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Our Remarkable Bible

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OUR REMARKABLE BIBLE

- I. It claims to be the Word of God -- that puts it in a class all by itself.
 - A. Holy Spirit Inspired.
 - B. God Providentially preserved.
 - C. Jesus Christ its message declared.
- II. But this raises many questions -- some we seek to answer now.
 - A. Do I really have the Bible?
 1. Not an original autograph exists.
 2. Copies vary - how can I know it's accurate?
 3. How old are the copies I have?
 - B. Clayton Harrop says we have these problems.
 1. No original & copies written on fragile papyrus - copies are hundreds of years from originals.
 2. No originals are likely to be discovered.
 3. Printing was unknown in ancient times - each by hand - not always by Christians - but group of slaves (publishing houses) to whom it was dictated. None earlier than 200 AD.
 4. Many did not regard NT as scripture - like OT.
 5. Men are involved - none immune to failure.
 - C. On what was it 1st printed?
 1. Papyrus - describe - plants 12 to 15' - size of wrist.
 - a) Sheets made rolls - 35' - Luke about size.
 - b) 1 side - narrow columns.

- 2.
2. Vellum - Parchments (skins of cattle, sheep, goats, antelopes).
 - a) Antelope thinnest
 - b) Both sides to write on
 - c) More lasting
 - d) Reed pen - dry stalk, split
 - e) Quill
 - f) Ink - soot, gum, water
 3. Types of writings - without space or marks - all capitals.
 4. Greek - common form.
 5. 88 papyri portions found.
 - a) Has order of NT - 1st by size.
 - b) Later by Importance.
 - c) One piece $2\frac{1}{2}$ x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches
oldest - AD 125-135 -
John 18:31-33, 37-38
Earliest fragment

D. Preserved Copies

1. Tischendorf - 1844 St. Catherine at Sincie
2. Vellum leaves for kindling fires.
3. Reused 43 leaves - 2 baskets already burned.
4. Monks hid rest.
5. Steward gave ancient copy - Entire NT.
6. Wouldn't sell it - later at Cairo copied it in 2 months.
7. Later given to Czar - 1933 sold to British museum - \$500,000.
8. Codex C - 5th century, MMS a palimpsest - text erased & sermon on top. "It is not the only time

sermons have covered up the Bible". A. T. Robertson

9. 2207 Lectionaries have been catalogued.

E. Church Fathers some value.

1. Quote either from memory or text.
2. Accurate memory.

F. Printed

1. Erasmus, Origen, Jerome
2. Chapters 1228 AD
Verses 1551 AD

"I have often felt that the horse sometimes bumped his pen in the wrong place". A. T. Robertson

3. Scribes no longer:

- a) Dictate
- b) Sign
- c) Destroy original as did not want to preserve worn out copies.
- d) Rough "paper".
- e) Sat on stools, scrolls on knees.
- f) Could not accurately hear dictation at times.
- g) Expensive - 40X yearly salary of soldier (Roman).
- h) Errors of eye, understanding, editing, supplying - one had "God the son of Aram" in Luke's genealogies.

G. Translations

1. Wycliffe
2. Tyndale, "Lord open the King of England's eyes" as strangled & burned at stake.

3. Cloverdale
4. Great Bible - chained.
5. Geneva - Mary ran them out of England.
6. Bishop's
7. KJV 1604 - 47 scholars - not accepted.
8. RV - 1881 ARV - 1901 - not readable but accurate.
9. Knox, New American, Jerusalem - Catholic
10. Moffatt
11. Goodspeed
12. Helen Montgomery - only woman
13. Charles
14. RSV - 1946 - 52
15. Phillips
16. Berkley
17. Simplified
18. Toddler's English
19. Good News
20. AM Standard NT
21. Living
22. NIV - 1978

Green Hills Kiwanis Club, Nashville, TN-11/13/87

God has protected His Word through the centuries that separate us from Christianity's early days. The Dead Sea Scroll discovery in 1947, for example, has added evidence of reliability of the Old Testament. Of the approximately 5000 manuscripts we have with all or parts of the New Testament on them, we can test the faithfulness of the copies. What we have learned is fascinating. William Barclay states that there are approximately 150,000 places in which there are variant readings among the manuscripts, often only a difference in spelling or word order, or a substitute of one synonym for another. Actually less than 400 of the variations affect the sense, and of these fewer than 50 are important differences. And in no case is an article of faith or a precept of duty left in any doubt.

"The New Testament Church Then and Now" - By LeRoy Lawson