

Biblical Studies #103

How we Got the Bible

How did we get what we today call the Holy Bible? The clearly revealed truth is that all is God-breathed, and God used more than 40 individuals and their personalities to give us His Word. Its current form contains 66 books produced over about 1600 years, ranging from Job, the oldest (around 1500 BC), to the latest of the New Testament books (none later than around 95 AD). This amazing Book has one consistent story line, one ultimate author, and it is clearly without error.

Dan Brown (*The Da Vinci Code*) and Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*) would have you believe that we are simply deluded, mindless followers of a long list of interconnected manipulating monarchs and their oh-so-obedient clerics. But a simple comparison of their claims and the facts show them to be either dishonest, uniformed, or some combination thereof. Dan Brown claims that some 80 gospels precluded what we now have as four, when the four we have were never historically in question. And you would be hard pressed to find more than 7 or 8 Gnostic gospels which the church dismissed as heretical for good reason over 1900 years ago. This was no secret club that made these decisions. What they dismissed and why (based on rules of I mentioned previously) has been published and is available for all to read in documents by early church fathers like: Clement, Origen, Athanasius, and many others. While I could spend 2 or 3 lessons pointing out the errors of the critics, let's move on to more positive evidence.

In 1976, a liberal scholar, Anglican bishop, and Dean at Trinity College in Cambridge England, wrote a book titled "Redating the New Testament". Even this liberal New Testament scholar, after seeking to show that the New Testament was written hundreds of years after Christ, discovered something quite different. He claimed in his book that all 27 books of the New Testament must have been written before 70 AD. He had many reasons for this, but one of his main reasons was simply that, from a purely historical perspective, it is hard to believe that anything originating in or around the region of Jerusalem by people of Jewish descent would not carry one mention of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70AD. This was such a large event historically that many writers after that date cited the number of years from that event to date of what they wrote.

God used real people to produce His Holy Word; divine inspiration does not mean they functioned as mind-numbed robots moving the pen in some disconnected mindless way. 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." God used their personalities which are evident throughout their writings: Matthew the tax collector is concerned with the detail of what he records; Luke the physician is concerned with the personal aspect of the same accounts; Paul the Pharisee writes in a highly educated form of Greek and has a clearly fluent knowledge of Hebrew as well. People today also have different writing styles based on professional jargon. Whether they are writing a technical document or a legal document, their vocabulary, their level of education, and their method of constructing sentences, all come through in the way that they write. You do not have to see the handwriting to recognize that what you are reading seems clearly like something I would say (or you may have even heard me say.) In the same way, Greek scholars did not have to see the original documents to say that the writer of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts clearly had similar, if not identical, writing style, education, and vocabulary. These are accepted methods in these fields of study, even outside the study of , to determine if two different documents may have come from the same author. As a matter of recorded fact, many ancient documents are identified this way. It is simply noted whether or not the traditionally ascribed author of a piece of work has his name actually on the document or not.

So, if you want to determine whether or not something is true, then we must identify what the claim is, and weigh that claim against the evidence. The witnesses we can call to our court to see if the claims are true

are: scientists and their discoveries; archeologists and their discoveries; linguistic scholars and their discoveries; the writings of early church fathers and any ancient historian; and of course itself.

For example, many critical biblical scholars claimed that there probably was never a King Sargon as mentioned in Isaiah 20:1. But in 1843, French archaeologist Paul Emile Botta discovered his 25 acre palace complex near the small village of Khorsabad, Iraq. This is the story with archeology over and over again: it affirms 's historical accounts. There is currently not one solid example of physical archeological evidence that outright contradicts . A coincidence? I think not!

In Christ,
Pastor Portier