**Which Bible 6**

2013

### Answering Questions

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We ended our last session with these claims”

“The very least requirement is a new set of rules. We need to rethink the whole field of text criticism … [here are] some suggestions about where the rules should be headed. A few of the subjects we should explore include:

* What is an accurate definition of Autographa and where are they located?
* How were Autographa historically accessed and how do we access them today?
* Are the Autographa a single collection of unchanging documents, or can they be changed? Are there possibly multiple Autographa?
* What is Inspiration?
* What is Inscripturation and how does it relate to Transcription?
* What is Canonization and who has authority to Canonize? Is Canonization fundamentally: an act of God, an act of the Jews, an act of the Church, or an act of man?
* How shall evidence be handled?
* How do we focus on real translatable differences, and not on meaningless trivia, or on mere document counting?
* What Bible(s) can we recommend to the Church?”

I would like to devote today’s discussion to our basis of Authority and from it, issues concerning Autographa raised by the above questions.

### Authority. What is the Basis of our Authority?

The basis of our authority is certainly not Scripture. No. No. A thousand times, No. Absolutely not. The only basis of our authority is God Himself. God Himself is the Fountain of Truth. He is the sole source of all Light, Life, and Love. Everything we are and have stems from His relationship with us.[[1]](#endnote-1)

If we attempt to make the Bible the center of authority, we have committed the sin of Bibliolatry or Bible worship. If we attempt to make the Church the center of authority, we have committed another sin of idolatry, though I’m not sure what we would call it. Many people want to define God; that is, to make God in their own image. This is the sin of self-worship, in which each individual makes him or herself into god.

There is only one center of authority, One King of kings, One Lord of lords, One True God. God is the only center of authority. His name is יהוה.[[2]](#endnote-2) He is God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the Holy Trinity, One in Essence and Undivided.

### Autographs. What are Autographs?

Autographs or Autographa are the original first writings of Scripture. Moses gives a detailed description of how the first of the Autographa came into being and how they were preserved and used.

“Moses took a tent,[[3]](#endnote-3) and pitched it outside of the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation. Everyone who sought the Lord went out to the Tabernacle of the Congregation, which was outside of the camp. When Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent. And it came to pass, as Moses entered the tent, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tent, and the Lord talked with Moses. All the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tent door. All the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door. And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he [Moses] returned again to the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tent.[[4]](#endnote-4)

When Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites, who bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, “Take this book of the law, and put it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.”[[5]](#endnote-5)

The Decalogue[[6]](#endnote-6) is a distinct artifact preserved within the Ark, underneath the Mercy Seat. The Decalogue itself was engraved in stone by the finger of God Himself.[[7]](#endnote-7) Moses is not now speaking of the Decalogue; rather he speaks of the Torah, the five books he wrote, which contain a full report of the Decalogue, its preservation in the Ark, and a quote of its wording. Now we are looking at the writing, and laying up of the Torah in the Most Holy Place, beside the Ark.

First logically, in these acts, God reveals Himself to man: in other words, this is God’s act of Revelation. Second, Moses hears and interacts with this revelation in what must be considered a conversation with God: God’s act of Inspiration. Third, Moses records the minutes of the conversation with God’s permission, supervision, and approval: man’s act of Inscripturation of the Autographa. Fourth, the Levites layup the Autographa in the Most Holy Place, beside the Ark, with God’s permission, supervision, and approval: God’s acceptance of man’s act of Canonization[[8]](#endnote-8) of the Autographa.

None of the participation of man occurs without the direct supervision of God and in the Presence of God’s Glory. These acts of Revelation, Inspiration, Inscripturation, and Canonization were all carried out in open public, in the presence of millions of eye witnesses.

There is every reason to believe that the same sort of process applies to many of the books of Hebrew Prophecy:[[9]](#endnote-9) namely, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; possibly even Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Other books were written as a result of private Inspiration: for example, most of the Minor Prophets[[10]](#endnote-10) and the Hebrew Writings.[[11]](#endnote-11) Since these followed a different process of Inscripturation, they had to be examined and Canonized separately, as the Congregation realized their public value and God approved their Canonization. Before their publicly witnessed Divine recognition such private Inspirations were known as Bath Kol, daughter of voice, daughter of revelation, secondary revelations.[[12]](#endnote-12) The Inspiration of the Holy Ghost was not limited to anointed prophets, but neither was He generally received by the congregation.[[13]](#endnote-13) Exegetical interpretations of Canonized Scripture were also known as Bath Kol.

Books like Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were never Canonized under Divine approval for reasons we are about to examine. All of these were written after the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Ezekiel explains how this process ended.

“Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory.”[[14]](#endnote-14)

“Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord’s house; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.”[[15]](#endnote-15)

“Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.”[[16]](#endnote-16)

God removed His last protection from Israel, the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC. Now, around 586 BC, God abandons the Temple at Jerusalem, along with Judah, the Southern Kingdom. The city that was protected by Divine intervention is now powerless. Left with only pitifully inferior human armies, the Southern Kingdom falls. The Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, quickly defeat Judah and sack Jerusalem. Solomon’s Temple, the Ark, Mercy Seat, Urim, Thummim,[[17]](#endnote-17) Decalogue, and Autographa are all destroyed: never to be recovered again.

The time span from Moses (1406 BC[[18]](#endnote-18)) to Ezekiel (586 BC[[19]](#endnote-19)) is roughly 820 years. The Jews knew how to oil documents and seal them in pottery jars. There is no good reason to doubt that the Autographa of Moses were still intact in 586 BC. Their destruction or disappearance is a monumental loss to the world.[[20]](#endnote-20)

After the return to Jerusalem seventy years later, the Second Temple was built, but the Ark, Mercy Seat, Urim, Thummim, Decalogue, and Autographa were never recovered. Instead, in a purely human act, the Scripture was reconstructed from copies.

The Presence of God’s Glory would not return until between 6 to 4 BC. Yes, in the interim He did continue the conversation with individuals like Ezra, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; as well as the authors of Chronicles, Esther, and Lamentations. None of these could have been Canonized by God until the event of the return of the Presence of God’s Glory, Jesus of Nazareth and the giving of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost in 33 AD. Without the authentication of Jesus, the Christ of God and the Holy Ghost we would have no confidence in any Canonization of Scripture whatsoever. Without the work of Jesus the Christ of God and the Holy Ghost everything we have would be nothing more than a futile, useless work of corrupt human flash.

As it is, because of Jesus the Christ of God and the Holy Ghost, we have excellent documents, supported by the Father’s approval. If we give a little thought we even know where the Autographa are. What is required for an authentic Autographa? Divine official recognition by the primary author in the presence of many witnesses. The Autographa are located exactly where God always intended them to be, at His side, next to the Mercy Seat, in the Most Holy Place. Consider the location of Jesus throne and know that the Autographa are there.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”[[21]](#endnote-21)

“I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written front and back, sealed with seven seals. I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?”

“No man in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look at it. I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, or to look at it. One of the elders said to me, “Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to break its seven seals.”

“I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

“When He had taken the book, the four beasts and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood from every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and have made us kings and priests to our God: and we shall reign on the earth.”

“I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.”

Every creature that is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying, “Blessing, honor, glory, and power, be to Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” The four beasts said, “Amen.” The twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him, Who lives for ever and ever.”[[22]](#endnote-22)

“The Temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the Ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”[[23]](#endnote-23)

Can there remain any doubt about where the Autographa are located, or about Who authenticates and canonizes them?

### The Three Autographa Questions

* What is an accurate definition of Autographa and where are they located?

An Autograph is a Divine, self-Revelation, Inspired in the form of a conversation between God and man, which the human partner in the conversation makes an official record of it in an act of Inscripturation, and which record is finally laid-up beside the Ark of the Covenant in an act of Canonization. All of which takes place in the presence of, with the approval of, and by the authority of God Himself, frequently in the presence of many witnesses.

Historically, the Autographa were kept beside the Ark of the Covenant, within the Oracle,[[24]](#endnote-24) in the presence of God’s Glory; first in the Tabernacle and later in Solomon’s Temple.

Today, the only known Autographa are kept beside the Ark of the Covenant, within the Oracle, in the presence of God’s Glory in heaven.

* How were Autographa historically accessed and how do we access them today?

In the days of the Judean Kingdom, priests and Levites accessed the Autographa by going in and out of the Oracle, under God’s watchful eye, as part of their ordinary duties. These duties included the manufacture and maintenance of accurate copies for the king and other leaders.

Since the days of the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 there has been no means of earthly human access to the Old Testament Autographa. Shortly after the writing of the New Testament Autographa, they were lost and are also without any means of earthly human access. The only human who has access to the Autographa today is Jesus Christ the Word of God Himself, as John tells us in Revelation 5.

* Are the Autographa a single collection of unchanging documents, or can they be changed? Are there possibly multiple Autographa?

Moses immediately writes a Second Law, which is known to us by its Greek name Deuteronomy (Second Law). Deuteronomy contains several changes. The Autographa never were a single collection of unchanging documents. Each major lapse of the Israelites required covenant renewal. Each new covenant renewal document disclosed new features from the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant, without detracting from the previous documents. So, yes; the Autographa are a collection of changing documents. “The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

Every wise sea captain incorporates within his plan various tactics to deal with changes of wind and weather, or the abilities and attitudes of the crew. He intends to arrive at his next port by the most expeditious route, which includes tacking into the wind, and navigating a course around obstacles.

Even so God changes His tactics in accordance with His plan, but He never changes His goal. Now He leads His Church in one direction, and then seemingly in another direction. We do not need to understand this, we are confident that He knows how to bring us safely to His final portal.

Similarly, we have four Gospels, which in general convey the same basic message but each is designed differently for different audiences or for different purposes. Even within the Gospels themselves we perceive that it was necessary for Christ to restate the Law and correct false understanding of it, which He did, evidently in the Greek language. The endorsement of the LXX by Christ did not obviate the original Akkadian text of Moses,[[26]](#endnote-26) or change its essential message or purpose: it simply made course corrections and made it available to a wider audience.

Indeed, because so much of the Hebrew and Greek was veiled in mystery, the Christ event appears to us as a radical change. For example: the covenant with David appears to be lost, instead it is enriched; the Law appears to be rejected, instead it is fulfilled.

In Revelation 5 the Scroll is sealed with seven seals. This could indicate several Autographa: we cannot say, we cannot know. Hence, we do not know that the Alexandrian text-type, the Byzantine text-type, the Western text-type, and some other text-types are not all distinct and legitimate Autographa.

The point is that we do not know that there is a unique Autographa, a single collection of unchanging documents. Deuteronomy and the three Synoptic Gospels cast doubt on the idea of a single Autographa. So, perhaps we should hold our opinions until additional evidence is gathered. There is nothing in Scripture to preclude a multiple or multifaceted Autographa. The Primary Author, God Himself has every right to publish a second, or even a seventh edition. The evidence seems to indicate that God did exactly that: at least one of these editions being in Greek. There is very little evidence to suggest that the Autographa are a single collection of unchanging documents. God either published multiple editions or unveiled the mysteries of a single edition over time, so that for all intents and purposes, it has the appearance of multiple editions from the human perspective.

The idea of a single inerrant Autographa has sent the Christian Church into centuries of fruitless tail-chasing. Of course the Autographa are inerrant, God is their Primary Author. However, this point is moot because we have no access to them and only clues about their exact contents. Fundamental to the problem of the Autographa is the undeniable fact that no man has either authority or ability to open their seals. Only Jesus and the Holy Ghost can disclose the contents of the Autographa to us. Jesus and the Holy Ghost are well able to pilot us safely between the many dangers of Scylla and Charybdis found in this mortal life.

Yours in Christ,

Augie-Herb

[[27]](#endnote-27)

1. Matthew 28:18 – the word, power, is an incorrect translation: ἐξουσία means authority, not power. Jesus is the sole authority bringer; He alone has the legal right. Acts 2 indicates that the Spirit is the power bringer. Jesus makes right; the Spirit makes effective in life. The only authority given among men is that which Jesus delegates; it is difficult to see how authority can be delegated, or how power can be distributed to any mere book, even the Bible. The Bible is the True record of these things: but, Giving the Bible the attributes of God, tends only to Bibliolatry, the sin of worshiping the Bible. The partial gift of these attributes of God to men by delegation or distribution flows from the fact that man is created in the Image and Likeness of God. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Exodus 3:13-15 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. This is not the First Tabernacle. Instructions for building the First Tabernacle had not yet been given. This was a temporary tent which Moses used for his conversations with God. It is located outside of the camp, where Christ is Crucified. The First Tabernacle is erected in the center of the camp, indicating that these are God’s people and He dwells among them. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Exodus 33:7-11 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Deuteronomy 31:24-26 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Exodus 20:1-17 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 34:1, 4; Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22; 9:9-11; 10:1-5 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. What is known as Canonization today, generally describes an inferior act of the human flesh. There is no evidence of the Presence of God’s Glory whatsoever in these fleshly acts. Consequently, the Council of Jamnia and the work of the Masoretes must be seen as works of flesh. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. The Nevi’im [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Sometimes known as the Twelve [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. The Ketuvim [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. An excellent discussion of Bath Kol and other Scripture related practices among the Jews may be found in Beckwith, Roger T., *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Wipf and Stock, Eugene, Oregon, and SPCK, London, 1985: 528 pages). [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ezekiel 10:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Ezekiel 10:18-19 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Ezekiel 11:22-23 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Nehemiah 7:65 – the priest could not consult with Urim and Thummim because they did not have them. There is no evidence that they were ever recovered. Jesus alone restores the ability and authority to talk with the Father and receive direct answers. The coming of the Holy Ghost extends this ability and authority to The Church. Such authority has never been removed from The Church, but the ability to use it appears to have been lost. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. The approximate date for Moses’ confrontation with Pharaoh. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. The approximate date for the first sack of Jerusalem. There were three such sackings over a period of about seventeen years. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Since, according to Revelation 5, the originals appear to be at the right hand of God today, we are left with one of two conclusions: either, the originals were always in heaven, making the works of Moses, typologies of the heavenly reality; else, God took the Ark, Mercy Seat, Urim, Thummim, Decalogue, and Autographa with Him when He abandoned Solomon’s Temple at Jerusalem in accordance with Ezekiel’s report. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Hebrews 9:24 [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Revelation 5 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Revelation 11:19 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. also called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. 2 Corinthians 3:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. We do not know in what language Moses wrote. Paleo-Hebrew is an improbable chance: since no paleo-Hebrew documents exist before 1000 BC; the earliest that do exist are “abjads”, which indicated that the alphabetic language known as paleo-Hebrew was in invention and development around the time of David. Because Akkadian was the international political lingua franca in 1406 BC, the most probable chance is that Moses wrote in Akkadian Cuneiform; other possibilities exist. We do not know, because we do not have manuscripts or historical record of manuscripts: there is no knowledge without empirical evidence. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
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