

The Book of God #8

Text : **II Kings 22: 8–23: 5**

S#1.

A. God reveals Himself in many ways :

1. The amazing works of God's hands are all around us in the beauty of His creation.
2. Many events in history point toward the providential working of God.
3. The mind and conscience of man testifies to his being created in God's image.

B. However, God is most clearly revealed in His Holy Scriptures, the bible. **S#2.**

1. It speaks of His magnificence, His glory, and His infinite love.
2. It speaks of His infinite power, His justice and His sovereign reign over the universe
3. It speaks of His will for man and His desire to draw all men into eternal fellowship.

C. Satan, being unwilling to submit to the reign of God, opposes God at every point.

1. We have seen that from the beginning Satan tried to lead man away from God.
2. He tried to prevent the Messiah from being born and then from fulfilling His mission
3. Once Jesus accomplished propitiation, Satan tried to annihilate His church.

D. Having failed to destroy God's church from without, Satan turned his attention toward seeking to destroy it from within. **S#3.**

1. God anticipated this would happen :
 - a. **Isa. 46: 10**– I am God, there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning
 - b. **Acts. 20: 29** – Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock ... I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;
2. The attacks started while the Apostles were still conducting their ministries.
 - a. **Gal. 1: 6-7**– I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you **S#4.** by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; **7** which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
 - b. **I John** was written to combat the gnostic heresy.

D. When the Apostles died the N.T. had not yet been fully assembled so there was a power vacuum which many tried to fill.

1. When the churches were first established the Apostles gave miraculous gifts to many.
2. **Acts 8: 14-17** – Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **S#5.** received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, **15** who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 ... 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.
3. This was not a self-perpetuating system b/c the gifted could not pass their gifts on.

4. As the Apostles passed away or soon afterwards the gifted also began to pass.
5. Some of the disciples of the Apostles began to write lessons to deal with questions.
 - a. Ignatius of Antioch was a prominent leader in the post-apostolic church, but ...
 - b. Polycarp of Smyrna was a faithful and respected teacher, **but** not inspired/inerrant.

S#6.

E. In the absence of the Apostles or their writings, Christians debated controversies.

1. Not having a recognized authority, brethren turned to the most noteworthy people.
2. Leaders of large churches sought to establish leadership over small churches.
3. The elders of large churches worked to expand their areas of influence.
4. As the church grew conflicts over territory as well as over doctrines grew.

* **Note** : Though contrary to our current tradition, early Christians defined the “local church” as being the Christians in a locality, not by each meeting place. There’s no mention in scripture of two congregations in any city, even Corinth.

5. Finally, on the instruction of Constantine, a council of church leaders was convened.

I. This was the first step into the great apostasy.

S#7.

A. The concept of calling a council of church leaders to resolve issues is biblical.

1. **Acts 15: 1-2** – Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." **2** And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

S#8.

2. The facts of the Jerusalem council were far different from all that followed.
 - a. The church at Antioch had been started by people from Jerusalem.
 - b. Those causing the problem in Antioch were from Jerusalem / claimed authority of.
 - c. Those from whom the church in Antioch sought resolution were inspired Apostles.
 - d. Only those involved in the dispute went to the council .. they were not summoned.

S#9.

B. The first international council was held in the city of Nicaea (Turkey) in 325 AD.

1. Nicaea was chosen because Emperor Constantine had a vacation house there.
2. Constantine instructed that all “secular dioceses” send at least one representative.
3. The topic of discussion was the “*Arian Controversy*.”
 - a. Alexander, the chairman of the elders (called a bishop) in Alexandria, Egypt had a doctrinal dispute with Arius, a fellow-elder.
 - b. The dispute was about the trinity.
 - c. Arius believed Jesus came into existence at birth

4. Though this dispute was between two elders at Alexandria, it was dividing the churches all across the empire so the Emperor felt compelled to settle it.

Remember : Constantine used the church to accomplish his political goals.

** The councils listed below were convened by the emperor.*

S#10.

C. It became a general practice to have a council of leaders about every 50 years.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Constantinople .. 381 | 4. Constantinople 2 .. 553 |
| 2. Ephesus .. 431 | 5. Constantinople 3 .. 680 |
| 3. Chalcedon .. 451 | 6. Nicaea 2 .. 787 (... Vatican council .. 1962) |

D. You will observe that these councils continued after the N.T. was assembled.

1. This manifested an unholy attitude toward the authority of the scriptures.
2. It elevated the authority of the leaders of the church above the scriptures.

E. Having successfully pulled off the counsel at Nicaea, Constantine decided to organize the church in a way that made it easier for him to control. **S#11.**

1. He name the leader of the church nearest to him and the leader of the church.
2. He then named a leader for each of the Roman dioceses. (political region)
3. Constantine organized the church to be efficiently run from his seat in Rome.

II. The newly organized Roman religion had difficulty enforcing the amount of control that the emperor expected it to exercise. **S#12.**

S#13.

A. After much debate the final canon of the scriptures were finally agreed upon.

1. At the council of Nicaea there were different canons used in various regions.
2. In 394 AD, the Council of Hippo agreed upon the 27 books that we use as our N.T.
3. In 398, the council of Cartage confirmed the 27 book, thus ending the long debate.

B. During the Roman persecutions, the churches had been industriously copying and circulating the scriptures.

1. Every congregation and wealthy Christians wanted their own copy of the writings.
2. Scribal shops were established.
 - a. One man read while many scribes simultaneously wrote down the words.
 - b. Before the printing press, this was the method of mass production.
3. To facilitate mass production, Christians adopted the use of books to replace scrolls.
4. The gospels were the first to be bound together as on book.

C. Once the apostate church was organized, they began to discourage the the general population of the church from reading the scriptures. S#14.

1. During the “dark ages” the apostate church increasingly opposed reading.
2. An ignorant membership could not challenge the teaching of their leaders.
3. Like Constantine, civil leaders (Kings) used the church to control the people.
4. If the church could not control the masses, they would lose political patronage.

D. Eventually the apostate church completely outlawed the bible. S#15.

1. At the Council of Toulouse in 1229 the following edit was issued : S#16.
 Canon 14: “We prohibit also that the laity should not be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books.”
2. At the Counsel of Tarragona in 1234 the following edit was issued : S#17.
 Canon 2: “No one may possess the books of the Old and New Testaments, and if anyone possesses them he must turn them over to the local bishop within eight days, so **that they may be burned...**”
3. Pope Pius IV had a list of the forbidden books compiled and officially prohibited them in the Index of Trent (Index Librorum Prohibitorum) of 1559. **Excerpt :** S#18.
 Rule IV & Rule VI : “Whoever reads or has such a translation in his possession... ***cannot be absolved from his sins until he has turned in these Bibles...*** Books in the vernacular dealing with the controversies between Catholics and the heretics of our time are not to be generally permitted, but are to be handled in the **same way as Bible translations...**”

S#19.

III. The apostate church identified bible translations as a threat to their control.

A. The translation of scriptures is a biblical concept. S#20.

1. Ezra translated the Law of Moses into the modern dialect for the people.
 - a. **Neh. 8:8** – They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading. S#21.
 - b. See how language changed over the years, especially during the captivity.
2. In 200 BC the Old Testament was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt.
 - a. Translated by 70 scholars in 70 day so it is called the “Septuagint.”
 - b. Though in no way a perfect translation, in the time of Christ it was the accepted
 - c. Jesus and others quoted from the LXX, **for example :**
Mark 7: 7 – But in vain do they me, teaching as doctrine the precept of men.

S#22.**B. In 382 Damasus, the pope of the apostate church, commissioned a translation.**

1. He wanted a definitive translation from the Greek & Hebrew into Latin.
2. Jerome was cloistered in the monastery at Bethlehem to produce the Vulgate.
3. When it was finished in 405, it became the standard for the entire western church.
4. Jerome wanted his translation read, "*Ignorance of the scripture is ignorance of Christ*"
5. However, the apostate church restricted access to even their own translation.
6. After the Vulgate was finished, the apostate church forbade further translations.

C. In 800 Charlemagne was allowed to contract a translation of the bible.

1. He had it translated into Old Church Slavonic used to convert Germanic tribes.
2. The complete bible was translated into Old French in the 13th century.

D. In 1383, John Wycliffe made the first English translation.**S#23.**

1. It was translated from the Latin Vulgate into Middle English.
2. This was before the invention of the printing press so each copy was handwritten.
3. Many copies of the Wycliffe Bible were circulated, but most were burned.
4. 250 copies remain. In 2016 one copy sold for \$1.7 million.
5. Wycliffe's bones were dug up, burned and thrown in river 40 yrs after his death.

S#24.

* In 1415, **John Huss** (noted priest) was burned for advocating reading Wycliffe's bible.

S#25**E. In 1516, Erasmus of Rotterdam completed a Greek translation of the bible.****S#26.**

1. Erasmus was a highly educated priest, teacher and humanist.
2. He became a Greek scholar and sought out Greek manuscripts.
3. He produced a N.T. with both Greek and Latin in parallel columns.

S#28.**F. In 1535, William Tyndale's translation of the bible into English was published.**

1. This was the first English translation to be translated from the Greek and Hebrew.
2. Tyndale was fluent in 7 languages.
3. Tyndale completed all of the N.T. and half the old, but Miles Coverdale completed
4. Tyndale was betrayed by a friend, jailed for 500 days and then burned at the stake.
5. While studying the Greek translation of Erasmus Tyndale discovered the doctrine of salvation by grace and decided to translate the bible into English to reveal it.
6. All future English bible have been influenced by Tyndale's work.
- *7. The printing press changed the world.

- a. Bibles could now be produced so fast and so cheap the apostate could not stop it
 - b. 6000 Tyndale bible smuggled to England, but confiscated and burned.
- *8. The King James bible contains 90% of the Tyndale bible .. as does the Geneva bible.

G. The Geneva Bible was translated in 1560, but printed in 1575.

S#29.

- 1. It was translated by a committee of most eminent scholars of the day.
- 2. The Geneva Bible was studied and quoted by the leaders of protestant reformation.
- 3. It was the first bible with chapters and verses. **S#30.**
- 4. It was also generously annotated. (*One motivation for King James version*)
- 5. It is the bible brought to America by the Puritan pilgrims.
- 6. The bible quoted by : Shakespeare, John Knox, Oliver Cromwell, John Bunyan, etc

H. 51 yrs later (1611) the King James Bible was completed.

S#31.

- 1. The King James contains 90% of the Tyndale bible.
- 2. It's roots are in the Greek text of Erasmus. (*Limited Grk manuscripts were available*)
- 3. 47 scholars from Church of England were divided into 6 groups to translate it.
- 4. Like Constantine, Kg. James had political goals in making the translation.
- 5. It could have no marginal notes and must be suitable for all churches to read.
 - a. Required the word "Easter" appear in the text.
 - b. Would not accept "immersion" as the translation of baptizo.
- 6. The King James Version has been revised many times : 16
 - a. 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769
 - b. The American Standard and the Revised standard were supposed to be revisions.
 - c. New King James took 7 years to revise and was published in 1982.

CONCLUSION :

- A. We have followed the course of the bible to America.
- B. We owe a debt of gratitude to many who have given their lives for the word.
- C. We will complete our series seeing the mechanic of how a translation is made.

INVITATION :

S#32.

S#33. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**II Kings 22: 8-23-5**

8 Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it. **9** Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord." **10** Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. **12** Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying, **13** "Go, inquire of the Lord for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her. **15** She said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to me, **16** thus says the Lord, "Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. **17** " Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched.'" **18** "But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord thus shall you say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel, "Regarding the words which you have heard, **19** because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the Lord. **20** "Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place.'" So they brought back word to the king.

23:1 Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. **2** The king went up to the house of the Lord and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. **3** The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.