

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Introduction

1. Common Questions:
 - a. Why are there different Bibles? Which one is the *real* Bible?
 - b. Where is *that* in the Bible? I believe in the “Bible *alone*.”
 - c. Why should the Bible be taken as a rule of faith at all? How do I know the Bible is inspired by *God* and not just the product of men?
2. The Question of the Biblical Canon: which books belong to the Bible
 - a. Jewish Bibles 24 (=39) Books
 - b. Protestant Bibles: 39 Books (OT) 27 Books (NT)
 - c. Catholic Bibles: 46 Books (OT) 27 Books (NT)
 - d. Did the Catholic Church “*add*” 7 extra books to the Bible? (so called Apocrypha)
3. The Question of Sola Scriptura: whether “the Bible Alone” is the Word of God
 - a. Catholics often Asked: “Where is *that* in the Bible?”
 - b. Assumption: Bible is the *Sole* Authority on Doctrine
 - c. Question: Where does the Bible itself come from?
4. The Question of Inspiration: how we know which books are the Word of God
 - a. Where did *the Bible itself* come from?
 - b. Who decided which books were inspired, and which were not?
 - c. *By what authority* did they make this decision?
 - d. What about the “Dead Sea Scrolls” and “lost Gospels”? Are they inspired too?
5. Answer: Exploring the Origins of the Bible

Common Misconceptions

1. The Bible did not fall from heaven, but was written by many different men.
2. The Bible is not simply a single book, but a sacred library of many books.
3. The Bible was not written all at once, but over many centuries (1500 B.C.-100 A.D.)
4. The Bible was not written originally in English, but in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
5. Translations of the Bible: from Original Languages; not one language to another!
6. The Bible is the end result of a long process: 1500 yrs (to write); another 300 years (to close Canon)

The Law of Moses (ca. 1450 B.C.)

“And *Moses wrote this law*, and gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to *all the elders* of Israel. And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time for the year of release, at the feast of booths... *you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing*. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they might hear and learn to fear the LORD your God... *When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book (Hb sepher) to the very end*, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the Ark of the covenant of the LORD, “*Take this book of the law and put it by the side of the Ark of the covenant of the LORD your God*, that it may be there for a witness against you.” (Deut 31:9-13, 24-26)

The Books of Joshua (ca. 1420 B.C.)

“And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, *he [Joshua] wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written...*” (Joshua 8:32-35) “So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statues and ordinances for them at Shechem. *And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the Law of God*; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD.” (Josh 24:26)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

The Book of the Prophet Samuel (ca. 1100 B.C.)

Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship; and *he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD.* (1 Kings 10:25)

The Psalms of David (ca. 1000 B.C.)

And Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with *the words of David* and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped. (2 Chronicles 29:30)

The Scribe Ezra Reads the Law of Moses (ca. 450 B.C.)

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring *the book of the Law of Moses* which the LORD had given to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. And *he read from it* facing the square before the Water Gate *from early morning until midday*, in the presence of the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the law. *And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden pulpit* which they had made for the purpose... And when [Ezra] opened it [the book] all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God; and *all the people answered, "Amen, amen,"* lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua [and many others]... helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. *And they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly; and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.*" (Nehemiah 8:1-8)

The Library of Nehemiah (ca. 440 B.C.)

The same things [location of the lost Ark] are reported in the records and in the memoirs of *Nehemiah*, and also that *he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and the prophets, and the writings of David*, and the letters of kings about votive offerings. (2 Maccabees 2:13-15)

The Septuagint (or the "Seventy/LXX") (ca. 250 B.C.)

[King] Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, being very anxious to adorn the library, which he founded in Alexandria, with all the best extant writings of all men, asked from the inhabitants of Jerusalem to have their Scriptures translated into Greek. They... sent to Ptolemy *seventy elders, the most experienced they had in the Scriptures and in both languages*, and God thus wrought what he willed. But Ptolemy, wishing to make a trial of them in his own way, and being afraid lest they should have made some agreement to conceal by their translation the truth in the Scriptures, separated them from one another and commanded them all to write the same translation. And this they did in the case of all the books. *But when they came together to Ptolemy, and compared each his own translation, God was glorified and the Scriptures were recognized as truly divine, for they all rendered the same things in the same words and the same names, from beginning to end*, so that even the heathen who were present knew that *the Scriptures had been translated by the inspiration of God.* (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.8.11-14, LCL; cited in McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 88-89).

The Prologue to Sirach (ca. 130 B.C.)

You are urged therefore... to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to have rendered some phrases imperfectly. *For what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language.* Not only this work, *but even the Law itself, the prophecies, and the rest of the books differ not a little as originally expressed.* (Prologue to the book of Sirach [Ecclesiasticus])

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Jesus and the Jewish Scriptures (ca. 30 A.D.)

And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And *beginning with Moses and all the prophets*, he interpreted to them in all *the scriptures* (Gk *graphais*) the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

And when he said this he showed them his hands and his feet... Then he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you, that *everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms* must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:36-45)

1. Jesus accepted the core Scriptures of Israel: three groups
2. But at the time of his Resurrection, the Jewish “canon” was not yet “closed.”

The Sadducees and the 5 Books of Moses (1st Cent. A.D.)

1. Three Jewish Sects:
 - a. The Sadducees (“sons of Zadok”; priestly group)
 - b. The Pharisees (the “separated ones”; strict followers of Oral Tradition)
 - c. The Essenes (authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls; celibate)

The Sadducees teach that the *soul dies along with the body*, and they *observe no tradition apart from the Law*. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.16; trans. P. L. Maier; cited in McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 68)

But although *the Samaritans and Sadducees, who receive the books of Moses alone*, would say that there were contained in them predictions regarding the Messiah, yet certainly not in Jerusalem, which is not even mentioned in the times of Moses... (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.49 ANF 4.418).

Josephus and the Twenty-Two Books of the Pharisees (ca. 95 A.D.)

With us it is not open to everybody to write the records, and... *there is no discrepancy in what is written*; seeing that, on the contrary, *the prophets* alone had this privilege, *obtaining their knowledge of the most remote and ancient history through the inspiration which they owed to God*, and committing to writing a clear account of the events of their time just as they occurred... It follows, I say, that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. *Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but two and twenty, and contain the record of all time*. Of these *five* are the books of Moses, comprising the laws and the traditional history from the birth of man down to the death of the lawgiver. This period falls only a little short of three thousand years From the death of Moses until Artaxerxes, who succeeded Xerxes as king of Persia, the prophets subsequent to Moses wrote the history of the events of their own times in *thirteen* books. The remaining *four* books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life. From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, *because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets*. We have given practical proof of our reverence for our own Scriptures. For although such long ages have now passed, *no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable*; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as *the decrees of God*, to abide by them, and, if need be, *cheerfully to die for them*. (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.37-43, LCL; cited in McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*, 56).

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Fourth Ezra and the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (1st Cent. A.D.)

[God] answered me [Ezra] and said, “Go and gather the people, and tell them not to seek you for forty days. But prepare for yourself many writing tablets, and take with you Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and Asiel—these five, who are trained to write rapidly; and you shall come here, and I will light in your heart the lamp of understanding... *So during the forty days, ninety-four books were written.* And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, “*Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them, but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.*” And I did so. (4 Ezra 14:23-48; NRSV)

1. 24 Public Books
2. 70 Secret Books: probably refer to other Jewish Writings
 - a. Apocrypha: “hidden writings”
 - b. Pseudepigrapha: “false writings”

The Dead Sea Scrolls (ca. 200 B.C.—70 A.D.)

1. Discovered in 1947 by Bedouin shepherds.
2. A Sacred Library of between 600-800 Works
3. Found in 11 Caves near Qumran by the Dead Sea
4. Contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - a. Copies of Hebrew Scriptures (VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 30)
 - b. Writings of the Jewish sect of the Essenes
 - c. Copies of Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (cf. Charlesworth, *OTP*)
 - d. No Copies of New Testament writings were found.
5. Copies of 38 Books of Protestant OT found (except for Esther).
6. Several Copies of Books in Catholic OT were found!
 - a. Sirach (in Hebrew)
 - b. Tobit (in Hebrew and Aramaic)
 - c. Letter of Jeremiah (in Greek)
7. Oldest Surviving Copies of OT Books: 1000 years older than oldest copies!
8. Implications:
 - a. Essenes had a Broader Canon than later Pharisees (Jacob Neusner)
 - b. Ancient Manuscripts of OT very reliable (cf. Isaiah)
 - c. Catholic Books of OT were read by ancient Jews in Hebrew

Disagreement Among Jews: No Closed “Canon” of Sacred Scripture (1st Century A.D.)

Sadducees/Samaritans

5 Books of Moses

Pharisees

22 Books

4 Ezra

94 Books

(24 Public/70 Secret)

Essenes

??? Books

1. Question: Who Decides What is Inspired Jewish Scripture and What is Not?

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

The Myth of the “Council of Jamnia” (supposedly 90 A.D.)

1. The Theory of the “Council of Jamnia”: Heinrich Graetz (1871)
2. Theory Popularized in English world by H. E. Ryle:

Now we happen to know that a council of Jewish Rabbis was held at Jamnia (Jabne), not very far from Joppa, about the year 90 A.D., and again, perhaps in 118 A.D. Rabbi Gamaliel II seems to have presided, and Rabbi Akiba was the prominent spirit. In the course of its deliberations the subject of the Canon was discussed. It was decided that the difficulties which had been felt about the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs could be fairly answered (*m. Eduyoth* 5:3). The suggestion has been made, that we have in the Synod of Jamnia the official occasion, on which the limits of the Hebrew Canon were firmly determined by Jewish authorities. (Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament*, 196, 218; cited in McDonald and Sanders, *The Canon Debate*, 147).

3. Ryle Gave No Evidence for His Suggestion Except the Following:

According to the School of Shammai the book of Ecclesiastes does not render the hands unclean [=is not sacred Scripture]. And the School of Hillel say: It renders the hands unclean [=is sacred Scripture]. (Mishnah, *Eduyoth*, 5:3; cf. *m. Yad*. 3:5)

4. All This Proves is that the Rabbis were Still Debating Scripture (200 A.D.)!
5. The Council of Jamnia: “A Myth of Christian Scholarship without documentary foundation” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, cited in *The Canon Debate*, 152)
6. The Jewish Palestinian Talmud Quotes Sirach as Scripture!

Rabban b. Mari (320-350 A.D.) told Raba: This matter is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and repeated a third time in the Writings, and was taught in the Mishnah, and was taught as a Baraita... and repeated a third time in the Writings, as it is written... [Quotes Sirach 12:15] (Cited in Lieman, *The Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture*, 97)

6. Jewish Canon Still Being Debated in the 4-5th Centuries A.D.!

Conclusions and Implications

1. The origin of the Old Testament Scriptures was a long process (some 1500 years).
2. By the time of Jesus, there was no closed *canon* of Jewish Scriptures.
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that the so-called “Apocrypha” or “extra books” of the Catholic OT were read by many Jews as sacred.
4. The popular theory of the Jewish Council of Jamnia is a Protestant Christian Myth.
4. Even if Jamnia happened, it does not matter. The Question Remains:
5. Who has the *authority* to decide which Jewish Scriptures are inspired? (later Rabbis do not)
6. Next Time: the Origins of the New Testament...

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Introduction

1. Questions:
 - a. Where did the *New Testament* writings come from?
 - b. Who wrote the Gospels, and are they reliable?
 - c. What about the “lost Gospels”; are they authentic too?
2. The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon of Scripture (see L. M. McDonald, *Biblical Canon*)
 - a. The Origins of the New Testament Writings
 - b. The Origins of the “Lost Gospels”
 - c. Study how the early Church *closed* the Canon of Scripture
3. Point: The Catholic Church alone gave us the Bible as we know it

The Writing of the New Testament Documents (b/w 50-100 A.D.)

1. Dates: between 50-100 A.D.
2. Authors: 8 or 9 different men wrote 27 different books:
 - a. Matthew (1)
 - b. Mark (1)
 - c. Luke (2)
 - d. John (5)
 - e. Peter (2)
 - f. James (1)
 - g. Jude (1)
 - h. Paul (13 or 14; Hebrews?)
3. Language: Koine Greek (“Common Greek”)
4. Different Kinds of Writings:
 - a. Gospels: (Greek *euaggelion*, “good news”)
 - b. Church History
 - c. Letters
 - d. Prophecy: The Book of Revelation
6. These books would later go on to be collected in we now know as the “New Testament”
7. Implications (Graham, *Where We Got the Bible*, 17-28)
 - a. The Church and the Faith existed *before* the New Testament
 - b. Importance of *Apostolic Preaching*: Only 5 of the 12 Apostles Ever wrote Anything
 - c. Thousands became Christians without reading a single line of the New Testament

The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers (ca. 70-180A.D.)

1. The Apostolic Fathers:
 - a. Bishops and priests of 1st-2nd Centuries A.D.
 - b. Leaders of Churches founded *by the apostles*; ordained by apostles
 - c. Apostolic Succession: could trace their ordination directly to Apostles
2. St. Clement: Bishop of Church of Rome (founded by Peter)
 - a. Wrote *1 Clement*, a letter to the Corinthians (founded by Paul)
3. St. Ignatius: Bishop of the Church of Antioch (founded by Peter)
 - a. Wrote Letters to *Ephesians, Romans, Smyrnaeans*, etc. (apostolic churches)
4. Polycarp: Bishop of Church at Smyrna (founded by John)
 - a. Disciple of the Apostle John; martyred at a very old age
 - b. Wrote a *Letter to the Philippians* (founded by Paul)
5. St. Irenaeus: Bishop of Church in Lyons (France); in communion with Rome
 - a. Greatest Theologian of 2nd Century A.D.
 - b. Disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Apostle

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Who Wrote the Four Gospels? Evidence from The Apostolic Fathers

1. Papias: Bishop of Hierapolis, Disciple of the Apostle John (ca. 110 A.D.)

“Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord’s discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard and not to state any falsely... “So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able.” (Eusebius, Church History, 3.39; NPNF)

2. St. Irenaeus: disciple of Polycarp, disciple of John (ca. 180 A.D.)

“After our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down, were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge; they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church (ca. 55-60 A.D.). After their departure (ca. 62-66 A.D.), Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast [the “Beloved Disciple”], did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.” (Against Heresies 3.1.1. ANF)

3. Eusebius: first Church Historian (325 A.D.)

“Nevertheless, of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to the other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated for those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence. And when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry. And this indeed is true... [Gives examples] They say, therefore, that the apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists, and of the deeds done by the Savior during that period; that is, of those which were done before the imprisonment of the Baptist... [Gives Examples].. One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at variance with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of his life...” “As for Luke... [he] delivered in his own Gospel an accurate account of those events in regard to which he had learned the full truth, being aided by his intimacy and his stay with Paul and by his acquaintance with the rest of the apostles.” (Church History, 3.24)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Reliability of the Four Gospels (cf. Felder, *Christ and the Critics*, 1-117)

1. Written in *Close Proximity* to the Event: only 20-50 Years after the Crucifixion
 - a. Synoptic Gospels (b/w 50-70 A.D.)
 - b. Gospel of John (b/w 60-90 A.D.)
2. Based on *Eyewitness Testimony* (cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*)
 - a. Matthew and John: written by Eyewitnesses (see John 19:35; 21:20-24)
 - b. Mark: based on Eyewitness Testimony of Peter
 - c. Luke: based on Testimony of Paul and other Eyewitnesses (see Luke 1:1-4)
 - d. External Evidence: universal agreement among Church Fathers on authorship
3. Based on *Credible Eyewitnesses*:
 - a. Companions of Jesus: first-hand knowledge of 1st Century Judaism
 - b. Coherence of Testimony
 - c. Credibility and Fidelity to the Truth (see Luke 1:1-4; John 19:35)
4. Existence of *Reliable Manuscripts*
 - a. Oldest Copy: Gospel of John Papyrus 52 (dated ca. 120 A.D. “What is Truth?”)
 - b. Over 5000 Ancient Manuscripts of NT in Existence! (cf. Greek Classics)
 - c. Bodmer Papyrus and Pope Benedict XVI (Oldest MS of Luke, ca. 200 A.D.)
5. Thousands of *Ancient Quotations* of New Testament writings in Church Fathers

The False Writings of Ancient Christian Heretics (2nd-6th centuries A.D.)

1. Alongside the Apostles and Apostolic Fathers, there were also Heretics
 - a. Docetists: denied the humanity of Christ
 - b. Ebionites: denied the divinity of Christ
 - c. Gnostics: denied the goodness of Creation
 - d. Manicheans: believed in dualism of good and evil; asceticism
 - e. Marcionites: rejected the Old Testament writings; only accepted Luke and Paul
2. These Heretics Produced Their Own Writings in opposition to Apostolic Fathers
 - a. New Testament Apocrypha (“Hidden Writings”)
 - b. New Testament Pseudepigrapha (“False Writings”)
3. Dozens of Writings Forged in the Name of the Apostles: Examples
 - a. The *Gospel of Peter*
 - b. The *Gospel of Thomas*
 - c. The *Gospel of Judas*
 - d. The *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*
 - e. The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*
 - f. The *Apocalypse of Peter*
4. *None of these writings is from the first-century A.D. or apostolic (Do the math!)*

Examples from the So-Called “Lost Gospels” (2nd-4th Cents. A.D.)

1. The “Infancy Story of Thomas” (end of 2nd cent. A.D.)

When this boy Jesus was five years old he was playing at the ford of a brook, and he gathered together into pools the water that flowed by, and made it at once clean... But the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a branch of a willow and (with it) dispersed the water which Jesus had gathered together. When Jesus saw what he had done he was enraged and said to him: “You insolent, godless dunderhead, what harm did the pools and the water do to you? See, now you shall also wither like a tree and shall bear neither leaves nor root nor fruit.” And immediately the lad withered up completely... After this again [Jesus] went through the village, and a lad ran and knocked against his shoulder. Jesus was exasperated and said to him: “You shall not go further on your way,” and the child immediately fell down and died. (Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:444)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Examples from the “Lost Gospels” (cont’d)

2. The “Gospel of Thomas”: 114 Sayings of Jesus (2nd-4th cent. A.D.)

Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Gospel of Thomas 114, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 138)

The Church Fathers Denounce the False Gospels

1. St. Irenaeus (180 A.D.; *Against Heresies* 1.31.1; ANF 1.358)
 - a. Denounced the “the Gospel of Judas” (ca. 180 A.D.)
 - b. A “Fictitious History” Written by Heretics called “Cainites”
2. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 350 A.D.; *Catechetical Lectures* 4:36)
 - a. Denounced “the Gospel of Thomas” (ca. 350 A.D.)
 - b. Written by “Manicheans”: “camouflaged by the sweetness of its title”
3. Serapion, Bishop of Syria (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6:12)
 - a. Denounced the “Gospel of Peter” as “false ascribed to him”
 - b. Reason: “such were not handed down to us”

The Debate Over the New Testament Canon: Eusebius (325 A.D.)

1. Eusebius: Bishop of Caesarea, first great Church historian (325 A.D.)

Since we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up *the writings of the New Testament* which have been already mentioned.

(1) First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels (the 4 Gospels); following them the Acts of the Apostles (Acts). After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul (how many?); next in order the extant former epistle of John (1 John), and likewise the epistle of Peter (1 Peter), must be maintained. After them is to be placed, *if it really seem proper*, the Apocalypse of John (Revelation), concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among *the accepted writings*.

(2) Among the *disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many*, are extant the so-called epistle of James (James) and that of Jude (Jude), also the second epistle of Peter (2 Peter), and those that are called the second and third of John (2-3 John), whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name.

(3) Among *the rejected writings* must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so called Teaching of the Apostles (the *Didache*); and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John (Revelation), if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel According to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among *the disputed books*. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which *according to ecclesiastical tradition* are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers—we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works and

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Eusebius: The New Testament Canon Debate (cont'd)

(4) *those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles*, including, for instance, such books as the Gospel of Peter, of Thomas (Gospel of Thomas), of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which *no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings*. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious. (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.25 NPNF)

2. Implications: Four Categories of Books:

- a. Undisputed
- b. Disputed, but recognized by many
- c. Rejected
- d. Heretical/False Writings

3. Even by 4th Century: Still *Disagreement* about Exact Canon (Lists; McDonald, *Canon*, 268-76)

4. Question: Who decides *exactly* which books are inspired and which are not?

Emperor Constantine and the Origin of the Bible (ca. 325 A.D.)

1. Dan Brown and the *Da Vinci Code*:

- a. Bible is not from God, but a work of “Man”
- b. Constantine, the “Pagan” Roman Emperor, created the Bible
- c. He altered the Gospels to make Jesus appear divine

2. What Really Happened? Constantine Ordered 50 Copies of the Scriptures for His City from Eusebius: “It happens, through the favoring providence of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in the city which is called by my name [Constantinople]. It seems, therefore, highly requisite, since that city is rapidly advancing in prosperity... that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. *I have though it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures... to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art.*” (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 4.34-47, NPNF, cited in McDonald, *Formation*, 187)

4. Constantine is NOT Creating the Bible!

- a. He does not say anything about which books; not clear it is the whole Bible
- b. He does not instruct Eusebius to alter anything
- c. He is simply ordering more copies for his growing capital city

The Council of Rome and the Closing of the Canon (382 A.D.)

1. Fourth Century: Many Questions raging about “What is Scripture?”

2. Pope Damasus I: bishop of Rome (366-384 A.D.)

3. Convoked the Council of Rome: to deal with

- a. Heretics who rejected Trinity and Council of Nicaea
- b. Heretics who rejected divinity of Holy Spirit
- c. Clarify and Close the Canon of the Bible

4. Canon of the Council of Rome:

- a. Old Testament: 46 Books (including 7 so-called “Apocrypha”)
- b. New Testament: 27 Books (recognized by all Christians)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Decree of Pope Damasus I: the Council of Rome (382 A.D.)

Now indeed we must treat of the divine Scriptures, what the universal Catholic Church accepts and what she ought to shun.

The order of the Old Testament begins here: Genesis, one book, Exodus one book, Leviticus one book, Numbers one book, Deuteronomy one book, Josue Nave one book, Judges one book, Ruth one book, Kings four books, Paralipomenon two books, Psalms one book, Solomon three books, Proverbs one book, Ecclesiastes one book, Canticle of Canticles one book, likewise Wisdom one book, Ecclesiasticus one book. Likewise the order of the Prophets. Isaias one book, Jeremias one book, with Ginoth, that is, with his lamentations, Ezechiel one book, Daniel one book, Osee one book, Micheas one book, Joel one book, Abdias one book, Jonas one book, Nahum one book, Habacuc one book, Sophonias one book, Aggeus one book, Zacharias one book, Malachias one book. Likewise the order of the histories. Job one book, Tobias one book, Esdras two books, Esther one book, Judith one book, Machabees two books.

Likewise the order of the writings of the New and eternal Testament, which the holy and Catholic Church supports. Of the Gospels, according to Matthew one book, according to Mark one book, according to Luke one book, according to John one book. The Epistles of Paul [the apostle] in number fourteen. To the Romans one, to the Corinthians two, to the Ephesians one, to the Thessalonians two, to the Galatians one, to the Philippians one, to the Colossians one, to Timothy two, to Titus one, to Philemon one, to the Hebrews one. Likewise the Apocalypse of John, one book. And the Acts of the Apostles one book. Likewise the canonical epistles in number seven. Of Peter the Apostle two epistles, of James the Apostle one epistle, of John the Apostle one epistle, of another John, the presbyter, two epistles, of Jude the Zealot, the Apostle. *The canon of the New Testament ends here.* (Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 33-34).

4. Pope Damasus and the Latin Vulgate

- a. Commissions St. Jerome to prepare a Latin Translation of the Scriptures
- b. St. Jerome's Translation: the Latin Vulgate ("Vulgar" or "Common" Language)
- c. This Would Be the Official Bible of the Catholic Church

5. Later Catholic Church Decrees: confirm Bible of the Council of Rome

- a. Council of Hippo (Africa, 393 A.D.)
- b. Council of Carthage (Africa, 397 A.D.)
- c. Second Council of Carthage: St. Augustine presided, approved by Pope Boniface (419 A.D.)
(For lists, see *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* II vol. 14, p. 453)
- d. Pope Innocent I: letter to bishop of Toulouse (405 A.D., *Epistle* 6:7)
- e. Council of Trent (1546 A.D.; lists in Denzinger, *Catholic Dogma*, p. 244-45)
- f. Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992 A.D.; list in CCC 120)

Conclusions

1. Multiple Writings from the first centuries A.D.: Apostles, Apostolic Fathers, Heretics
2. No complete agreement among Church Fathers on *Canon* of the Bible
3. Only an *Official Decree of the Pope and Catholic Church* could definitively close the Canon
 - a. Divine Authority needed to definitively recognize Inspired Books
 - b. This Authority was given to Peter and Successors by Christ (cf. Matt 16:18-19)
 - c. Only Infallible Church could produce an infallible canon of Scripture (Holy Spirit)
 - d. Catholic Church has remained constant in her Canon
4. Why then are there different Christian Bibles? What about Martin Luther and the Reformation?

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Introduction

1. Began with Questions:
 - a. Why are there different Bibles? Which one is the *real* Bible?
 - b. Where is *that* in the Bible? I believe in the “Bible *alone*.”
 - c. Why should the Bible be taken as a rule of faith at all? How do I know the Bible is inspired by *God* and not just the product of man?
2. Three Issues:
 - a. The Question of the Biblical Canon: which books belong to the Bible
 - b. The Question of Sola Scriptura: whether “the Bible Alone” is the Word of God
 - c. The Question of Inspiration: Why should I believe the Bible at all?
3. Part 3:
 - a. The Protestant Reformation and Different Christian Bibles
 - b. The Protestant Doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*
 - c. The Catholic Response to these questions
4. Conclusion:
 - a. There is only one Bible, that which the Church gave us
 - b. Sola Scriptura is an unbiblical “tradition of men”
 - c. Reason we can trust the Bible: because we can trust Christ and His Church

Why Different Bibles? Catholic vs. Protestant Canons

1. Almost all Protestants: do not accept the Catholic Canon of the *Old Testament*

Catholic Bibles

OT: 46 Books

NT: 27 Books

Protestant Bibles

OT: 39 Books

NT: 27 Books

2. Catholic Bibles have 7 More Books than Protestant Bibles (DB: “Disputed Books”?)
 - a. The Apocrypha: “Hidden Books” (misnomer)
 - b. The Deuterocanonicals: “Second Canon” (also misnomer)
3. The 7 Books of the Catholic Old Testament (Deuterocanonicals):
 - a. Tobit
 - b. Judith
 - c. Wisdom of Solomon
 - d. Sirach (aka Ecclesiasticus)
 - e. Baruch
 - f. 1 Maccabees
 - g. 2 Maccabees
 - h. (Also: Portions of Esther, Daniel)
4. Fact: these books were *not* “added” by the Catholic Church later (cf. W. Kaiser, 30)
5. Fact: these books were *always* part of official ancient canon of Scripture
6. Questions:
 - a. When were they eliminated from the Bible?
 - b. Why were they eliminated?
 - c. By whom? By what authority did they do so?

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Martin Luther and the Origin of the Protestant Bible (16th Cent. A.D.)

1. Common Misconception (Michuta, *Why Catholic Bibles are Bigger*)
 - a. Martin Luther “removed” the 7 Books from His Bible
 - b. Fact: during 15-1600’s almost all Protestant Bibles included the 7 Books
 - c. Real Story: Luther denied the *canonical status* of the 7 Books
 - d. This eventually led to the disappearance of the 7 Books from Prot. Bibles
2. Early Years: Luther cited the 7 Books as Scripture a/g Catholics (Sirach, Tobit)
3. Later On: Disputation with Johann Eck (1519 A.D.)
 - a. Luther denied Canonical Status of 2 Maccabees:
 - b. Reason: 2 Maccabees taught truth of Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead

And making a gathering, he [Judah] sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (*For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.*) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. *It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.* (2 Macc 12:43-46; Douay-Rheims)

There is no proof of Purgatory in any portion of Sacred Scripture, which can enter into the argument, and serve as a proof; for the book of Maccabees not being in the Canon, is of weight with the faithful, but avails nothing with the obstinate. (Luther, cited in Breen, *General Introduction*, 516)

I hate Esther and 2 Maccabees so much that I wish they did not exist; they contain too much Judaism and no little heathen vice. (Luther, cited in Bruce, *Canon*, 101)

4. Luther’s “Canon within a Canon”:
 - a. Canonical Authority: depended on whether a book preached the “Gospel”
 - b. The “Gospel” = Luther’s *personal understanding* and theology
 - c. Any Book that disagreed with this: lost its status
5. Luther’s *German Bible* (1545 A.D.)
 - a. Included the DB in the Old Testament! (like every copy of OT before that)
 - b. However, Luther rearranged the *order* of the books, placing them at the end
 - c. Added an “Appendix” entitled “Apocrypha”

Apocrypha—that is, books which are not held equal to the Holy Scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read. (Cited in Metzger, *Canon*, 183)

6. Luther was not daring enough to *remove* the 7; he just “demoted” them.
7. He did the same thing with the New Testament!
 - a. Appendix: Hebrews, James, Jude, Revelation
 - b. Prefaces: Called James “an epistle of straw” (James 2:14 “*not by faith alone*”)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

John Calvin (ca. 1540 A.D.)

1. John Calvin:
 - a. Aspiring Catholic monk turned Protestant reformer
 - b. Quotes some of the 7 Books as Scripture in his *Institutes*!
2. Wrote a Preface to the Geneva Bible (1540 A.D.)

These books, called Apocrypha, have always been distinguished from the writings which were without difficulty called Holy Scripture. For the Church Fathers wished to avoid the danger of mixing profane books with those which were certainly brought forth by the Holy Spirit. That is why they made a list, which they called a canon.... It is true that the Apocrypha is not to be despised, insofar as it contains good and useful teaching. Yet there is good reason for what was given us by the Holy Spirit to have precedence over what has come from human beings. Thus all Christians, following what St. Jerome said, read the Apocrypha, and take from it teaching "for edification"... None of these books was in any way accepted by the Hebrews, and their original texts are not in Hebrew, but in Greek. It is correct that today, a great part of them are found in Hebrew. But it may be that they were [back] translated from the Greek. The safest thing is therefore to hold to what is extant in the language in which they are usually found. (John Calvin, cited in Neuser, 95-96)

3. Calvin is Dead Wrong on Several Counts:
 - a. "Apocrypha" have *not* always been distinguished from Scripture
 - b. Church Fathers did *not* unanimously separate the 7 Books in their lists
 - c. He assumes the 7 Books come from "men" rather than the "Holy Spirit"
 - d. What authority does St. Jerome have to determine the Bible?
 - e. Almost all 7 Books *were* originally written in Hebrew (except 2 Macc)
 - f. What difference does the language make anyway? (cf. NT!)
4. Conclusion: private opinion cannot determine the Canon

The Anglican Church (1562 A.D.)

1. Anglican Church:
 - a. Founded by Henry VIII (1553)
 - b. Composed 39 *Articles of Religion* for Essential Doctrine:

In the name of Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments, *of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church*. Of the names and number of the Canonical Books... All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them canonical. *And the other books (as Hierome [Jerome] saith) the Church doth read for example of lief and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine*. Such are these following [lists the 7 Books plus 3 and 4 Esdras]. (Anglican 39 *Articles*, Article 6)

2. Problems:
 - a. Majority Vote: Lack of doubt does *not* establish the inspiration of a text
 - b. There was doubt about many texts in the shorter canon (Esther, Revelation)
 - c. What authority does a Catholic priest (Jerome) have for Anglicans?

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

From the King James Version to Today (1611-2007 A.D.)

1. Most Famous Protestant Bible: the King James Version
 - a. Originally called the “Authorized Version”
 - b. Published in 1611 A.D. (“authorized” by the King)
 - c. Revered by Many Protestants to this day (“King James Only” Christians)
2. KJV was originally published with the 7 Books! (see 1611 edition)
 - a. 7 “Apocrypha” were placed at end of the Old Testament (+1 and 2 Esdras)
 - b. Also Published with Liturgical Calendar of Saints Feast Days!
 - c. Archbishop George Abbot: sentenced printers 1yr for printing KJV’s w/out the Apocrypha!
 - c. Only later were they removed, along with cross-references to the 7 Books (after 1615 A.D.)

“[W]hatever may be our personal opinions of the Apocrypha, it is a historical fact that they formed an integral part of the King James Version, and any Bible claiming to represent that version should either include the Apocrypha, or state that it is omitting them. Otherwise a false impression is created.” (Edgar Goodspeed, *Formation of the New Testament*, 7)

3. After 1650’s: Most Protestant Bibles omitted the 7 Books
 - a. Apocrypha are far most part forgotten
 - b. Most Protestants do not know they were ever a part of their Bible
4. The Bible Today: Proliferation of Translations
 - a. Douay-Rheims Version (NT, 1582; OT 1609; Catholic trans. of Latin Vulgate)
 - b. King James Version (1611; Protestant)
 - c. Revised Standard Version (1950-1966; Catholic and Protestant Editions)
 - d. New American Bible (1970, rev. 1986; Catholic)
 - e. New International Version (1973; Protestant)

***Sola Scriptura* and the Problem of the Canon**

1. Historical Study of the Canon Raises Important Theological Question:
 - a. What about *Sola Scriptura*? The Protestant Doctrine of the “Bible Alone”
 - b. Shouldn’t We Trust the Bible Alone? (“Where is *that* in the Bible?)
 - c. How can we say the Church is also Infallible?
2. The Protestant Reformers: several important doctrines
 - a. “Christ Alone” (*solus Christus*)
 - b. “Grace Alone” (*sola gratia*)
 - c. “Faith Alone” (*sola fide*)
 - d. “the Bible alone” (*sola Scriptura*)
3. “Sola Scriptura”: Scripture *alone* is the sole source of authoritative doctrine
 - a. Articulated by Martin Luther: Diet of Worms (1521 A.D.)
 - b. Repeated by *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The authority of Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore is to be received, because it is the Word of God. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture... yet, notwithstanding, *our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our Hearts* (cited by P. Madrid, “Sola Scriptura: A Blueprint for Anarchy” 22)

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

Five Key Problems with *Sola Scriptura*

1. *Sola Scriptura* is *unhistorical*.
 - a. Church precedes the Bible: Earliest Christians did not practice *Sola Scriptura*.
 - b. Problem: if so, they would have had to exclude the New Testament!
 - c. No-one Church Father ever taught it before the Protestant Reformation.
 - d. Not an apostolic teaching but a “tradition of men” made up by the Reformers.
2. *Sola Scriptura* is *illogical*.
 - a. Luther and Reformers upheld infallibility of the Bible but denied infallibility of the Church.
 - b. Problem: If the Bible is infallible, then the Church who canonized it must also be infallible.
 - c. Otherwise, you are left with a fallible collection of infallible books.
 - d. This is logically impossible.
3. *Sola Scriptura* is *unnecessary*.
 - a. Unnecessary Dichotomy: It pits the Church against the Bible.
 - b. But it is the Church that *gave* us the Bible.
 - c. Not *either* the Church *or* the Bible, but *both* the Church *and* the Bible.
 - d. Bible cannot be used *against* the Church who gave it to us.
4. *Sola Scriptura* leads to *division within the Church*.
 - a. Historical Fact: now over 30,000 Christian denominations!
 - b. All of them claim to use the “Bible alone” as source of doctrine.
 - c. Christ prayed that his Church might be “one flock, with one shepherd” (John 10, 17)
5. *Sola Scriptura* is *self-contradictory* because it is *unbiblical*.
 - a. Says we should only believe what the Bible teaches.
 - b. But the Bible itself *never* teaches *Sola Scriptura*! (Not one single passage.)
 - c. In fact, the Bible frequently refers to the authority of the Church and Tradition:

Sola Scriptura* is *Unbiblical

1. Main Protestant Proof-Text for *Sola Scriptura*:

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it 15 and how from your childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:14-16)

2. Problems:

- a. When Paul says Scripture he is not talking about “the Bible” as we have it
- b. He is talking about the *Old Testament*; this text proves too much!
- c. Paul nowhere says the Scripture *alone* is the rule of faith.

3. Jesus on Scripture and Man-Made “Tradition”:

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” He answered them, “*And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition (Gk paradosis)?* For God commanded, “ ‘Honor your father and your mother’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of a father or mother let

The Origin of the Bible: Human Invention or Divine Intervention?

him surely die.’ But you say, ‘If any one tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father’. *So for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God.* You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, *teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.*” (Matthew 15:1-7)

4. Problems:

- a. Jesus is not condemning *all* tradition, but evil *man-made traditions*.
- b. Problem is when the “precepts” of men are taught as “doctrine” of God.
- c. Jesus assumes “doctrine” as well as Scripture is “the Word of God”!
- d. Jesus elsewhere commands obedience to Pharisees’ teaching (cf. Matt 23:1-3)

5. St. Paul on the Authority of Tradition:

So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the *traditions* (Gk *paradosis*) which you were taught by us, either *by word of mouth* or *by letter* (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the *traditions* (Gk *paradosis*) even as I have delivered them to you. (1 Corinthians 11:2)

6. The Church as “the pillar and foundation of the Truth”:

I am writing these instructions so that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is *the Church* of the living God, *the pillar and foundation of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:15)

The Bible, the Catholic Church, and the Divine Authority of Jesus Christ

1. Why Trust the Bible at All? Isn’t it just a Product of Men?

- a. Authority of the Bible
- b. Authority of the Church
- c. Authority of Christ himself

2. The Divine Authority of Christ: Jesus’ Claim to Divinity; 3 options (C.S. Lewis)

- a. Lunatic
- b. Liar
- c. Lord

3. The Divine Authority of the Church (cf. Graham, *Where We Got the Bible*, 65-66)

- a. Peter and “the Church”: Gates of Hell will not prevail (Matt 16:13-19)
- b. Christ’s Promise: Holy Spirit will lead disciples into “all truth” (John 16:13)
- c. The Disciples: “He who hears you hears me” (Luke 10:16)
- d. Church is the “pillar and foundation of the Truth” (1 Tim 2:15)

4. The Divine Authority of the Bible:

In order to reveal himself to men, in the condescension of his goodness God speaks to them in human words: “Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men... In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, “but as what it really is, the word of God.” “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them.” God is the author of Sacred Scripture. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 101, 104-105)