

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

DECEPTION IN THE END TIMES

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PART 3: THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus was 30 years old when He began public ministry. **Luke 3:21-23**

In writing the New Testament, the apostles stated that Jesus had existed prior to His human birth in Bethlehem; He was God and also the Creator. **John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:10-20; Hebrews 1:1-3**

When Jesus walked on earth as both God and man, He was clothed in a human body, but he had retained the memory of life in heaven and that He was the Son of God incarnate. **John 3:17-23; 6:35-40; 8:53-58**

Jesus knew how the universe had been created. He was the one that made Adam out of the dust of the earth and He was the one that performed surgery on Adam and took a rib from him that was used to make Eve. **Genesis 2:7; 21-23**

Jesus could have made the Jews into a high technological nation by teaching them about electricity, the combustion engine, aircraft, computers, etc. and in a few years he could have built up their military might with airplanes, tanks, aircraft carriers, etc. and every nation in the world would have been subdued under the rule of Jerusalem.

Some 1,500 years before He was born into a human body in Bethlehem, Jesus transferred skills and technology to the craftsmen of Israel who made the parts for the Tabernacle. **Exodus 31:1-6**

But this time Jesus was not here to lift the human race to a high technological society, He was here to live a sinless life, to teach about salvation and to die on the cross to make atonement for the sins of mankind. **2 Corinthians 5:14-19**

Jesus never wrote down his teachings. Most likely the disciples took notes as he taught them and kept a running diary of the miracles He performed. The responsibility for writing down the teachings of Jesus and setting forth the doctrine of the church was given to the Holy Spirit. **John 16:7-15**

THE FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

After Jesus had ascended into heaven, the apostles did not initially write down any of the books in the New Testament. **Acts 1:9-11**

It was not until about 15 years later that the four Gospels were written down and copies were circulated among the churches. Historians date the writings of the four Gospels from 48-61 A.D.

The theme of the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus is King. The Gospel of Mark stressed that Jesus was a servant. The Gospel of Luke presented the human side of Jesus and the Gospel of John's theme was that Jesus is God.



Matthew was an apostle. Mark was a disciple under the apostle Peter. Luke was a physician and a close companion to the Apostle Paul. John was an apostle.

Once the four Gospels were written on parchments, copies were sent to different churches throughout the Roman Empire, to Ethiopia and eastward all the way to India where the apostle Thomas had gone.

Luke wrote the Book of Acts like a running diary and ended his writing in Rome in 63 A.D., when Paul was beheaded.

The rest of the epistles of the New Testament were written from 52 A.D. until after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The Book of Revelation is the last book in the New Testament and was written around 90 A.D.

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By 100 A.D. a number of different Gospels had begun to circulate such as the Gospel of Peter and the Gospel of Thomas. The third generation Christian pastors who had been trained under leaders like Timothy and Titus decided around 100 A.D. to only accept writings that were done by apostles or by their immediate disciples. The Canon of the New Testament as it is in the King James Version was established in a church council meeting in Carthage, North Africa in 397 A.D.

Carthage was the second largest city in the Roman Empire in the fourth century and had a population of around 500,000. It was a strong center for Christianity in North Africa and is located in modern day Tunisia. In 698 A.D. the murderous hordes of Islamic armies defeated the Romans and took possession of North Africa from Egypt to Morocco. Christians were slaughtered and Islam was forced upon the people who survived this barbaric conquest.

The believers in Carthage were the Latin speaking part of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Western part of the Roman Empire. Latin had overtaken the Western part of the Roman Empire, while the eastern part still retained Greek as their language.

THE VULGATE TRANSLATION

In 382 A.D. the ruling pope in Rome commissioned Jerome to translate the Old and New Testaments into Latin, which he completed during the years 390-405 A.D. Latin was an ancient Italian language which had at the time become the official language of the Western Part of the Roman Empire and was spoken and read by most people. It replaced Greek and church leaders felt that the Bible must be translated into the language people spoke at that time.

In 1054 the Roman Catholic Church split into two parts, with the Western part governed by the Pope in Rome and Latin as its official language. The Eastern portion of the church became known as the Greek Orthodox Church with its headquarters in Constantinople. It was ruled by the Archbishop of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and its official language was Koine Greek.

The Latin Vulgate translation became the Bible used by the Roman Catholic Church, and since the leadership did not want its members to read the Bible, they developed a doctrine that only priests had the necessary training to read the Bible and interpret its meaning. Common Catholic members therefore had no knowledge of what was written in the Bible and had to rely upon the priest to give them the official church doctrine. This was one of the many abuses of the Roman Catholic Church that led to Martin Luther's reformation.

THE INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS

I personally do not like the word "invent" because mankind only discovers what God has created and learns to use it. The printing press is one such item that man discovered and for the last 560 years has developed that technology. The first printing press was made in China around 1041 A.D and seven years later an improved model had been built in Korea. For the next 400 years different printing presses were made in Europe, but it was in 1450 that the Johannes Gutenberg developed a printing press with characters made of lead that could be fastened to a frame, inked up and pressed against paper.

Gutenberg's press was revolutionary in the way man could communicate via the written word because it was finally possible to turn a written manuscript into book form and mass produce it quickly. I have no doubt that God showed these different people how to make printing presses in order to mass produce Bibles.

WILLIAM TYNDALE (1494-1536)

William Tyndale was a British clergyman and Bible scholar who decided to translate the Bible into English for the common man. When news came to the English royal court that the Bible was being translated into English, he was ordered arrested and brought to trial for heresy. England at that time was still in the clutches of the Roman Catholic Church and its leadership demanded that he be put to death. At this time all services in the Catholic churches were held in Latin, which the common people did not understand and they also had no access to the Bible. The court found him guilty of heresy; he was strangled and burned at the stake. Tyndale's last words were for God to open the eyes of the king and allow the Bible to be available in English for the people.

In 1538 the King of England made a decree that Tyndale's translation would be accepted as the Bible in English and this version became known as the "Great Bible."

THE GENEVA BIBLE (1576)

The persecution of Christians in England caused many born again British clergymen and Bible scholars to flee and go to Switzerland where they could work without persecution. Some of them took the Tyndale translation, and after looking at the Vulgate version of the Bible, the Greek manuscript known as "Textus Receptus" produced by Desiderius Erasmus from Holland in 1516, along with other Hebrew and Greek fragments of the Bible, they produced the Geneva

Bible in English. Eighty percent of this Bible was based upon Tyndale's Bible translation.

The Geneva Bible was the most popular English Bible in the 16th century and was printed in large quantities.

MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

As God was moving in England, He was also moving in Germany and a Roman Catholic monk was touched by God and born again. Just like the apostle Paul turned against the Jewish leadership, Martin Luther renounced the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and started the reformation movement in Europe. Luther knew that if the German people could have the Bible in their own language they would see a multitude of errors with the Roman Catholic doctrine. Luther finished the translation of the New Testament into German in 1522 and the Old Testament in 1534. He used the same source manuscripts that Tyndale and the Geneva Bible translators had used.

THE KING JAMES BIBLE

In 1534 King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his wife and marry another woman but the Pope in Rome refused permission to do so. In his anger against the Roman Catholic Church, he severed all ties with Rome and proclaimed himself to be the head of the Church of England. To weaken the clergy that still held on to Rome, he ordered Tyndale's Bible translation to be released and printed as the official English Bible.

Reformers from Switzerland came back and worked to make the Church of England part of the reformation. When Henry VIII died in 1553, his daughter Mary became Queen and took the title Mary I. She married a Spanish prince, who became known as King Phillip. Mary had taken the throne through force and imprisoned her cousin Lady Jane Grey and later ordered her to be beheaded.

Mary lead a violent persecution of the reformers and had 280 of them executed. She revoked the decree of her father and restored the Pope as the head of the churches in England and once again became part of the Roman Catholic Church.

When she died of cancer in 1558 at the age of 42, her half sister Elizabeth became the next queen and took the name Elizabeth I. One of her first acts was to break with the Roman Catholic Church and she too made herself the head of the Church of England. She reigned until 1603 when she died.

The next king was James I, who realized that his kingdom was weakened through the confusion that existed in the Church of England. He wanted a Bible in English that all factions could agree upon, and in 1604 he called a meeting of the church clergy and told them that he wanted a new standard translation of the Bible. He demanded that the best scholars in England would be used for this task and 47 clergy and laymen were selected.

The group was divided into six companies, each taking a portion of text to be translated. Every man in the company worked independently to translate the

Bible word for word. Once each person had finished their translation, they met as a group and discussed the translations until they agreed upon a common version. The translation was then sent to another company to be studied. The final version of the Bible translation was hammered out when two members from each company met and reviewed the whole Bible translation. The work was completed in 1611.

King James I did not participate in the translation and the Holy Spirit was free to work with each man and guide them into giving us an accurate translation in English.

These men used the Textus Receptus and other Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. In reality the King James Bible was based upon the work that Tyndale had done during his lifetime on earth and the men checked that what Tyndale had done was correct.

When I went to seminary in 1969-73 I learned that more than 3,000 partial Greek manuscripts of the New Testament dating back to the 700th century A.D. had been located and when scholars had studied them and found that the work the 47 men had done in the 17th century had stood the testing of time and that it is the most accurate translation of the Bible in English. When the Dead Sea scrolls were found in the late 1940's, processed and photocopied were released to the theological study centers in the world, it was found that these scrolls of the Old Testament dating back to some 300 years before Christ verified that the King James Bible is extremely accurate.

By 1650 the King James Bible had become the standard Bible for all English speaking Christians and it is the best seller in the 21st century.

God is watching and protecting his Word. **Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?