

Lafayette Bible Study

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Lesson # 1

Proof of the Bible Series (Part 1)

(Chart at end)

I've given some consideration as to what to get into by way of Bible study. There are many different things we could go through and, undoubtedly (in the time ahead of us), many things that we will go through. I felt that maybe a good place to start would be to **go back to the Bible itself—to take some time as to the proof of the Bible, the origin of the Bible, etc.**

Many times we, in the western world, take this Book for granted. The Bible is a book that we have grown up with, whether we grew up in the Church or not. We grew up with a certain familiarity with the Bible. Everybody had a Bible, heard of a Bible or knew about a Bible. We kind of take for granted the fact this is God's Book.

If we were to look around the world, there are many people in many areas of the world—many different societies and cultures—that certainly don't recognize the Bible as being anything in particular. And there are differences that come in, even as far as what constitutes the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, regards the books that compose the Bible as being different from the books that we normally use in our Bibles. Why is the Bible that we use in God's Church the same as what is used in the Protestant world, as opposed to the Bible that is used in the Catholic world?

Most of you are undoubtedly familiar with the books in the Catholic Bible that are different. There are several books that are included—the so-called Apocrypha books, as well as certain endings on some other books. There are various things that are included that you don't find in the Bible we customarily use. Why is that? Why the difference and how can you know that the books that you are using as the Bible consist of the books that God wanted preserved? How did it come about? Who decided that this is the Bible? Who had the right to decide that and what gave them the right to decide?

The Roman Catholic Church, of course, claims that they are the ones who have the right to decide what the Bible is. That's why, after the Protestant Reformation had its beginnings with Martin Luther, the Roman Catholic Church, at the Council at Trent, declared certain books to be part of Scripture—the books that constitute the Catholic canon.

The word "canon" is a word that simply means "measure." It comes from a Greek term that had to do with a measuring rod. When you speak of canon in terms of the Bible, you are not talking about something you shoot—a big gun. "Canon" comes from the Greek term which meant "a measuring rod." In other words, the canon was the books that measured up. That's kind of the sense of the word. That's the meaning. It's sort of a technical term that's used and that's the origin of it. It refers to those books that measure up or don't measure up. Going back to ancient times, it was the term that was used. We will be talking about the canon, or the canonization, and the books that composed the canon, or the books that are not considered a part of the canon.

The Roman Catholic Church had the council of Trent in the 16th century, following the Protestant Reformation. The Protestants said the Bible is supreme. This was their claim. That is not the way it actually worked out in practice, but their claim was that the Bible is supreme. The Catholic Church said, 'You don't even know what the Bible is and the church is supreme. The church is superior to the Bible because the church determines what the Bible is. And to prove that, we will add some books! We will declare, as a part of the canon, books that have been kind of on the borderline. We will declare those as a part of the Bible. We will fix the canon and we will determine—we will decide—what is in the Bible and what is not. We are the ones that decided it and established the Bible to begin with.' This was their claim. Is this true? The Catholic Church claims to be the one who provided the Bible. Is that really an accurate statement? What about the Old Testament? What about the New Testament? When was it written? Who wrote it? How do you know which books are a part of the Bible?

Jesus Christ said that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). If we are going to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Father, how do you know that this Book, the Bible, consist of every word of God? How do you know we have the whole thing? Maybe we just have part of it. Can we be sure?

From time to time, we read of certain obscure books. Maybe you've heard of certain books termed "lost books of the Bible." Various books, sometimes, would turn up—the Apocrypha,

books that are normally used as a part of the Catholic canon—and there are other books floating around from ancient times that even the Catholic Church does not consider a part of the canon. But you hear of them: the book of Enoch, Jasher and various ones. Sometimes they are even referred to in the Bible. In the Bible itself, you read a mention of the so-called book of Jasher and of certain other books like that (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18). What about these books? Are they supposed to be a part of the Bible? Can you know if we have the whole Bible? Who decided that it was the Bible and how was it preserved? The copy we have in front of us—where did it come from? How do we know that this Book we have right here in front of us is God’s Book for us? How do we know that this is all of it? How do we know that there are not other books floating around somewhere that somebody will dig up, that maybe we ought to add in? How do we know that the books we have are all the books that God intended?

There are several things that we might look at. Romans 3 is one good place to start.

Romans 3:1, Paul asked, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision?”

Verse 2, he answers it, “Much in every way! [Here is the chief advantage the Jews had.] Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.” “Oracles” means “the Word of God.” The chief advantage that the Jews had is that, ‘to them were given the Word of God.’

Verse 3, “For what if some did not believe it? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?” The advantage that the Jews had was that to them were given the Word of God! What if they didn’t believe it? What if some of them did not practice it? Many of them today do not practice it. Does their unbelief make the faithfulness of God of none effect?

If God was going to give His Word to someone, does it make sense that God would then break His Word? Does God inspire something to be written, but is helpless to preserve it? Are you going to go out and dig it up somewhere and then not know if you’ve found the right thing or the wrong thing? If God is going to inspire something as His Word, then there needs to be some means of preserving it and of guaranteeing that what we have—what God’s people have had through the centuries—is what God wanted them to have.

Now, if you are going to do that, then there has to be someone to preserve it. That was the job the Jews had. Their chief advantage is that they

had committed to them the keeping of God’s Word. If they didn’t believe it, that didn’t affect it. They still had to keep God’s Word. God was going to be faithful. It was God’s responsibility to preserve it. He used them as human instruments. God can use human beings in spite of themselves and has done so many times. God utilized the Jews to preserve His Word.

There is an interesting statement that Jesus made in the book of Matthew in what is called the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:17-18, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill [fill to the full]. For assuredly, I say to you, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass away from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Now what does “one jot or one tittle” mean? The term “jot” refers to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, pronounced in Hebrew as “yad.” It looks like a little apostrophe, and it is the Hebrew letter that is the equivalent of our “y” or “i” sound. It is the smallest, least significant-looking letter. It looks like a little apostrophe. The “tittle” referred to kind of a decoration that was put on certain letters of the alphabet, particularly the ending letters of a word. What Christ is saying in effect is, ‘not the dotting of one “i”, not the crossing of one “t” is going to disappear. Everything is going to be preserved to the letter.’

That’s a pretty strong statement. He said it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the dotting of an “i” or the crossing of a “t” to pass away from the Old Testament! It’s interesting because even though the Jews have not obeyed—certainly not obeyed in the spirit of the law—many of the instructions that God gave, they historically have had a regard and a certain reverence for the Bible—the Holy Scriptures.

The Jews don’t use the term “Old Testament.” The obvious reason is that if you have an Old Testament, then you must, therefore, have a New Testament. The Jews do not recognize the authority of the New Testament because as a nation, they rejected Christ as being the Messiah spoken of in the Scriptures. They have, therefore, rejected the authority of the New Testament. The New Testament was preserved in a different manner. We will address that at a later time. The Jews have preserved the Old Testament, or as they have termed it, “the Holy Scriptures” or “the Sacred Writings.”

It is interesting the way in which the Old Testament has been preserved. There was a group of scribes known as the “Sopherim” that

were responsible for the transcribing of the Old Testament. This was a lifetime job. This was a major job. The Sopherim were a very meticulous, technical and detail-minded people. They devised various ways to make sure that nothing got lost.

In the Hebrew language, each letter has numeric significance. Most of us are familiar with Roman numerals. “I” is “1,” “V” is “5,” “X” is “10,” “L” is “50,” “C” is “100,” etc. We are familiar with this type of thing and realize that, in modern times, we now use what is termed “Arabic numerals” (the one through ten designations), our alphabet being distinct. But in ancient times, most nations and their languages utilized the letters of their alphabet as also being numbers. This was commonly used in the Roman Empire in the Latin language. A number of the letters had numeric value, and we use it even today as Roman numerals.

In Hebrew, the “alpha,” which was the first letter, was “1,” the “beta” was “2” and the “gamma” was “3.” That was just the way it was, and they had various combinations of letters that stood for certain numbers. Each letter had a numeric value, which means that any word that you could write out, would also have a numeric value. If each letter has a numeric value, then you can spell it out and pronounce it as a word or you can add it up as a number. That is referred to in Revelation 13:18 when we’re told about the beast—the number of his name will be “666.” This is something that was very understandable to people at that time because they were familiar with languages where the letters had numeric value. Every name had a numeric value because if every letter of the alphabet has a numeric value, and you write out your name, whatever your name is you can go through and add it up. We could do that. You can do it in Roman numerals if your name happens to have a lot of “i’s” and “v’s” and “x’s” in it. Maybe for most of us we wouldn’t come up with very much. There are all kinds of names you can add up if you get the right combinations. Anyway, this was something they were familiar with.

The point I’m making is that was one of the primary ways that the Jewish scribes checked to make sure that nothing got lost in the shuffle. They went through the Scriptures and literally counted every word and every letter. They had added up various combinations and they knew, for instance, which letter ought to be the 200th letter, counting from the first letter in Genesis as you count forward. They knew what would be the 200th letter or what would be the 500th word,

counting forward and backwards from the end of Genesis. They had many number tricks like this, including what would be the numeric value of the first chapter. It was their way of crosschecking their work. When a scribe copied, someone would go back and arbitrarily look at various places. They might take the book of Obadiah, and they would know what should be the 99th letter. They would count from the first letter to the 99th to see if it corresponded. At other times they might count backwards. They would add up certain sections. They would add the numeric value and see if it totaled up. They had all these numerical methods of cross checking to where, if one letter was added or taken out, it would throw the numbering off and it would be very apparent.

If all you were doing was just going through, reading and comparing, it would be very easy to miss a letter. How many times have you proofread something you’ve typed and found out later there were spelling errors you had missed? I have lots of times. It’s easy to miss something when you are proofreading something this way. But they would have one man do the copying, and someone else would go through and not just proofread it in the sense of reading through what he was copying. They would have these intricate little puzzles that they had devised as a means of crosschecking. If they ever found one that diverged, they would go through letter by letter to see what the divergence was. And the rule was: when Scripture was copied onto vellum parchment (animal skin), there could *never* be an erasure. If they found an error, they made a note in the margin as to the proper reading, but nothing could be erased. If vellum was used it could not be erased because you wouldn’t know how to distinguish what had been erased by the scribes or erased by someone else. For those occasional errors, they would make a notation in the margin so that anyone reading it would be able to spot what it was and read it properly. But there were not any scratching out, scribbles, erasing and this kind of thing. They were very meticulous, even to the point of a virtual superstitious awe of the Scriptures. Not one jot or tittle was to pass. The Jews were very careful in this regard.

Let’s go on a little further. What books constituted the Old Testament as we know it? It’s very apparent what Jesus Christ considered the Scriptures consisted of.

After the resurrection, Jesus Christ, in His showing Himself to the disciples in [Luke 24:44-45](#), “Then He said to them, ‘These

are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” How did Jesus Christ define the Scriptures? He defined the Scriptures as consisting of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (or the Writings). That is the traditional Jewish division of the Scriptures: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings—a three-fold division. Jesus Christ recognized that as being authoritative and refers to it here, specifically, as the LAW, the PROPHETS and the PSALMS (or WRITINGS). He defined it in verse 45 as being “the Scriptures.”

The books of the Apocrypha simply do not fit into that. The Jews never have regarded them as a part of the Law, or a part of the Prophets, or a part of the Writings (Psalms) division. They don’t fit into that three-part division. The books of the Apocrypha were primarily written in the Greek language during the time between the close of the Old Testament period and the beginning of the New Testament period. They were books that had their origin in the Jewish community. Jews did not regard them then, nor do the Jews regard them now as being scriptural. They are simply thought of by the Jews as being books—historical books—books of certain value, just as we have many books in our society today. Books that may contain a certain degree of fact and a certain degree of fable—books that are simply books. Somebody wrote them, and they give that person’s opinion. The Jews have never considered the Apocrypha a part of the Scriptures.

Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived in the first century—in the time of Christ and on up through the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. He was not only a priest, but he was also an individual of the highest echelons of Jewish society. He was a Jewish general in the Jewish revolt against the Romans and he was an historian. He provides in his books—in his works that have been preserved for us—a certain listing of the Scriptures and makes an interesting statement. He declares that the Holy Scriptures consists of 22 books, divided into three sections: the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (or Writings). Now if you were to go through your Old Testament and were to start counting books, you would very quickly come up with more than 22. What did he mean by that? The Jews today count 24 books as being in the Scriptures of the

Old Testament in these same three divisions. There is a reason why.

In the traditional reckoning of the books, some of the books that we count as multiple books, they count as simply one. Let’s notice an example. In 1 Samuel, in most of your Bibles, it will probably have, “The First Book of Samuel, otherwise called the First Book of the Kings.” Maybe you’ve never noticed that. Flip over in your Bible a few pages to 2 Samuel. It reads, “The Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings.” Just flip over a few more pages, and you will come to 1 Kings and it reads, “The First Book of the Kings, commonly called the Third Book of the Kings.” Guess what it says at the beginning of 2 Kings? You guessed it! “The Second Book of the Kings commonly called the Fourth Book of the Kings.” Now, what does all this mean? Well, simply put, the Jews regarded the books that we term 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings as simply one book—“The Book of the Kings.” It was written on four different scrolls because of length, but it was considered one book. It had four volumes because the size of the scroll would have been so enormous that they could not have gotten it up and down off the shelf. It is the story of the kingship from its inception to its end. They counted it as only one book, but it was divided into four scrolls.

The books of Joshua and Judges were counted as one book. They were written on two scrolls because, again, of their size and length. They tell the story from after the death of Moses to the beginning of the kingship. The Jews counted it as one book even though it was written on two scrolls. That’s why it’s divided into two books in most of our translations.

The Minor Prophets are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and all the way through Malachi. These were very short little books, all written on one scroll and was simply called, “The Twelve.” Those 12 books, or Prophets, were considered one book and were counted as such.

Today, Ezra and Nehemiah are reckoned as two books in most English translations. Some Bibles that follow the Septuagint and the Catholic translation will refer to them as I and II Ezras or I and II Ezra. (Ezras is simply the Greek form of the Hebrew Ezra). Ezra and Nehemiah were considered one book—Ezra-Nehemiah. The Book of Chronicles was also divided into two scrolls because of its size and was considered one book—The Book of the Chronicles.

The Jews, by counting them this way, came up with 22 books. They had five books of **the Law**: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These were the five books that Moses gave. The second division that Christ referred to was **the Prophets**. The Jews divided the Prophets into two sections: the **Former Prophets** and the **Latter Prophets**. The Former Prophets were Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Those are books we would not normally consider prophets. We think that they are historical.

Let me ask you a question. What is the difference between history and prophecy? They are simply the same things seen from different directions—you look back on history; you look forward on prophecy. They are the same things. They considered the historical books and the prophetic books as one section—the Prophets. The Prophets have, as their purpose, to tell you what happens when you obey God and what happens when you don't. All prophecy is based on the blessings and the curses given by Moses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. God promises blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. That's all prophecy is. It's a story of what happens when you keep the Law, and what happens when you don't keep the Law.

We look at the Former Prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings—as the record already written of what Israel of old did. Then we look at what are called the Latter Prophets, consisting of the major and the minor. The **Major Prophets** consist of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They are called major because they are longer, lengthier books, not because they are more important. Then there are the **Minor Prophets**, or “The Twelve.” All these together are considered the Prophetic division consisting of Joshua/Judges, Samuel/Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and The Twelve—six books.

Added up, so far, we have the Law—the first five. Then the next six are the Prophets. Next is **the Psalms** (or **Writings**) Division that consists of a little more variety. The book of Psalms was the first of those books. The Division was often called Psalms because that was the biggest and most lengthy book, and it was also the first of that section. Sometimes it was called the Writings because that Division also consisted of poetic books and writings—Psalms, Proverbs and Job were the first three, and this was the order they went in. Psalms, the chief or leading one, set the stage for that section of Scripture. It was written in poetry. Psalms was the logical book to come first, to set the stage for the rest of

the section. David was the primary author of Psalms. Solomon, his son, was the primary writer or author of Proverbs. Proverbs logically followed Psalms. Job came later, even though it had been written much earlier than the others. Psalms was the logical book to come first and set the stage for the rest of that section. Job is placed there about as early as it can be put in—right after Psalms and Proverbs.

Then we have the five books that are called the five Festival Scrolls. The Jews traditionally read them at certain festival occasions. First was the Song of Solomon, which was read at the Passover season. Next was the book of Ruth, which was read at Pentecost season. The book of Lamentations was read during the summer in a national holiday that was kind of a Fourth of July in reverse—the feast of Ab.

Ab was the fifth month of the calendar year and corresponds, approximately, to our July. It was that particular day that Solomon's Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Interestingly enough, it was exactly the same day centuries later that the temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. The temple was destroyed, both times, on the same day. The Jews set that day aside as a voluntary fast day—a day of national lament—and on that day they read the book of Lamentations, which is a lament. This would be a logical book to read on that occasion.

Then the book of Ecclesiastes was the fourth of that festival section, read during the Feast of Tabernacles. The book of Esther was read on the national day of Purim, which is mentioned in the book of Esther—that's five. Psalms, Proverbs, Job, then, the five Festival Scrolls. Then three more—Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles. You add that up; you have the five Festival Scrolls and the three at the beginning and the three at the end. This totals 11. There are five books of the Law, six books of the Prophets, and 11 books of the Writings—the sum of which is 22.

Let me show you something about the number 22 and why the Jews considered that an important number. Psalm 119 is a good place to go to illustrate the point. Notice under Psalm 119. In most of your Bibles you will have a funny little squiggle and a name “Aleph” written out by it. If you come down eight verses, you'll find another funny looking little squiggle and the word “Beth” written out by it. Come on down eight more verses and “Gimel” is by it; then “Daleth,” “He,” “Vau,” “Zain,” “Cheth,” “Teth,” “Jod” and “Caph.” Right on down every eight verses, you'll find another little squiggle and a

funny looking word written by it, until you finally come down to the last one, "Tau." Now if you will count all the funny little squiggles, you'll find there are exactly 22—the same number in the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is what is called an "acrostic." If you were reading this in Hebrew, you would find that every eight verses begin with a different letter. We are familiar with acrostics. Little kids learning to read say "a" is for "apple"; "b" is for "boy"; "c" is for "cat"; "d" is for "dog"; etc. They go through the story and each page will have a letter with different things that begin with that letter. That's an acrostic. It uses up every letter in alphabetical order. A poem can be written with an acrostic where every line begins with a different letter. This was an important part of Hebrew poetry and it had significance.

Psalm 119 is a perfect acrostic. In other words, it was an acrostic that used every letter. You had said all you could say on a subject. You had used up the whole alphabet from "A" to "Z" and you had completed it. There was nothing else to be said. This was the sense of it. In Psalm 119, which is in praise of God's perfect law, the entire alphabet was used up. Every eight verses a different letter was used until all the letters were used. The entire alphabet was used up in praise to God's perfect law.

The Holy Scriptures, as the Jew's preserved them, were considered an acrostic. Twenty-two books—22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. God's revelation in the Hebrew language was complete. It was obvious that He had used up all the letters. Now, I mentioned that the Jews today count 24 books. There is a reason for that. Does anybody know how many books there are in the New Testament? There are 27. Count them. Does anybody know what 27 and 22 added together make? Forty-nine! Seven times seven! The significance of that was not lost on the Jews. In fact, it became such an embarrassment to them (in the first century when the New Testament was completed) to see that the Old Testament added to the New Testament had God's stamp of approval numerically. It caused quite a bit of consternation.

About 45 years after the canon of the New Testament was complete, they called a conference and added two letters to the alphabet and divided two of the books. They divided Joshua and Judges into two different books at that time. I believe they also divided Ezra and Nehemiah at that time, but it may have been Chronicles. They actually divided the books and renumbered them at that time (a little over 100

years after the time of Christ) because it was such a problem to them. They were so embarrassed of the idea of the 27 books of the New Testament added to the 22 books of the Old Testament totaling a perfect 49 (seven times seven), they decided they would just have to change their alphabet. They added two letters. They also divided a couple of books in the Old Testament. They didn't change "a jot or a tittle"; they just changed the way they counted them.

Josephus, a Jewish historian and priest, wrote prior to the completion of the New Testament (in the 70s and 80s A.D.) when this had not yet become an issue. He tells on them. He tells exactly how many books there were and how they did it (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, book I, section 8). God used them to preserve His word. Nothing was changed.

Now, when you look at it again, you see that there isn't any room for the Apocrypha. When you have 22 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, you have God's number of completion and perfection—seven times seven. You add anything to it, and you mess it up. You take something out, and you mess it up. There isn't any room to add or take away. It's perfect! It's complete just the way it is. The Old Testament—God's revelation in the Hebrew language, of which not one jot or tittle was to pass—has been preserved, and it was very clearly marked that it was what God intended for the Jews to preserve. He gave them one book for every letter of the alphabet. He used up the alphabet and that was the end of the story. Now it was time to go on to something else.

Another interesting thing is that the New Testament is prophesied in the Old. Notice a statement that Moses said in Deuteronomy 18.

Deuteronomy 18:15, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me you from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear..." Now what did Moses mean, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me"?

Hold your place there and turn back to Deuteronomy 34.

Deuteronomy 34:10, "But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face..." Moses said God would raise up a Prophet like him.

Let me make a comment about that. Who wrote Deuteronomy 34:10? Clearly, Moses himself didn't write it, though he wrote virtually the entire book of Deuteronomy.

Evidently, Chapter 34 was probably written by Joshua.

Deuteronomy 34:5-6, we are told, “So Moses the servant of the Lord died.... And He buried him....” Moses didn’t write the account of his own funeral. Joshua was inspired to write this as the postscript—the addendum—to the story of Moses’ life, which was also included in others of the first five books. Joshua, as Moses’ successor, wrote that.

But verse 10 could not have been written by Joshua. To have made the statement, “there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses,” that is a statement made looking back over a long period of time. You don’t write that ten minutes after someone died. ‘Look around; hasn’t anyone else just like him showed up. He died 20 minutes ago, and we haven’t seen anybody like him since.’ No, that statement was made as an editorial comment at the conclusion of the Old Testament canon, which was done at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah—the time of the final editing of the Old Testament. We will go into some of that. We don’t have time this evening, but we can actually go through and prove (both from the Scriptures and from history) that both Ezra and Nehemiah were responsible for giving us the Old Testament in the form in which the Jews preserved it.

There were many places in the Old Testament where a certain place-name or something was edited or an editorial comment was stated where it would bring it up to date, so to speak. For instance, in Genesis it would refer to a certain event or a certain location, and then there is an editorial comment that “this place” or “this may be seen at ‘such and such’ until this day.” That was a statement added at the time Ezra and Nehemiah were putting the Old Testament into final form. These comments were added in—parenthetical statements—to bring it up to date, so to speak.

Deuteronomy needed this statement to bring it up to date because the prophecy was made, ‘There would arise in Israel a Prophet like Moses’ (Deuteronomy 18:15). At the conclusion of the canon of the Old Testament, that Prophet had not yet arisen! So, the statement was added in at the end of the book after the end of Moses’ life because that was the logical place to add it. The Prophet spoken of by Moses—a Prophet like him—had not yet come.

Now, what kind of prophet was Moses? How did Moses differ from any other prophet? How did God deal with Moses?

In Deuteronomy 34:10 it says *God knew Moses face to face. And God gave law through Moses.* Through no other prophet in the Old Testament

did God give law. The other prophets commented on the law and they rebuked the people for disobeying the law, but none of them claimed to speak for God or to announce the law. No one else in the Old Testament could be called a lawgiver. Moses gave the law, and everything else was a commentary on that.

Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant—right? Aren’t we told that in Hebrews (Hebrews 9:15-19)? He was the one that was the go-between, between God and the people. Has there arisen a Prophet like Moses?

In the book of Acts, we are told that there has!

Acts 3:20-24, “and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.” And it will come to pass that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold of these days.”

Verse 26, “To you first, God, having raised up His servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you....” Peter quotes what Moses wrote and said that Jesus was that Prophet raised up like Moses.

It is referred to back in Acts 7.

Acts 7:37-38, “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” This is he who was in the congregation [church] in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us.”

The point is that Jesus Christ was the Prophet like Moses. Jesus Christ came as a Lawgiver. Read the Sermon on the Mount that is recorded in the greatest detail by Matthew. What did Jesus say?

Matthew 5:27-28, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Verses 33-34, “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.” But I say to you, do not swear at all, . . .”

Verses 21-22, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder,”.... But I

say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause....” —You go on through.

Jesus Christ was giving law! He said, ‘Now it has been said, you shall do this, but I’m telling you....’ He was not making a modification. This is the way it was; here is the modification. In effect, He was expanding and magnifying the law. Jesus Christ came as a Lawgiver.

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 is comparable to the statutes and judgments in Exodus 21, 22 and 23. The Ten Commandments were the basis of both the Old and the New Covenant. They were called the tablets of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 9:11). They were placed in the ark of the covenant. The Ten Commandments was the basis of the Old Covenant. It is also the basis of the New Covenant. God will write His laws in our hearts and in our minds (Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33). The statutes and judgments were the applications of the law.

How do you apply them in practical day-to-day circumstances? Exodus 21, 22 and 23 were the statutes and judgments for a physical, carnal nation. How were they to apply the principles of the law in their circumstances? Jesus Christ came along as a lawgiver and dealt with a converted nation. He said in Matthew 5, 6 and 7, ‘this is the way you apply the spirit of the law.’ Under the New Testament, Jesus Christ came as a lawgiver, as a Prophet like Moses. The Jews recognized this scripture in Deuteronomy 18—there would come a Prophet like Moses; a Prophet who would give law; a Prophet who would introduce Scripture because Moses established Scripture. Moses established a Canon, a measure of books. He established Law. When the Old Testament concluded, this Prophet had not yet come.

At the conclusion of the Old Testament, everything God had to say in Hebrew had been said. The entire alphabet had been used up. God’s revelation in the Hebrew language was complete, and it was committed to the Jews who were responsible for preserving it. Not one dot of an “i” or cross of a “t” was going to be lost. God ensured that. But His revelation of His message was not yet finished. That was made evident because that Prophet had not yet arisen. So, when One claiming to be that Prophet came and the New Testament books of Scripture were complete, it was too much for the Jewish leadership. They recognized that this was too much to be a coincidence, so they actually changed the way they numbered the books.

It’s an interesting story, and we have only touched on the beginning of it. We will go back through and find out the way in which we came to have the Old Testament. We will find certain definite periods in which the Scriptures were written and certain individuals who were responsible for preserving it. Then we will find, in the story of the New Testament, that the Catholic Church had nothing to do with preserving it. In fact, they did their best to either alter it or destroy it! Their early church councils were not arguing about trying to establish a canon. They were arguing about a canon that already existed and they were trying to make alterations in it. That also provides some interesting material that we will discuss later.

Moses was responsible for that first period of canonization—for that first set of Scriptures—the books of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament).

We will notice the principle laid down in Deuteronomy 31.

Deuteronomy 31:9, “So Moses wrote this Law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Eternal and to all the elders of Israel.” Moses wrote this Law. It is called the Law of Moses (Joshua 8:31-32). Moses wrote this Law and gave it to the priests.

Deuteronomy 31:10-11, “And Moses commanded them saying: ‘At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this Law before all Israel in their hearing.’” What did Moses do? He wrote this Law and he gave it to the priests.

Notice what instruction he gave them.

Verses 25-26, “that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: ‘Take this Book of the Law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God that it may be there for a witness against you.’”

Moses established the first canon of Scripture—the book of the Law—the first section of authoritative writings.

At the end of Moses’ life, he took the five books (the books of the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and laid them up. He gave them to the priesthood and they were to be kept by the side of the ark—laid up in kind of a pouch or pocket on the side of the ark. They were to be kept there as Holy Scriptures. What makes something holy? God

makes it holy! God is holy. God's presence is holy. The word "scripture" simply means "writings." Here were writings that were laid up before God. They were in the Holy of Holies, right next to the ark. This was the official, authoritative Temple copy from which everything else had to be compared.

As time went by other copies were made. When a copy became damaged or illegible, it was destroyed. The reason being that as copies would become tattered and worn, sections would become illegible, and it would be possible for errors to creep in because sections would become difficult to read or would just wear away over time. Little sections of a page may tear or wear away over time and letters would become difficult to read.

It was the priesthood's responsibility to make a new, official, authoritative copy when an old copy began to show signs of wear. The new copy was then laid up beside the ark and the original that had become tattered was destroyed so that no error might creep in and there would not be any divergent copies floating around. They did not want something that was worn out, pages missing or this sort of thing. They were very conscious of making an exact, 100 percent and total continuation of the Scriptures that had been given. This was the beginning of the canon. Moses laid up these five books of the Law.

When we will pick it up next time, we will find out who continued that—the second time an addition was made to the canon of Scripture. We will find out who did it, why they did it, and on whose authority. We can go right on through and find the story of how we came to have the Old Testament and how we came to have the New.

[Editorial Comment: The 1984 Thomas Nelson *New Kings James Bible* (NKJV) is used unless otherwise indicated.]

THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS AND DIVISIONS

				<u>Parts</u>	
I. The <u>Law</u> Division	}		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy 	} 1	
II. The <u>Prophets</u> Division	}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Former Prophets The Latter Prophets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joshua-Judges Samuel-Kings 	} 2	
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Major Prophets The Minor Prophets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Poetic (or Metre) Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Twelve 	} 4			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Megillot or Festival Books The Restoration Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psalms Proverbs Job 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther 	} 6				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daniel Ezra-Nehemiah Chronicles 			} 7
III. (Psalms) <u>Writings</u> Division	}				