

Bible Study # 2
August 11, 1987
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Proof of the Bible Series (Part 2)
(Chart at end)

In continuing with what we talked about last Bible study, **how do we know we have the whole Bible?** The books commonly called the Apocrypha, how do we know that those books are not a part of the Bible? And **how do we know that the books we use are the ones God inspired?** How can we be sure of that?

The Old Testament has seven logical parts: 1) the Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), 2) the Former Prophets (Joshua-Judges, Samuel-Kings), 3) the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel), 4) the Minor Prophets (The Twelve), 5) the Poetic (or Metre) Books (Psalms, Proverbs, Job), 6) the Megillot or Festival Books (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther) and 7) the Restoration Books (Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles). The Old Testament is complete as the Scriptures of God of the Old Testament. But there is something yet to come. It doesn't end with the same finality as the New Testament does in Revelation 21 and 22. How did the Old Testament begin?

Deuteronomy 31:24-26, "So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 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 as a witness against you.'" **This was the beginning of the Canon, the Books that were to measure up as Scripture (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).**

God, prior to this time, had dealt with individuals. He talked with them and He walked with them. But now He began to work with a nation, a group of people He called out.

Exodus 12:3, "'Speak to all the congregation [church] of Israel....'" "Church" means "those who are called out." How much time did Abraham spend studying the Bible? None! Abraham never read the Bible because there wasn't a Bible. Abraham knew God's will because God instructed and taught him. God revealed things to them (Example: Genesis 28:10-22—Jacob's dream). But now God began to deal with a whole group of people, and there needed to be some clear statements given.

There were, evidently, some documents that had been preserved, but it was not the Bible as we know it.

Genesis 5:1, "This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God."

Genesis 10:1, "Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. And sons were sons born to them after the flood."

God's basic revelation of His will was set down. God revealed the basic law through Moses. It was the basis of the Old Covenant. This Book of the Law was presented to the priests and the Levites—against which everything else was to be compared. It was the beginning of Holy Scripture. It filled the needs of the people. God's basic Law was revealed.

The second period of canonization: The second period was because there was a need for change. This next period was at the time of David and Samuel. David wanted to build a temple. Things had grown and increased. Some of the things Moses had set up could no longer function. One of the things was the service set up by the Levites. As the years went by, and the numbers increased, you couldn't get all the priests around the altar at the same time. You no longer had just Aaron and his sons.

I Chronicles 9:22, "All those chosen as gatekeepers were two hundred and twelve. They were recorded by their genealogy, in their villages. David and Samuel the seer had appointed them to their trusted office." There was a reorganization that began at the time of David.

I Chronicles 24:1, "Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar."

Verses 7-9, "Now the first lot fell to Jehotariab, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin."

Verse 18, "the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah." You get down to 24 divisions—24 different families of priests. David divided them into 24 divisions.

Luke 1:5, "There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth." Zacharias was a priest of the division of Abijah.

I Chronicles 24:10, "the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah." You could actually go through to find when the two-week period—or

division—of John the Baptist’s father was David, under inspiration, divided them up.

I Chronicles 25:1, “Moreover David and the captains of the army separated to the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the workmen according to their service was:”

Verse 7, “So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the Lord, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight.” They were divided up.

II Chronicles 29:25, “Then he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.” David established music. But what were they going to sing? That is where the book of Psalms comes in.

Psalms 72:19-20, notice, “And blessed be His glorious name forever and let the whole earth be filled with His glory, Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” Notice how it ends. What does that mean?

Verse 19, what does it mean, “Amen and Amen”? If you take the number 72 and divide it by 24 (you had 24 divisions of singing and there were 72 songs selected), they had three songs for each division. Psalms 1—72 are psalms of David. (You will find that there are other psalms that David wrote—101, 108, 109 and 110. We will go into that later.) When you reorganized the service in the temple, there were additional things that needed to be brought in.

With the reorganization of Temple worship and as the nation was growing into a great nation, there was also a need for instruction in wisdom.

Proverbs 1:1-3, “The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity.” You had this set apart.

Ecclesiastes 12:9, “And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs.” Solomon taught the people. He set in order proverbs—meaning the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 1:1, “The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David...” Solomon set in order Proverbs. Added at this time were Psalms 1—72 and

Proverbs 1—24, 30—31. This was a second period of canonization.

The third period of canonization: Things went on and the nation of Israel split up into two nations. It was a time of crisis, a time when the existence of the entire nation was at stake. During the time of Hezekiah, the king of Assyria surrounded Jerusalem (II Kings 18 and 19). Hezekiah prayed and fasted (19:1). God sent an angel and wiped out the Assyrians (19:35-37). It was a time of crisis. What we will see is that the first two periods of canonization were periods of reorganization—things for a settled nation. The next three periods were times of crisis. Things had drifted and the truth was in danger of being lost. The first revival was at the time of Hezekiah. It was a time of crisis that threatened to literally destroy the entire nation.

II Chronicles 28:1-2, “Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done. For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molten images for the Baals.” We pick up the story of the way the nation got “off track.”

Verses 21-24, “For Ahaz took part of the treasures from the house of the Lord, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave it to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him. Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. This is that king Ahaz. For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, ‘Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them, that they may help me.’ But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem.” The nation got off track and Temple worship ceased.

II Chronicles 29:1-7, “Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the east square and said to them: ‘Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry out the

rubbish from the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the Lord our God; and they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs on Him. They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.”

He said they needed to get back on track and clean out dirt that had accumulated in the Temple for years. It took days.

Verse 25, “Then he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.” Hezekiah began to reorganize things and set things back on track the way David had organized them. He told them to sanctify themselves.

Verse 30, “Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

Psalm 72:20, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

Notice Psalm 73—“A Psalm of Asaph.” Turn to Psalms 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82 and 83—all “Psalms of Asaph.”

II Chronicles 29:30, “Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.” They worshiped with the words of David and Asaph.

Now notice Isaiah 38:1, “In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz went to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Set your house in order for you shall die and not live.”’”

Verses 5-8, “Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; and I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city. And this is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing which He has spoken: Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which is gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.’” So the sun

returned ten degrees by which it was gone down.”

The sun literally went backward. It stood still at the time of Joshua (Joshua 10:13). If you think that was something, wait until you find out how it went backward in the time of Hezekiah.

Verse 20, “The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.”—The aftermath of that.

Notice Psalms 120—134—“Songs of degrees” (KJV). There are 15 songs of degrees—one for each of the 15 years. Hezekiah wrote ten of them; five were written by David. Hezekiah’s songs were to be added to the songs of Scripture. Hezekiah added them to the canon of Scripture.

Proverbs 25:1, notice also, “These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.” Solomon’s Proverbs ended with Proverbs 24. Here was an addition that the men of Hezekiah wrote out.

This was also a period when the nation was facing captivity. Isaiah was written at this time. The books of Joshua, Judges and Kings were also written at this time.

II Chronicles 32:32, “Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the books of the kings of Judah and Israel.” What is the book of the kings of Judah and Israel?—The books of Samuel and Kings. I Kings is otherwise known as the Third Book of the Kings—the actual title in the King James Bible.

II Chronicles 32:33, “So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.”

II Chronicles 26:22, “Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first and last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote.” Isaiah wrote the book of Kings. If you compare II Kings and Isaiah, II Kings 18-20 is identical to Isaiah 36-39. They are identical. There were also books added to the Psalms by the Levites during this time. Then things got off track again.

We come to the second great revival and reorganization—the **period of the fourth canonization**. It was the time prior to Judah going into captivity. Northern Israel was already in captivity (II Kings 18:11); Judah was almost taken into captivity (II Kings 18-19). Then there was a revival by Hezekiah (II Kings 18-20). But

then there was another period of crisis—a time when the nation was faced with captivity.

II Chronicles 33:1-3, “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshipped all the host of heaven and served them.” They really got off track. Let’s notice a comparison as to what Josiah did in getting things back on track.

II Kings 23:1-3, “Then the king [Josiah] sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem to him. And the king went up into the house of the Lord with all the men of Judah and with all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took their stand for the covenant.”

II Kings 22:1-2, “Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.” He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

II Kings 23:4, “And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.” This is what King Josiah did to get things back on track. When they went to repair the temple, they found the Book of the Law.

II Kings 22:8, “Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord.’ And Hilkiah gave the Book to Shaphan, and he read it.”

II Kings 23:2-3, “...and he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which

had been found in the house of the Lord. Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this Book. And all the people took their stand for the covenant.” Then he began to order these things.

Verses 7-8, “Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places of the gates which were in the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the gate of the city.”

Verses 10-12, “And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molch. Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the Lord... and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.” He pulverized them and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.

Verses 13-14, “Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.” He broke down the images and the groves.

Verses 21-22, “Then the king commanded all the people, saying, ‘Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.’ Surely such a Passover had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.” Josiah turned to God with all his heart. It was a time of revival.

II Chronicles 34:4, “They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and

the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.”

Verse 8, “Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple [house], he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the governor of the city and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.”

Verse 14, “Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses.” He found the Book of the Law of the Lord. He found the Bible that existed at that time.

Verse 19, “Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes.”

Verse 21, “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the Book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this Book.”

Verses 32-33, “And he made all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take their stand for it. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel diligently serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of the fathers.”

II Chronicles 35:1, “Now Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.” It was a time of revitalization.

Verses 17-18, “And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

There hadn’t been anything on that grand scale since Samuel the prophet. It was a revitalization of worship just prior to the captivity. God said He would postpone judgment on the nation because of Josiah. For the sake of Josiah, God was going to spare things as long as he lived, but when he died, that was going to be the end (II

Kings 22:15-20). You talk about everything resting on one man! You can imagine when Josiah was cut off at an untimely death.

II Chronicles 35:23-25, “And the archers shot at King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, ‘Take me away; for I am severely wounded.’ His servant therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom [KJV, “ordinance”] in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments” [KJV, “lamentations”]. —An ordinance for Israel written in the lamentations. Where do you find it? Turn over to the book of Lamentations—“The Lamentations of Jeremiah.” What do we see in verse 25? Lamentations was recorded as a permanent record and made an ordinance and a law.

Verses 26-27, “Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to what was written in the Law of the Lord, and his deeds from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.” Jeremiah was responsible for recording the final things in Samuel and Kings.

Lamentations was written at the time of Josiah’s death. His death was all that stood between captivity and destruction for Judah. Lamentations is a prophecy of the Great Tribulation. The death of Josiah was the reason Lamentations was written when it was. It went along with the book of Jeremiah.

II Chronicles 35:25, “Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom [KJV, “ordinance”] in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments [KJV, “lamentations”].”

After Josiah’s death, the temple was destroyed and the nation was taken into captivity. Jeremiah was the prophet who bridged the gap—before the captivity, during, through and after. The books of Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk and Zephaniah were added to the canon Scripture by Jeremiah. Jeremiah finished the books of I & II Samuels and I & II Kings.

How was Scripture to be preserved? Go back to the book of Daniel.

Daniel 1:4, “young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom,

possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans." Daniel lived during the captivity. He was a prince. He was of the king's descendants and very intelligent. He had access to the archives of Babylon. The Bible was preserved in the archives of Babylon (v. 2). Nebuchadnezzar didn't just burn the temple; he transported these things out of the temple, and they were sent back in the royal archives and treasure of Babylon. And who is in a better position to take care of it than Daniel?

Daniel 9:11, "'Yes, all Israel have transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.'" Daniel had access to the Bible and was able to study it. All the vessels and sacred things of the temple were taken to Babylon. He was primed, taught and made knowledgeable.

Daniel 1:3-4, "Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans." He was brought to Babylon to be trained and educated.

In Daniel 9:3-22, we read of Daniel praying. Jeremiah added the prophets. How do we know?

Read Daniel 9:2, "in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord, given to Jeremiah the prophet that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Daniel had been puzzled over this prophecy.

Jeremiah 25:12, "'Then it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it perpetual desolations.'" Jeremiah's and Daniel's lives overlapped. At the time Daniel was a teenager, Jeremiah was an old man. God took this young man and put him in a position to preserve the Scriptures. That would have been the time the Bible would have been lost—during the time of the captivity. Daniel was brought here. He

studied the Bible. He studied the book of Jeremiah and was trying to understand. Then it finally came to him. He understood it about the time it was supposed to be fulfilled (Daniel 9:1-2). The first Babylonian captivity was 604 B.C. The year of Cyrus' decree to return to Jerusalem was 534 B.C.; the 70-year prophecy was completed.

The point is that Daniel had access to the Scriptures and took care of them during the Babylonian captivity.

Lamentation, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah were all written prior to the captivity and were added to the canon of Scripture by Jeremiah.

Then we come to the period that finished the Old Testament—the **fifth period of Old Testament canonization**—the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Solomon died in 921 B.C. About 200 years after Solomon's death, Northern Israel went into captivity. About 20 years later was the time of Hezekiah and a revival. About 100 years later, we come down to Jeremiah and Josiah and another revival. Then 604 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar comes in and takes them captive. He comes back a few years later and takes more into captivity. About 587 B.C., he destroys everything and the whole nation goes into captivity. Daniel was in captivity as a young man on up until he was an old man. (Jeremiah provides about a 70-year period during this time.) Seventy years later, 534 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree for them to return and repair the temple.

We pick up the story in the book of Ezra.

Ezra 1:1-3, "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? May his God be with him! Now let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.'" "

Verses 5-7, "Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all those whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. And all those

who were around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods.” These were the things he brought back.

Ezra 4:1-5, “Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers’ houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.’ But Zerubbabel and Joshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers’ houses of Israel said to them, ‘You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.’ Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.”

They literally hired lawyers and went to court. Zerubbabel and Joshua finished the part of the work God had called them to do.

Ezra 7:1, “Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah.” Verse 10, “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” He is coming to Jerusalem prepared to teach Israel statutes and judgments.

Verse 12, “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven: perfect peace, and so forth.”

Verse 14, “And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the law of your God which is in your hand.” – “According to the law of your God which is in your hand.” He was bringing the copy that had been preserved in Babylon. He brought back the Law—the Bible.

Nehemiah 8:1-3, “Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate, and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, of men and women and all who

could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.” The Bible was being read and understood.

Verses 5-8, “And Ezra opened the Book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin...and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the Book, in the Law of God; and gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.” We have this example in the time of Ezra.

Editorial comment added: [There were things that had to be added to deal with new things and circumstances.]

I Samuel 10:25, “Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.” Samuel added what is in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. It refers to it here.

Deuteronomy 34:10, “But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” Joshua couldn’t have written this. This was an editorial comment made at the conclusion of the Old Testament canon by Ezra and Nehemiah about 400 B.C. Ezra went back and on authority made an editorial comment. There were times when things simply had to be added. The time of Ezra and Nehemiah was that time—a time of editing. It was also a time of crisis, a great deal of trouble. We are going into that at the next Bible study—the things that were going on and what these things were.

During this fifth period of canonization, Psalms 90—119, 135—150, Ruth, Esther, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and I & II Chronicles were added to the canon of Scripture. One of the statements that Josephus makes is that nothing had been added since the time of Artaxerxes. Since that time there had not been a succession of prophets. The Jews recognized that the spirit of prophets ceased. From that time on, there was never a succession of prophets, and

no one ever took it upon himself or dared to ever make a change. It all goes back to Ezra and Nehemiah. Josephus said that during the reign of Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.), the canon of Scripture was completed and delivered to the hand of the Great Synagogue (or Assembly). We will go back and understand why Chronicles had to be written at this time. Malachi was the last book written and added in about 420-400 B.C.

We have a story of how these five periods of the Bible were put together—this setting apart of the authoritative canon of Scripture. We see the five periods of time when the Old Testament came together. Then we will see the two times when the New Testament came together—God putting it together working with His prophets. We will see how it all came together and how God has given us this Book we call the Bible.

THE FIVE PERIODS OF OLD TESTAMENT CANONIZATION

1. Moses

Genesis	Moses
Exodus	Moses
Leviticus	Moses
Numbers	Moses
Deuteronomy	Moses

2. Solomon and Nathan

Psalms 1—72	David
Proverbs 1—24, 30—31	Solomon

3. Hezekiah and Isaiah

Proverbs 25—29	Hezekiah
Psalms 73—89	Hezekiah *
Joshua—Judges	Samuel
I & II Samuel	Isaiah
I & II Kings	Isaiah
Isaiah	Isaiah

4. Josiah and Jeremiah

Lamentations	Jeremiah
Jeremiah	Jeremiah
Hosea	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obadiah
Jonah	Jonah
Micah	Micah
Nahum	Nahum
Habakkuk	Habakkuk
Zephaniah	Zephaniah

5. Nehemiah and Ezra

Psalms 90—119, 135—150	*
Ruth	Samuel
Esther	Mordechai
Song of Solomon	Solomon
Ecclesiastes	Solomon
Ezekiel	Ezekiel
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Nehemiah
Daniel	Daniel
Haggai	Haggai
Zechariah	Zechariah
Malachi	Malachi
I & II Chronicles	Ezra

- numerous authors

The canon of the Old Testament was sealed up about 400 B.C. by Ezra and Nehemiah and the Great Assembly that they headed.