

## **The Origin of the Old Testament**

### **3-29-15 PM**

There are a number of claims about the Bible today that are made by both religious and secular persons that have a great impact on how many see the Bible. The Catholic church claims that “the Catholic Church created the Bible”<sup>1</sup>; secular claims include “the Bible was written centuries after the fact”<sup>2</sup> and “it has been translated & copied too often to be true”<sup>3</sup>; the Mormon church makes the claim that “the Bible is no longer valid”<sup>4</sup>.

We need to be able to reply to these claims. We need to be confident the Bible is God’s Word, and that the Bible we hold in our hands is God’s Word. We need to have an answer to the nay-sayer (Titus 1:9) and ultimately, to save souls!

#### **Definitions You Need to Know:**

**Canon** – literally “a line”; the accepted complimentary books we call the Scriptures

**Apocrypha** – additional books in the Catholic and Greek Orthodox Bible

**Septuagint** – A Greek translation of the Old Testament

**Translation** – literally moving from one language to another; to describe versions of the Bible

**Copy** – multiplying identical texts

#### **The Story of the Old Testament:**

**THE LAW** - In the beginning Moses received the law (1500-1300BC) over 40 years. Moses & Joshua wrote down these first five books of the Bible (Exodus 24:4, Deuteronomy 31:9, Joshua 24:26) in Hebrew.

**HISTORY** - As time progressed various authors transcribed Israel’s history for a period of about 1000 years (from Joshua until Malachi/Nehemiah). Jewish scholars attributed some of these (traditionally) to Samuel and Ezra. We need to know that these records were also considered the Law, as history is in fact Case law even in our legal system (legal applications).

**POETRY** – This material was poetic legal prophecy. It was prophecy (speaking for God in commentary AND speaking for God as foretelling) as seen in Psalm 22. As well, OT poetry was seen as Law in Romans 3:19 and John 12:34.

**PROPHETS** – While we break them into major and minor based on the length of material, originally the Minor Prophets were one books (seen in Acts 7:42). They were either speaking for God in commentary or in foretelling (such as Jeremiah 31:31). Their words are also called Law in Scripture (I Corinthians 14:21).

Therefore, we see that everything in what we call the Old Testament (Genesis through Malachi, as Jesus said in Matthew 11:13) is summed up by being called the Law and the Prophets, and is both Law and Prophecy in equal match (consider Matthew 5:17).

#### **Can We Be Certain?**

Some (secularists and liberal denominations) claim that the OT “was written much later – 500 BC”, or “it was a fictional record”, or “the real OT has been lost”. Can we be certain that the claims of the veracity of these writings is present? In fact, there are “tons” (literally, hundreds of tons) of evidence that testify to the veracity of the OT. For example, a silver strip found in a cave in the middle east turned out to be a quote of Leviticus 6:24-26, and proves that Leviticus (one of the original five books) existed long before

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bible.ca/cath-bible-origin.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/writers-bible.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/01/02/thats-not-what-bible-says-294018.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/modern-prophets-and-continuing-revelation>

these scholars say it did. There is substantial (again, the tons) recorded evidence that the records of the OT are accurate; consider that 50 people from the OT are non-biblically<sup>5</sup> confirmed in other records. That is a BIG testimony. Finally, to the claims that cast doubt on the Bibles ability to survive repeated copies, the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate that for 2000 years Scribes have accurately copied the Old Testament.

We CAN be certain that the Hebrew Old Testament we translate today has enormous historic authenticity, has verifiable ancient linguistic evidences, and has an extremely reputable pedigree.

**What About What Is NOT the OLD TESTAMENT:**

It was generally by the Jewish scholars in the time of Christ that Moses wrote five books (“The Five”), David wrote most of the Psalms, and Zechariah & Malachi were the last of the inspired writers. Therefore, the Old Testament we use now was the same that Jesus & the Apostles used. However, after Malachi some writings appeared that were known but NOT considered to be inspired by God by ancient Jewish scribes as well as early Christians, including Jesus and the Apostles. These are the books we call the Apocrypha. They were fables, myths and perhaps uninspired histories that were added to the Scriptures. The Greek OT translation called the Septuagint (written around 150BC) included them; soon many early Rabbis rejected the Septuagint because of this inclusion. The Apocrypha include:

Tobit	Judith	Additions to Esther
Wisdom (of Solomon)	Sirach/ Ecclesiasticus	Baruch
Daniel: Azariah	Daniel: Susanna	Daniel: Bel & the Dragon
1 Maccabees	2 Maccabees	

Let us be very clear: these books were never considered “Scripture”, and even today those who use them would not call them such. They contradict things recorded in Scripture, and contain doctrines that are in opposition to Scripture. They are still produced in the Catholic translations of the Bible because they teach some Catholic doctrines, and they were adopted to contrast the “Protestant” Bible.

Finally, there are also some books that were written in Greek that were never ever presented as inspired, even by their authors, but represent a style of literature called Pseudepigrapha (“like writings”). They were books like the Books of Enoch, Martyrdom of Isaiah, and the Book of Adam and Eve. They were NEVER seen as anything other than religious fiction.

**CONCLUSION:** We have absolutely certainty that: The Old Testament we have is God’s Word to Israel; Books we do not include were not part of that Word. We can be sure THIS WAS GOD’S MESSAGE TO Israel, and to us today (I Corinthians 10:11).

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<sup>5</sup> *Biblical Archeological Review*, March/April 2013, pp 46-47