

Lesson 8

THE BIBLE

DID THE CATHOLIC CHURCH GIVE US THE BIBLE?

INTRODUCTION:

How did the Bible originate? Did the Catholic Church give us the Bible as they claim? Was the Bible already in existence before the Catholic Church existed? These are questions we must answer in any approach to the study of the Bible.

The Catholic Church has made frequent use of the printed page to advertise its claims in the field of religious belief. The large daily newspapers and national magazines have been used with paid advertising by the Knights of Columbus to foster the claim that they gave the world the Bible. One of those ads was entitled: *“The Bible Is a Catholic Book.”*

I.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CLAIMS TO HAVE GIVEN US THE BIBLE

The following quotations are from **authentic** Catholic sources and will show clearly that they teach they gave the Bible to the world.

- (1) **THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC ALMANAC**, 1960, page 218: *“To interpret Holy Scripture infallibly pertains to the Holy Spirit Who is its principal Author. This He does through the Catholic Church alone, to which He has entrusted the Bible.”*
- (2) **JOHN A. O’BRIEN, former President of Notre Dame University:** (*Our Sunday Visitor*, 1955, pp. 142-145) *“Far from being hostile to the Bible, the Catholic Church is its true Mother. She determined which are the books of religion from the many writings circulated as inspired in early Christian ages, assembled them all within the covers of a single book, shielded it from destruction by the hordes of barbarian invaders that poured into Europe and translated it into many languages long before Protestantism saw the light of day. If she had not declared the books composing the New Testament to be the inspired word of God, we would not know it. The only authority which non-Catholics have for the inspiration of the Scriptures is the authority of the Catholic Church. The Church is not the child of the Bible, but its mother.”*
- (3) **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS AD**, (*Woman’s Home Companion*, April, 1955). *“Nowhere in the Bible text will you find a list of the 73 inspired books of which it is composed. This list was given to the world by the Catholic Church almost three full centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Established by Jesus Christ Himself and rapidly spread among the nations of the world, the Catholic Church was carrying on Christ’s work for the salvation of men some 60 years before the Apostle John wrote his books of the New Testament. Yes, the Bible is truly a Catholic book. They were members of the Catholic Church who, under God’s inspiration, wrote the New Testament in its entirety. It is the Catholic Church which treasured it and gave it to the world in its original and unaltered form. It is the infallible authority of the Catholic Church that always has been the only sure guarantee of its inspiration.”*

- (4) **THE FAITH OF MILLIONS, p. 146.** *“She is not the child of the Bible, as many non-Catholics imagine, but its mother. She derives neither her existence nor her teaching authority from the New Testament. She had both before the New Testament was born: she secured her being, her teachings, her authority directly from Jesus Christ.”*

II.

WHY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH COULD NOT HAVE GIVEN US THE BIBLE

- (1) **The Catholic Church could not have given us the Bible for the very simple and conclusive reason that the Catholic Church was non-existent for several centuries after the Bible was given to the world.**

A bit of irrefutable history here will establish the point above. The process was quite gradual by which the Bishop of Rome ascended above his fellow bishops. Although God’s word makes it clear that elders are to rule in the church of the New Testament (I Timothy 5:17, and there are to be a plurality of such elders in every church (Acts 14:23), yet, in course of time, the lofty title of Patriarch was assumed by the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. In the beginning, these patriarchs were altogether independent of each other. An intense rivalry developed between the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Constantinople. In 451 A.D. the Council of Chalcedon was held. It was the first council over which the Bishop of Rome presided. In the twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon, it was decreed that the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Constantinople should be accorded equal right and honor due to the dignity of the two cities. That did not terminate the rivalry. In 588 A.D. John, the faster, Bishop of Constantinople, proclaimed himself the Universal Bishop. That was five centuries after the Bible was completed. John, the faster, was faster than the Bishop of Rome in grasping that vainglorious title. Gregory, Bishop of Rome, referred to as Gregory the great, wrote epistles to his own representative at Constantinople, to the Emperor Mauritius, and to the Patriarch John, in which he denounced the title of Universal Bishop as “vain”, “anti-Christian”, “blasphemous” and “diabolical”. In response to a letter from the emperor at Constantinople, Gregory stated, *“Whoever adopts, or effects, the title of ‘Universal Bishop’ has the pride and character of the antichrist...”* (Epistles of Gregory, I. vi Ep. 30). Gregory died in 604 A.D. In 605 A.D. Boniface III ascended to the Roman See, and in 606 A.D. he conspired with Emperor Phocas, a bloodthirsty tyrant, to proclaim him the “**Universal Bishop**”. Therefore, we have established that the Catholic Church was several centuries too late to have given us the Bible.

This history also disproves the Catholic claim that they gave the world the complete Bible at the Council of Hippo in A.D. 390. This is false because we had the complete Bible **early in the second century**, before the existence of the Catholic Church. There are more than 2,000 manuscripts of the Bible books, but three are recognized as most outstanding: Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Sinaiticus. Perhaps the greatest manuscript is the Codex Sinaiticus discovered at the foot of Mt. Sinai in 1844. It was written in Greek capital letters on one hundred antelope skins. It contains the entire Bible except small portions of the Old Testament. The New Testament is complete. Scholars are certain that this manuscript of the Bible was copied in the third century. Yet, Roman Catholics claim

that they gave the world the complete Bible near the dawn of the fifth century. The Codex Sinaiticus manuscript was never in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. The German scholar, Tischendorf, who was a Protestant, discovered it.

The Codex Vaticanus manuscript, which has been in the Vatican since 1475, has missing parts of Genesis, Psalms, and Hebrews, plus many small portions of other books. Scholars believe this manuscript was one of the fifty ordered by Constantine and was copied from the original language in the third century.

The Codex Alexandrinus, said to be one of the best manuscripts, was written in Alexandria, Egypt, possibly in the 5th century. It is in the British Museum.

The Syriac Version was translated from the original into six dialects of Syrian early in the 2nd century. It is believed that some who read this version were acquainted with some of the New Testament writers.

The Old Latin Version was translated from the Greek into the Latin at the close of the 2nd century. The Coptic Version was translated from the original into the Egyptian about the close of the 2nd century. Ulfilas translated the Gothic Version for the Goths in A.D. 375.

The Latin Vulgate was a revision of the Old Latin Version. This work of the New Testament translation was done by Jerome A.D. 385, who stated that he used a Greek Bible belonging to Origen who lived in the early third century. The irony of the false claim that the Catholic Church gave the world the complete Bible at the Council of Hippo in A.D. 390 is the fact that the bishops at the Council of Hippo declared that Jerome was inspired in his translation of the Bible into the Latin language and could not make a mistake in his translation. Yet, Jerome rejected the additional books that the Roman Catholics include in their Bible. He branded them as “Apocrypha”, which means “hidden, obscure and without authority”.

These facts, recognized by scholars of the world, refute the false claims of the Roman Catholic Church that she gave the world the Bible. The Bible is from God and not from the Catholic Church.

(2) The Catholic Church did not give us the Bible because no religious movement gives literature that condemns the very teaching of that religious movement.

If the Catholic Church gave the Bible to us why does it so thoroughly condemn the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church?

For example, the Bible **does not mention nor give authority for:**

A pope, a cardinal, a college of cardinals, metropolitans, patriarchs, councils (whether ecumenical, national, provincial, or diocesan), apostolic legates, the Roman Curia, the Vatican, bishops over seas, a special order of priests, religious orders, parishes, dioceses, archdioceses, monk, friars, nuns, sacraments, original sin, infant baptism, sprinkling for baptism, confirmation, the mass, transubstantiation, rosaries, auricular confession, indulgences, penance, worship of Mary, immaculate conception, perpetual virginity, bodily assumption,

adoration of images or relics, canonized saints, intercession of such saints, prayers for the dead, holy water, extreme unction, purgatory, limbo or a host of other things that make up the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. When Catholics begin to read the Bible they immediately wonder why they cannot find their church in the very book that the Catholic Church claims to have given to the world in the first place.

(3) If the Catholic Church gave the world the Bible why has she always opposed the Bible?

The voice of Romanism down through the centuries has been against the influence of the Bible! Please observe the following:

In 1229 A.D., the Bible was forbidden by the Council of Toulouse to the laity with the following decree: *“We forbid also the permitting of the laity to have the books of the Old and New Testament, unless any should wish, from a feeling of devotion, to have a Psalter or breviary for divine service. But we must strictly forbid them to have the above-mentioned books in the vulgar tongue.”* (*History of the Councils*, Vol.ii, part I, Col. 425, can. 14, Paris, 1671).

“The very nature of the Bible ought to prove to any thinking man the impossibility of its being the one safe method to find out what the Savior taught” (*Question Box*, p.67, 1913 edition).

“Again, it has ever been practically impossible for men, generally to find out Christ from the Bible only” (*Question Box*, 70).

“The Bible was not intended to be a textbook of the Christian religion” (*Catholic Facts*, p. 50).

“In other spiritual books the truths of the Bible are presented more fully, and in a more modern and familiar style, so that we can hardly wonder that they are, as a rule preferred; and that though Catholic families generally have a Bible, it is more venerated than read” (*Plain Facts*, p. 154).

“It is that of having for a foundation authority in all ages, for a means of deciding all doubtful points, not a book alone, or a book with authorized interpreters but simply authorized interpreters of the faith such as the Apostles were, with a book perhaps to help them, but still not absolutely needing that book for the discharge of their office any more than the Apostles did themselves” (*Plain Facts*, p. 33).

“The Scripture indeed is a divine book but it is a dead letter, which has to be explained, and cannot exercise the action which the preacher can obtain” (*Our Priesthood*, p. 155).

Pope VIII, in 1829, denounced the circulation of the Bible in vernacular tongue as a *“crafty device”* and *“a nefarious scheme threatening everlasting ruin”*.

Pope Gregory XVI in his encyclical letter of 1844 condemned Protestant Bible Societies with these words: *“Among the chief machinations by which in our times*

non-Catholics of various denominations try to enslave Catholic believers and turn their minds away from the holiness of their faith, a prominent place is held by the Bible societies.... Moreover, we confirm and by our Apostolic authority renew the commands already given against the publication, distribution, reading and keeping of Scripture translated into the vernacular.”

“No, the Bible is not the only source of faith. The Bible itself is but a dead letter calling for a divine interpreter. Moreover, a number of revealed truths have been handed down by divine tradition only.” (Question Box, p. 76)

“We do not in any way presuppose that the books of the New Testament are inspired, but only that they are genuine, authentic documents written by honest men.” (Question box, p. 80)

As you can see from their own writings the Catholic Church has always opposed the Bible. Why then did the Catholic Church give us the Bible according to their claim? If the Catholic Church is the official interpreter of the Bible then why did God wait several centuries after giving the Bible to establish the Catholic Church?

The Bible is crystal clear in requiring that man understand the Scriptures (Eph. 5:17). **Would God command something that is impossible?** God wants all men to come to knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4). Jesus teaches that we will be judged by His words (John 12:48-49). Will God judge us by a standard that cannot be understood? We are commanded to study, search, and grow in knowledge and Scripture implies that the Scriptures are understandable.

(4) If the Catholic Church were truly desirous of preserving the Bible, how could it be so antagonistic to the spirit of the author of the Bible?

Jesus said, *“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”* (Matt. 5:44-45).

The cruelty of the Catholic Church toward those who have opposed her and who have tried to spread the influence of the Bible is too well established in history to be successfully denied. Anne Fremantle, associate professor at Fordham University, in her book *“The Papal Encyclicals in Their Historical Context”*, pp. 69, 70, has written: *“The Church reached the zenith of its earthly power with Innocent III (1198-12-16). Then it was a supranational world state, organized with its judiciary and its law, its centralized bureaucracy, its financial system, and its armies prepared to coerce by force of arms, by threat and the reality of a holy war any rebellion against the standard doctrines of belief and conduct or against papal policies”*. So, under Innocent III, the armies of the Catholic Church were prepared to overthrow by the force of arms any rebellion against the teachings of the Catholic Church or the policies of the pope. Such a spirit and disposition accounts for such tragic events in human history as the merciless

Inquisition and the persecution of the French Huguenots with the diabolical massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day.

John Wycliffe completed the first translation of the Bible into English in 1380. His translation was from the Latin Vulgate. Yet a Catholic council condemned his work. Twenty-three years after his death his library was burned. Forty-one years after his death, the Council of Constance ordered his remains to be dug up, burned, and his ashes scattered on the River Swift, in order that the English speaking people would have no shrine at which to pay honor to one who gave them God's word in their own language.

A century and a half after Wycliffe's translation, William Tyndale translated the New Testament from the original Greek into the English language. Tyndale said, "*With God's help, I will make the sacred volume so abundant in England, that every ploughboy might read it.*" He kept his word. On a charge of heresy, he was strangled and then burned at the stake near Antwerp. His last words were, "*Lord, open the eyes of the King of England!*"

Tyndale published his first version from Antwerp with the help of John Frith and William Roye. Thereafter, William Roye fled to Portugal, where the Catholic Inquisition committed him to the flames. John Frith went to England. There he was burned at the same stake with a young tailor, named Hewet, who had made known that he agreed with the religious views of John Frith.

John Huss, the Bohemian reformer, as the preacher of Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, denounced the corruptions of the Catholic Church with much boldness. He was summoned to the Council of Constance on a charge of heresy, and went with a safe-conduct assurance from the emperor. But once there, he was apprehended. Despite the safe-conduct assurance, he and his writings were condemned to the fire. He was burned and his ashes were thrown into the Rhine River.

One may wonder why such things have happened in history. The following quote will show the real attitude of the Catholic Church toward those who oppose Catholicism: "*The death sentence is a necessary and efficacious means for the Church to attain its end when rebels against it and disturbers of the ecclesiastical unity, especially obstinate heretics, can not be restrained by any other penalty from continuing to disturb the ecclesiastical order and impelling others to all sorts of crime...it (the Church) can and must put these wicked men to death*" (Vol II p. 143 of a book of Cannon Law, 1901, by Marianus da Luca, J.S., a professor of Canon Law at Georgetown University at Rome. The book opens with a strong commendation by Pope Leo XIII).

Could such an evil movement give us so glorious a book as the Bible?

III. QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ANSWERED

1. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does it so thoroughly condemn the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church?
2. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does not the name and identity of the Catholic Church appear in the Bible?
3. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why is there no mention made of the pope, with the honor and reverence given him?
4. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why is there no reference to Peter as the Vicar of Christ on earth?
5. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible declare that Christ is the head of the church instead of the popes? Eph. 1:22
6. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible say that Peter forbade men to fall down and worship him? Acts 10:25-26
7. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible say that Peter was a married man? I Cor. 9:15
8. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible foretell that an apostate doctrine would be that of “**forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats**”, both being taught and practiced by the Catholic Church? I Tim. 4:1-3 (The Catholic Church once condemned the eating of meats on Friday and now allows it.)
9. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why would it forbid calling a priest “Father”? Matt. 23:9 Jesus said, “**Call no man your father on the earth; for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven.**”
10. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible not even mention praying to Mary? I Tim. 2:5
11. If the Bible is a Catholic book and handed down to Protestants, why is it so completely silent about the doctrines of “Purgatory”, “The Mass”, “The Rosary”, “Auricular Confession”, “Indulgences”, “Holy Water”, and “Transubstantiation”?
12. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does it condemn the making of and bowing down to images, the special observance of days, and the worshipping of saints and angels? Ex. 20:4, 5; Gal. 4:8-11; Col. 2:16-19
13. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why will the Catholic Church not accept it as their authority in religion? Jno. 12:48
14. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why would the Catholic Church insist on interpreting the Scripture for their members, when the Bible clearly declares,

“no prophecy of scripture is of any private (special) interpretation.”? 2 Pet. 1:20; II Tim. 3:16-17

15. If the Bible is a Catholic book, why does the Bible condemn the practice of keeping “traditions” as taught and practiced by the Catholic Church? Matt. 15:2, 3, 7, 8, 9

These are but a few of the questions one could ask. These and others deserve an honest and sincere answer.

The Bible message was complete, final and fixed before the Catholic Church came into existence as can be proven by history. Furthermore, Paul declared, *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”* (KJV) Gal 1:6-9.

Therefore, the Bible is **complete, fixed and final**, and has been that way since the inspired apostle John closed it with the writing of the Book of Revelation on the Isle of Patmos toward the end of the first century A.D. While we may have streamlined transportation today and a computerized economy the **same spiritual requirements are enjoined upon us today** as were enjoined upon the people under the direct teaching of the inspired apostles. The Lord’s church changes not; the Catholic Church changes. In the words of an ex-Catholic, *“If the Catholic church wants to change, that’s her business, but I want to ask this question: why has she enjoined these things upon us so arbitrarily for so long?”* Many people are now asking this same question today. They are ready to leave their bondage. The truth will make them free, Jno. 8:32.

Questions

1. In what ways has the Catholic Church tried to teach people that it gave the world the Bible?

2. Give the simple reason the Catholic Church could not have given the world the Bible?

3. List the three greatest manuscripts.

4. In what way does the Bible condemn the Catholic Church?

5. Name some ways the Catholic Church has opposed the Bible.

6. How is the Catholic Church so antagonistic to the spirit of the author of the Bible?
