

The Hebrew Letter and the Completeness of the Bible

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The question is sometimes asked, "Can we be sure we have all the books of the Bible?" The Bible itself answers this question. Peter says we have been given "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Jude told his first century readers to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3).

Yes, the Bible does mention some lost books and letters. In the Old Testament we read of the book of Jashar (Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18). Paul makes reference to a letter he had written to the Corinthian church, *prior* to what we know as *First* Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9). To the brethren in Colossae, Paul mentions a letter to the church at Laodicea (Col. 4:16). Some believe this may be a reference to the letter we know as Ephesians.

Does the fact that these books are lost mean we are missing important or essential information? No. If God felt we needed the contents of these letters, I believe they would have been preserved for us. Evidence for this is seen in the Hebrew letter, and its mention of a king and priest with a strange sounding name: Melchizedek.

This king and priest is first found in the book of Genesis (written by Moses around 1500 B.C.), when he comes out to meet Abram after his defeat of the enemy kings and the rescue of the people and goods stolen from Sodom (Gen. 14:18-20). Melchizedek does not appear in Scripture again until around 1,000 B.C. when David mentions him in a psalm:

The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,
"You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."
Psalm 110:4

Had this been all that was written about Melchizedek, we would not know anything about his significance as a type of Christ. We would know nothing of the meaning of Psalm 110:4. Fortunately, a little over a thousand years after David wrote this psalm, the Hebrew writer gave us plenty of information concerning Melchizedek (Heb. 5-7).

Think about the significance of what is described concerning Melchizedek in the book of Hebrews. Consider also that no other New Testament book or letter mentions him! This is evidence of God making sure we would have all the information we would need as Christians. This is proof of God making sure we got the books and content for "everything pertaining to life and godliness." This shows how correct Jude was when he spoke of the "faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."

We can be assured that the books contained in our Bible are those which God wanted for us. Let us therefore be diligent to study the divinely inspired *and divinely preserved* message of the Bible.