

# TXT Week 2: The History of the Bible

College Life

6/24/09

John Wyatt

**Topic:** Bible

**Theme:** Faith in the Word

**Key word:** Assurance

## **Intro:**

In this series, TXT, we are exploring why we can trust God, and put our faith in the Bible.

## **Key Verse:**

Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

I want you to see that The Bible is trustworthy. I want you to see that it's not blind faith to believe God's Word, but rather, it's placing your faith in a proven body of evidence. That faith, which takes you from "the Bible is a book written by men," to "God is speaking to me through the Words in this book," is the key to unlocking the power and presence of God in our lives. Once we are convinced that The Bible is God speaking to us, we will not neglect it. We will not take it for granted. We will let God shape our lives through it.

Last week, we looked at 5 Scriptures that changed my life. They changed my life for this very reason: I believe them. I believe God is speaking to me through the Scriptures. Tonight, I want to offer you some of the body of evidence in which we are putting our faith.

## **THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE: 1500BC-1500AD**

### **History Timeline**

**2560 BC:** Great Pyramid of Khufu at Giza completed

**1400 - 1500 BC:** God wrote the 10 Commandments in ancient Hebrew on stone.

**500 BC:** 39 books that make up the Old Testament were completed and preserved in Hebrew on scrolls.

- Pentateuch: first 5 books (Gen, Ex, Lev, Numb, Deut.)
- Torah: complete Pentateuch scroll: 150 feet long; whole herd of sheep to complete it

**First Century AD:** New Testament had been completed and was preserved in Greek on papyrus.

**250B.C. to 68 A.D.:** Dead Sea Scrolls Produced

- Discovered in Qumran in 1947
- Prove the consistency of the translators from then until today

**393 AD:** Synod of Hippo officially approved the New Testament for the entire Church. (Canon)

### **Canon:**

- Before the Canon, each group of Believers used their own collection of letters/books/writings to set doctrine for their local church
- These were people who loved Jesus and seeking Truth
- Canon was developed to prevent heresy and promote Unity in the Body of Christ
- Through fasting and prayer and deliberation, the Christians of the day developed a "Divine" battery of tests. This divine battery was developed for the Councils of Jamnia (late 1<sup>st</sup> century) and Trent, and confirmed the Canon set apart at Hippo:

1. Test of Divine Inspiration: Does the book claim to be inspired?
2. Test of Human Authorship: Is the book written by a credible author?

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3. Test of Genuineness: Can the book be traced historically back to the time/author who claimed to write it?
4. Test of Authenticity: Is the book factually true?
5. Test of Testimony: Was the book recognized by the Christians of the Day?
6. Test of Authority: Does the book convict you?
7. Test of Agreement: Does the book agree with the others?
8. Test of Fulfillment: Do the promises predicted come true?
9. Test of Endurance: Does the book speak to generations? Is it timeless?
10. Test of Spirituality: is the book of such spiritual character that it is in harmony with the Character, the Dignity and the Personality of God?
  - In our Bibles today, we possess 66 books that passed these tests 100%
  - The Koran was not processed. IT is just assumed that God wrote it
  - Are there "lost books?" Yes. But not lost Scripture

**500 AD:** Bible had been translated into over 500 languages.

**600 AD:** Bible was restricted to only Latin. All other versions were considered illegal.

**400-1400 AD:** Known as the "Dark Ages."

- No one could read the Word for themselves
- Corruption; false teachings
- Indulgences were sold for salvation

**500's - 1300's:** Secret Bible society made up of the "Culdees" continued to study God's word.

- 700 years of faithful discipleship throughout the Dark Ages

**1380:** John Wycliffe (often called the Morningstar of the Reformation) translated the Bible into English.

- First to translate the Bible into English
- Took up to 10 months to write out
- Considered a heretic: 44 years after his death, the Pope had his bones dug up and destroyed

**1415:** John Hus burned at the stake for his stance for the Bible. Wycliffe's bibles used to start the fire.

- One of Wycliffe's Disciples
- Used Wycliffe Bibles to start the fire
- "In the next 100 years, God will raise up a man whose call for reform cannot be suppressed."

**1517:** Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Thesis on the church door at the church in Wittenberg.

- Door still there today
- 95 Claims of heresy against the Catholic Church, including indulgences
- Began Protestant Reformation
- Completed a manuscript of the Bible in German
- Printed it on the newly-invented Guttenberg press and distributed it throughout Europe
- Meanwhile, John Colet, a contemporary of Luther, began to read the Word in English weekly at St. Paul's Cathedral in London; crowds of up to 40,000 come to hear the Word of God in their own language.

**1526:** William Tyndale printed the first English Bible.

- Anyone caught with this Bible could be executed immediately
- Tyndale smuggled Bibles into England in bales of hay and bags of flour
- King's men were among the biggest purchasers, so they could destroy the Bibles
- Tyndale used the money to print more
- On the run for 11 years

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**1536:** before he was strangled and burned at the stake, Tyndale prayed, "Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes".

**1539:** King Henry VIII finally allowed (and even funded) the printing of an English Bible. He had one delivered to every church, had it chained to the pulpit, and provided readers, so that even the illiterate could hear the Word of God...

**1540-Present:** The Bible has been, for the most part, readily available in Western Civilization; however, persecution and martyrdom of Christians worldwide is at it's highest levels in history. Much because of the Word of God.

## **Conclusion:**

Think of all the people who have died to bring us God's word. Real people. Real lives lost, to preserve the Word of God.

Do Not Neglect God's Word

*I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.* Psalms 119:16

shakach (shaw-kakh'); to lay aside, to forget, to take for granted or neglect.