Analysis Of The Origin And Sources Of The Bible

How many times have you picked up the Bible to read for inspiration, search scripture for encouragement or read your favorite scripture. Have you ever thought about how the Bible was printed and the process that the Bible went through so that believers can read what we called the Holy Bible today?

The Bible tells the account of God reaching out to his people. It began with the creation of man and the earth and ends with the end of time. There are two main sections of the Bible. The first section is the Old Testament written before Christ came to earth. The second section is the New Testament, written after Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and returned to heaven.

We believed that the Bible was recorded as the Holy Spirit inspire men. Its content is far beyond human authorship. The Bible did not come to us like the original draft of the Ten Commandment, written by the fingers of God on two tables of stones. II Peter 1:21 says, For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as the Holy Ghost moved them.

God is a loving and caring God that he wanted to make it easy to communicate with men. He wanted to share his life and love with men in a way that men would understand and learn. God did just that. We called his way of communicating to man the Bible.

The Bible is not a systematic treatise on theology, history or any other topic. The Bible is a direct revelation from God to men concerning his plan and purpose for man life. The Bible was given to the human race at various times. In Hebrew 1:1 it says “At various times and in different ways, the Bible provides the only true source of solution to the problems of life. 2Timothy 3:16 says “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.”

Holy men of God whose writing makes up the Bible didn’t know that their work would one day be collected into the holy Scriptures. They weren’t thinking they were going to be on a bestseller list. They were like we are driven by problems that they were trying to solve and the ideologies that they felt passionately about.

Mose wrote because he didn’t want the history of God’s provision to be forgotten. He wrote in the style in which he felt comfortable-narrative. He just told the facts as they happened, or as God told him how it would happen. He is the only person we know of whom actually took dictation from God, at least when he wrote the Ten Commandment.

David didn’t set out to write Psalms that could be translated into praise music today. He just wrote about parts of life he was processing (even the less that appealing experiences) and they became a part of Psalm.

Jeremiah didn’t make plans to write a book that would follow three books after Ecclesiates in the Bible. Jeremiah’s heart was broken because God’s people continued over and over to fall away from God. Jeremiah knew that this would lead to their destruction. So when God called

Jeremiah to be a prophet, he pulled all the stops to convince them to turn back to God. Jeremiah used dramatic language, metaphor and he forecasted the consequences of their behavior. Jeremiah's style of writing shows us who God nature and how he communicated to his people.

Each person who wrote a part of the Bible wrote from his specific place and time in history. The thing that caused their writing to be unique was God breathed his truth through them. God used them exactly where they were at, but guided them to record exactly what he needed. Today, we think of this kind of thing as dictation, but that’s not how it worked (except the one time with Moses). God didn’t speak the words and let the writer take shorthand. It was more miraculous than that. He breathed his word into their lives so that when he wrote from his heart it came to be a living word. It was just like God was speaking.

The Bible Itself Claims Inspiration

Paul informs us “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2Timothy 3:16). Paul further declared that the very words he used were chosen by the holy Spirit.” 1Cor.2:13 says which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teachest, but which the Holy Ghost teachest comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The Bible’s Unity

The unity of the Bible demonstrates the fact that it cannot merely be the work of men. The Bible contains sixty-six books; thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. Forty writers wrote sixty books over a period of about fifteen hundred years. Many of these writers never saw each other, yet throughout the Bible there is one theme--God and human redemption through Christ. The only way this can be explained is that the Bible is inspired by God.

Now the remarkable fact is that over a period of 1,500 years the Bible speaks of one God that speaks about one purpose. The earliest part of the Old Testament and the lastest of the New Testament are bound together by one outlook and one conviction, so that they become one revelation. How could this be in a world of human fallibility is something we shall never understand.

The Bible is Scientifically Accurate

The Bible does not claim to be a book of science, nor is it written in scientific terms, but if it is inspired by God, it must be scientifically accurate. Consider these examples of its scientific truths:

In 712 B.C. Iisaiah declared that the earth is circular (Isaiah 40:22). He wrote this when people believed that the earth was flat. How could he have known this? Only one way--he spoke by inspiration.

In 2000 B.C., Job declared that the earth is not supported (Job 26:7). He wrote this when people believed that the earth was supported by the shoulders of Atlas, or floated like a ball on

water. How could Job know this?

In 591 B.C., Jeremiah declared that the stars are innumerable (Jeremiah 33:22). He wrote this when men thought they could count the stars. Ptolemy in 150 B.C. counted 1,056 and claimed all the stars would total more than 3,000. It was not until 1608 A.D. that Galileo after using a powerful telescope, declared that the stars were innumerable. How could Jeremiah have known this?

In 1000 B.C., the Psalmist stated that there were paths in the seas (Psalms 8:8). In 1855 A.D. Matthew Maury's eldest son was reading the book of Psalms to his ailing father. When he read Psalms 8:8, Matthew said, "it is enough if the word of God says there are paths in the sea they must be there, and I am going to find them. "Within a few years, he charted sea lanes and currents.

In 58 A.D., Paul declared that all flesh is not the same (1 Corinthians (15:39). In 1838 M.J. Schleder taught that the cells of plants and animals were the same. But in 1930, using a powerful microscope , scientists found that Paul was right--all flesh is different.

Many believers are unaware of how we came to have the Bible. An understanding of how the Bible came to be can add a new dimension to a believer's perspective of whom God is and how he has chosen to work through his creations.

The writing which eventually were gathered together and came to be known as "The Holy Bible" were written over a period of fifteen hundred years by more than 40 different authors living on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe). While the text itself was written by the hands of its various authors, the ultimately divine origin of Scripture is testifying numerous times within the text itself and has been repeatedly confirmed throughout history by its steadfast integrity and reliability. Based upon the textual evidence two key doctrines may be discerned.

This address the means by which God reveals truth to his people. Revelation may be defined as "a supernatural work of God in which he communicated divine truth to human beings that they otherwise would not or could not know.

The Doctrine of Inspiration

This addresses the means by which the writers of Scripture received and recorded God's truth accurately. Inspiration may be defined as "The supernatural act of God whereby he directed human authors of Scripture without destroying their individuality, literary, or personality. His complete and connected though towards humanity was received and recorded without error or contradiction which each word being supernaturally written and preserved so the result is an infallible document in its original writing.

How did the original writing penned by so many different people over such a long period of time come to be grouped together as the Bible that we know today. How certain are we that the documents we have today are the accurate copies of what was originally written. I will attempt to answer these questions by tracing the development of the group of writing now known as the Bible.

The Canon of Scripture

When referring to the books of the Christian Bible, the word “canon” is often used (as the Canon of Scripture). According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a canon may be defined as the books of the Bible officially accepted as the holy scripture.

Since the canon of Scripture as we know it today has not always existed. Where did the Bible originate? How do we know that the copies we have today accurately represent what was originally recorded by the author of Scripture? Fair questions for anyone consider the Christian faith. Christians who asked these questions would do well to answer these questions so each individual will solidify the foundation of their own personal beliefs.

The canon of Scripture is the result of the collecting of various writings which believers of previous time recognized as authoritative. Who collected the writing together and what basis did they have for considering the writing authoritative. To answer these questions, it is best to consider the two testaments separately. .

Old Testament

By the time civilization was developed enough to keep historical records, the Old Testament was already collected into pretty much the same books that we have in the old Testament today. The book was considered sacred because of their history and because of the power that manifested itself when they were read. Each book had proved itself over and over again. Eventually this collection was called the Old Testament.

Some of the books are one step beyond oral tradition. They are stories to be passed down from one generation to another generation to come. Some books are also legal documents; they are the rules and regulations for the believers' lives. Some are poetry, songs, hymns, and proverbs. Some of the books are sermons and others are prophecies.

Some writers wrote out of their own abilities and context. It wasn’t like they were saying to themselves, “I’m going to write a book and maybe it will be included in the Bible one day.” No, they wrote because an issue needed to be addressed or some history needed to be recorded or warming needed to be written. God wrote the Bible through these writers as they responded to the union of the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament didn’t speak about Jesus in the same biographical way that the New Testament expresses Jesus. The focus of the Old Testament is on God’s solution to humanity’s problem; the future coming of Christ. In the Old Testament Jesus is referred to as the promised one, Messiah, Immanuel, the Redeemer. God’s promise to Abraham included a promise that Jesus would come through Abraham’s bloodline, the Jewish people. This is why the history of the Jewish people was so important: Jesus was climbing down that family tree. This is the significance of all the sacrifices you read about in the Old Testament. Jesus was promised as the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

Remember,while the Old Testament was being written, the world was rather new and in the process of being organized and man was learning about it. Languages and nationalities were being born and in the meantime technology was being birthed and continuing advancing. This

generation was figuring out how to keep track of the latest trends.

The early theologians (which usually meant wise men who worked in the temple or synagogues) were discussing and rediscussing the power of the Bible,which at that time was called something like the “Law and the Prophets.” They were also discussing what their responsibility was in caring for the manuscripts and in passing them down through the generations. There were task forces formed (called councils) to specifically discuss and decide about these kinds of things.

A Need For A Witness

The Old Testament declared only that the Savior would come, not that he had come. The world needed a permanent, complete trustworthy testament (witness) to the actual events of the birth, life, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, especially as the eyewitnesses passed from the scene.

The New Testament

The first three Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels. The word “Synoptic” comes from two Greek words meaning “seem together.” Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell the story of Jesus in the same sequence and in nearly identical terms.

The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books (or letters) which, for the most part, were prior to the start of the second century9100 A.D.0. The first four (the Gospels) contain written accounts of the teaching and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The book which follows interprets Jesus teaching and explains how to apply it to daily life.

It would appear that until about 50-60 A.D. there was no need for a written account of the Gospel because the eyewitnesses were still living who could pass on the information first-hand. However, since the apostles were to grow old and pass away like everybody else, it later became necessary to have written accounts of the life of Jesus

So that the facts would not get distorted with the passing of time. As a result, certain of the apostles and their associates wrote the account we now have included as the four gospel.

Other gospels did exist, which are called “apocryphal” because the church never accepted them. The apocryphal” gospel was never widely used. Some were rejected because they seemed to promote false doctrines. Others were dismissed as merely fanciful speculations designed to answer the curious question of those familiar with the canonical Gospel. In any case, none of the apocryphal gospels that survive explain the similarities among the canonical Gospel.