

PART 1

THE SCRIPTURES

How We Got Our Bible

1. How close was man's first fellowship with God?

"They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.... And the Lord God called unto Adam." Genesis 3:8, 9.

2. What caused the break in this intimate communion? "Your iniquities have separated between you and your

God, and your sins have hid His face from you." Isaiah 59:2.

3. After sin entered the world, what modified method of communicating with man did God adopt?

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." Hebrews 1:1.

4. What nation did God single out to be the special instrument of His revelations?

"What advantage then hath the Jew?... Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Romans 3:1, 2. See also Romans 9:4.

5. What further provision did God make for keeping the knowledge of His will before His chosen people?

"The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book." Exodus 17:14. See also Exodus 24:4.

NOTE. - In His providence God gathered up the record of the past and communicated it to Moses, instructing him to write it in a book to form the nucleus of a written revelation which could be handed down from generation to generation. By divine inspiration Moses wrote the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which became known as "the book of Moses" (2 Chronicles 25:4), "the book of the law of Moses" (Joshua 23:6), and in later times the Pentateuch.

"Sweep away his [Moses'] authority as an inspiration, and you undermine the whole authority of the Bible; you bring it down to the level of all other books; you make it valuable only as a thesaurus of interesting stories and impressive moral truths, which we accept as we do all other kinds of knowledge, leaving us free to reject what we

cannot understand or appreciate or even what we dislike.” - John Lord, *Beacon Lights of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 125, 126.

“We reject, however, with scorn all those learned and labored myths that Moses was a legendary figure.... We believe that the most scientific view, the most up-to-date and rationalistic conception, will find its fullest satisfaction in taking the Bible story literally.... We may be sure that all these things happened just as they are set out according to Holy Writ.” - Winston S. Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, page 249.

6. Who was commissioned to continue the sacred record after the death of Moses?

“Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God.” Joshua 24:26.

7. Who were chosen by the Lord to give guidance and reproof to His people after Israel settled in Canaan?

“The Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers.” 2 Kings 17:13.

NOTE. - During the period of the monarchy there were added to the books of Moses and Joshua the books of Samuel, the earlier parts of the Kings and the Chronicles, the psalms of David, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and the writings of the earlier prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos.

8. During the captivity of Israel and Judah or immediately after the captives’ return to their homes, what new books were incorporated into the Scriptures?

Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and perhaps the latter parts of the books of the Kings and the Chronicles.

9. How did the children of Israel who returned from captivity indicate their desire to understand the words of the Lord?

“All the people gathered themselves together;... and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.” Nehemiah 8:1. Read verses 1-8.

10. What books were added in postcaptivity days to complete the Old Testament as we now have it?

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

NOTE. - With the book of Malachi, written about 400 B. C., the canon of the Old Testament was completed. It had been in process of formation for more than one thousand years.

11. How did Jesus refer to the Old Testament Scriptures?

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.” Luke 24:44.

NOTE. - This threefold division was the customary classification of the Old Testament books in the days of Jesus: “the law of Moses,” including the five books of the Pentateuch; “the prophets,” comprising Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets; “the psalms,” including also Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and First and Second Chronicles.

12. In what form were the earliest writings of the New Testament set down?

“I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17. See also Colossians 4:16.

NOTE. - As time passed, it became more and more difficult for the apostles personally to visit all the groups of Christian believers which were springing up. In order to meet the need for further instruction in the faith, to combat prevailing error, and to warn against strange and heretical teachers, the apostles were led to send forth messages of warning and exhortation. See 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2; Galatians 1:1, 2; Ephesians 1:1; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1.

13. What portions of the New Testament were next written?

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us;.. it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.” Luke 1:1-4.

NOTE. - Some thirty-five years had passed since Jesus ascended to heaven, and persecution was decimating the ranks of the disciples. Soon there would be no one who had been with Jesus who could tell the story of His life and teachings. Therefore several men were led to prepare authoritative accounts, and the gospels, or “good news,” came into being. The earliest was written by Mark; Matthew wrote his Gospel soon after, followed by Luke. John’s Gospel came much later and was one of the last of the New Testament books to be written.

14. In addition to his gospel what further record was Luke inspired to set down in writing?

THE BIBLE SPEAKS

The Acts of the Apostles is the book of the New Testament giving an account of the early church leaders as they went forth to fulfill the great commission given them by Jesus. See Acts 1:8.

15. With what prophetic communication was the New Testament completed?

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.” Revelation 1:1.

NOTE. - By A.D. 100 all the books of our New Testament had been written. That this was in the providence of God is clearly evident, for not one of the apostles, save perhaps John, lived to see the beginning of the second century. The believers now began systematically to copy out and circulate the apostolic writings with the Old Testament Scriptures. From, the middle of the second century, testimony is forthcoming from every part of the Roman Empire to the general acceptance of the whole Bible, as we know it, as the inspired word of God.

16. How did God intend that the Bible should be used?

a. It was to be read publicly in the assemblies of God’s people. “Go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from My mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord’s house.” Jeremiah 36:6. See also Nehemiah 8:8.

b. It was to be studied earnestly by the individual believer. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” 2 Timothy 2:15.

NOTE. - “In the Bible, I must read the word of God to me in my specific situation. I must read it as one listening to God, in order to learn His will concerning me and my duty as I face a particular decision. I must read it as one who is at the parting of the ways, as one who must now choose between good and evil, between life and death.” - Joseph Haroutunian, “The Bible and the Word of God,” Interpretation, vol. 1, No. 3, p. 295.

17. What blessed result will follow the wholehearted acceptance of the word?

“These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:31.