B. Not many of these are even close to being a COMPLETE New Testament

C. New Testament books were DICTATED. Note Romans 16:21, 22 where it is stated that, “I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.”
Read also I Peter 5:12 and Galatians 6:11 where Paul wrote in his own hand.

D. The New Testament books may, at first, have been written cursively, but later copied in **UNCIAL SCRIPT, CAPITAL LETTERS** and put in **codex form**.

E. The **UNCIAL** manuscripts were *without spaces between words*, and had very little, if any, punctuation

F. As noted above, there are about 650 uncials which includes about 95 papyri, and **270 “Lectionaries”** which were specially prepared manuscripts for public reading in the assembly.

G. If the **PAPYRI** and **LECTIONARIES** are **SUBTRACTED**, there are about **280** remaining **UNCIALS** available which were copied from the 3rd to the 10th centuries.

V. IMPORTANT UNCIAL MANUSCRIPTS

A. About **50 papyri** are dated from the 2nd to the 4th centuries

B. The **MOST COMPLETE “VELLUM”** (parchment) manuscripts are the **VATICAN, SINAITIC, and ALEXANDRIAN**. They are complete, or almost complete copies of the New Testament, and have almost all of the Old Testament.

C. The **VATICAN MANUSCRIPT** *(Codex “B”)*

1. It is dated from the 4th century (The 300s A.D.), and is a very important New Testament manuscript.

2. It is in the Vatican Library in Rome, and has been there at least since 1481 A. D.

3. A photographic copy was made available for all scholars to study about 1888-89. Before that, it was in relative seclusion with limited access.

4. It contains almost the entire Old and New Testaments in Greek.

5. It has 759 leaves of fine vellum, and each page is about 10 inches square.

6. It is considered to be the most exact copy of the New Testament that is available
7. **NOTE:** The Vatican manuscript **DOES NOT** contain Mark 16:9-20, **BUT**, at that exact place in the manuscript, **more than a column of bland space was left unwritten**

D. The **SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT** (“Aleph”)

1. It is almost equally as important as the Vatican manuscript

2. It was obtained by Constantin von Tischendorf in 1859 from the monastery at the bottom of Jebel Musa (“mountain of Moses”), the traditional Mount Sinai.

3. Tischendorf had first visited St. Catherine’s monastery in 1844 and had found a number of sheets of the Greek Old Testament.

4. In 1859, **almost the entire text was found**, and, in Cairo, he and two assistants copied 110,000 lines of the text, and checked them letter by letter.

5. Tischendorf has been honored almost more than any other Biblical scholar.

6. This manuscript, made of fine vellum, is now in the British Library.

7. It has been **DATED at the middle of the 4th century** (middle of the 300s)

8. It is the **oldest complete manuscript** of the New Testament available today.

E. The **ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT** (Codex “A”)

1. It was kept in Alexandria, Egypt for several centuries.

2. It was in Constantinople in 1621, and was presented to King Charles I of England in 1627. It is now in the British Museum.

3. It contains most of the Old and New Testaments.

4. It is contained in FOUR VOLUMES, but was originally **one volume**, and is the only Greek manuscript that also includes I Clement, an Ante-Nicene writer who wrote about 95 A.D..

5. It has **773 leaves**, and these pages are about **12 ½ by 10 ½ inches**. Ten leaves are missing from the Old Testament and several are missing from the New Testament.
F. These THREE MAJOR MANUSCRIPTS were NOT AVAILABLE when the KING JAMES TRANSLATION was made in 1611 A. D..

VI. OTHER GREEK MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Many New Testament manuscripts are scattered in many parts of the world.

B. Comparisons may be made between these many manuscripts and the Vatican, Sinaitic, and Alexandrian.

C. These manuscripts are located in National Libraries, Museums, Prominent Universities, Monasteries and Cathedrals, and in Private Collections.

D. TWO FIFTH CENTURY UNCIALS (The 400s A. D.)

1. Codex of EPHRAEM (Codex “C”)
   a. This manuscript is a “PALIMPSEST.” This word means “scraped again.” The ink of an earlier writing was removed, and another writing placed over it. The old writing could still be detected. It was the Scripture.
   b. 38 sermons of a man named Ephraem of Syria had covered up the Bible text.
   c. Much of the Old Testament is missing from this manuscript.
   d. In the New Testament, 145 leaves contain all the books except II Thessalonians and II John.

2. The Codex BEZAE (“D”)
   a. This manuscript is DATED also in the FIFTH CENTURY (The 400s A. D.)
   b. It is located at Cambridge University in England.
   c. It contains, with some “gaps,” the FOUR GOSPELS, ACTS, and III JOHN
   d. It is written in GREEK on the left page of the codex, and in LATIN on the right page
e. When the KING JAMES was translated, Codex BEZAE was the only UNCIAL available, but, because it had some strange variations, it was not used widely in the translation.

f. In spite of the variations in the text, the agreement with the Vatican and the Sinaitic is much greater than the disagreement.

E. We NOTE TWO OTHER LATER MANUSCRIPTS

1. Codex LAUDIANUS  (Codex E”)
   a. This manuscript is DATED at the end of the 6th century (The 500s A. D.)
   b. It is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University in England.
   c. It contains the book of ACTS
   d. It is the earliest manuscript that contains the Eunuch’s confession in Acts 8:37.

2. Codex REGIUS  (Codex “L”)
   a. This is a manuscript DATED in the 8th century (The 700s A. D.)
   b. It is a manuscript of the GOSPELS
   c. It is in the National Library in Paris, France
   d. It includes Mark 16:9-20, but it also has a shorter ending of Mark that is not well supported by other manuscripts.

VII. A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT “MINUSCULES”

A. There are about 2,800 available at the present, and these are DATED beginning in the 9th century (The 800s A. D.)

B. Minuscules #1 and #2 of the 12th century (The 1100s A. D.) were used by ERASMUS in editing the first Greek New Testament

C. Number 33, of the 9th century, (The 800s A. D.) has the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, and is called the “Queen of Cursives.”
D. Minuscule 61 of the 15th or 16th century (The 1400s and 1500s A. D.) is the first manuscript to have in it I John 5:7, 8, the “three heavenly witnesses” passage.

VIII. LECTIONARIES

A. As noted above, these are special manuscripts which were carefully prepared for public reading in the worship assembly. Much attention was given to exact and correct copying.

B. Most were prepared from the GOSPELS, but some also are lectionaries from Acts and the Epistles.

C. About 2,200 of these “lectionaries” have been enumerated.

ANCIENT VERSIONS (TRANSLATIONS) OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson 4

I. Introduction

1. Translations are always made by FALLIBLE MEN who are NOT INSPIRED BY GOD. Therefore, they must be considered as “secondary” witnesses to the Greek text.

2. We must always seek to find the EXACT TEXT written by the INSPIRED MEN who were directed by the HOLY SPIRIT (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:20, 21, I Corinthians 2:9, 10, etc.)

3. The most important ancient TRANSLATIONS out of the GREEK TEXT WERE IN:

   a. Syriac
   b. Coptic (Egyptian)
   c. Latin

4. The SYRIAC and LATIN are DATED in the 2nd century (The 100s A. D.)

II. ANCIENT VERSIONS

A. The SYRIAC Versions
1. Syriac is almost identical to the Aramaic language.

2. The “Diatessaron” of Tatian was a harmony of the Four Gospels, Matthew-John.

3. The word, “diatessaron” means “through four,” that is, through four Gospels. He merged the four gospels into one continuous story of the Life of Jesus.

4. Tatian’s work is dated about 170 A.D. He had become a pupil of Justin Martyr who lived in the middle of the 2nd century.

5. The “Diatessaron” was lost, and we know it only through secondary sources.

6. The Old Syriac Version
   
a. There are two manuscripts of this Old Syriac version that are dated about the 5th century, and one of these may go back as early as the 4th century.

   b. The “Peshitta” (“simple”) Syriac translation has been in use since the 5th century.

B. The Coptic Versions (Egyptian)

1. The Sahidic dialect translation of Southern Egypt dates back to the 3rd and 4th centuries.

2. The Bohairic dialect translation of Northern Egypt has some manuscripts from the 5th century (The 400s A.D.)

3. These translations are similar to the Sinaitic and Vatican type of text.

C. The Latin Translations

1. Note: Paul wrote the book of Romans in Greek, but Latin was the Language of the City of Rome.

2. Therefore, later, a Latin translation was desired.

3. It is believed that Latin versions of the New Testament were used.
in Africa as early as 160 A. D.

4. Evidently, the first **LATIN versions** were translated by **INDIVIDUALS** independently to be used in **specific congregations**.

D. **JEROME** and the **LATIN VULGATE**

1. Jerome was born about 345 A. D., but was educated in **ROME**. He spoke **LATIN**.

2. In 382-83 A. D., he was asked by the Roman bishop to bring together the Old Latin versions into one official translation.

3. Jerome wanted to be certain that the Latin translation would conform to the **ORIGINAL GREEK**.

4. The **“LATIN VULGATE”** translation came out of Jerome’s work. The word, **“Vulgate”** means **“common”**.

5. It was **NOT** until the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 A. D. that Jerome’s revision was officially called **“Vulgate.”**

6. There are about **10,000 manuscripts** of the Vulgate, more than any other book.

7. The Vulgate **IS NOT BASED ON THE ORIGINAL GREEK**, but rather is a **revising by Jerome of the OLD LATIN**.

8. However, the Vulgate was the **BIBLE OF WESTERN EUROPE** for about **1,000 years**.

9. It is remembered that, in former years, the Catholic **“mass”** was in **LATIN**.

10. The **Vulgate translation** was the **first important book** printed on Gutenberg’s **printing press** in 1456 A. D.

11. It **became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church**.

12. **NOTE**: In English, the Roman Catholic Bible is **A TRANSLATION OF A TRANSLATION!**

**THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Lesson 5

19
I. Introduction

1. We no longer have the “autographs” of inspired men. The PAPYRUS on which they wrote would perish in a number of years.

2. If God’s WRITTEN WORD is to spread throughout the world, COPIES must be made from the ORIGINALS.

3. It would be natural for NEW COPIES to be made to REPLACE the “timeworn” ORIGINALS.

4. NOTE: WHEN COPIES ARE MADE, IT IS CERTAIN THAT COPYING ERRORS WILL BE MADE!

5. For example, when the King James translation was published, 400 mistakes were corrected in the next edition TWO YEARS LATER!

6. It is NOT DIFFICULT to see how COPYING ERRORS were NOT observed in New Testament manuscripts.

II. VARIANTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

A. “Textual Criticism” is the science of comparison and study of manuscripts to recover the EXACT WORDS of the INSPIRED WRITER.

B. It is so essential to “weed out” the “chaff” that may have slipped in to the original text of the New Testament.

C. There are TWO TYPES of ERRORS in BIBLICAL COPIES

1. UN-INTENTIONAL ERRORS

   a. They are mistakes of the “hand, eye, and ear”

   b. These are rather EASY to see

   c. Sometimes, a “scribe” would write down the WRONG WORD.

   d. Sometimes, he would NOT HEAR CORRECTLY!

   e. EXAMPLES in ENGLISH:

      (1) Sometimes, people do not hear correctly and do not
distinguish between “CAN” and “CAN’T”

(2) Sometimes, it is hard to distinguish between the words, “AFFECT” and “EFFECT.”

f. EXAMPLE in GREEK:

(1) In Revelation 1:5, should the text read, “that loosed us” from our sins, or should it read, “that washed us” from our sins?

(2) In Greek, the two words are “lusanti” and “lousanti,” just different in ONE LETTER. One manuscript may have one of these words, and another manuscript will have the other.

(3) The pronunciation was evidently quite SIMILAR, or even IDENTICAL

g. ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

(1) In Romans 5:1, should the text read, “Let us have peace with God,” or should it read, “We have peace with God?”

(2) The difference in Greek is that in one word, the letter “O” is long, and in the other word, it is a short “O.”

h. Sometimes, in manuscripts, when copying, the scribe would OMIT some words. His eye would perhaps “jump” from Line 8 down to Line 10, etc..

I. Sometimes, a note of explanation, or a comment, would be placed in the margin, and then, later, it would be added to the text. THIS DID NOT HAPPEN VERY OFTEN!

2. INTENTIONAL ERRORS

a. Un-intentional errors can usually be corrected easily and present NO problem.
b. Intentional errors may be more difficult to correct in the text.

c. A scribe might be very HONEST, and he just desired to “clarify” a verse BY ADDING SOMETHING to that verse.

d. An EXAMPLE of ADDING to the text

(1) The King James says, “And the Lord added to the church ....” (Acts 2:47)

(2) In later manuscripts, the word “church” (“ekklesia”) was added.

(3) It should read, “And the Lord added to their number day by day ....”

(4) We quickly say that later in Acts, these SAME PEOPLE are called “THE CHURCH” (Acts 5:11)


THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEXTUAL VARIATIONS
Lesson 6

I. Introduction

1. A “Textual Variation” simply means that one manuscript may have a different reading than another manuscript.

2. A relevant and important question would be, “What is the significance of these variations?

3. AN IMPORTANT TRUTH TO CONSIDER: To guarantee EXACT, CORRECT COPYING, God would need to PERFORM A MIRACLE each time a manuscript was copied.

4. NOTE: There are many more manuscripts of the BIBLE than of ANY OTHER BOOK FROM THE ANCIENT PAST!
a. There are about 5,300 manuscripts. This includes both PARTIAL and MORE COMPLETE manuscripts.

b. The more manuscripts there are, the more possibility of VARIATIONS.

c. **BUT:** At the same time, there is the means available (MANY MANUSCRIPTS) to check for accuracy so that the original text can be apparent.

II. TYPES OF VARIATIONS

A. “TRIVIAL” VARIATIONS

1. This may involve the omission or addition of words in a manuscript such as “and,” “for,” and “but.”

2. Or, variations in a manuscript such as “The one who has ears” versus, “The one who has ears to hear.” These are unimportant.

3. They may involve SPELLING differences in manuscripts such as whether it should be “Apollos” or “Apelles” (Acts 18:24)

4. A variation may involve a SIMPLE WORD ORDER in a manuscript such as “The birth of Christ Jesus,” or “The birth of Jesus Christ.”

5. These “TRIVIAL” variants do NOT affect the original meaning of the Text!

B. MORE “SUBSTANTIAL” VARIATIONS

1. These “substantial” variations may involve ONE VERSE or SEVERAL VERSES.

2. Consider the “ADULTEROUS” WOMAN  (John 7:53-8:11)

   a. The only EARLY manuscript that has this story is Codex BEZAE of the 5th century

   b. Codex Bezae was the only UNCIAL manuscript available at the time the King James Translation was made. And, so, it was included in the text of the King James.

   c. This story may have been very true, and handed down from
generation to generation.

d. We know that it fits EXACTLY with the attitude of our Lord Jesus concerning SINNERS. Note the stories of Luke 15, the LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, LOST SON!

e. The Greek scholar Hort said of this story, “The story itself has justly seemed to vouch for its own substantial truth.”

3. Consider also the CONFESSION of the ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH (Acts 8:37)

   a. No early Greek manuscript, before the 6th century (The 500s A.D.) had this verse

   b. BUT, confession of faith in Christ Jesus is noted many times in the New Testament. Read Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10; I Timothy 6:12, etc.

4. Consider the “THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES” of I John 5:7

   a. Erasmus in his Greek text and Tyndale included it.

   b. But, only TWO late manuscripts had it, one from the 14th or the 15th century and one from the 16th century.

   c. Of course, there are many OTHER PASSAGES that teach about the GODHEAD (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14, etc.)

5. Consider the ENDING OF THE BOOK OF MARK (Mark 16:9-20)

   a. The SINAIITIC and VATICAN manuscripts of the 4th century DO NOT HAVE THESE VERSES

   b. Other early manuscripts also DO NOT INCLUDE them

      (1) The Old Syriac translation

      (2) The earliest manuscript of the Latin Vulgate

      (3) The Armenian language manuscripts, etc.

   c. Some vocabulary in Mark 16:9-20 is not found elsewhere in
Mark or the other gospels.

d. It is said that verses 8 and 9 do not seem to connect well with each other

e. Mary Magdalene is introduced in BOTH verses 1 and 9.

f. A NUMBER OF FACTORS ARE IN FAVOR OF INCLUDING MARK 16:9-20 IN THE TEXT

   (1) The Alexandrian manuscript of the 5th century has it

   (2) The Ephraem manuscript of the 5th century has it.

   (3) The Codex Bezae manuscript of the 5th century has it

   (4) Other UNCIALS, plus the Old Latin, and the Syriac Peshitta version have it

   (5) The Latin Vulgate has it

   (6) IRENÆUS, in the latter part of the 2nd century, refers to this text and states that MARK is the author

g. It may be that the last leaf of the Sinaitic Codex may have been TORN AWAY from the codex and lost.

h. NOTE: The TRUTHFULNESS of what is taught in Mark 16:9-20 is NOT IN QUESTION. The events of these verses are also confirmed by the other gospel accounts.

I. The SCRIBE who COPIED this portion of MARK left more than a COLUMN of BLANK SPACE at the end of Mark BEFORE he began the copying of the book of LUKE!

j. Brother Neil Lightfoot said, “not one principle of faith or command of the Lord is involved” with respect to these textual variations.
ASSURING THE ACCURACY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK TEXT

Lesson 7

I. Introduction

1. **VERY IMPORTANT**: If we take only ONE MANUSCRIPT as the BASIS for the New Testament Greek text, we will FAIL to get the original text.

2. **No single manuscript is free from scribal errors.**

3. If we use MANY MANUSCRIPTS and OTHER IMPORTANT WITNESSES we will be ASSURED of getting much closer to the ORIGINAL TEXT.

II. THREE TYPES OF AUTHORITIES FOR DETERMINING THE ORIGINAL TEXT

A. **Comparing the THOUSANDS of available MANUSCRIPTS**

1. Not all of these manuscripts have equal importance. Some are more important than others.

2. When a number of manuscripts regularly agree in their readings, they are called a “text type.”

3. There are **three major text types**:
   a. The “**Alexandrian**” text type — Those manuscripts that seem to have originated in Alexandria, Egypt
   b. The “**Byzantine**” text type — Those manuscripts that seem to have their origin in Antioch, Syria.
   c. The “**Western**” text type ---- Those manuscripts that seem to have originated in Western Europe.

4. Of course, the PRIMARY SOURCE for determining the true text are **THESE MANY MANUSCRIPTS**
B. **Examining the EARLY TRANSLATIONS** (Versions) which were translations into a **NUMBER OF LANGUAGES**

1. These translations must have been made from a Greek text of the New Testament.

2. Certainly, it is recognized that **TRANSLATIONS ARE MADE BY FALLIBLE MEN WHO CAN, AND DO, MAKE MISTAKES.** But, translations are valuable for comparing with manuscripts and EARLY WRITERS.

3. Early versions were translations into such languages as Syriac, Latin, Coptic (Egyptian), Armenian, Gothic, Ethiopian, and Georgian.

C. **Early Christian WRITERS**

1. We have available **MANY VOLUMES** of the writings of these men

2. In their Greek writings, **THEY QUOTE MULTITUDES OF BIBLE VERSES.**

3. **NOTE the names** of some of these men and the approximate **DATES** when they wrote.

a. Clement of Rome  (95 A. D.)

b. Ignatius  (110-120 A. D.)

c. Polycarp  (Same time as Ignatius)

d. Epistle of Barnabas  (Not the New Testament Barnabas)  (130-140 A. D.)

e. Hermas  (Same as “Barnabas”)

f. Justin Martyr  (About 150 A. D.)

g. Irenaeus  (180-190 A. D.)

h. Clement of Alexandria  (About 190 A. D.)

I. Tertullian  (200-210 A. D.)
j. Origen   (About 225 A. D.)

k. Cyprian  (About 250 A. D.)

4. NOTE: These writers would be quoting from MANUSCRIPTS that ARE OLDER than the MANUSCRIPTS AVAILABLE TO US!

5. Concerning the VAST NUMBER OF SCRIPTURES quoted by these WRITERS, Dr. Bruce Metzger, a renowned translator said:

“So extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.”

D. A TASTE of HISTORY

1. In 1516 A. D., ERASMUS of Rotterdam, Netherlands published the first GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

2. In 1550 A. D., Robert Stephanus published a Greek New Testament that became the basis for the “Received Text” (“Textus Receptus”) from which the King James Version came.

3. BUT, in 1881, the scholars, Westcott and Hort, using many more OLDER manuscripts, not available earlier, produced the basis for our Greek text NOW.

4. NOTE: The Sinaitic manuscript was made available through Tischendorf after 1859.

III. MORE EXCITING MANUSCRIPTS: “MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE SAND,” THE PAPYRI

A. Manuscripts such as the Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic were written on VELLUM, animal skins.

B. However, the EARLIEST MANUSCRIPTS of the New Testament were written on PAPYRUS.

C. Consider the following concerning PAPYRUS WRITINGS
1. In 1750 A.D., a villa was discovered at Herculaneum, Italy which had been destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

2. About 2,000 papyrus rolls and fragments were found there, writings which would be DATED before the eruption. These were secular Papyri.

3. Of course, this raised the hope of people that MORE PAPYRI, especially BIBLICAL PAPYRI, might be found.

D. In 1896-97 A.D., a number of Biblical papyri were found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt.

1. One of these papyri was a portion of Matthew 1 which was dated in the 3rd century (The 2000s A.D.).

2. At that time, it was considered to be the oldest known manuscript

3. 20 manuscripts from Oxyrhynchus of portions of the New Testament are DATED in the 2nd, 3rd, and early 4th centuries.

E. At Nag Hammadi, in Egypt, in the year 1945, heretical Gnostic texts were found including the apocryphal “Gospel of Thomas.”

F. The CHESTER BEATTY PAPYRI

1. The original group of papyri contained 11 manuscripts, 8 from the Old Testament in Greek, and 3 from the New Testament.

2. They are in the Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland (See below)

G. The BODMER PAPYRI

1. These papyri were found at Thebes in Southern Egypt

2. There is a large number of papyri written in Greek and Coptic (Egyptian)

3. These include MOST OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, and I and II PETER
H. SELECTED NEW TESTAMENT PAPYRI WITH APPROXIMATE DATES

1. P-1 — More than 15 verses from Matthew 1. This papyrus was found at Oxyrhynchus. Dated in the 3rd century.

2. P-4, P-64, P-57 — These fragments are from the same codex. They contain a number of verses from Matthew and Luke. Late 2nd century

3. P-5 — Part of several chapters of the gospel of John. 3rd century

4. P-38 — Part of Acts 18, 19. Late 3rd century

5. P-45, P-46, P-47 — These are part of the Beatty papyri. P-45 contains part of the FOUR GOSPELS and ACTS. P-46 has most of PAUL'S LETTERS. P-47 is about 1/3 of the book of Revelation. 3rd century (The 200s A. D.).

6. P-52 — The John Rylands fragment. This fragment has John 18:31-33, 37, 38. It is dated from the FIRST HALF OF THE 2nd CENTURY. The OLDEST PAPYRUS.

7. P-66 — Almost all of the first 14 chapters of John. 200 A. D. or earlier.

8. P-72 — A Bodmer papyrus. I and II Peter and Jude in complete form. 3rd or 4th century.


IV. ESSENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

A. There are about 100 New Testament PAPYRI that are known today

B. Of these, more than 60 are from the 4th century and EARLIER

C. More than 30 are from the 3rd century and EARLIER

D. These PAPYRI, contain in PART (some in whole) every book of the
New Testament except 1\textsuperscript{ST} AND 2\textsuperscript{ND} TIMOTHY

E. These PAPYRI uphold the Greek text WE HAVE TODAY, not the “Received Text” of the King James Version

F. The text of the New Testament rests on a SOLID FOUNDATION

G. “SUBSTANTIAL” VARIATIONS only account for about \(\frac{1}{1000}\)th of the text of the New Testament

H. Sir Frederic Kenyon, a great scholar said,

“The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”

THE TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Lesson 8

I. Introduction

1. The Old Testament was FIRST written in HEBREW (Except for a small amount written in ARAMAIC as noted before). The Old Testament was “INSPIRED” of God (II Peter 1:20, 21; II Timothy 3:16, 17). Read also Matthew 22:43 where Jesus said that David spoke “in the Spirit” in Psalm 110:1.

2. NOTE: When Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, he stated that these disciples could understand the “mystery” of Christ which had not been known in other generations as “it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Ephesians 3:4, 5). THIS IS INSPIRATION!

II. HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. The “ALEPPO” CODEX

1. It is named after the CITY in SYRIA.

2. It contained the ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT

3. The manuscript was PARTIALLY BURNED in ARAB RIOTS
in December 1947. after present Israel was made a nation by the United Nations.

4. It is DATED in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century (The 900s A. D.)

B. The “\textit{LENINGRAD}” CODEX

1. Now, because of the \textit{partial destruction} of th “Aleppo” codex, this manuscript is the \textit{OLDEST COMPLETE} manuscript of the \textit{Hebrew Bible}

2. It was \textit{COPIED} in Cairo, Egypt about 1010 A. D.

3. Both the “Aleppo” and the “Leningrad” codices are good examples of what is called the “Massoretic Text.” More below.

C. The “\textit{CAIRO}” CODEX

1. This manuscript contains what the Jews called, “The FORMER and LATTER PROPHETS”

2. It was \textit{COPIED} about 895 A. D.

3. It is in the possession of the \textit{KARAITE SECT} in Egypt.

D. The “\textit{LENINGRAD}” CODEX of the PROPHETS

1. It is DATED in 916 A. D.

2. It contains \textit{ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL} and the \textit{MINOR PROPHETS}

E. British Library CODEX of the “\textit{PENTATEUCH}”

1. It is also DATED about the 10\textsuperscript{th} century (The 900s A. D.)

2. There are \textit{MANY MORE} manuscripts, but these are the \textit{MOST IMPORTANT}

F. \textbf{A FASCINATING QUESTION:} WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE OLDER MANUSCRIPTS? WHY ARE THE MANUSCRIPTS NOTED ABOVE DATED AS LATE AS THE 9\textsuperscript{TH} AND 10\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURIES A. D.?
1. The Jews had almost a superstitious respect for the Scripture

2. They would have a “ceremonial burial” of damaged or defective manuscripts

3. Before the “burial,” they would “hide” them in what was called a “genizeh.” This word means “to hide.”

III. The Massoretes

A. The Massoretes were a group of Jewish Scribes who were so careful to copy the text of the Old Testament correctly.

B. These Scribes began about 500 A.D. Note that there were Scribes also in the Old Testament (I Chronicles 2:55)

C. Information concerning the Massoretes

1. The ones who were in Tiberias are the most important

2. It was well known concerning the care they had, the concern to copy the text correctly.

3. They were well known also for adding vowel points and accents above and below the text to assist in pronunciation. Hebrew had only consonants in its alphabet. When Hebrew ceased to be a “spoken” language, assistance was needed in reading the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

4. The Massoretes were so careful that they even counted the verses, words, and letters of the text. They even counted the number of times that each letter was used in each book.

5. Because of their very strict rules in copying, it will be seen that their text of the Old Testament, the Massoretic Text is like the recent discoveries of copies made before the birth of Christ, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

IV. The Dead Sea Scrolls

A. The first scrolls were discovered in 1948 in caves on the mountain behind Qumran near the Dead Sea.
B. About 800 scrolls have now been found including thousands of fragments.

C. A MUSEUM was built in JERUSALEM near the government building to “House” a number of the scrolls. It is called “The Shrine of the Book.”

D. One of the scrolls is the great scroll of the BOOK OF ISAIAH

   1. This scroll is 24 feet long.

   2. It is DATED about 100 B.C. (One century before Jesus’ birth)

E. In these many scrolls, and the fragments, almost every book of the Old Testament is represented.

F. For all practical purposes, the ISAIAH SCROLL is the SAME TEXT that the Massoretes copied HUNDREDS OF YEARS LATER.

G. The SCROLLS are almost ONE THOUSAND YEARS EARLIER than the manuscripts described ABOVE, and YET, THEY TEACH THE SAME THING!

H. In the DEAD SEA SCROLLS, there are about 20 manuscripts of the book of ISAIAH.

   1. One example of a textual VARIANT is that in one manuscript of Isaiah 6, the words, “HOLY, HOLY” are found, while in another manuscript, the text says, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY.”

   2. The variations are NOT SIGNIFICANT!

I. One scholar said, “The authenticity of the Masoretic text stands higher than at any time in the history of modern textual criticism ....”
   — Bleddyn J. Roberts

J. Another scholar said, “It should therefore be stated explicitly that, when we survey the Hebrew Bible as a whole, the incidence of copyists’ errors is statistically very few indeed....” “.... Even allowing for the intrusion of occasional errors in the received Hebrew text, it is remarkable how faithfully it was transmitted.” — J. Weingreen

ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS (VERSIONS) OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
Lesson 9

I. Introduction

1. These include the **SEPTUAGINT, ARAMAIC TARGUMS, SYRIAC VERSION, and LATIN VERSION**

2. The **MOST IMPORTANT is the Septuagint**, the one that was used so often in the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament.

II. ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. The “**SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH**”

1. This is really **NOT a translation**, but, rather, a **variation of the Hebrew text**.

2. It can be traced back to about the year **400 B.C.** It must be noted that Samaritans were a mixture of Jews and other nations.

3. Most of the variations in this text from the Hebrew text are **variants in SPELLING and GRAMMAR**.

4. It **ADDS material** that **EMPHASIZES MOUNT GERIZIM**, the mountain where the Samaritans worshiped (And still do).

5. **NOTE** the passage of Scripture, **Deuteronomy 27:4**, which speaks of MOUNT EBAL. The Samaritan manuscript changed it to **MOUNT GERIZIM**

6. This manuscript also rejects material in the Old Testament that elevates **MOUNT ZION and JERUSALEM**.

7. The Samaritans accept **ONLY THE PENTATEUCH** of the Old Testament.

B. The **ARAMAIC TARGUMS**

1. In Nehemiah 8:5-8, when EZRA was reading the Law to the people, The LEVITES would explain, translate, and give the sense of the teaching. This seems to be a “TARGUM,” which is an **ORAL PARAPHRASE** of Scripture.
2. After the Babylonian Captivity, the language of the Jewish people was **ARAMAIC**. Synagogues were built and utilized.

3. When the **READING** of Scripture was done in **Hebrew**, an “oral” paraphrase or translation was given in **Aramaic**. Later, these were **WRITTEN** down.

4. Later, two written Targum translations were the most important, one on the **Pentateuch** and one on the **Prophets**.

**C. The SYRIAC “PESHITTA”**

1. The **‘TARGUMS’** were written in **WESTERN ARAMAIC**, the language of the Jews during Jesus’ time on earth.

2. However, the Hebrew text was translated into **EASTERN ARAMAIC** or **Syriac**. The Syriac dialect was called **‘PESHITTA’** or “**SIMPLE**” Syriac.

3. The Syriac translation of the **OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW** was made quite early, perhaps as early as the **middle of the 1st century** A. D..

4. It is **NOT KNOWN** if the ones who did the translation were **JEWS** or **CHRISTIANS**.

5. **NOTE**: Upon examination, it is seen that the SYRIAC Old Testament text is **SIMILAR** to the Massoretic Text coming much later.

**D. The LATIN VULGATE of the OLD TESTAMENT**

1. The **OLD LATIN** translation is **DATED** at about **160 A. D.**

2. However, because this translation had been based on the **SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION**, it had some problems.

3. Jerome, at first, based **HIS Latin revision** of the Old Testament on the **SEPTUAGINT**, but later was convinced that the Latin translation must be based on the **HEBREW**.

5. **NOTE:** Jerome **DID NOT** include the APOCRYPHAL BOOKS of the Old Testament in his translation. He affirmed that, because there were 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, there should be only 22 books (Our 39 books) in the Old Testament.

E. The **GREEK SEPTUAGINT** of the OLD TESTAMENT

1. This is the translation of the Old Testament from **HEBREW into GREEK**.

2. The Septuagint is **one of the MOST IMPORTANT** Bible translations.

3. An ancient writer Aristeas said that Ptolemy II of Egypt (285-247 B.C.) **wanted** the Jewish Law translated into **GREEK**.

4. **SIX Jews FROM EACH** of the 12 tribes of Israel (72) were selected to do the translation. However, in “round numbers,” the word “Septuagint” means “70.”

5. The Roman numerals “**LXX**” (70) are used to describe the Septuagint.

6. **NOTE:** Most of the textual variations between the HEBREW and GREEK texts are **MINOR**

7. The Septuagint was the “Bible” of the early Christians until the New Testament was completed by the inspired authors.

8. The Septuagint was the text used most when the New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament.

9. Someone said that the **APOSTLE PAUL** wrote as a man with the Septuagint “in his blood.”

10. Neil Lightfoot says that the **Septuagint is important to Christians** for **THREE REASONS**:
   
a. It was the “Bible” of the early church in early days

b. Its background is important to the understanding of the New Testament.

c. Its Greek language prepared the way for evangelism by Christians.
THE “CANON” OF THE SCRIPTURES

Lesson 10

I. Introduction

1. Many RELIGIOUS BOOKS were written during the period of time of the writing of the Old and New Testaments.

2. The question must be asked, “Which of these should be considered as “SACRED SCRIPTURES”? Which should be in the Bible?

3. Should we believe the “Da Vinci Code” which seeks to add Gnostic writings?

4. The word “canon” comes from the Greek word, “kanon” and the Hebrew “qaneh.” We get the English word, “cane” from the Greek. The word means a “reed,” and then it was used to refer to a “measuring rod,” a RULE or STANDARD.

5. Note the Greek word, “kanon” in the Scripture. It is the word, “rule” in Philippians 3:16.

6. NOTE A VERY IMPORTANT POINT: THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE POSSESS THEIR OWN AUTHORITY!
   b. A book should be considered “CANONICAL” because of its own INHERENT AUTHORITY, and NOT because some CHURCH COUNCIL composed of FRAIL HUMANS DECLARED IT SO.

II. THE “CANON” OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. There is MUCH INFORMATION in the NEW Testament concerning the “CANON” of the OLD TESTAMENT. Which books are considered to be a part of God’s Word?

B. The Old Testament is called, the “HOLY SCRIPTURES”

1. It is called, “The Scripture” (Romans 4:3)

3. The “Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2)

4. The “Sacred Writings” (II Timothy 3:15)

5. NOTE that the New Testament says many times, “IT IS WRITTEN....” (For example, Read Matthew 4:1-11)

C. Jesus has given us a very CLEAR PICTURE of the EXTENT of the Old Testament CANON. In Luke 24:44, He said that everything written in the “LAW OF MOSES” and “The PROPHETS” and the “PSALMS” must be fulfilled concerning himself.

D. NOTE: This undoubtedly refers to the THREE DIVISIONS into which the Jews separated the OLD TESTAMENT

1. The “LAW” — Genesis through Deuteronomy

2. The “PROPHETS” — There were “Former” and “Latter” Prophets
   a. “Former” Prophets – The books of Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings
   b. “Latter” Prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets


   NOTE the important point made about the “Chronicles” below

E. Jesus spoke of the fathers of the Jewish people at that time who had KILLED the PROPHETS. He spoke of the MARTYRS of the Old Testament from the “blood of Abel” to the “blood of Zechariah” (Luke 11:47-51)

1. Abel was the first one killed in the Old Testament (Genesis 4)

2. Zechariah was the last one killed in the Old Testament (II Chronicles 24:20, 21). How can this be?
3. From ABEL in the book of GENESIS until ZECHARIAH in the book of II CHRONICLES.

4. **THE ANSWER:** The Jews placed 1st and 2nd Chronicles LAST in the HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT. Their Old Testament CANON was GENESIS TO 2ND CHRONICLES!

5. Therefore, the Jewish Old Testament in the days of Jesus were the SAME as our 39 Old Testament books. We just have them in a different order.

F. The historian, JOSEPHUS, in his writing “Against Apion,” about 95 A. D., stated that there were 22 books in the Hebrew Bible. These 22 books are EXACTLY the SAME as our 39 books of the Old Testament. Some were COMBINED in Josephus’ LIST.

G. In the 3rd century A. D., the writer ORIGEN listed the SAME 22 books in the HEBREW Old Testament.

H. In the 4th century A. D., the translator, JEROME, also only ACCEPTED these 22 books which are the same as our 39 Old Testament books.

I. **A VERY IMPORTANT POINT:** Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate, the basis for the Catholic Bible, BUT, he DID NOT ACCEPT the APOCRYPHA. (Please see Lesson 11)

III. **THE “CANON” OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

A. **NOTE:** Peter affirmed that the writings of the apostle PAUL are Scripture! (II Peter 3:15, 16)

B. It was NO LATER than the MIDDLE of the 2ND CENTURY when the writings of the APOSTLES were READ WIDELY in the congregations of that day.

C. The “Muratorian Fragment” is DATED in the latter part of the 2nd century A. D. (The late 100s A. D.). It was found by Mr. L. A. Muratori in the 18th century.

D. The New Testament books that are LISTED in the “Muratorian Fragment” are:
1. Luke is mentioned as the 3rd gospel. This infers that Matthew and Mark were at the top of this writer’s list.

2. Then, John and Acts are listed, the 13 letters of Paul, two letters of the apostle John, and Revelation.

E. The books NOT mentioned in this LIST are Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, and, perhaps 3rd John. **NOTE:** Some of this list was lost.

F. ORIGEN, about 225 A. D. undoubtedly accepted the FOUR GOSPELS, ACTS, 13 LETTERS OF PAUL, 1ST PETER, 1ST JOHN, and REVELATION.

   1. Origen also quoted a number of times from the book of HEBREWS, but, he stated that some people did not accept Hebrews, James, 2nd Peter, and 2nd and 3rd John.

   2. But, **NOTE ALSO** that Origen, in his “Homilies on Joshua,” which is preserved in a Latin translation, MENTIONED THE 27 BOOKS WHICH WE HAVE IN OUR NEW TESTAMENT.

G. Therefore, the New Testament of the 3rd century (The 200s A. D.) is LIKE OUR NEW TESTAMENT OF TODAY

H. In the 4th century (The 300s A. D.), EUSEBIUS, the historian, mentioned books accepted BY ALL. They were the FOUR GOSPELS, ACTS, 14 LETTERS OF PAUL, 1ST PETER, 1ST JOHN and REVELATION.

I. Eusebius stated that the books which were questioned, but accepted “by the majority” included James, Jude, 2nd Peter, and 2nd and 3rd John.

J. In 367 A. D., ATHANASIUS of Alexandria, LISTED THE 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, and stated, “.... Let no one add anything to them or take anything away from them.”

K. **CONCLUSIONS**

   1. **ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION:** The early church was NOT “naive” and “gullible,” just accepting without examination. They checked carefully concerning the books of the New Testament BEFORE ACCEPTING THEM.
2. ALSO, these books were NOT questioned because they had error in them, but, because they were NOT well known in some places.

3. It is ALSO SEEN CLEARLY THAT NO “CHURCH COUNCIL” ESTABLISHED THE NEW TESTAMENT “CANON!”

4. Neil Lightfoot said, “The Bible owes its authority to no individual or group...” “.... The church does not control the canon, but the canon controls the church.” Brother Lightfoot also said, “As a child identifies its mother, the later church identified the books which it regarded as having unique authority.” (Pages 161-62)

THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

Lesson 11

I. Introduction

1. The word “Apocryphal” means “hidden,” and was used to mean “concealed” or “secretive.”

2. Later, with reference to Bible books, it meant, “Non-canonical.”

3. The “Apocrypha” refers to extra books in the Catholic Old Testament.

4. The Roman Catholic Church uses the following terms:

   a. “Proto-canonical” which means “FIRST Canon”

   b. “Deutero-canonical” meaning “SECOND Canon”

5. Of course, this is an admission that the “Deutero-canonical” books, the Apocrypha, were NOT A PART OF THE ORIGINAL CANON.

II. THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS ADDED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. There are either 14 or 15 of them, depending on whether or not the “Letter of Jeremiah” is attached to “Baruch.”

B. They are DATED between 300 B. C., and 100 A. D..

C. The “HISTORICAL” APOCRYPHA
1. **1st ESDRAS**

2. **1st MACCABEES.** This book has historical value in recording events in the 2nd century B.C.

3. **2nd MACCABEES**

D. The **“LEGENDARY” APOCRYPHA**

1. Tobit

2. Judith

3. Additions to Esther

4. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men

5. Susanna

6. Bel and the Dragon

E. The **“PROPHETIC” APOCRYPHA**

1. Baruch

2. Letter of Jeremiah

3. 2nd Esdras

F. The **“ETHICAL / DEVOTIONAL” APOCRYPHA**

1. Ecclesiasticus or Sirach

2. Wisdom of Solomon

3. Prayer of Manasseh

**III. REASONS FOR REJECTING THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA**

A. These books were NEVER INCLUDED in the HEBREW CANON of the Old Testament. This is noted by consulting writers such as Josephus
B. JESUS and the APOSTLES NEVER QUOTED from these books.

C. Jewish writers such as PHILO and JOSEPHUS did NOT accept them.

D. JEROME (About 400 A.D.), whose Latin Vulgate is the basis for the Catholic Bible, believed them to be “apocryphal.”

E. They are NOT worthy of inspiration, and DO NOT have qualities worthy of inclusion in the Canon of the Old Testament.

   1. For example, JUDITH prayed that God might “use the deceit upon (her) lips” (Judith 9:10)

   2. This is emphasizing “doing evil that good may come.”

F. NOTE: These books cannot be “justified” for inclusion on a “compromise” basis. For example, the Church of England permitted them to be used in public assembly, but would not permit them to be the basis for doctrine.

G. DICTATORIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS CANNOT OVERRULE the OBJECTIONS to these books. On April 8, 1546, in its fourth session, the Roman Catholic Council of Trent pronounced that these books, EXCEPT 1ST AND 2ND ESDRAS and the PRAYER OF MANASSEH were to be considered AUTHORITATIVE and CANONICAL SCRIPTURE. In the Council, the statement was made that, anyone was condemned who, “does not accept these entire books, with all their parts, as they have commonly been used in the Catholic Church and are found in the ancient editions of the Latin Vulgate, as sacred and canonical.”

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

   A. They are DATED beginning in the 2nd century A.D. They try to “imitate” the authentic New Testament books. For example, the “Gospel of Thomas” quotes many verses from the FOUR GOSPELS.

   B. These Apocryphal books include literary types such as “Gospels,” “Acts,” “Epistles,” and “Apocalypses.”

   C. They are quite “fanciful” and bear no resemblance to the genuine Canon. (See examples below)
D. A FEW EXAMPLES OF THESE BOOKS

1. “Gospel of Thomas”

2. “Gospel of Peter”

3. “Protoevangelium of James”

4. “Gospel of Bartholomew”

5. “Infancy Story of Thomas”


E. EXAMPLES OF “FANCIFUL” STORIES

1. In the “Infancy Story of Thomas,” when a child bumped Jesus’ shoulder, Jesus struck him dead.

2. In the “Acts of John,” when bedbugs were found in his bed, John commanded them to leave.

3. In the “Gospel of Peter,” three men come out of Jesus’ tomb, and a cross is following them. The head of 2 of these men reaches up to heaven.

4. In the “Protoevangelium of James,” Mary is brought to the temple and dedicated as a virgin from the age of three.

5. In the “Acts of Paul,” Paul baptizes a lion who later saves Paul from death in the amphitheater in Ephesus.

F. WE SHOULD BE VERY THANKFUL THAT THE EARLY CHURCH REJECTED THESE BOOKS!

THE ENGLISH BIBLE

Lesson 12

I. Introduction
1. It was in the country of ENGLAND that the BATTLE WAS FOUGHT to produce the Bible for the COMMON MAN in his OWN LANGUAGE.

2. EARLIEST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:
   a. Caedmon, in the 7th century, produced some BIBLE STORIES in the old Anglo-Saxon language.
   b. About 735 A.D., the venerable BEDE near the time of his death, translated the gospel of JOHN.
   c. King Alfred, about 901 A.D., led his people in England in a religious reform, and he had the book of Psalms and other Scriptures translated.
   d. In the 10th century (The 900s A.D.), Abbott Aelfric translated parts of the Old Testament.
   e. Translations that survive in the Old English include the Pentateuch, some historical books, Psalms, and the Gospels.
   f. After the Norman conquest in 1066 A.D., the English language began to change into “MIDDLE ENGLISH.”
   g. In the 14th century, (The 1300s A.D.), the work of William Shoreham and Richard Rolle on the book of PSALMS paved the way for the struggle of the next TWO CENTURIES to give the Bible in English to the COMMON MAN.

II. JOHN WYCLIFFE  (1330-1384 A.D.)

A. There was a great deal of faction and unrest in England at this time.

B. Wycliffe was an OXFORD SCHOLAR who felt that the “common man” was WORTH SOMETHING!

C. Wycliffe said, “No man was so rude a scholar but that he might learn the words of the gospel according to his simplicity.”

D. During the last years of his life, with the assistance of his students, the Bible was translated OUT OF LATIN into ENGLISH.

E. This work was completed in 1382 A.D., the FIRST TRANSLATION of the COMPLETE BIBLE INTO ENGLISH!
III. WILLIAM TYNDALE

A. Tyndale is considered to be the “true father” of the English Bible.

B. He was educated at OXFORD and then CAMBRIDGE universities.

C. TYNDALE’S WORK of translation:

1. His ambition was to give the Bible to the people, translated NOT out of LATIN, but translated out of the ORIGINAL GREEK and HEBREW.

2. To an opponent, Tyndale said, “If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.”

3. In 1524 A. D., Tyndale left England and went to GERMANY. The next year, his translation was finished.

4. NOTE: In 1517 A. D., MARTIN LUTHER had begun his Reformation in GERMANY.

5. In 1526 A. D., the FIRST COPIES of his translation into ENGLISH WERE SMUGGLED into England.

6. The Roman Catholic Church condemned his translation. Copies were seized and BURNED!

7. NOTE: England, under King Henry VIII, did NOT break away from the religion of ROME until 1536 A. D..

8. In 1536, Tyndale was imprisoned in Brussels.

9. In October, 1536, Tyndale was STRANGLED and BURNED at the STAKE! He cried out, “LORD, OPEN THE KING OF ENGLAND’S EYES!”

10. His translation gave us such English words as, “congregation” instead of “church,” “love” instead of “charity,” “repentance” instead of “penance,” “Passover,” “mercy seat,” etc.
Tyndale DIED, but he had, “Lighted such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as should never be put out.”

IV. OTHER SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
(NOTE: The Church of England broke away from the Catholic Church under King Henry VIII in 1536 A.D.)

A. Miles Coverdale Translation (1535 A.D.). This was the first translation to circulate among the people without religious opposition.

B. Matthew’s Bible (1537 A.D.)

C. Taverner’s Bible (1539 A.D.)

D. The “GREAT BIBLE,” a revision of Matthew’s Bible (1538 A.D.)
   1. Henry VIII ordered that copies of this translation be placed in every church in England.
   2. NOTE: People “flocked” to the churches, and preachers complained that these people were more interested in the BIBLE than their sermons.

E. The GENEVA BIBLE (1560 A.D.)
   1. This translation was the MOST POPULAR of that century, the 16th century.
   2. NOTE: Queen Mary of England was a Catholic, and so, this Bible had to be produced in Geneva, Switzerland.
   3. This Bible became the “Bible of the family,” not limited to the church building.
   4. The GENEVA BIBLE went through 140 EDITIONS.
   5. Its commentary notes reflected the teachings of JOHN CALVIN. Therefore, it was NOT POPULAR with the “clergy” of the Church of England.

F. The “BISHOP’S” BIBLE
   1. This translation was produced by the English “clergy” in 1568 A.D.
2. **NOTE:** These translation listed above forced the Roman Catholics to produce the RHEIMS translation of the New Testament in 1582 A. D., and the Douai Old Testament in 1609-1610 A. D.

3. The Roman Catholic DOUAI-RHEIMS translation was translated from the LATIN VULGATE, and NOT FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF SCRIPTURE. It is a “TRANSLATION of a TRANSLATION!”

V. THE KING JAMES VERSION

A. It was “AUTHORIZED” by King James of England.

B. King James arranged a meeting on religious TOLERANCE of people from different religious groups in England (1604 A. D.)

C. However, Bible translation was also discussed in the meeting.

D. An important RULE that was introduced by KING JAMES was, that, in the translation that was planned, NO COMMENTARY could be included except what was essential for the translation.

E. By 1607 A. D., 48 Hebrew and Greek scholars began the translation. **SIX WORKING GROUPS** were formed to do the work.

F. In 1611 A. D., the translation came forth, and was dedicated to the King.

G. In 1613 A. D., a **new edition** was produced that had about 400 **changes** from the first edition.

H. At first, people liked the GENEVA BIBLE more than the KING JAMES.

I. One great advantage was, that, by this time, Hebrew and Greek study had advanced greatly.

J. **NOTE:** More than 80% of Tyndale’s translation is preserved in the KING JAMES

K. **EXISTING CONDITIONS** at the time of the production of the KING JAMES translation.

   1. There was a **greater interest** in the original **languages of the Bible**
2. Literary scholarship, as a whole, had advanced.

3. A good translation was needed.

4. The KING JAMES translation WAS NOT THE WORK OF JUST ONE MAN. Note above that 48 scholars worked on it.

L. In spite of the changes in the ENGLISH LANGUAGE over recent centuries, the KING JAMES has ENDURED for almost 400 years.

VI. WEAKNESSES OF THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION

A. The manuscript BASE of the KING JAMES VERSION is WEAK.

1. The Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian manuscripts were NOT available in 1611 A. D., when the King James was translated.

2. Other manuscripts, plus the PAPYRI, were not available.

B. There are OLD, ARCHAIC WORDS in the KING JAMES that are NOT used in the ENGLISH LANGUAGE today. Some examples would be “Concupiscence,” “thou,” “thy,” the word “let” which would be “hinder” today (Romans 1:13), the word “prevent” which should be “precede” today (I Thessalonians 4:15), and words like “which” that should be “who” today. Note the King James of Philippians 4:13 for an example.

C. There are ERRORS of translation in the KING JAMES VERSION

1. The words “eternal” and “everlasting” are the same Greek word in Matthew 25:46

2. The word “HELL” (“hades”) should be “HADES” in several Scriptures. An example would be Luke 16:23.

3. The word “EASTER” in the King James should be “Passover” (Acts 12:4). Etc.

VII. MORE RECENT ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

A. NOTE: These translations were produced AFTER some great manuscripts became available
B. The **ENGLISH REVISED VERSION**

1. Two groups of **27 scholars** each began work in 1870.

2. The **New Testament** was completed in **1881** and the **Old Testament** in **1885**.

C. The **AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION**

1. It is very **SIMILAR** to the English Revised Version

2. Any differences would only be in **SPELLING, IDIOM, WORD ORDER**, etc.

3. It was **completed in 1901**.

4. **ADVANTAGES** of the **AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION**
   
a. The translating committee **had access to a better Greek text**.

b. **Better knowledge of the ancient Biblical languages** contributed to a better translation.

c. A number of **OLD, ARCHAIC WORDS were CHANGED**

d. **NOTE**: However, **many OLD WORDS were RETAINED**.

D. The **REVISED STANDARD VERSION**

1. The **FIRST EDITION** of the **New Testament** was published in **1946**.

2. The **Old Testament** was published in **1952**.

3. The **greatest BENEFIT** is the “**READABILITY**” of the Revised Standard

4. **More ADVANTAGES** of the **REVISED STANDARD VERSION**
   
   1. By this time period, **more Biblical PAPYRI** had been found.

   2. Also, **more secular papyri** had been discovered which could be used for comparison.
E. The NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

1. This “revision” of the Revised Standard Version was published in 1990.

2. It seeks to be as “literal” as possible in translation, but, when “word for word” translation is not possible, it is “freer” in its translation.

3. TWO THINGS TO NOTICE:
   a. The words “thee” and “thou” are NOT used in statements addressed to God. For example, it was translated, “Hallowed be your name” (Matthew 6:9)
   b. “Male-oriented” language is NOT USED to refer to “people in general.” For example, this text is translated, “One does not live by bread alone ....” (Matthew 4:4) instead of “Man does not live by bread alone ....”

F. The NEW ENGLISH BIBLE

1. This translation was published in 1970.

2. It is NOT a “literal” translation like the English translation of 1881-1885 and the American Standard of 1901.

3. Because of this, the New English Bible received CRITICISM

G. The NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION


2. Because the American Standard Version seemed to be “passing away,” the Lackman Foundation wanted to preserve the form of the ASV.

3. In this translation, EACH VERSE is a separate unit like the King James.

H. The NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

2. At that time, some people had felt that the Revised Standard Version was “LIBERAL.”

3. The NIV is very “READABLE” and has “CLARITY.”

4. The New International Version DOES HAVE TERMS that may be DIFFICULT for some to understand:
   a. The word, “bewilderment” is found in Acts 2:6.
   b. The word, “appease” is found in Acts 16:39.
   d. The word, “dissuaded” is used in Acts 21:14.

I. There are OTHER TRANSLATIONS SUCH AS:
   1. The NEW King James Version
   2. The GOOD NEWS BIBLE (With simple vocabulary)
   3. The LIVING BIBLE (A paraphrase, not really a translation)

J. “No one translation is infallible.” “All of them have their faults”
   — Neil Lightfoot

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Mark 13:31)

2. There are TWO CLAIMS in this verse:
   a. Jesus’ words are DIVINE. The world will pass away, but NOT His Words!
   b. JESUS’ WORDS WILL STAND FOREVER! God preserves His words!
3. The Bible is **INSPIRED BY GOD**  (II Timothy 3:14-17)
   
a. **IT CLAIMS TO BE FROM GOD!**
   
b. **ITS CONTENTS SHOW THAT IT IS FROM GOD!**

4. **THE LORD IS PRESERVING HIS WORD**
   
a. The quantity and quality of manuscripts and other witnesses such as:
   
   (1) **Early writers who quoted multitudes of Bible verses**, and
   
   (2) **Translations**, evidence this principle concerning how God has preserved His revelation.

b. Brother **Neil Lightfoot** said, “The text of the New Testament, as compared with other ancient books, holds a unique and enviable rank.”

WE HAVE EXAMINED THE ORIGIN OF

THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK

IN THE WORLD

__________________________________________

“The grass withers, and the flower falls off,

But the word of the Lord abides forever”

(I Peter 1:24b, 25a)