

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

Examining the History of Our English Bible



Erasmus' Desk

Dr. David L. Brown

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PREFACE

The Indestructible Book by Dr. David Brown is a very valuable tool for anyone interested in the modern debates over preservation, the Traditional Text, and the King James Bible. There are many, many issues that influence this debate. When a person first starts studying these issues he is often surprised how many many different points come up during the discussion. Over the last several decades many books have been written to address these issues. *The Indestructible Book* does more to gather all these subjects into one volume than any other work I am acquainted with.

Church history, doctrine, controversies, debates and practical application are all here in one volume. This book is well documented, thorough and readable. That is not surprising to anyone who has heard Dr. Brown speak in public or who has engaged in private conversation with him over these issues. He has a gift in addressing this discussion.

These areas are the hot bed of debate among evangelicals and fundamentalists today. Independent Baptists have spent an amazing amount of time focused on these debates in recent years. It is easy to be loud and controversial. It is not so easy to be well informed. It takes a lot of diligent study to "get up to speed" on the many points of controversy that are part of this discussion. *The Indestructible Book* is a great head start on understanding these issues.

The greatest thing about this book is that it demonstrates clearly that we have an Indestructible Bible. It has survived campaigns to literally destroy it, it has survived conspiracies to corrupt it and it rises above all the foolish debates over it. In a time of great controversy, the Bible provides us with both answers and strength. The preserved Word of God convicts of sin, has the power to save and provides us with everything we need to know in the middle of a pagan world.

The Indestructible Book by Dr. David Brown reinforces, educates and strengthens our faith. It is worthy of your time and attention.

Pastor Phil Stringer
Ravenswood Baptist Church
Chicago, IL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iii
PREFACE	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
FOREWORD	xiii
CHAPTER #1: IT ALL BEGAN ON MOUNT SINAI	1
CHAPTER #2: THE HEBREW-ARAMAIC OLD TESTAMENT	5
THE HEBREW-ARAMAIC OLD TESTAMENT CANON.....	5
HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT CAME TOGETHER.....	7
THE PRESERVATION & CONVEYANCE OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES	12
THE TALMUDISTS (100-500 A.D.).....	13
THE MASORETIC PERIOD (500-900 A.D.).....	15
THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.....	17
THE SEPTUAGINT – LXX.....	19
CONVENTIONAL WISDOM	19
THE APOCRYPHA	20
THE BIBLE IN MY OWN WORDS!	21
WHY EVANGELICALS?.....	21
WHAT IS THE SEPTUAGINT?.....	22
EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS	24
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS.....	26
GREEK SCRAPS	26
THE WORK OF PROFESSOR KAHLE	27
THE OLD TESTAMENT IN GREEK -WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.....	28
THE EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST DID NOT USE ANY VERSION OF THE SEPTUAGINT	32
PROVERBS 30:5-6.....	32
THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE APOCRYPHA	34
THE APOCRYPHA OR DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS.....	38
WHAT IS THE APOCRYPHA?.....	38
THE LIST OF THE APOCRYPHA.....	39
THE ENGLISH BIBLE AND THE APOCRYPHA.....	41
WHY MANY REJECT THE APOCRYPHA.....	52
CHAPTER #3: THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT CANON	57
A - THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT CANON - Ω.....	57
THE WORD “CANON” DEFINED.....	58
MY VIEW OF CANONICITY.....	58
PRE-NEW TESTAMENT CANON.....	59
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON.....	60
CANON LISTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT FROM EARLY TIMES	63
COLLECTING THE LETTERS.....	64
CHAPTER #4: THE FOUR TYPES OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS	75
EARLY GREEK TRANSLATIONS.....	75
THE FOUR DIFFERENT KINDS OF NT MANUSCRIPTS	76
PAPYRI MANUSCRIPTS	77
THE UNCIALS OR MAJUSCULES.....	78
CURSIVES OR MINUSCULES.....	78

LECTIONARY MANUSCRIPTS	79
CHAPTER #5: TEXT STREAMS: GROUPS OR TEXT FAMILIES	81
EARLY WITNESS TO THE RECEIVED TEXT	83
BODMER II – P66	89
THE OLD SYRIAN TEXT OR PESHITTA	90
THE OLD LATIN, ITALIC OR ITALIA VERSION	91
THE GOTHIC VERSION	92
THE ETHIOPIC VERSION	92
THE BYZANTINE TEXT-TYPE AND THE CHESTER BEATTY PAPYRI ..	94
BACKGROUND	95
THE ARGUMENT THAT THE BYZANTINE TEXT IS SECONDARY	96
THE ARGUMENT THAT THE BYZANTINE TEXT IS PRIMARY	97
THE BYZANTINE TEXT IS INDEPENDENT & FOUND IN EARLY PAPYRI ..	98
BYZANTINE-ALIGNMENTS ARE EASTERN, 2 ND CENTURY	102
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BYZANTINE TEXT-TYPE	103
CONCLUSION	104
THE MINORITY TEXTS & THE SO-CALLED GREAT UNCIALS	105
CODEX ALEXANDRINUS (A)	105
CODEX VATICANUS (B)	108
CODEX SINAITICUS (A OR ALEPH)	112
CHAPTER #6: GnosticisM's CORRUPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPTS	117
THE DISCOVERY AT NAG HAMMADI & THE DA VINCI CODE	117
A BRIEF DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF GNOSTICISM	118
THE EARLY CORRUPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	119
AN OVERVIEW OF GNOSTIC HERESIES	120
GNOSTICISM IN GENERAL	121
DOCETISM	124
MARCIONISM	126
CHAPTER #7: THE LATIN VULGATE	129
LATIN VERSIONS BEFORE JEROME	129
THE OLD LATIN IN NORTH AFRICA	129
CYPRIAN'S BIBLE	130
TERTULLIAN'S BIBLE	130
THE EASTERN ORIGIN OF OLD LATIN	130
CLASSIFICATION OF OLD LATIN MANUSCRIPTS	131
INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS	132
JEROME'S LATIN VULGATE	132
THE TRANSLATOR	133
JEROME AND HIS BELIEFS	134
JEROME'S TRANSLATION	137
CHAPTER #8: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ENG. BIBLE IN BRITAIN ..	139
EARLY INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE BRITONS	139
THE GOTHIC VERSIONS	141
GOthic ENGLISH AND ANGLO-SAXON VERSES COMPARED	141
HOW WAS CHRISTIANITY REINTRODUCED INTO BRITAIN?	143
WHO WAS MAEWYN SUCCAT?	144
THE LIFE OF PATRICK	144
PATRICK'S CALL TO EVANGELIZE IRELAND	147
WHO WAS COLUM CILLE OR COLUMBA?	149
BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE	150

THE BOOK OF KELLS	153
CAEDMON'S PARAPHRASE OF THE SCRIPTURES — 650'S A.D.....	154
ALDHelm AND GUTHLAC THE HERMIT - THE EARLIEST TRANSLATORS OF SCRIPTURE INTO ANGLO-SAXON —EARLY 700'S A.D.	155
LINDISFARNE GOSPELS, ST. CUTHBERT'S GOSPELS OR THE BOOK OF DURHAM.....	156
“THE VENERABLE” BEDE’S GOSPEL — 735 A.D.....	158
📖 ALCUIN OF YORK -- LATE 700'S A.D.....	159
📖 ALFRED THE GREAT -- MID 800'S A.D.....	159
📖 RUSHWORTH GLOSS OF THE GOSPELS —850 A.D.....	160
📖 AELFRIC THE GRAMMARIAN PARAPHRASE —LATE 900'S A.D....	160
📖 ANOTHER ANGLO-SAXON VERSION OF THE GOSPELS —1050'S A.D. 161	
📖 THE ANGLO-NORMAN VERSION OF THE GOSPELS	161
📖 THE ORMULUM METRIC GOSPEL PORTIONS —1100'S A.D.	162
📖 GENESIS, EXODUS — 1250'S A.D.....	162
📖 SURTEES PSALTER, YORKSHIRE — 1250-1300.....	163
INSTRUCTIONS FOR READING MIDDLE ENGLISH	163
SURTEES PSALTER —PSALM 23	164
📖 THE SHOREHAM PSALM —EARLY 1300'S.....	164
📖 TRANSLATIONS OF ROLLE, THE HERMIT OF HAMPOLE — 1300'S	165
PSALM 23	167
CHAPTER #9: ROME’S WAR AGAINST THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY	169
WHY THE BIBLE & NT CHRISTIANITY WERE BANNED BY ROME	169
THE INQUISITION ESTABLISHED	172
POPE INNOCENT III.....	172
THE KEY ENFORCERS OF THE INQUISITION.....	176
DOMINIC DE GUZMAN.....	176
THE ALLEGED BIBLE BASIS FOR THE INQUISITION ATROCITIES.....	177
CHAPTER #10: THE ROOT OF THE CONFLICT: ROME & THE CHRISTIANS SHE PERSECUTED AND MARTYRED	181
THE ROOT OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN "HOLY MOTHER CHURCH" AND THE MARTYRS	182
CHAPTER #11: JOHN WYCLIFFE & THE FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE.....	205
TIME LINE OVERVIEW OF WYCLIFFE’S LIFE	205
WYCLIFFE: HIS BIRTH AND LIFE	208
THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF JOHN WYCLIFFE.....	213
THE CONDEMNED CONCLUSIONS OF JOHN WYCLIFFE.....	222
HOW DID OXFORD UNIVERSITY RESPOND?	224
WHAT WYCLIFFE BELIEVED, TAUGHT AND PREACHED	229
OVERVIEW OF HIS BELIEFS	231
THE TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE	244
HOW DID THE ENGLISH PEOPLE ACCEPT A BIBLE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE?.....	247
HOW DID THE ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT RESPOND TO THE BIBLE BEING TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH?	248
PSALM 23 IN THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE	250
WYCLIFFE’S LOLLARD PREACHERS	250
THE TWELVE CONCLUSIONS OF THE LOLLARDS	252
WYCLIFFE’S DEATH & POSTSCRIPT	259

THE "ERRORS" OF JOHN WYCLIFFE AS PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE 1414-1418, SESSION VIII, MAY 4, 1415 ...	261
THE DESECRATION OF WYCLIFFE'S GRAVE	264
THE WORLD-WIDE INFLUENCE OF WYCLIFFE	264

CHAPTER #12: KEY EVENTS THAT END THE DARK AGES PLUS THE PRINTING OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.....267

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINTING BY GUTENBERG	267
1455 A.D. – GUTENBERG BIBLE	269
THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE.....	270
ERASMUS DESIDERIUS ROTERDAMUS – 1466? -1536	271
THE INFLUENCE OF JOHN COLET	271
THE INFLUENCE OF JOHANNES OECOLAMPADIUS	274
1516 – ERASMUS GREEK NEW TESTAMENT.....	276
REVIEW.....	278
THE FIRST PRINTED BIBLE PORTIONS IN ENGLISH.....	280

CHAPTER #13: THE ENGLISH BIBLES AND THEIR TRANSLATORS..... 283

WILLIAM TYNDALE (BORN ABOUT 1492 – MARTYRED OCTOBER 6, 1536).....	283
A LETTER FROM PRISON, IN TYNDALE'S OWN HAND	290
THE LATIN TRANSCRIBED	291
THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.....	291
GEORGE JOYE'S UNAUTHORIZED MODIFICATION OF TYNDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT	295
MYLES COVERDALE – 1488-1569.....	297
JOHN ROGERS BORN IN 1500 – MARTYRED FEBRUARY 4, 1555.....	309
📖 1537 FIRST EDITION OF MATTHEWS BIBLE.....	309
📖 1539 - TAVERNER'S BIBLE	314
📖 1539 – FIRST EDITION GREAT BIBLE.....	315
📖 1540 – CRANMER EDITION TO BE READ IN THE CHURCHES	315
PSALM 23 – THE GREAT BIBLE	318
ROBERT ESTIENNE OR STEPHANUS 1503-1559.....	318
STORMY YEARS OF UNREST AND UNCERTAINTY	319
MARY TUDOR – BLOODY MARY	319
📖 THE GENEVA BIBLE – 1560	322
PSALM 23 – GENEVA BIBLE	324
📖 1568 – FIRST EDITION OF THE BISHOPS BIBLE	324
PSALM 23 – BISHOPS BIBLE	325
CATHOLIC RHEIMS NEW TESTAMENT – 1582.....	326
DOUAY OLD TESTAMENT – 1609.....	326
📖 1611 – THE KING JAMES BIBLE (ALSO KNOWN AS THE AUTHORIZED VERSION).....	327
HOW THE KING JAMES BIBLE CAME TO BE	328
THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND	330
THE MILLENARY PETITION, 1603	331
THE TRANSLATION.....	336
THE USE OF ITALICS IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE	338
PROCEDURES AND RULES THAT GUIDED THE MAKING OF THE KJB	339
MY CONCLUSION REGARDING ITALICS IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE	341
WHY THE THEE'S, THOU'S, YE'S AND YOU'S?.....	341

THE TWO IMPRESSIONS OF THE FIRST EDITION	341
THE BEGINNING OF THE ATTACKS ON THE KING JAMES BIBLE	343
CHAPTER #14: UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE OVER VERSIONS	347
THE PURPOSE	347
INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS	347
UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE TERMINOLOGY	348
NEW TESTAMENT PAPYRI MANUSCRIPTS	349
THE UNCIALS OR MAJUSCULE MANUSCRIPTS	349
CURSIVE OR MINUSCULE MANUSCRIPTS	350
LECTIONARY MANUSCRIPTS	350
OTHER WORDS AND PHRASES RELATED TO THE VERSION BATTLE	351
INSPIRATION	351
VERBAL-PLENARY INSPIRATION	352
PLENARY INSPIRATION	352
VERBAL INSPIRATION (THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF INSPIRATION).....	352
THOUGHT-CONCEPT INSPIRATION (THE COUNTERFEIT VIEW OF INSPIRATION)	353
PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION	354
FORMAL EQUIVALENCY OR LITERAL TRANSLATION	357
DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE OR FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE	359
PARAPHRASE	360
HIGHER CRITICISM	361
TEXTUAL CRITICISM	362
THE CORRUPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT	365
THE EARLY CORRUPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	366
WHY YOU SHOULD NOT USE THE MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS	369
SO WHAT IS “HIGHER CRITICISM?”	373
OVERVIEW OF THE MOTLEY CREW BEHIND THE BIBLE VERSIONS	373
RICHARD SIMON	373
JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH	375
KARL LACHMANN	376
BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT AND JOHN ANTHONY HORT	377
EUGENE NIDA	377
KURT ALAND	378
BRUCE MANNING METZGER	378
WHAT METZGER BELIEVED	378
CONCLUSION	379
THINGS THAT ARE DIFFERENT ARE NOT THE SAME!	380
JOHANNINE COMMA	383
BELIEFS OF WESTCOTT & HORT	387
HOW DID JESUS VIEW THE SCRIPTURES?	389
CHAPTER #15: THE KJB ONLY BAPTIST CIVIL WAR OVER INSPIRATION	391
CHAPTER #16: WHY YOU SHOULD USE THE KING JAMES BIBLE	401
INTRODUCTION	401
THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH	402
A FEW CORRUPT MANUSCRIPTS	410
MASSIVE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE	413
FORMAL EQUIVALENCY – A SUPERIOR METHOD OF TRANSLATION	414

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY & PARAPHRASING – AN INFERIOR METHOD OF TRANSLATING	414
SUMMARY	414
CHAPTER #17: THE MATERIALS INCLUDED BY THE TRANSLATORS IN THE 1611 KING JAMES BIBLE	417
(EPISTLE DEDICATORY TO THE AUTHORIZED KING JAMES VERSION)....	417
THE TRANSLATORS TO THE READER	420
Preface to the King James Version 1611	420
THE BEST THINGS HAVE BEEN CULMINATED	420
THE PRAISE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES	423
TRANSLATION NECESSARY	425
THE TRANSLATION OF THE OT OUT OF THE HEBREW INTO GREEK	426
TRANSLATION OUT OF HEBREW AND GREEK INTO LATIN	428
THE TRANSLATING OF THE SCRIPTURE INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES	428
THE UNWILLINGNESS OF OUR CHIEF ADVERSARIES, THAT THE SCRIPTURES SHOULD BE DIVULGED IN THE MOTHER TONGUE, ETC. .	430
THE SPEECHES AND REASONS, BOTH OF OUR BRETHREN, AND OF OUR ADVERSARIES AGAINST THIS WORK.....	431
A SATISFACTION TO OUR BRETHREN.....	432
AN ANSWER TO THE IMPUTATIONS OF OUR ADVERSARIES	434
THE PURPOSE OF THE TRANSLATORS, WITH THEIR NUMBER, FURNITURE, CARE, ETC.....	438
REASONS MOVING US TO SET DIVERSITY OF SENSES IN THE MARGIN, WHERE THERE IS GREAT PROBABILITY FOR EACH	440
REASONS INDUCING US NOT TO STAND CURIOUSLY UPON AN IDENTITY OF PHRASING	441
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	445
INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES.....	459
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	481

FOREWORD

I went through Bible College and Seminary and never heard of John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, John Rogers, or any of the historic English Bibles that lead up to our King James Bible. When I signed up for my Romans class, my professor told us we would have to go out and buy an American Standard Bible of 1901 because it was a far better translation than our King James Bible. He gave no further explanation! I was puzzled, but passed it off, figuring he was the professor and knew more about these things than I did. It was not until I got into the ministry that I discovered a missing verse in the NIV. To my surprise, I discovered a total of seventeen missing verses and hundreds of partial verses and words missing. So I began my quest to find out why. Since the Bible is the foundation of literally everything in New Testament Christianity, it is imperative that we have an uncorrupted Bible. If something does not have a biblical base, it should be rejected. We read in 1 **Thessalonians 5:21** “**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.**” The English word **prove** is a translation of the Greek work dokimazete (dok-im-ad'zate). The word carries the idea of **proving a thing whether it is worthy or not**. So, the question is, “How are we to go about proving something”? I believe **Isaiah 8:20** gives us insight into the answer to this question—“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” In other words, **examine everything by the words of the Bible** and if it does not line up, reject it!

I am especially thankful for three men God brought into my life that helped me to get a hold on the History of Our English Bible and the underlying textual issue: Dr. David Otis Fuller who gave me a copy of his book, *Which Bible*, Dr. Jewel Smith, and Dr. Ken Connolly who first took me on the fascinating journey of the history of our English Bible.

Friends, our King James Bible is the “GOLD STANDARD” for EVERYTHING in Christian life for English speaking people!

The purpose of *The Indestructible Book* is to explain the wonderful history of the English Bible and the underlying textual issue in the

hopes you will see how God has preserved His Words for us as He promised, and to show why you should use the King James Bible.

May God bless and enlighten the reader,

Dr. David L. Brown

Pastor David L. Brown,
First Baptist Church of Oak Creek, WI
December, 2014

SAMPLE

PAGES

CHAPTER #1

IT ALL BEGAN ON MOUNT SINAI

IT ALL BEGAN ON MT. SINAI: GOD'S WRITTEN WORD REVEALED TO MAN

A close personal friend of mine, the late Dr. Kenneth Connolly, wrote this – “The Bible is the most remarkable piece of literature this world has ever seen.” There is absolutely no doubt that that is true. “Probably more has been written about the Bible, over a longer period, than any other subject.” (*The Book: A History of The Bible*; Christopher De Hamel; Introduction; Phaidon Press Limited). I want to take you back to where the Bible began - Mt. Sinai.



In 2008 I took a group of people on a trip to see the important biblical places in the Middle East. We arrived at St. Catherine's Monastery guesthouse in Sinai, Egypt for a late supper. It was already dark. The monastery is a Greek Orthodox monastery located at the foot of Mt. Sinai. It is said to be the oldest, continuously inhabited Christian Monastery in the world. It was founded in 527 A.D. by the Roman Byzantine Emperor Justinian. It replaced a chapel that was built by Constantine's mother, the Empress Helena in 337 A.D.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

In about 1280 B.C. the first written communication from God came on Mount Sinai, etched in stone tablets by the finger of God. “These sacred words from the Ten Commandments have shaped the world and its ethical system for 3,500 years.” (*A Visual History of the English Bible* by Donald L. Brake; Baker Books; p. 25).

Although Moses destroyed the tablets God had written on when he descended from the mountain and saw the idolatry of the people (Exodus 32:19), God instructed Moses to, “*Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.*” (Exodus 34:1). But, in spite of a bad start, it is on Mount Sinai that God began to communicate with human beings in written form using the language that the people knew. He continued His progressive revelation for the next 1500 years.

To give you an overview of how God revealed His word to us, I will share with you what William Smith wrote in the 19th century. “There are 31 to 36 different authors, who wrote in three continents, in 13 different countries, in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek), and from every possible human standpoint. Among these authors were kings, farmers, mechanics, scientific men, lawyers, generals, fishermen, ministers and priests, a tax collector, some poor, some city bred, some country born, thus touching all experiences of men, extending over 1500 years.” (Adapted from *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; by William Smith; published 1884; p.91).

Smith goes on to say, “Yet the Bible is but one book, **because God was the real author**, and therefore, though He added new revelations as men could receive them, He never had to change what was once revealed. The Bible is a unit because: **1)** It has but one purpose, the salvation of men. **2)** The character of God is the same **3)** The moral law is the same **4)** It contains the development of one great scheme of salvation.” (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*; by William Smith; published 1884; p.91).

The most important book that has ever been written or ever will be written is the Bible. It towers above all other books because **God uniquely inspired it. God is the real author.** John Wycliffe put it this way; “The authority of the Holy Scriptures infinitely surpasses any writing, how authentic soever it may appear, because

the authority of Jesus Christ is infinitely above that of all mankind. The authority of the Scripture is independent of any other authority, and is preferable to every other writing..." (Wycliffe quote from - *Rome and The Bible*; by David W. Cloud; Way of Life Literature; p.52).

As I take you back to where many believe it all began, you could climb to the 7,498 foot summit of Jabal Musa, the traditional site of Mount Sinai (others believe Mt. Sinai is Jabal al Lawz, in Saudi Arabia). Many tourists get up very early to see the sunrise from the top of Mt. Sinai. It takes about 3 hours to climb the 3,750 "**Steps of Penitence**" that wind along the Sikket Saydna Musa or "**The Path of Moses**." Once at the top there is a small mosque and a Greek Orthodox Chapel that is said to enclose the rock from which God made the **Tablets of the Law**.

From that lofty perch, when the climactic conditions are right, the sunrise is an awe-inspiring sight to see. As I thought about Mt. Sinai, my mind shifted to **Exodus 19**, which gives the account of Moses being on Mt. Sinai early one morning. There God visited him accompanied by thunder, lightning, loud trumpets, fire, and smoke. The whole mountain shook. As I looked at Mt. Sinai I thought, this may have been the place where Moses received the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God three and one half millenniums earlier. **It was on Mt. Sinai that Moses received the very first written communication from the Lord God Almighty**. It was on Mt. Sinai that the written progressive revelatory journey of God speaking to man began.

CHAPTER #2

THE HEBREW-ARAMAIC OLD TESTAMENT

In order to trace the history of the Bible's translation into English, you need to understand something of the origin of the Bible and its preservation. Let's begin with the Old Testament. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, but portions of the books of Daniel and Ezra are written in the language of Babylon, which was Aramaic. The Hebrew language did not distinguish between capital and small letters and it had no vowels or punctuation marks. Unlike English, Spanish, French, German, etc. the writing was from **right to left**.

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ:

. earth the and heaven the — God created beginning the In

THE HEBREW-ARAMAIC OLD TESTAMENT CANON

- **There are 24 books in the Jewish Bible (Old Testament).** But, these 24 books cover the same material that we have in our 39 book English, non-Catholic Bible, Old Testament. Below is the Hebrew Arrangement. (Note: Catholic Bibles contain 12 additional Apocryphal books not found in the Hebrew Canon).
- **The Law or Torah** (5 Books) - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- **The Prophets or Nebhiim** (8 Books)
The former prophets - Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings
The latter prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve prophets we call the Minor Prophets. Let me explain: The Hebrew Bible subdivides the prophets into two divisions - **Major Prophets** (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) and the **Minor Prophets** which they count as one book (Hosea, Joel,

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi).

- **The Writings** Kethubhim or Hagiographa (11 books)
- **Poetical books** (3 books) - Psalms, Job, Proverbs
- **Five rolls or Megilloth** (5 books)- Ruth, Song of Songs (Solomon), Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther
- **Historical books** (3 books) - Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

As you can see, the difference is accounted for by the fact that **1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, Ezra and Nehemiah** and **1 & 2 Chronicles** and the **12 Minor Prophets** were treated as one book by the Jews.

I must point out that the oldest known recorded witness to the number of books in the Old Testament is quite recent, found in 4th Esdras, which was written between 85-96 A.D. This apocryphal book says – “Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people.” (14:45-46).

Note: **In the Latin Bible** 1 Esdras is Ezra and 2 Esdras is Nehemiah, which are part of the Hebrew Canon. However 3 Esdras and 4 Esdras are Apocryphal.

Josephus, a first century Hebrew historian says, in his testimony *Against Apion* 1:8: “For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have) but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine, and of them, **five belong to Moses**, which contain his laws, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was a little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, **the prophets**, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining **four books contain hymns to God**, and precepts

for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes, very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them."

He is two books short of what is written in 4 Esdras. That may be **accounted for in one of two ways**. First, some Jews did not recognize the book of Esther, and doubted the inspiration of Ecclesiastes. He might have been one from that school. Or, perhaps his count combined some of the books together. My point is simply this. The same material that we find in the Old Testament of our English Bible finds its source in the Hebrew Bible.

Since we are studying the History of our English Bible, I think it is important to point out that **ancient English Bibles identified some of the 39 books of the Old Testament by different names than we have today**. Here is a listing of the ancient name differences – 1 Samuel is called **1 Kings**, 2 Samuel is called **2 Kings**, 1 Kings is called **3 Kings**, 2 Kings is called **4 Kings**, 1 Chronicles is called **1 Parlipomen**, 2 Chronicles is called **2 Parlipomen**, Ezra is called **1 Esdras**, Nehemiah is called **2 Esdras**, Song of Solomon is called **Song of Songs**.

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT CAME TOGETHER

The Pentateuch - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are sometimes referred to as: the "**Five Books of Moses**," because the writings themselves identify the author as Moses, or the "**Pentateuch**," a Greek term meaning "**pente** (5) **teuchos** (volumes)," or the "**Books of the Law**," or the "**Torah**" (a Hebrew word meaning "**instruction**").

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

These books were originally written as a single unbroken scroll. Sometime before the 2nd Century B.C. it was divided into the 5 books that we see today.

There are about two dozen verses in the Hebrew (Old Testament) Scriptures and about half that many in the New Testament Scriptures which state or strongly imply that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible.

“Ancient Jewish and Christian writers, such as Ecclesiasticus, Josephus, Philo, and Origen were essentially in full agreement that the Pentateuch was written solely by Moses. The Mishnah and the Talmud also confirm this. Tradition during the first millennium of Christian history agrees with this belief.” (R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Page 497 [cited in R.B. Dillard & T. Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, (1994) Page 39]).

Before the rise of the so-called Higher Criticism (18th Century) it was held almost universally that **Moses wrote the Pentateuch** substantially as it exists today. That is what I believe and I base that on the internal evidence found in the Bible itself.

The Pentateuch itself claims Mosaic authorship. “In **Exodus 24:4** we read: ‘*And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.*’ These were placed ‘inside of the Ark of the Covenant,’ according to **Deuteronomy 31:26.**” (*The Indestructible Book* by W. Ken Connolly; Baker Books 1996; p.14)

Exodus 17:14 “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.*”

Exodus 34:27 “*And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.*”

Leviticus 1:1 “*And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation...*”

Leviticus 6:8 “*And the LORD spake unto Moses...*”