

DIRECTIVES FOR GOD'S PEOPLE:

- *"...Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have...." (1 Pet. 3:15)*

THE RELIABILITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

- *The Bible is amazingly consistent, despite being written by about 40 different human writers, from every walk of life, over a period of about 1500 years.*
- *The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in history.*
- *More than 2000 times in the Scripture the writers note that they are speaking or writing the Word of the Lord and not their own.*
- *The Bible is unique in that it is totally honest: It notes how Abraham lied and how David was involved in adultery and murder and how Peter had great lapses in his faith.....No other work presents such an honest portrayal of its heroes.*

How the Bible came to be:

- The term, "**The Canon of Truth**" was first used in the year A.D. 367. The term referred to the restriction of the number of books that compose the sacred volume.
- **Criteria for admission into the Canon**
 - *Writings must be viewed as divinely inspired (Deut. 18:18; 2 Pet. 1:21)*
 - *Writings must be consistent with established truth (Gal. 1:8)*
 - *The prophet and his prophecies must be rejected if marked by error (Heb. 2:3-4)*
 - *New Testament material must be written by an Apostle, an eye-witness to the ministry of Jesus and/or birth and expansion of the NT Church, and/or someone working in conjunction with an Apostle (I.e., Luke)*
- **The Old Testament**
 - *The writings of the Old Testament were divided into sections (i.e., the Law, the Prophets, etc.) and were generally immediately accepted as divinely inspired.*
 - *Old Testament writings were translated from Hebrew to Greek in the 3rd century BC. Known as the Septuagint, the early versions of this collection of writings became the officially recognized canon of OT material in the first century AD*
 - *The Old Testament Canon was finalized at the Council of Jamnia in 97 AD.*
- **The New Testament**
 - *Some Gospel writings from cir. 125 AD have survived*
 - *In 303AD the emperor Diocletian issued a royal decree that every Bible should be destroyed.*
 - *The complete Canon of Scripture was finalized at the Synod of Hippo in 393 AD and the third Synod at Carthage in 397 AD.*

- **The Apocrypha**

- A collection of 14-15 books written between 300—30BC [1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Song of the Three Children, the Story of Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasses, and 1 and 2 Maccabees]
- Apocryphal books are not quoted by Jesus or New Testament writers
- The formal and official church Canon of Scripture (from the Synod of Hippo, 393 AD) did not include the Apocrypha
- No Apocryphal book claims to be inspired...some specifically deny that they are inspired (see 1 Maccabees 9:27 and 2 Maccabees 2:23, 15:38)
- The apocrypha was not officially recognized by the Catholic Church until 1546 (at the Council of Trent)

- **Are there “lost books?”**

- Numbers 21:14-15 quotes from the “Book of Wars”
 - Ex. 24:7 references the “Book of the Covenant”
 - Genesis 5:1 references the “Book of the Generations of Adam”
 - Joshua and Samuel quote from the “Book of Jashar”
 - 1 Kings 11:41 references the “Book of the Acts of Solomon”
 - 1 Kings 14:19 references the “Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel”
 - 1 Kings 14:29 references the “Book of the annals of the Kings of Judah”
 - Jude references spiritual writings and Paul quotes secular poets
 - There are reported second—fifth century AD (Gnostic) writings that some suggest should be in the Bible (such as the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, The Gospel of Thomas, and The Gospel of Abraham).
 - There are reportedly several Psalms found in the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- **The Bible does reference important books that are not included in Scripture, and old writings with impressive titles have been found over the centuries, but the Bible is not incomplete and this is why:**
 - Scripture notes that God preserves the integrity of His Word. It is not beyond His power to ensure that the Canon of Scripture is complete and accurate.
 - The New Testament leaders determined that material for the New Testament must be written by an eyewitness to (or have exceptionally close association to) the ministry of Jesus and the risen Lord. Later century Gnostic writings contradict Scripture, were not written by close followers of Jesus, and were not written by whom the title suggests. For example, The Infancy Gospel of Thomas was not written by the disciple, Thomas, and the Gospel of Mary Magdalene was not written by Mary. Individuals wrote in their name to gain credibility for their writings.

HOW THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE

Some of this material comes from the books "The Case for Christ," "Evidence that Demands a Verdict."

- **What Scripture says about itself (internal validation)**

- All Scripture is 'inspired by God' (2 Tim. 3:16)
- 'Scripture cannot be broken' (John 10:35)
- Scripture was given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:16)
- Scripture equates itself with the authoritative Word of God

WHAT GOD SAID	SCRIPTURE SAID
<i>Genesis 12:3</i>	<i>Galatians 3:8</i>
<i>Exodus 9:6</i>	<i>Romans 9:17</i>

- **Outside evidence for the reliability of the Scriptures (external validation)**

- **The Scribal Tradition:** Unequaled care was given to the work of copying Scripture. *The middle word and letter of each book, along with the total number of letters in each book and Testament, was calculated. Scribes had to justify their work at the end of each day according to a complex grid and counting system.* This system ensured accuracy.
- **FACT:** There are 86,489 second, third and fourth century quotations of Scriptures from sources **outside** the Church. If the entire Bible was lost, scholars would be able to draw from these sources and reassemble all but 11 verses of the Bible.
- **FACT:** There are only 400 word variants among the **5300** early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. By comparison, there are only 643 early copies of Homer's Iliad, the so-called best-preserved work of antiquity, and these 643 copies have a word variant count exceeding 75,000.
 - **In comparing the Bible with the great works of antiquity, we see:** *There are more than 5300 early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and more than 10,000 early translations of the Latin Vulgate, and 9300 other early versions of the New Testament.*

TITLE	WHEN WRITTEN	# OF COPIES	EARLIEST COPY
Caesars G. Wars	50 BCE	10	900 AD
Plato	400 BCE	7	900 AD
Homer's Iliad	900 BCE	643	400 BCE
Sophocles	500 BCE	193	1000 AD
Aristotle	350 BCE	49	900 AD
Pliny the Younger	75 AD	7	850 AD

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Wycliffe Translation

- John Wycliffe was known as "the morning star of the Reformation." Born about 1324, he was the first person to translate the complete Bible into the English language.
- Wycliffe translated the Bible from the Latin Vulgate, not from the original languages of Hebrew (O.T.) and Greek (N.T.).
- In 1414 the reading of the Scripture in English was forbidden. The Church Council of Constance declared that Wycliffe was a heretic. In 1428, over forty years after his death, Wycliffe's bones were dug up, his remains were burned.
- 170 copies of his text have survived to this day. The reading is middle-English and difficult for 21st Century believers to follow. A sample from John 14 is noted below:
 - *"Filip seith to him, lord schewe to us the fadir, and it sufficith to us. ihesus seith to hym, so long tyme I am with you: and han ye not knowen me? Filip, he that seeth me seeth also the fadir, bileuest thou not that I am in the fadir and the fadir is in me; the wordis that I speke to you, I speke not of my self; but the fadir hym silf dwellinge in me, doith the workis..." John 14:8-10*

Tyndale Translation

- William Tyndale was born in 1494. He has been called "the father of the English Bible."
- Opposition to making the Bible available in English so great in England that Tyndale did his translation work in Germany.
- He translated the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek. A contemporary of his wrote, "He (Tyndale) was so skilled in seven languages--Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and French--that whichever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue."
- In 1536 Tyndale was betrayed by a man named Phillips, a man Tyndale trusted. Phillips was a spy sent by the Pope to trap Tyndale. Tyndale was strangled to death and his body burned. He died at age 42.

The last five centuries

- King Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church in 1534. This opened the door for English Bible translations, most notably the King James Bible (1611).
- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and several ancient families of Greek manuscripts in the 20th century prompted the creation of a number of English translations.

The Dead Sea Scrolls verify the accuracy of the Scriptures:

- The Dead Sea Scrolls: About 830 documents (250BCE—65CE) were found in 11 caves in 1947. 202 documents are biblical texts—the others are legal and historical documents, poetry, worship scrolls, etc. Of the 202 biblical scrolls, there are copies of all O.T. books in our canon of Scripture, except Esther.

- When the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Old Testament, Cir. 100 BCE) is compared to the next oldest complete Hebrew Bible (Cir. 900 AD), the copies are 99+% identical—the less than 1% variance does not pertain to matters of doctrine, but rather variant spelling of proper nouns. This verifies the integrity of Scripture.

The accuracy of Bible Prophecy also validates the integrity (and inspired nature) of Scripture

- [illegible]

ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS VERIFY THE INTEGRITY OF THE BIBLE

- The Amarna Tablets were found in 1988. *These confirm the disputed biblical account of Joshua's conquest over Gezer, Ashkelon and Lachish.*
- The first (non-biblical) reference to Nebuchadnezzar was found in 1899
- The biblical city of Bethel was found in 1919
- The biblical city of Jericho was found in 1930
- The Mari Tablets were found in 1933. *These confirm the existence of the disputed city, Nahor, listed in Gen. 24:10*

- Dead Sea Scrolls (1947). These confirm the reliability of the Old Testament
- The only lithic reference to Pilate was found in 1961
- The biblical city of Nazareth was found in 1963
- The Elba Tablets were found in 1970. These verify the existence of the long disputed listing of cities in Genesis 14
- The burial chamber of the High Priest Caiaphas was found in 1990
- The biblical city of Dan was found in 1993
- The biblical city of Hazor was found in 1996
- The first non-biblical reference to David was found in 1976
- The Mari Tablets (a collection of legal documents found in Northern Syria—dated to the early second millennium BC) note a particular pattern (and stipulations) for oaths, agreements and treaties....this matches perfectly with the form and structure of the treaties Abraham, Isaac and Jacob entered into with their neighbors, as described in Gen. 21, 26 and 31.
- An ancient Egyptian document known as the Leiden Papyrus 348, which dates back to the time of Moses, notes an order that food was to be distributed to the 'Apiru who were dragging stones for the great project.' Apiru = non Egyptians.
- The Merneptah Stele (cir. 1217 BCE), which commutes Ramesses II, mentions the servitude of the Hebrew people.
- 1996: Hebrew University Professor Amnon Ben Tor found the city of Hazor. Temple areas had been razed by fire (mud bricks had melted and turned into glass). Statues of Canaanite deities were decapitated and strewn about the Temple. This matches the Deut. 7:5 record.

Secular writings

- The Roman Historian Josephus wrote: "Jesus is widely known as a doer of amazing deeds and a teacher who won over many Jews and Greeks."
- The Babylonian Talmud (a compendium of Jewish law and commentary) notes: "On the eve of Passover, Yesju was hanged...because he practiced sorcery and led Israel astray."
- The Roman Historian Tacitus wrote that Jesus was executed under Pilate during the reign of Tiberius, and was the head of the Christian movement.
- Jewish Historian **Josephus** wrote that, "Jesus was a wise man...who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher...of truth. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks, He was the Messiah. And when upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross...He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things..."

***"...Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you
to explain the hope you have in you."
(1 Pet. 3:15)***