

# Making of the Bible P2

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## Exploring My Strange Bible

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Speaker in the audio file:

Tim Mackie

Tim: Hey everybody! I'm Tim Mackie, and this is my podcast, Exploring My Strange Bible. I am a card-carrying, Bible, history, and language nerd who thinks that Jesus of Nazareth is utterly amazing and worth following with everything that you have.

On this Podcast, I'm putting together the last ten years' worth of lectures, and sermons where I've been exploring this strange, and wonderful story of the Bible and how it invites us into the mission of Jesus and the journey of faith. And I hope this can be helpful for you too.

I also helped start this thing called, The Bible Project. We make animated videos, and podcasts about all kinds of topics on Bible, and Theology. You can find those resources at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com).

With all that said, let's dive into the episode for this week.

Alright this is part 2 of a three-part series about the Making of the Bible. If you haven't listened to the first lecture, this second one isn't going to make any sense at all if you have not listened to lecture 1. So I highly recommend it. And the second lecture is diving into some of the details of the manuscript history of the Old Testament which is fascinating and complicated all at the same time.

And also the second half of this lecture dives into the composition and writing of the books of the New Testament and specifically looking within the books themselves of the New Testament and how they give us clues and information about how they came into existence and how they were written. Again, this whole lecture is about helping set the foundation for understanding where the Bible came from that's like one of the first and main goals is to get the basic facts but 2, in light of where the Bible came from, that ought to deepen and give us a much more rich sense of what the Bible is as a human word through which God speaks to His people and how to hold those two together.

So we'll be talking more about that within the end of this second lecture. Then we'll set the stage for them. The third lecture to follow, part 3 of the series which will be about the formation of the New Testament as a group of writings altogether. So hope this is helpful for you turning the firehose on. A lot of data coming your way. But hopefully it will tie together to a much bigger picture.

Alright this is kind of again, 30,000-foot overview. We're landing on a few detailed points. Other than these basic manuscript groups there are a handful of other witnesses that we could put on the timeline. But these are the most important ones basically. There's a group of off shoot from Ancient Israel called

the Samaritans so they feature in the New Testament in a couple places. So they were also kind of like the Qumran group but they broke off at an earlier time in biblical history. And they went north into what's called the West Bank now. But they're a community that still exists today, and they took a form of the Torah with them. And so they have a form of the Torah called, it's called the Samaritan Pentateuch and it also could be placed on the map here. And again it's one of these things where sometimes it agrees with the Masoretic text, sometimes it agrees with the Dead Sea scrolls and Septuagint. I can't the Masoretic text this is such a fascinating, complicated mess but it's only for the Pentateuch, it's not for the whole Hebrew Bible. And so it's important, but I'm focusing more things that get us to the whole Hebrew Bible.

Let's look at a larger example of when we compare all of the families here and try to understand how they get us back to the originals and then what they tell us about what happened in history of the making of the Bible here. So I have a section here of Jeremiah chapter 10. You can see it up here on the screen or it's in the handout here. So maybe I should say this right now real quick. For most of the history of the English Bible our English translations going back to... we'll talk about the history of the English Bible when we get to the New Testament to Tyndale and the first edition of King James version called the authorized version which just had its 400 birthday last year in 2011 so 1611. Most of the earliest English translations were based solely and completely off of the Masoretic text and specifically the Leningrad Codex. That's the thing that I showed you right there.

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So what's happened then of course is that in the last 150 or so years, all these things have come to light and people are studying them more and more and more. The question is, when do we, in the English translation, go with a reading that's in here that seems to be correct but it's not in the Masoretic text. So we saw that in the Cain and Abel story, yeah. Some of your English translation had the, "Let's go into the field," that's in these manuscripts but not in these. So it raises all these other complicated questions of when should your translation go with the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls against the Masoretic Text, and so on.

The Book of Jeremiah is in a complicated example worth a lot like Ezekiel where when you compare these families here, you can isolate things that have been added to the Book of Jeremiah likely after the time of the original. So here's an example right here. Here's what I want you to do. So pretend that you're with me at my desk 5 in the morning, cup of coffee, we have Radiohead playing and we're preparing the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts and here's track with the meaning and the content of the different pieces here. The entire text is what's in the Masoretic text, bold italics is absent in the Septuagint and in a Hebrew Dead Sea Scroll of Jeremiah. So let's read.

For the customs of the people are false. People's referring to non-Israelites here. A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an act by the hands of an artisan. People deck it with silver and gold. They fasten it with hammer and nails so it cannot move. Who are we talking about here? It's idols, ancient idols. Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field for they cannot speak, they have to be carried around. They can't even walk. Don't be afraid of them, they can't do evil nor is it in them to do good. There's none like You, Oh LORD, and the divine name, oh Yahweh. You are great, your name is great and might. Who would not fear you oh king of the nations for that is your due. Among all the wise ones of the nations and in their kingdoms there is no one like you. They are both stupid and foolish. The instruction given by idols is no better than what? Beat and silver is bought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. They are the work of the artisan and the hands of the goldsmiths. Their clothing is blue and purple and all of the product of skilled workers. But Yahweh, He is the true God. He is the living God and everlasting king. As his wrath and the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure his indignation. Thus you will say to them, the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from the heavens.

I mean we're laughing because you didn't see what's going on. So we have a description. A description of the making of an ancient idol, right? And so the materials that are used, the process. And verse 5 and so on, we're kind of poking fun at the idols, you know, all this work for this little statues, and they can't even talk, you know. But people bow down to them, make sacrifices to them, and so on. What has been added to this passage in the Masoretic text in two places here or the tradition of the Masoretic text? How would you characterize the bold italics then? Obviously a clear contrast, and also notice that the first big extra part here verses 6 and 7 were addressing God directly now. It's almost like a praise song, like a little hymn, worship hymn.

And then verse 10 it's offering a contrast. In contrast to these idols that can't talk or anything, the Lord is the true God and son on. Go back to the timeline here. So what this means is likely the passage originally was crafted in its shorter form and this doesn't mean that the Masoretes added this material. The Masoretes have preserved a version of the text to which there were addition made somewhere in this complicated period. So we have two witnesses here. It seems most likely conclusion to draw is that the praise song was added in two different places to the passage.

So let me ask you here, some of you, this might be deeply troubling, okay. So that's okay. Part of this whole process of discovering the human history of the Bible might break some categories a little bit. That might be happening in the room right now. I totally respect that. I don't want to poke fun at that. So let's characterize what's happening here. Is this addition distorting the message or theology at work in this passage? Is the message of the passage changed? Is there anything in verses 6, 7 and 8 or in 10 in addition that you wouldn't learn to say in the Book of Psalms? In fact, actually, a lot of phrases in these additions are just literally quoted encrypt right out of the Book of Psalms.

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So you learn something there. What you learn is that these additions come from a time period, not just when Baruch and Jeremiah are sitting in a room. But these additions come from a time period when somebody is reading the Book of Jeremiah alongside the Book of Psalms as a collected word of God, right?

So this is the same thing that happened with Ezekiel when I was doing my dissertation is that there were additions made and often times their quotations, not like some scribe playing fast and loose. They're quotations from some other part of the Bible saying, Dear Reader, Ezekiel belongs along with Leviticus and along with Deuteronomy, and along with the Book of Psalms. Where do you get—who's favorite is donuts in the room? Krispy Kremes? So you have the donut which is like the raw material of the dough but then there's the glaze, you know what I'm saying? There's the glaze and so it's as if there's a composition of the books of the Hebrew Bible but then when they were collected into the canon to make a collection, it's like there's a glaze laid over the top. Gave it all the same flavor, right, that's uniting. You can use different metaphors. And I think what

we're looking at here is glazing, it's the donut glaze. So it's quotations from the Book of Psalms. We're reading this passage in line with the Book of Psalms essentially and this happens all over the Hebrew Bible. You're reading and all of a sudden you're reading and it's a quotation from some other book of the Bible, so where did that come from? This is the glazing.

And so I don't think this is people playing fast and loose with the Bible. I think these are people who are reading the Bible along the grain of its authors. It's almost like they're cross-reference notes or something. They're saying, these books belong together and are meant to be read together. Does that make sense what I'm saying? Not all, but many, many of these types of examples, were looking at some form of glazing of the Hebrew text.

And so what this is means is that these manuscripts when you compare them, they get you back into the final phases of the making of the Bible which to me that's just thrilling and fascinating, right? Because this is the final steps of how the books were collected and assembled together. So the New Testament often quotes from Old Testament. And here it gets very—this is another layer of complication, right? Often times what they're quoting is the Septuagint. They're quoting this right here. And so there are some cases where we're reading a New Testament translated from the Greek, a quotation of the Old Testament. Has this ever happened to you? And then you turn back in your Old Testament and say, "Hold on, what? Like the wording doesn't quite match." Have you ever done this before? So that's because your Old Testament is a translation of this. But what the New Testament authors are quoting is this. Thus the differences between the two. So and sometimes it's totally inconsequential, it doesn't matter much at all. Sometimes it's profound and you got to get in and dig and most of the differences and what's going on there, you can trace it all out or good scholars will do that for you if you read a commentary. Most of the stuff, you can do the homework and figure it out what happened and where and so on. But yeah that's a great—the New Testament quotations are also another manuscript witness that we could add here because they come from this time period right here. What the Masoretes in terms of their putting notes around the margin of the text, they're preserving, they're not making up this tradition. And basically, you know, in Jewish culture, training to be a rabbi, the first step is like from a kid is memorizing the Hebrew Bible. That's just for beginners. Then you go on and memorize the other writings. This is a people who are steeped in their sacred text and so really it seems crazy to us that people would be this into the Bible. But this is just how you do it in Jewish culture. And so likely what the Masoretes are doing is that

they're preserving techniques and so on that they write back to I think the composition of the Biblical books. It's a living tradition. So you would say, "Yes, it's not a bad way of saying it. This is an early form of cross-referencing it to other parts of the Bible. So it's a good observation." But yeah, reading the Hebrew Bible again is like walking through a library or a museum. Lots of materials from over a thousand different years of Israelite history which is complicated. If you're doing the Eat This Book Challenge you're right into the thick of Israel's history now. It's complicated. And so, the method and process by which the books were combined and compiled and so on, its own complicated history that isn't preserved in the manuscript witnesses. It's mostly you have to look for clues within the books themselves.

So I showed you a few of them earlier. And so what the scholars are paying attention to is more clues like that. So more updated English Translations, the NIV just went through an updated form and what they've done is included more of these footnotes. What I got right here is the first 1984 edition of the New International Version. There was 2011 update and they've included more based on new scholarship.

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This is a growing thing. And different translations in the committees that make them have different philosophies about if they're going to go with the reading from these manuscripts or from these. Okay, let me show you just one example of how this would work out. How these editions will be made.

This is an image from the Isaiah scroll. So here we go. So the Isaiah scroll was one of the best preserved Dead Sea Scrolls. You can literary look at the whole thing online now. So these are all made out of leather, animal skin. It's how the pyrules are more difficult, more expensive to make. And if you just Google Isaiah Scroll, zoom in, you'll get the sites, it's just a good time waiting to happen here for you. And if you have ever sat down and tried to handwrite a copy of one text all the way through, a long text like this. So this is early correcting and copying. So you know, this is just a theory, but most likely at some point, going back to Jeremiah chapter 10 this extra material was likely marginal material that at some point God inserted into the text of Jeremiah by the later scribes. There you go.

It's complicated. Should we expect this? Totally. This is human beings responding to God speaking in and through human authors and passing that down. So we'll draw some conclusions from this even though this is complicated and some of you may be having your categories blown. Here would be an irresponsible conclusion drop. "Oh this is all screwed up, we can't know anything about what the Bible, it's so messed up." That is not a logical conclusion of all of this. But what the Masoretes has preserved carefully and meticulously is a version of the text out of this period right here. So in other words, in some cases they were meticulously preserving an incorrect text, does that make sense? So those practices while they may have been practices at some time period they latched on to one text version and meticulously protected it. But the time period that preceded them was a little bit more complicated. So what I think are the right conclusions to draw from all of this.

In almost all of these cases, the differences have to do with a scribe's eye skipped over something in one text tradition seeing in the Masoretic text, we found something in the Cain and Abel story. But lo and behold, we have the Septuagint. We have the Dead Sea Scrolls that have the correct text. So essentially and often what happens, this is not usually omission and what's more common is additions. So what we don't have is, oh we only have 90% of the Bible because 10% of it fell out somewhere. No, that's incorrect. What we have 103% of the Bible. We have too much Bible because things have been accumulated throughout the transmission period. So what you do is there's a whole tradition particularly in Protestant scholarship has been the most forward aggressive. It's Protestant Scholars. Catholic scholarship in the last 50 years, we'll talk about Catholic collections in Bible in a little bit. But it's a little bit different. Like there's tomes and tomes of people studying and giving their whole careers to working on these issues here. So there's no lost Bible. If anything, we need to shave off some accumulation or a little too much glazing on the donut. And so, in terms of theology, there's no inherent contradiction here. Both Judaism and Christianity embrace the idea that God speaks through people. It's through history and human processes that God has given His revelation. So there may be a shaking of categories, but at the end of the day we're really on pretty good ground here for recovering the text of the Bible.

So here's how this works out in practicality here is that for the Hebrew Bible, this is a page of the Hebrew Bible, I got it here with me. So this is a modern, scholarly edition of the Hebrew Bible called the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia and there's actually a new updated edition even of this being formed as we speak. It won't be

finished until almost all of us are dead, I'm sure that's how these things go in scholarship. Very slow because it's so meticulous. And so what this is, this is an official text of the Bible. The main text in the center here, this is from the Book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 1, the main text is the Leningrad Codex is sitting on the table right there. That's what they use as the base text. And then what they've done is for each book, they've collected all of the manuscript variants between the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scroll Scrolls, and the Pentateuch, all of them. We're on very good ground for recovering the original text throughout the Bible.

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And so there are whole versions and series of commentaries that are just dedicated to digging that material and working with it. That's probably not anyone in here's idea of a good time. But there are people who have given their life and their careers to this and thank God for these people, right? Because they produce the basic foundation from which our English translations are made. So all of our English translations of the Old Testament are made from this edition of the Hebrew Bible right here. And then different translation committees will have different philosophies of how much of this do we pay attention to and lock on to in the English translation.

Terms of the amount of energy and amount sheer number of manuscripts and so on, yeah, the Bible is pretty much top at the heap in terms of amount of manuscripts and so on. So the New Testament is one of the most well-documented text of the ancient world by a few thousand manuscripts, you know. So Homer and Plato and so on, some of these authors they actually maybe only have about thirty, fifty copies of their works period. You know in Greek or something like that. And for the New Testament, we have six thousand. So yeah. So the Bible is kind of at the top of the heap here. So it's one of the best documented text in human history. Sometimes the Masoretic text agrees with stuff we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Apparently at some point there was a break which is why you get differences here and so on. So essentially with those little notes at the bottom of the page, scholars just have to reconstruct a little tree and do it. That's essentially the status of the situation for the Hebrew Bible and things will only get more accurate and more firm-grounding as people write more dissertations and as we go on.

There's also a New Testament timeline. The history of the making and the manuscript history of the New Testament is totally fascinating. This is like it's best mystery novel ever except that it's true and there are no conspiracies. So that's the best thing. But it is a mystery novel in terms of the process of discovering manuscripts and so on. It's great, so you'll enjoy this. The writing of the books of the New Testament, not the collecting of the New Testament that took place over a longer period of time. But all the books that we find in our New Testament were written between 45 through 100 no matter what views the scholarship, mostly everyone falls in between these broad numbers here, 45, 50. The apostle, Paul never said, "Here I am in this date and time writing this." No one ever did that. But based on a basic trajectory, the last written books of the New Testament are likely the Gospel of John or the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse of John, and he was the last surviving apostle, you know, likely into the late 90s, somewhere in there. So that's and most, that's a broad consensus most New Testament scholars would agree with that.

So here's the breakdown on how the New Testament works. We have five large narrative works, we have the four gospels and the Book of Acts, we have a collection of someone else's mail, the large portion of the New Testament, we're reading someone else's mail. And then a unique work in the New Testament, a first century Jewish Apocalypse which to us is unique in the Bible, it doesn't read quite like anything else. But it was a well-known style of literature in writing in first century Jewish culture. People would have tracked with what John was doing when he talked about dragons and beasts and prostitute and all the crazy symbolism that he uses in the Book of Revelation. So that's what we got for the New Testament. And each of these collections has their own unique history and so on.

So we're going to start here first with the narrative books. What you'll often hear and books that make the New York Times Best-seller list will often put forward a theory about the making of the gospels, the four gospels, right? These are basics foundation stories about Jesus of Nazareth. That's my picture of Jesus right there. Has anyone seen that picture before? It came out a year ago. A team of Israeli scholars who became extremely frustrated over the years with the history of depictions of first century Jewish people as white Europeans. And so just think about whatever images of Jesus you have ever seen likely He looks like a white skinny, Anglo-Saxon, right? And so these are scholars, they dig up tombs, they dig up skulls and bones of Israelites and Jewish people and so they put together a composite of a number of first century Jewish skulls, male skulls and you know,

they can do all kinds of stuff nowadays with face shape based on the skull shape. And so here is A. It's one first century Jewish Man, of course Jesus almost certainly didn't look like this, you know. It wasn't Jesus' skull that was the basis.

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But I think it's helpful just to put it out there and to at least help us realize Jesus for sure wasn't white. You know what I'm saying? And His face shape was probably very distinct and not like anything in European ancestry. The three will go essentially, it gets put out there in the public lot is that. Here's Jesus, he lived a roughly in his early thirties. We can date most likely the time period that He was born, that the first person who put together the Christian calendar was wrong by about four years. That calendar was put together like in about 500AD. So our tools have improved somewhat for dating things. So likely Jesus was born in likely what we would call, 4BC was crucified and the empty tomb happens around 30.

What happens then is that the gospels, as we call them, the best scholars can do in terms of the dating of the language, you know. So language changes through time, yes? So you can date how language changes and so based on the type of language in the gospels, they can roughly date the age of the Greek and so on. Jesus would have likely spoken primarily Aramaic but He likely also spoke Greek and as He didn't hang out with many non-Jewish people, so he most likely all of His teachings are in Aramaic and so on. So what we have in our English Translations of the Gospels, our translation of the Greek text which is of the gospels but then at some point, the teachings of Jesus were in Aramaic and were translated into Greek and passed down, so it's from Aramaic into, at least the teachings, you know, teachings of Jesus and so on. And so, you know, we have probably somewhere about a, you know, 30 to 40, 50-year gap in-between the finished text of the Gospels as you and I have them and the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth. So the theory goes is what was going on in this period right here. And there is no end to scholarly speculation about what was going on in this period right here. And usually what it comes down to historically throughout the last two hundred years of modern New Testament scholarships is people who have an axe to grind and were burned by the church at some point in their life. They have a very negative view of what was going on in this period and that the

stories about Jesus were so garbled and embellished and so on that what ends up here in this process is not at all historically reliable.

And then you have other scholars who have golden tablets falling out of Heaven View that say, no what we're reading is like exactly the words of, there's been no development or change in this process, golden tablets falling out of heaven.

Now here's the two extremes and whenever there are extremes, you just need to step back, take a deep breath, right? And say, reality is likely more complicated than both extremes. I think about the last 60 years of Gospel scholarship has been an edge of your seat ride in terms of the discoveries being made, people doing research in other cultures that are oral, storytelling cultures about how designated storytellers, elders in the community preserved the traditions of the earlier, and the stories from earlier generation and ethnographic studies. It's awesome. I think it's awesome. Because it's getting us into the shoes of what this early period must have been like here. And what we find lo and behold is something like this, this is my metaphor for what's going on here, is that the reading of the gospels as we have them is a lot like looking at a quilt, a finished quilt. Now just take two seconds to think this metaphor through. Is the age of the quilt the same as the age of the materials compiled into the quilt? Answer. No, of course not. Like that doesn't make all the sense in the world. So who know like some of these squares were in grandma's basket underneath her bed, some of these squares were in JoAnn's fabric, you know what I mean? Whatever. Depends on the kind of quilt that you're making. But to trace this process here, doesn't say anything about the age of these individual pieces right here. And so essentially I think that's precisely what we have going on here in the gospel. Why don't you go to Luke chapter 1 with me?

So Luke chapter 1 is one of the most rare passages in the Bible because here, you have a biblical author stopping before he begins the historical count and saying, "Dear Reader, Here I am. Here's what I'm doing, and here's how I did it. It's just awesome." And so this is what he says, he says, "Many have undertaken who draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us." What's he talking about here? What has been fulfilled among us? The story of Jesus.

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And as Luke tells the story, he makes it very clear that he believes that the story of Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament story. That's what he means here. So how many accounts of Jesus are floating around out there according to Luke? What's he saying? There's a lot of cool pieces floating around. He didn't do this in a corner, he traveled all over Israel and he impacted people all up and down the Jordan Valley and then the hill countries, travelling everywhere up in the Sea of Galilee. None of this happened in secret. And so there are quilt pieces about Jesus, His stories, His teachings floating around all over the place. Many have undertaken to even collect those things into one place.

So we know for sure one section of quilt, one collection of quilt pieces that he's talking about right here, we know for sure one of them, and that is the Gospel of Mark. And we'll talk about this in a second here. But the majority position in New Testament scholarship is that Mark is the first, chronologically first. It's the second order of the New Testament, but in terms of the order of the writing of the books, Mark was almost certainly first. And then Matthew and Luke both took Mark up and then also had access to quilt pieces and then broke Mark open in certain places and inserted different material and so on. So that's likely at least one of the things he's talking about here. So many have undertaken the draw up on the account of the things could have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us, by whom? By those who from the first were eye witnesses, people who saw and heard these things done by Jesus and talked about by Jesus and then also what's this next phrase here? Servants of the word. Now what he's getting at here and what more research has uncovered here is he's talking about officially designated storytellers of the Jesus stories. So these would be apostles or these would be Jesus went into a village, did a bunch of things there and then there would be appointed in oral cultures a designated storyteller. He is the one who has memorized, you want to know what really happened? Go talk to that servant of the account. And so this is a very common feature in oral cultures. And so in their culture, a living eyewitness was much more reliable than a written account, right? Because you can go talk to the person and then the designated person sometimes there's multiple ones so they can cross check each other. So there are eyewitnesses, there are designated preservers of the story about Jesus, and people are making accounts about Jesus based off of those materials.

So he says therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, he's gone around and talked to a whole bunch of other people, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent

Theophilus so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Okay, so Luke is now dedicating his book to Theophilus - who's Theophilus. Theophilus is a Greek name, and a very common practice in like a Roman culture would be for someone essentially, he probably got a grant from Theophilus to do his research project. That's what he's saying here. So Theophilus is likely the patron of Luke in his project of compiling the Book of Luke. And it's clear that Luke the convert to Christianity and so he dedicates the work to Theophilus to help him understand the certainty of the Jesus traditions that he has learned. Isn't this awesome? Right. It's the only passage like this in the Bible, but he tells you why he's doing what he's doing, how he did it and what he's done.

So, if you're interested again, this is the most recent, only I would say this is, the most exciting, research project done on this whole thing of eyewitnesses by a scholar named Richard Bauckham called Jesus and the Eyewitnesses. Dude, this guys has done his homework. It's just unbelievable. And so if this is an issue for you, this is not an easy read but if you make your way even halfway through it you'll be amazed by how much we actually can know about how the gospels were written and their historical reliability. This guy is not a conservative, well we would call theologically conservative Christian. He is very much a devout Christian; he loves Jesus very much. He's very comfortable with historical leeway in the reliability of different books of the Bible and so this is why he is such a great person to write this book. He doesn't have an axe to grind, you know what I'm saying? So he's done an amazing job. This is about five years old now. It's been well and widely reviewed across all spectrums of scholarship.

And for him he takes his theme package, a few verses right here. And this is his entry point into setting the gospels. Here's what I think is going on here, is you've got Jesus here and then from right from the back, you have the apostles and servants of the word.

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People who are official, reliable, cross-checking, people preserving the traditions and sayings of Jesus and then at some point they commit those traditions to writing and then those traditions are passed down directly and inserted into the

quilts here. And then I have the order of the quilts here. So I think Mark is the first quilt. I don't think most scholars think though. And then Mathew and Luke have taken up Mark but then also drawn on other quilt pieces that were not in Mark. John has a unique relationship because these two have materials right from Mark and then others. John has some material that relates to Mathew, Mark and Luke, but John comes from a different group of quilt piece collectors which makes John awesome because he's like an independent witness to the life and the teachings of Jesus. So have you ever noticed John reads differently than Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is why. He's drawing on a different collection of quilt pieces essentially. And so when you put this together, what you notice is, were there changes to the wording of the teachings of Jesus? Sometimes. Just compare some of the teachings of Jesus in Luke to the teachings of Jesus in Mathew. Are they profound differences? Yeah. What I would consider profound which you might say are insignificant, but I think they're profound. And so you know, if you've ever compared things in Matthew, Mark and Luke, they may bother you, and there are some tensions that area really challenging. So for example, the last supper takes place essentially the day before Passover it seems, in Mathew, Mark, and Luke, the Last Supper seems to take place on the night of Passover. How do you iron out that difference? Well they're drawing a different quilt pieces here, and there's a few different solutions to what's going on there but there's a genuine tension here that comes from the complexity of this period. Is anything about the essential doctrines of Christian faith or what Jesus was about and so on, you know. One of these gospels is Jesus like saying something completely different than he says in another one. No, no. They're collective witness, they are coherent at the most basic points. But there are differences, and we should expect that because this is people working through his historical process. Let me pause right here. Thoughts or questions here. So that's essentially where things stand for the gospels. The letters have a very different kind of process to them. New Testament Letters. The Letter if Romans, it's not a book, it's a letter. Last chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. Turn to Romans chapter 16.

I want you to put your thumb right there and keep your thumb in Romans chapter 16, but turn to chapter 1. Just so we all know what chapter 1 verse 1 is going to say, but I just want us to see it with our own eyes.

The Letters to the Romans 1:1. Who's this letter from? Paul. A servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle, he has a long introduction here. Who is this letter to? Go down to verse 7.

To all who are in Rome and loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Okay. So who wrote this letter? Paul. Who is he writing to? The Romans. Go to chapter 16 with me. It's Paul's little greeting to all of his friends in Rome and friends from other people sort of at the end of some of his letters Paul puts a little, say hi to so and so, list at the end. So verse 1.

He says: I commend to you our sister, Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and give her any help she may need from you, she has been a great help to many people, including me.

Here's what's interesting. He calls Phoebe a servant of the church. This is interesting, interesting aside. Paul has—there's a number, people have done studies and you can do this too. Just go through and put together a little map of all the people that Paul greets and he's constantly greeting and talking about men and women and he uses the same titles to talk about them. He talks about men and women and his co-workers as servants. And remember servant was a technical term, at least in Luke 1 to talk about people who pass on the writings of someone. And most likely, he mentions Phoebe first because Phoebe is the one who delivered the letter of Romans to the people in Rome. Which means she would also be the person who designated to read and teach the content of the Book of Romans to the Romans which has all kinds of interesting implications about that, doesn't it? Okay, so he's greeting his people, "Hey I'm Paul, I', saying hi to this person, greet, greet, greet, greet." Go down to verse 21 with me.

Then says: Timothy, my fellow worker, he also sends his greetings to you, as to Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my relative.

I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

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Who wrote the letter of Romans? Tertius. Who's Tertius? Nobody knows. It's the only time he appears. So this is similar situation to Jeremiah. So Jeremiah is obviously behind the book of Jeremiah, but it's actually Baruch who is responsible for writing and compiling the Book of Jeremiah. And we have some more kind of situation right here with Paul's letter. Go to first Peter chapter 5. First Peter, again you can put your thumb there in Chapter 1, and this is a letter from Peter to God's Elect Strangers in a world scattered in all these areas, a very wide audience he's writing to. But in chapter 5 verse 12, we hear this comment right here.

He says: With the help of Silas, or does anyone else have a different spelling of the name? Sylvanus? So this is a good example in the New Testament, we'll talk about this. There's a text variant in the manuscript about this spelling of this guy's name. likely this Silas is an abbreviation of Sylvanus.

So with the help of this guy, Silas or Sylvanus, who, I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging and testifying to you that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

Who wrote the letter of First Peter? Well it's obviously from Peter but it's with the help of Silas, the scribe. This solves a bit of the puzzle that comes as some people thing, well, Peter he's a fisherman, you know, like we spoke Aramaic. He liked my new Greek, but First Peter is written in beautiful high-style Greek. Like literary beautiful Homer, beautiful Greek. So what's the first century like Aramaic fisherman doing? Well clearly he brought along someone who knows Greek a lot better than he does to write and communicate what he wanted to communicate. So just imagine what's going on here then. Peter is communicating his ideas and this guys is wording them into beautiful high-style Greek. So who wrote the letter First Peter?

Actually a couple of people then were involved in the project. And should this not bother us? This is just part of the making of the Bible. So these are again, these are just little clues that we have about the making of the Letters. We also have a little clue in Paul's Letters to the Colossians about how the letter spread, right. I've never thought about this. How did Paul's Letter to the Corinthians becomes God's words to the church everywhere? How did that happen? And that raises all kinds of problems because sometimes Paul was talking about very specific issues to the Corinthian church about the length of people's hair and you're like, what does that have to do with anything else? Because Paul had this practice here. He says in his letter to the Colossians, he says, after this letter has been read to you, see to it that it is also read in the church of Laodiceans, and that you in turn read

the letter that I wrote to Laodicea. Who are the Laodiceans? How do we know where Laodicea was. Do we have the letter from Laodicea? Nope. It didn't get preserved or for one reason or another, it was not included within the official collection of Paul's letters. We'll talk about that in the next session. So very clearly Paul had in mind is sort of like He's writing to the Colossians but he's looking over his shoulder at the rest of the Church. Capital C Church. And so this is why sometimes you're reading in Paul's letters and he's talking about the length of hair and it seems like very specific to the Corinthians but then he'll begin to talk about that issue in light of a larger theological point he's making about the Gospel and about Jesus and about God's nature. And these are profound ideas that help us shape our theology in our beliefs as a whole. And so what these letters do is sort of like a case study or something like that in how Paul's larger theology got worked out and applied to specific places in time.

So that creates for us the challenge of how do you know how Paul meant to be just to the Corinthians, and to everybody else? That's a whole other challenge. That's about how to read the Bible type of class. But that's what Paul seemed to have had in mind. And so you've got these essentially I think a great metaphor is for how things go viral on YouTube or Facebook these days. Essentially Paul's letters begin to go viral and just gets spread and copied and recopied and spread and spread to other churches and all of the letters in the New Testament. And that's how things begin to raise at the top of the heap. These are all the raw materials for the making of the books of the New Testament. Here we are and we're separated by big time gaps, so what are the links in the chain that links the Bibles in your hand of the New Testament to the writing to the documents right there?

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Alright. That was the end of episode two of Making of the Bible. I hope your brain is full of historical facts and I'm sure all kinds of things will fall out and you won't remember them a week from now but that's okay. The point is getting the big picture. This is going to be the setup for the last, the third part of the Making of the Bible Series. We're going to get into the collection of what's called the canon or the overall collection of books of the Old Testament and New Testament, all

the dynamics and history involved there. Thanks for listening too. This is the Strange Bible Podcast.

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