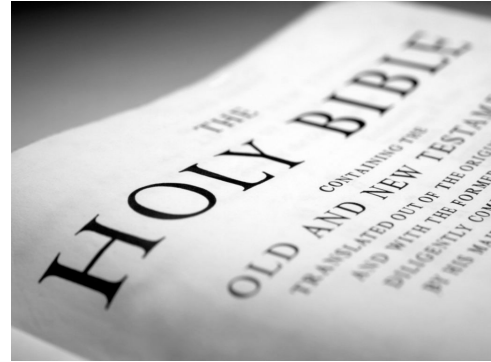


How Did We Get the Bible?

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Very often people will ask this question. Others will deny or doubt the Bible's accuracy and authority, indicating a lack of information on the subject. This is very sad because the evidence for it is abundant. It is impossible to cite all the evidence in one brief essay, so this will be but a summary.

A lack of information is a large cause for uncertainty on any subject. The evidence that the Bible has come down to us accurately is more than adequate to persuade any honest person. No one needs to be uninformed or confused regarding the subject. To be an honest doubter or denier, one must successfully disprove the evidence. Otherwise, it is only willful or neglectful rejection. The two categories of evidence we must consider are called internal and external evidence.

One problem is that terms are often confused. Some will say the Bible has been re-written so many times that there are bound to be mistakes. Some get the words "translations" and "interpretations" confused. The Bible has not been re-written! It has been translated into many languages and many times into English. Translations are not changes, unless they are not accurate translations. I want to insert an important point here for those who may wonder about the accuracy of our English translations. There are plenty of Hebrew and Greek scholars in the world who would be very willing to point out any possible errors.

The Bible either had to be translated in the languages of the peoples of the world or else all had to be taught Hebrew and Greek. The latter certainly would not be feasible! Having taken Hebrew and Greek, I can assure you very few would do that. Translators have their challenges. For example, in English we have only active and passive voice, but Greek also has a middle voice. Verbs in the Greek middle voice have to be adjusted when translating into English to reflect the same meaning. Even in English words do not always have the same meaning or connotation in every area of our country. In my home state of Ohio, for example, "evening" refers to the period between late afternoon but before nightfall. In Kentucky and some other places, however, it can refer to the entire period after noon. Other words have taken on new or additional meanings. Years ago, "cool" referred to the temperature. But people can now be "cool" even when it is hot. The word "gay" certainly has changed meaning. Where the King James Bible uses the word "terrible" newer translations employ the word "awesome." "Charity" in the days of the King James Bible did not mean giving to the poor. It is the word now translated with the English word "love." Having new translations does not mean changes. We must also distinguish between translations and paraphrases, such as Kenneth Taylor's Living Bible. A paraphrase may be helpful, but should not be compared to a translation.

Most translations are made by a whole board of translators over an extended period of time to provide for greater accuracy. A whole lot more could be said along this line, but this brief explanation shows that great care is given to preserve the authenticity of the Bible. This whole study has become a science. Interpretations are only men's views of the scripture's meaning.

The Bible repeatedly claims to be divinely inspired. The prophets often said, "The word of the Lord came to me." Sometimes it was more than once in one day or two or three times in one month, etc. Peter says, "For no prophecy ever came by will of man: but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). That phrase "moved by the Holy Spirit" could

be rendered "carried along by the Holy Spirit." Divine inspiration is assured by two facts. 1) Many things were written that could not have been known apart from divine inspiration. For example, how could Isaiah have even thought about one being born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) even 700 years ahead of its occurrence, apart from divine direction? 2) Some things would not have been written apart from divine inspiration. For example, all the writers, in one way or another, acknowledged that they were sinners and in need of salvation.

The original manuscripts that came from the writers' hands were divinely inspired – without error. Naturally, they had to be copied and translated into other languages down through the years. Until the printing press was invented they had to be copied by hand, and some mistakes were made, in spite of meticulous care. Translations into other languages began to appear very early in the second century. These translations, in addition to the accumulation of thousands of actual Greek texts down through the years, helped men to sort out the copyists mistakes, none of which had anything to do with the meaning of the text. I know this is a summary statement, due to limited space, but it is accurate. With all the information available today, anyone who doubts or denies the accuracy of the Bible is uninformed or lacking in interest of knowing the truth. Preachers, parents and Bible School teachers need to make sure these things are clearly taught to as many people as possible.