FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL,

AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWOEDGED SWORD...

THE CHRISTIAN COURIER

Published by Brethren of the Church of Christ

Send all correspondence to: P.O. BOX 270, SELAH, WA., 98942

JANUARY 1980

BIBLOS--BOOK OF BOOKS

Who wrote the Bible? The Bible was written by many different types of men. Moses, the great lawgiver, received the best schooling to be obtained in Egypt. David started out as a shepherd boy and lived through years of bitter exile to become king. Amos was a shepherd all his life, but was a fiery preacher of God's message. Ezra was a religious scholar appointed by the king of Persia to lead a group of Jews back to their homeland. King Soloman was a close follower of science and philosophy, noted for his wisdom and wealth. There was Jeremiah, a shy man who thought he was too young to be God's spokesman. Daniel, who was carried away into captivity when he was a teenager, was faithful and was promoted to the top of the government of ancient Babylon.

The New Testament authors were very different men. Matthew was a tax collector. Luke was a doctor. Peter, James, and John were fishermen. Paul was highly educated in Tarsus.

The earliest stories in the Old Testament were probably passed on by word of mouth. Families sat in front of tents or around campfires with grandfather telling the stories he had heard from his father or grandfather. By the time of Moses, stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were well known favorites. The Jews placed special importance on them, for God was in all of them. These stories helped people to see that God was something

besides the all-powerful creator. They discovered that God was like a close friend, or a loving and wise, as well as strict father. Many times writing about God"s word or about God was risky business, depending on whether or not the rulers of the day agreed with you or not. Many of the authors were thrown into prison because of what they wrote. If it were not for the courag of many Jews and Christians throughout the centuries, we would not have the Bible at all; it has often been under attack. Antiochus conquered Israel in 168 B.C. and passed a law saying that anyone found with a copy of the Scriptures would be put to death. When enemies attacked Jerusalem, they always tried to destroy the temple and the Scriptures. Five hundred years ago kings and so-called church officials (split off from Christ's true body) did not want people to know anything about the Bible, except what the priests taught them. They didn't want the people to think for themselves about God. In those days, it was easy to keep people ignorant. There were not many Bibles because printing had not yet been invented. Those that had been written, were written by hand, and in the latin language, which was known by only specially educated men. It is no mystery, then, why so many had never read the Scriptures.

Nearly all of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The New Testament was written in Greek. Although the spoken language of the time was Aramaic, the Scriptures were written in Greek because it was the language of culture and understood everywhere throughout the Roman Empire and its remote provinces.

All of the Old Testament manuscripts which have been found are written in square, block letters which resemble the printed Hebrew of today. Translators have two problems with Hebrew: A. Hebrew was written without any spaces separating the words, so you have a solid row of letters, line after line. B. The Hebrew alphabet had 22 letters, all of them consonants. In writing, only the consonants were written. The reader was expected to know what vowels should be added. The context in which each word occured would suggest the proper vowel to be inserted: An example from English might be MN---man, men, main, mean, moan, moon, omen. It could have been any of these, depending on the context.

In the 6th century A.D. the spoken Hebrew language was beginning to die out. Rabbis were not always agreed as to the proper reading of passages in the synagogue scrolls. During this time, some Jewish scholars inserted marks above and below the letters to show which vowels should be inserted. Hebrew also had no capital letters or punctuation. It was also read from right to left; a book was read from back to front cover.

Greek is the language of the New Testament. The alphabet has consonants and vowels. It is read from left to right. The earl·· writings were of letters capitalized with no spaces between the words; later writings were capital and small letters with spaces between the words.

Much of the Old Testament was written on papyrus (paper), however, important documents were written on carefully prepared skins (vellum or parchment). These papers were sewn together in long rolls. New Testament writings were much the same way. The change from scrolls to books was a long and gradual change.

Since all of the words and sentences ran together, there were no verse numbers in the original testaments. The first divisions in the Old Testament were in 1448. Divisions of the New Testament were in 1551. The first English Bible that had numbered verses was the Geneva Bible in 1560. Since then, all English Bibles have had numbered verses.

Readers of the King James Version come upon words printed in italics. These words do not have any equivalents in the Hebrew or Greek text. They are words which have been supplied by the translators in order to make the meaning of the sentence clearer, or in order to make the passage read more smoothly in English.

There are many versions and translations of the Bible. Three of the strongest influences follow:

A. Septuagint--The Old Testament was translated into Greek even before there was a New Testament. During the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, the Jews became widely scattered. A large colony of Jews was located in Alexandria, Egypt, and their native tongue, Hebrew, was little used because Greek was the tongue of the area. In order that the Hebrew Scriptures not be lost, a group of 70 scholars was commissioned by the high priest at Jerusalem to make a translation into Greek. This was about the middle of the 3rd century B. C. The name of this translation became "Septuagint", because in Latin it means 70.

B. Vulgate--The official language of the Roman Empire was Latin. Soon, Latin replaced Greek in the Church at Rome. With the approval of Pope Damascus (head of the church that split from Christ's true body), a scholar named Jerome (340-420 A.D.) translated the Bible into Latin. He went to Bethlehem to visit the places mentioned in the Bible, and there completed the Vulgate and also founded two religious orders. The Latin translation became the official book of the Roman Catholic Church.

C. King James Version--King James I ascended the throne of England in 1603. He was the figurehead of the Anglican Church at that time. During a conference discussing religious tolerance, there was made mention that a new translation of the Scriptures was needed. James appointed a large number of English scholars who were free to use any preceding translation ever written They relied primarily upon the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. This translation was considered to be an accurate translation that would be understood by the readers of that day.

What is the Bible? The Bible is derived from the Greek word 'biblos' meaning "book". This book is composed of 66 books, each separate. The order of the books is in a logical historical order of the happenings of mankind. The order of the Old Testament is History, Poetry, Major prophets, and Minor prophets. The order of the New Testament is History, Paul's epistles, General epistles, and the future (Rev.). The Bible is the most popular book in the world and the number one seller.

The most accurate record of the Scriptures are the original manuscripts. Since most Christians are not experts in Hebrew and Greek, the best way for us to study the Scriptures is by using a translation that is the most accurate. We must be careful not to base our belief or philosophy upon a choice few verses, but rather upon the entire intent of the inspired man of God. Most important, before people can discuss the word of God, they must agree that the Bible does indeed contain the complete word of God, and from that point, search out the truth.

Submitted in Christian Love,
Bro. Dan Ross
Yakima Congregation

I Thess. 5:24 *"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."* Who has called us? I Cor. 7:17 *"The Lord hath called everyone."* What will He do?

First He will be faithful. It is a wonderful feeling to know there is no chance God will change His mind.

It would be very difficult to be a christian if we could not depend on our God.

Our government can't depend on foreign countries to live up to their agreements, which makes it difficult to negotiate with them. But we don't have any such problem with God.

God has made us some wonderful promises, a life without end where there will be no pain nor sorrow, only joy and happiness.

I Cor. 2:9 *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."*

There are some wonderful things in this world, but eye has not seen anything to compare with what will be in store for those who are saved.

If anyone fails it will be us, our fate is in our own hands. So let's not let this happen.

I don't have any news from Waterford, so will close with the exhortation that all the brothers and sisters be strong in the Lord.

Bro. L.E. Arnett
Waterford congregation

:As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country"
(Prov. 25:25)

Dear Brethren:

We here are about as usual although we have had some sickness and lost one member of a long standing. Brother Claud Watson passed away and we miss him very much. He had been down for about two years before he passed on.

We also have two members moved here, my brother and his wife.

I am not much better, I am not able to work or travel very much. But we hope all everywhere are fine and we want the prayers of all for us here.

The weather here has been fine, although it looks like winter is just about to start here now.

It seems like not very many are interested in true Christianity any more. It seems like they don't know what being worldly is anymore. Most today just add going to church to their worldly life instead of being transformed; changed into a new life. Rom 12:1-2. And seem to hope that God will accept their person. But not so according to the scriptures. And when we try to teach them, they stop their ears and get sore at us for trying to help them.

Well, news is not much, so will close for now.

Yours in Christ,
Bro. Lloyd Treat
Broken Bow, Oklahoma

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The apostle Paul told Timothy we must seek to please the one to whom we are serving. As a soldier of Christ, Paul writes *"if a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."* II Tim. 2:5

The term strive used here means to make an earnest effort. The earnest effort put forth must be given us if we do not comply to the regulations set forth in God's word.

The congregation at Chesterton, Indiana sends greeting through-out the brotherhood. We are planning a gospel meeting for the week starting July 13 to 20th with Bro. Tom Broadway as speaker. We invite all.

In Christian Love,
Bro. Charles Jared
Chesterton congregation

Dear Brethren,

The church at Chico wishes to express its appreciation for the support that was shown during the Thanksgiving Meeting.

The inspiritional lessons and fellowship was indeed uplifting to the congregation. We wish to thank each and everyone for the effort they put forth to help make the meeting an enjoyable fellowship.

We, also, would like to take this opportunity to wish each a happy and prosperous, God willing, New Year.

In Christian Love
Chico Congregation

In December Brother Jimmy (James) Stapp was injured at work. He has a crushed hip and broken thigh. He will be in a wheel chair and later on crutches until April, when he will be allowed to start putting some pressure on it and working towards walking.

All prayers, letters and cards would help a lot during the long recovery.

His address is: 5932 N. E. Davis
Portland, Oregon 97213

OBITUARIES

It was a sad week for the two congregations, Stillwell and Baron. There were two funerals within three days. Sister Evie Jewel Morris and Brother Sylvester Scott Brown.

Sister Morris was born February 21,1910 in the state of Kentucky, and died December 10,1979 in Stilwell, Oklahoma.

Brother Brown was born September 22,1901 in the state of Arkansas, and died December 14, 1979 in Stillwell, Oklahoma.

Brother Claud Watson of the Broken Bow, Oklahoma congregation passed away recently following a lengthy illness.

Our prayers go out to the families and friends of these brothers and sister in their time of sorrow.

BIRTHS

Darrell and Jessica Chastain have a new baby girl. She was born October 31, 1979. Her name is Shelly Maree. She is healthy and very sweet. Jessica is fine.

1980 MEETINGS

DATE	HOST	LOCATION	SPEAKERS
June 22-29	Cederedge, Colo.	Big Spruce	Camp
June 15-22	Yakima, Wash.	Yakima, Wash.	Camp
June 29-July 6	Bellflower, Calif.	Bellflower, Calif	Bill McCay, Sr.
July 13-20	Chesterton, Ind.	Chesterton, Ind.	Tom Broadway

We recently heard of another meeting to be held March 30 through April 6, 1980 in Modesto, Calif. by Bro. Al Way and Bro. Kelly McCay.

EDITORS NOTES

Since our last issue we have been blessed with many fine articles and letters. If your article does not appear in the Courier the issue after you have mailed it, please don't be offended, as often times we receive mail after one issue has just been typed. However if for some reason your article or letter does not appear after several issues please let us know. Since we are only human we could have misplaced it.

Since our last issue we have received only $30 in support. Our current bank account is approximately $400. But we must always remember that it takes approximately $90 to $100 for each issue published, most of which goes for postage (approximately $75 per issue.)

Keep the mail coming.

Yours in Christian Love,
The Courier Staff

Isn't it strange that princes and kings
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings
And common folks like you and me
Are builders of eternity?

To each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass and a book of rules,
And each must make, ere life has flown,
A stumbling block or a steppingstone.

R. L. Sharpe