

**The Evolution of the Bible:
The Canon and Editorial Additions**

The gradual emergence of a canon:

1. As stated in the last lesson, the Bible is a collection of texts recognized progressively by the church. It did not fall out of heaven intact with a glossary of terms.
2. The Old Testament was assumed though first affirmed at the Council of Jamnia (90 AD), a Jewish Council. The Hebrew Scriptures were interpreted by the church as speaking of and anticipating Christ. This is demonstrated by the numerous quotations from it by the New Testament writers.
3. It must be remembered that the books were not assembled into a canon until the fourth century. Some only saw a few of the books, especially those that were small being addressed to a person or single church.
4. Collectively, the earliest churchmen (80-150 AD) alluded to all the N.T. books, except Philemon, II John, and III John.
5. The Muratorian Canon (160-180 AD) is our first known list of canonical books (discovered in 1740). It included the OT books and the NT books except I John, I and II Peter, Hebrews, and James.
6. Irenaeus (b. 130), the western bishop of Lyon, erected a list that included all the NT books except Jude, II Peter, Philemon, II and III John, and Revelation.
7. Clement of Alexandria (c. 155-c. 230) erected a list that included all the NT books except James, II Peter, and III John.
8. The Syriac Version (3rd) included all the books except Revelation.
9. With peace coming to the church an advance became noticeable. In 365/66 Athanasius (d. 373), the most prominent churchmen in the East, sent a letter to the churches (The Festal or Easter Letter, "The only source of salvation") listing all the OT and NT books. He also listed inferior books not to be read in the churches (Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, *Esther*, Tobit, Judith, and Apostolic Constitutions).
10. There was no solidified list of books for the churches until the Reformations. This is when the Roman Catholic Church recognizes 73 books and the Protestants 66 books.

11. Catholics accepted 73 (41 and 27) to fortify their teachings (Pope Damasus proposed 73 in 382). Protestants had three criteria and arrived at 66 (39 and 27).
- Was it written by an apostle or one associated with an apostle?
 - Does it speak of a meritless, totally grace-initiated, secure gift through the person and work of Christ alone?
 - That God's revelation is noncontradictory because God incapable of confusion or deception.

Later edits to the structure of the books:

1. Originally the books of the Bible were devoid of chapter divisions and verses. Chapter divisions were first added about the 13th century by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton (ca. 1150-1228).
2. The New Testament was segmented into verses in the sixteenth century by Robert Estienne in the 16th century.
3. The first complete Bible with both chapter and verse segmenting was the Geneva Bible (1560).
4. The Geneva Bible was also the first Bible with marginal notes explaining texts and with cross-references. The Scofield Reference (1917, 1967) was not the first with notes!
5. The demarcation of the words of Jesus in red letters.
 - The first "red lettered" NT appeared in 1889; the first "red lettered" Bible in 1891.
 - The concept behind "red lettering Jesus' words was the work of Louis Klopsch (d. 1910), editor of the *Christian Herald* magazine. He was a close friend of Dwight L. Moody and supporter of the Moody Bible Institute.
 - The idea came to Klopsch when reading Luke 22:20 ("This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you"). His motive was to accentuate the person of our Lord.
 - Negative criticism of "red lettering" is that it might give the impression that some texts are superior to others (a canon within a canon). Are Jesus' words more inspired of God than the words of others recorded in Holy Scripture?

How to Enjoy God's Presence

"How do you simply be with God without thinking of that infinite space as primarily "the place where my needs are met?"

But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me (Ps. 131:2)

The matter of meditation:

1. There is a saying that can be revised with more positive orientation: "Input determines consequences." Filling the mind is the initial step for each of us in gaining special moments with God and contentedness.
2. Think of the beauty of God (His truthfulness, His enduring and unrelenting compassion, the promises He has made to you, His righteousness, His mercies).
3. Think of the beauty of Christ and His unexpected and profound goodness to you (that he would step out of the realm of glory for you, that He would carry His love for you to the cross, an event reckoned as "joyful" according to Heb. 12:3, that the cross was the only means to procure the gift of life for you, that He lives today and so will you without the burdens and pains of life, that Savior is now our advocate in heaven as the Spirit is on earth).
4. Think that the gift of salvation was not something you could have ever earned but had to be a divine gift (that God did so for you without any merit but the merit and righteousness of Jesus, that we had and have nothing to offer to God be our great need, that He love us before we were righteous in His sight).

Some preliminary observations:

1. The Christian life is a mental struggle. What you entertain, what you focus upon, is what you will become and do. Therefore, right thoughts are of utmost importance.
2. The spiritual life boils down to actions based on priorities. The internal manifests itself in the external.
3. Walking with God is a process; we are all on a journey. There is no beatific plateau in this life. There are moments of special delight and fulfillment, but life is exceedingly complex.
4. It is confusing to realize that there are godly people believing very diverse things about how to walk with God. This suggests that the key ingredient is not any particular method. All methods entail "trust and obey;" that is the insight of all of them.

The mechanics of meditation:

1. Right thoughts require virtuous input: The place of the Bible.
If you desire to think correct thoughts, you must have good ideas in your mind. You simply cannot avail yourself to or be strengthened by what is not there.

- It is not about the length of time in reading daily; it is about frequency.
- It is not about remembering what you read. Remember that growth is only seen over time with time-lapse photography.

- +Slowly and carefully reading a verse or paragraph but read daily until it becomes a habit.

- +If reading is hard, get tapes or a CD and listen. Most drive to work; use the time to think good thoughts.

2. Right thoughts require the mental expression of good ideas; good ideas come from good input.

- Meditation, thinking about God intentionally. Try to think about the passage of Scripture you read for the day.

- Prayer, verbalizing your thoughts to God. Prayer is worship in that we recognize our need and dependency coming to Him as the one who alone can address our deficiencies.

- +Make a list of prayer needs.

- +Pray through portions of Scripture (the phrases of Psalm 23 or Matthew 6, the Lord's model prayer).

- +The posture of prayer is not important.

- +The place of prayer is at your discretion.

- +The length of prayer is not the point. Is it sincere and God-focused?

- +Some people pray best with another or others. Join a prayer group.