

# *First Century Fellowship Ministry*

## A Biblical Church of God

### Setting Our Biblical Foundation on THE Rock

#### Part 1

#### THE HOLY BIBLE

#### INTRODUCTION

When we start down the path to seek the truth and knowledge of our Christian faith we generally come with some, many probably, pre-conceived ideas, thoughts and notions on what Christianity really is. They have come from what we have heard, what friends have said, what we have learned from churches we have attended and from the world in general.

We need to start off by setting the record straight. If you are here, you did not do it of your own accord. You have been called by God the Father. You did not start off one morning saying, "I think it's time to get right with God." God has set out by revealing to you that you need Him. He initiates the call, He begins by bringing you to that knowledge.

Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who has sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

(John 6:44).

He also tells us, "For many are called, but few are chosen."

(Matthew 22:14).

Why has He made these seemingly contradictory statements? Because He knows He has created us with *independent free moral agency*. We have been given the right to choose. Even though we

are called by the Father, we can chose to respond, respond half-heartedly (luke warm) or not respond at all. That's why He notes, "... few are chosen."

When you seek truth and knowledge in the Word there are several basic things to understand. You need to believe, repent of your sins, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will address each of these. All vitally important to understand. (We will go over these in more detail later.)

If you want to continue on this journey, this coming to God if you will, you need to do some "soul searching". Pray about this path you are on. Ask yourself, "What am I looking for? What do I desire to learn from this?" Pray before you begin and ask for His guidance. Pray that His plan be revealed. Do not be disappointed if you do not get an earth shattering response immediately. God reveals things to us as we develop the ability to handle it.

Are you willing to believe; that He really exists? He has always existed and will always exist. That He has complete authority over your life. This is important.

When asked by the disciple's what they must do to do the works of God Jesus said,

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him Whom He has sent."  
(John 6:29).

You must believe.

This is where faith comes in. We have to have faith that He is. We should be able to look around and see His glory in His creation and believe. Most cannot. Faith is what we must have to please God. We must have faith and believe that He is.

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6).

We have to get away from what we believe or what others say and rely on the Word.

When we believe in God we are to believe in the God Family.

Jesus tells us,

“Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. ... I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”

(John 14:1, 6).

Belief in God is belief in Jesus Christ.

Let us move along to God’s word, His guidebook, His instruction manual for us. We need to understand how His word originated and has been preserved.

## THE BIBLE-GOD’S WORD

In praying about this series what has been revealed is to start with the Word of God. Good place. Where exactly do we find that? Let’s start off by noting that God is revealed all around us. He is the Creator God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything that was made.

“All things came into being through Him, and not even one thing that was created came into being without Him.”

(John 1:3).

Because of this truth we should know Him, but we do not.

As we saw above, we must have faith and believe God. We must have confidence that what His word, the Holy Bible, says is faithful and true, which it is. How can we be sure that what we read now is a true and faithful version of His original writings? That is what this section will show.

Also, you must let His word interpret and define His word. Let the Bible interpret itself. No one scripture should be taken on its own to set a doctrine or belief. The Bible displays a unity of scripture, the Old and New Testaments comprise the complete Bible. One cannot stand and be properly understood without the other.

Beginning with Moses it took a span of approximately 1500 years to complete the entire Bible. More than forty authors, chosen and inspired by God writing as He directed them. The apostle Peter acknowledged,

“We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word to which you do well to pay attention, as to the light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts; Knowing this first, that no prophesy of Scripture originated as anyone's own private interpretation; Because prophesy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

(2 Peter 1:19-21).

A very unique part of the Holy Bible is its accuracy and how it has been preserved over the past 3800 years. It has been protected and preserved by the chosen of God.

The Old Testament: Most of the Old Testament, the scripture as it is referred to in the New Testament, was written in the Hebrew language. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses who was a Levite. He wrote what God, the Word, had spoken to him and the children of Israel. He personally met with God and wrote the words God spoke to him. He wrote nothing of his own. He recorded the words God commanded him

to write. He recorded God's Law. From the death of Moses, God transferred the Law to the Aaronic priests, who were Levites, to safeguard and preserve His word.

Ezra and the Great Assembly canonized the scriptures of the Old Testament and continued to have the Aaronic priesthood protect and preserve it. Faithful copies were made as needed by the priests and Levites for teaching and the temple readings.

Other books of the Old Testament were written by priest like Samuel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all descendants of Aaron. Samuel records that these books were to be "laid up before the Lord". (1 Samuel 10:25).

Books or psalms written by kings who were not Levites such as King David and Solomon, who were from the tribe of Judah, were submitted to the priests to be laid up before the Lord. "Then on that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren in order to thank the Lord." (1 Chronicles 16:7). This process insured important accounts would be written down and preserved. They would eventually become part of the prophets, the Psalms and historical writings.

The high priest Ezra, and the priests and Levites composing the Great Assembly, completed final editing and canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures in the late fifth century B.C.

From the time of Moses God used the Aaronic priests as writers, editors and custodians of His Holy Scripture. This continuity insured accurate, faithful and true renditions of His Word by His priests.

As originally canonized there are 22 books in the Old Testament set forth in three distinct divisions, The Law, the Prophets and the Writings (or Psalms).

The 39 books of the Old Testament we are most familiar with, do comprise the entire Old Testament. The difference is in the

numbering sequence between the 39 books and the original 22 books in how Ezra grouped and counted them for the three part division of the Old Testament. (See Attachment: The Order of the Original 22 Books of the Old Testament).

The original change occurred during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century B.C. when he had the Old Testament Scriptures translated from the original Hebrew into Greek. This translation is called the Septuagint, from the Latin, meaning seventy. It is commonly referred to by the Roman numerals *LXX*, for seventy as it was supposed to have been translated by seventy Jewish scholars. Hellenistic Jew's later added an additional 14 books, called Apocrypha (meaning, of doubtful origin) and added to the *LXX* bringing the total number of books to 53.

Jerome, in the fourth century A.D., translated the Bible into Latin. This version is known as the Latin Vulgate. Even though he acknowledged the correct order and divisions of the original text as 22, he chose to follow the order of the *LXX* thereby subverting the God inspired unity of the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments.

The number 22 is easily verified in many historical texts up to the fourth century.

Josephus in his book, *Antiquities of the Jews*, in the first century states, "We do not have a countless number of books, discordant and arranged against each other; but only two and twenty books, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as divine."

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, a biblical scholar and historian recorded, "There were only 22 books to the standard Old Testament. This numbering can be traced back at least two hundred years before the time of Christ. It is found in the book of Jubilees. Thus, as early as the year 150 B.C., it was common for Jews to reckon the

Old Testament books as being 22 in number.” (Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 57).

We see that Jesus was aware of the three part division of the Old Testament,

“And He said to them, “These are the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all these things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “According as it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.”

(Luke 24:44-46).

Notice what is recorded, “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,” He is speaking of the Old Testament only. The New Testament had not been written.

The New Testament: You cannot understand the Old Testament without the New Testament.

The New Testament was faithfully and accurately written by the apostles of Jesus Christ in Koine Greek. Its 27 books were canonized by John, Peter and Paul and after the Apostolic age, around 125 A.D., was preserved by the Greek speaking church. This preserved text is called the Byzantine text. In 1550 A.D. this text, then known as the Stephen’s text, was used to translate the New Testament from the original Greek into English which was then used for the King James Version of 1611.

“William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the first person to translate the Bible into English from its original Greek and Hebrew and the first to print the Bible in English, which he did in exile. Giving the laity access to the Word of God outraged the

clerical establishment in England: he was condemned, hunted, and eventually murdered. However, his masterly translation formed the basis of all English Bibles-including the 'King James Bible,' many of whose finest passages were taken unchanged, though unacknowledged, from Tyndale's work." (*The Holy Bible In Its Original Order-A Faithful Version with Commentary*, Commentary, Chapter One, p. 8).

Tyndale's condemnation, persecution and eventual murder shows the established church did not want privately owned copies of the Holy Bible, and its associated truths, in the hands of those they were "serving". When you have Biblical truth you are a threat to them and their authority.

"Therefore Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly My disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

(John 8: 31-32).

This is not the only situation like this. Martin Luther suffered at the hands of the Catholic Church for trying to get them to acknowledge truth.

"But you shall be delivered up even by parent and brothers and relatives and friends, and they shall put some of you to death; And you shall be hated by all because of My name."

(Luke 21:16-17).

"And because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you can convict Me of sin? But if I speak the truth, why don't you believe Me? The one who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God."

(John 8:45-47).



There have been many Saints throughout history who have protected, preserved and transmitted the true word of God. Through their faithful and selfless service to our Creator God they allowed us to realize His truth.

As we have seen, we can have faith that there are faithful translations of God's Holy Word. However, we must be careful that in the newer translations that accuracy and truth has been retained. Some newer translations have changed words, left out some passages and inserted words or verses to justify a position.

Some acknowledged "changes" are:

Acts 12:4; "And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people."

"**Easter**" in this passage of a later KJV is incorrect. The true translation should be, "... intending after **Passover** to bring ..."

1 John 5:7; "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one."

This is an addition placed into the text of later KJV's that *does not* appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts. It also does not appear in Jerome's early Latin translation, the Vulgate. It does appear in later Greek manuscripts that were translated from the Latin tradition dated around the twelfth century A.D. The Old Latin is the only version to include it. It is an addition to justify the trinity. The later KJV, NKJV, Amplified Bible, NIV, NASB and Cephher all contain this addition or a variation of it. The correct translation, based on original Greek transcripts should be,

"And it is the Spirit that bears witness because the Spirit is truth." (The Holy Bible In Its Original Order (AFV)).

Luke 11:2-4; "2. And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be you name. Your kingdom come. 3. 'Give us each day our daily bread. 4. 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indepted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

This verse is from the NASB. It also appears this way in the ASV, NIV and the ESV. It is an incorrect translation. The correct translation from the KJV is, (note the differences-underlined), "2. And He said unto them, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3. Give us day by day our daily bread. 4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indepted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from (the) evil (one)"

This correct version also appears this way in NKJV, the Amplified Bible and AFV.

What these few passages show is we also must be careful in what we use to read and understand God's truth. The KJV, NKJV, the Amplified Bible and the Holy Bible In Its Original Order (AFV) are consistently more accurate translations. Others may be easier to read for some but we must be aware of errors and in some cases, deliberate attempts to subvert the truth.

"For everyone who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed; But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by the power of God." (John 3:21-22).

“But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner.” (John 4:23-24).

An interesting note, as originally canonized there are 22 books in the Old Testament in three divisions. There are 27 canonized books in the New Testament set in four divisions. This gives 49 total books set in seven divisions making up the complete Bible. Seven is the number of completeness and perfection and is directly tied to creation. 49 is  $7 \times 7$  and there are 7 division in the original canonized texts.

In more “modern” translations they mark the Old Testament with 39 books with no division and the New Testament with 27 books with no divisions. This total is set at 66 books. 6 is the number of man and human weakness. Man was created on the sixth day. There are 6 days of work. “666” is noted in Revelation 13:8, as the mark and number of the Beast. It shows the inadequacies of man’s rule.

“Here is wisdom. Let the one who has understanding count the number of the beast; for it is man's number and his number is 666.”

(Revelation 13:18) Just a thought!

Please remember these passages;

“Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

(Matthew 5:19).

“For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophesy of this book, that if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes

away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."

(Revelation 22:18-19).

## **The order of the original 22 Books of the Old Testament With Divisions**

### **The Law:**

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

### **The Prophets:**

6. Joshua/Judges
7. The Book of Kingdoms: (1 and 2 Samuel/1 and 2 Kings)
8. Isaiah
9. Jeremiah
10. Ezekiel
11. The Twelve: (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

### **The Writings (Psalms):**

12. Psalms
13. Proverbs
14. Job
15. Song of Songs
16. Ruth
17. Lamentations
18. Ecclesiastes
19. Esther
20. Daniel
21. Ezra/Nehemiah
22. The Book of Chronicles: (1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles)

# **The Original Order of the Books of the Canonized New Testament-With Divisions**

## **Gospels/Acts**

- 1) Matthew
- 2) Mark
- 3) Luke
- 4) John
- 5) Acts of Apostles

## **General Epistles**

- 6) James
- 7) 1 Peter
- 8) 2 Peter
- 9) 1 John
- 10) 2 John
- 11) 3 John
- 12) Jude

## **EPISTLES OF PAUL**

- 13) Romans
- 14) 1 Corinthians
- 15) 2 Corinthians
- 16) Galatians
- 17) Ephesians
- 18) Philippians
- 19) Colossians

- 20) 1 Thessalonians
- 21) 2 Thessalonians
- 22) Hebrews
- 23) 1 Timothy
- 24) 2 Timothy
- 25) Titus
- 26) Philemon

## **REVELATION**

- 27) The Book of the  
Revelation of  
Jesus Christ