



presents

# CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

Feb 2022, Vol. 2, no. 2, Page 1/2

## Timeline of Topics.

- Quote:
- Thomas à Kempis, 1400s
- Early Church
- Old Testament Apocrypha and Deuterocanonicals
- Physical Proof of New Testament: Erastus
- England/India: Missions
- William Carey's sister's contribution
- Upcoming class
- How we got the New Testament (Feb 28)

### Books not in the Protestant Old Testament: OT Apocrypha and Deuterocanonicals (it gets complicated)

Protestants believe that the Bible should contain 66 books, while Catholics believe that the Bible should have 73 books. All Christian groups agree that the New Testament (NT) should only contain 27 books. The disagreement exists over the number of Old Testament (OT) books. Protestants and Catholics agree that the Old Testament should include the 39 books in the Protestant OT, but Catholics add books to the Protestant Old Testament (see the box to the left).

Catholics have a special name for these “additional” books, deuterocanonical. “Canonical” means “holy writing” and “deutero” means secondary, meaning they are secondary-level scripture. Protestants do not include these books in their OT and refer to them as “Apocrypha,” the term for books not in the Bible because they are false or contain errors. Catholics do not believe they are false or contain errors yet are not on the same inspiration level or “divineness” as the 39 books of the Protestant OT.

But why the “additional” books? First, we have to talk about the development of the OT. In the 200s and 300s BC, the Jews in Egypt translated their holy writing from their native tongue of Hebrew into Greek, which was becoming the dominant language of the time. This version is called the Septuagint. The Septuagint contained the books of the Orthodox OT, except II Esdras.

About 1000 years later, in the Middle Ages, a group of Jewish scholars produced a Hebrew version of the Jewish Bible called the Masoretic Text. The Jews already had a Greek version, the Septuagint, but 1000 years later, they wanted to reform an authorized copy in the original Hebrew language. The Jewish scholars also reduced the number of books to 39 books, meaning that Jews and Protestant OT uses the same books.

The Catholic Old Testament has the 39 books of the Protestant OT plus Tobias (or Tobit), Judith, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach), Wisdom, and I & II Maccabees; additions to Esther and Daniel are also included. The additions to Esther include 6 short parts. The additions to Daniel are 3 short parts called the Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Young Men (or Children)(this is one part), Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon.

But that was the Jewish scholars. Catholics of the Middle Ages kept using their version, which was based on the Septuagint. The Protestants finally showed up in the late Middle Ages, in the 1500s. At first, Protestant leaders used the Deuterocanonicals, but soon, within 20-30 years), individual Protestant leaders decided only to include protocanonicals (“proto” meaning “primary”) and not deuterocanonicals: this would be the 39 books in the present Protestant Old Testament. In the Westminster Confession of 1648 (one of the most prominent Protestant statements of faith), the deuterocanonicals were left out of the OT for the first time in an official document. And they have generally been absent from Protestant Bibles ever since. (The King James Version Bible was the last Protestant Bible to remove the Deuterocanonicals. The Deuterocanonicals remained in the KJB Bible until the late 1800s.)

**"By focusing on myself, I lost myself. By seeking only You and by truly loving You, I found both You and myself."**

**Thomas à Kempis,  
"The Imitation of Christ"**

William Carey,  
"Father of Modern Missions";  
But few people have heard about his  
sister

William Carey (1761-1834) became interested in missions to other countries before it became popular in the 1800s. In 1792, he helped found the Baptist Missionary Society (which still exists and sends missionaries to forty countries), The next year, he went to India as a missionary, where he work bi-vocationally: he supervised an indigo factory (to make blue dye). While there, he also set up a printing press, became a college professor, and translated, either by himself or with assistance, the New Testament or complete Bible into twenty-six languages.

But we are not here to talk about William. Instead, I want to focus on his younger sister, Mary "Polly" Carey. Polly would like to have traveled with William to India but couldn't. Why? She was almost complete paralyzed. She had not always been so, but became a paralytic by the age of 25. Her only unparalyzed limb was her right arm. In addition, she was unable to speak for 11 years. Eventually she became sick with smallpox, but, for some reason, while sick, she was able to speak for a short time, then silent again for the rest of her life.

Nevertheless, she was busy: she taught a Bible class from her bed using a slate and piece of chalk. Oh yes, and she prayed. While William was away doing his active mission work in India, Polly did all that she could for him, which was to cover his work with her prayers the whole time. We can be sure that, in all the success that William had on the mission field, Polly shared in those victories while doing her part: making sure William's ministry had a constant, vigilant prayer partner.

**Class coming up: See complete list here.**

**==How we got the New Testament: Starts Feb 28**

**\*\* Invite your friends \*\***

Questions, comments, or want to join a free class contact Mark at [marknickens@gmail.com](mailto:marknickens@gmail.com)

©2022 Mark Nickens

Original work or adapted from [studythechurch.com](http://studythechurch.com)

## Physical evidence of Erastus: Director of Public Works, friend of Paul, and mentioned in Acts and Romans

Not much is known of Erastus. His name only appears in two sources. No one knows when he was born or died, if he was married, or had children. All we know is that he lived in Corinth and his official title was "Director of Public Works." And that he was a friend of Paul, and that makes all the difference because it ties the two sources of Erastus together in a fascinating way.

The first source is the Bible: "Erastus" is mentioned three times. Two brief references show that Erastus was a companion of Paul, Acts 19:22 ("He [Paul] sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia") and II Timothy 4:20 ("Erastus stayed in Corinth"). But it is the third reference that provides personal information about Erastus. The Apostle Paul mentions this in Romans 16:23: ". . . Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings." (Paul wrote the letter while in Corinth.)

The responsibilities of the government today include enforcing laws, maintaining streets and public places, and collecting taxes. But the Roman government of Paul's day did not have all the responsibilities of the U.S. government. Certainly, they enforced laws and collected taxes, but often the building and maintenance of streets and public places were done by the wealthy. The director of public works/city treasurer in Corinth would have been wealthy and would have donated funds for projects like building public buildings or streets.

So what? This is where it gets interesting.

The second source of information comes from none other than a paving stone in the ancient city of Corinth. In 1929, the archaeologist T. L. Shear discovered amongst the ruins this inscription on a stone in a street which was placed there in the 50s: "Erastus in return for his adeileship laid this pavement at his own expense." (see below) An "adeile" (Latin) was in charge of the financial matters of a city. Therefore, in ancient Corinth, in the 50s, a wealthy man named Erastus was given the office of adeile and in return laid a street pavement.

Both Paul in the book of Romans and the inscription agree that a man named Erastus held a public office in Corinth in the 50s. Thus the pavement stone is an historical proof of one verse of the Bible.



<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/image-gallery/c/church-at-corinth-erastus>