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Bible Study Center

“How We Got the Bible”

Welcome!

We are excited that you have decided to continue your study with us in this course **How We Got the Bible**. Congratulations on completing book 1! We hope you enjoy book 2 as much as you enjoyed book 1. Your assignment is the same in this book as your previous book. Study through the material and answer the questions at the end of each lesson. Study each lesson carefully. At the back of the booklet you will find a supplementary material section which will have MAPS and a GLOSSARY of terms to help you in your studies.

Once you have completed working your way through all of the material for the lesson you then proceed to answer the test questions found at the end of each lesson. Read each question carefully and consider all the possible answer choices, then record your answers on the **Answer Sheet** for each booklet that we will provide. When you have finished all the lessons in your booklet, submit your completed answer sheet to us at the Bible Study Center. We will check and record your grades for our records and if you can average 70% over all of the lessons and fulfill our requirements for graduation, we will send you a special diploma, which you can hang on your wall. However, aside from a diploma, the wealth of knowledge you will gain from your study will be considerably more valuable!

If at any time you have questions about anything in your study, please feel free to visit us, write us or send us a text message. We will do our very best to help you find the answers you seek. As a final thought before you start, please remember that we have gone to great lengths to make this study FREE of both cost and obligation. There is no tuition and by agreeing to take this course, you are not changing your religion or joining a religious group. All we are asking you to provide is the time to study. We sincerely hope that you enjoy your study and learn many new things about God and the Bible and how Archaeology can prove that the peoples, places and events recorded in the Bible are true!

A final note, after you complete this course we have several other courses to offer you so that you may continue your studies. Jesus: Man of the Bible is one of our major courses composed of 12 lessons which goes over a study of how to study the Bible. After we complete the first four lessons we will use what we have learned to study about Jesus and who he really is. It is an insightful and interesting course which we hope you will enjoy. If you would like to enroll in this course or have any questions about other courses we offer please include them with your answer sheet, email us, call us or send us a text message. We hope you have gained much from your studies!

- The Staff at the Bible Study Center

This course has been modified from the original course "How We Got the Bible" by Neil R. Lightfoot.

Lesson 4

The Bible and Recent Discoveries

Recent discoveries have helped us learn much more about the Bible and its eventful history. They have also helped to create new translations in up-to-date language.

The year 1611 was a memorable year in the history of the English Bible. It was in that year that the King James Version made its first appearance (1). It was the end result of a number of earlier translations and revisions. There were about 50 scholars involved in making this version under the direction of King James I of England. But this newly revised version made its way slowly into widespread use.

When the Pilgrims, shown in this painting (2), came to America in 1620 they brought with them, not the King James translation, but the old Geneva Bible. It was Governor William Bradford who brought the Geneva version to America with him and this version was used more widely by the early American colonists than any other translation for a long time.

There were doubts about the King James Version for some time. There were people who even questioned the need for this new translation. To ease their doubts, and to explain the translation a preface was attached to the King James Bible entitled, "The translators to the reader" (3). This preface is no longer printed in most editions of the King James Version.

In the preface, the translators explained to the readers their reasons for creating the King James Version.

"Truly, good Christian reader, we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one, but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principle good one, not justly to be accepted against, that hath been our endeavor, that, our mark."

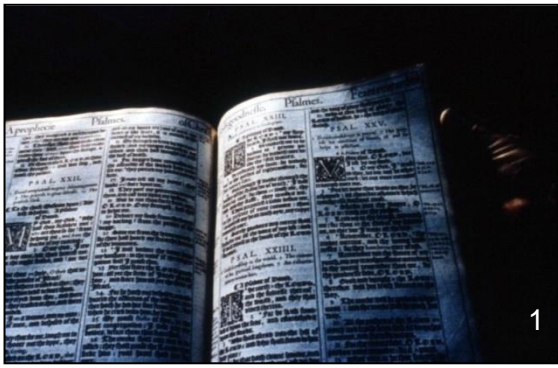
The translators of the King James Version wanted everyone to understand that their goal was not to say that other translations were bad, but that they wanted to help make translations better. In their preface they also explained that if anything in their work needed correction, such corrections could always be made in the future. They concluded by saying,

"If light become into the world, love not darkness more than light."

In time the King James Bible was accepted by the people (5). Within a few decades it had established itself as the translation for English speaking people around the world. In fact, the King James Version was so well accepted that for more than 200 years, no efforts were made to revise it.

During the first half of the 19th century, however, scholars began to recognize that it was time for a new revision of the English Bible. Many words and expressions used in the days of King James had changed their meanings in the 200 years that had passed.

One of the first men in America to fight for an improved translation of the Bible was Alexander Campbell (5). In 1829 he published a translation which he called 'The Living Oracles'.



1



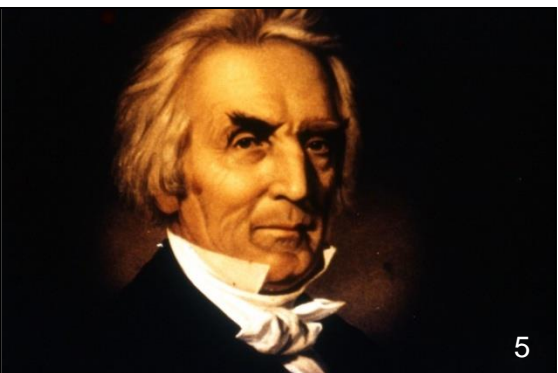
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3



4



5

During the 1800's discoveries of Biblical manuscripts were taking place which were of great value to Bible scholars. One was an amazing find by a German text critic named Constantine Tischendorf.

In 1859 Tischendorf, in search of old Bible manuscripts, came to Saint Catherine's Monastery (6) at Mount Sinai. He had been there before. On one occasion, he had found a basket full of old parchments, but he had been allowed to take only a few sheets from the monastery.

Tischendorf now came to Sinai in search of these old sheets. After days of searching, an unexpected circumstance, led him to his goal.

Tischendorf himself relates how it happened.

"On the afternoon of this day I was taking a walk with the steward of the convent in the neighborhood. And, as we returned toward sunset he begged me to take some refreshment with him in his cell. Scarcely had he entered the room when he said, "And I too have read a Septuagint."

"And so saying, he took down from the corner of a room, a bulky kind of volume wrapped in a red cloth and laid it before me. I knew that I held in my hand the most precious Biblical treasure in existence."

This was the celebrated Siniatic Manuscript (7), practically a complete copy of the entire Bible in Greek. Dating from the 4th century, this manuscript is 600 years older than any manuscript used by the King James translators in their work.

Other ancient manuscripts were also coming to light and were being published, including the Vatican Manuscript at Rome (8). This extremely valuable manuscript also was not available to King James translators.

Two scholars in England took special advantage of these new materials; B. F. Wescott and F. J. A. Hort. For almost 30 years they worked jointly studying these and other ancient manuscripts. Their labors were climaxed by the publication in 1881 of a more accurate Greek text, based on the earliest known manuscripts.

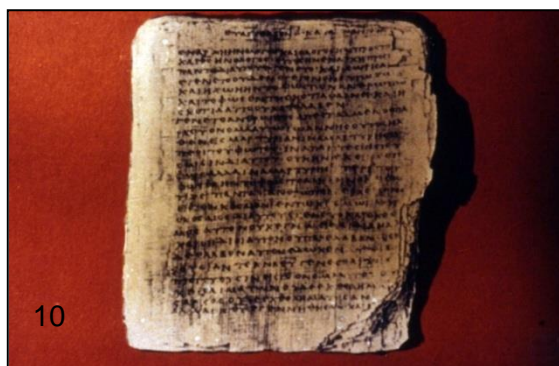
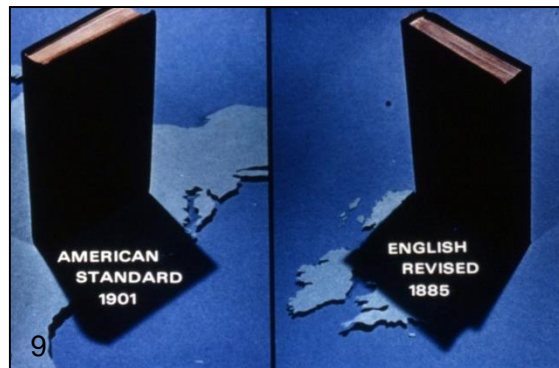
In the meantime, scholars in England began to press for a new translation. In 1870 the decision was reached to revise the King James Version. At first the revision was undertaken by only British scholars but later Americans joined in as well.

The results were embodied in what is known as the English Revised Version, completed in 1885 and the American Standard Version in 1901 (9). These two translations are basically the same except for some small difference between British and American figures of speech.

Research in the original Biblical language continued. From the sands of Egypt, archaeologists were recovering large numbers of papyri documents; deeds, bills of sale, formal and personal letters, and many more (10). The effect of these discoveries was two-fold.

First they showed that the New Testament was not written in some strange kind of Greek, but rather was written in the language of the common man on the street.

Second these discoveries clarified and made more intelligible for the English reader, the meanings and significance of certain Greek words and phrases.





Still other ancient manuscripts were coming to the attention of scholars. Among them is the earliest known fragment of the Gospel of John. The famous John Ryland's papyrus (11) was identified in 1935. It contains portions from several verses from John's gospel and is dated from 100-150 A.D. It is the oldest known fragment of our New Testament. Other startling discoveries also have been made.



A major find on the Old Testament text, the Dead Sea Scrolls, was discovered on April 15, 1947 in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, just a few miles from Jericho (12). An Arab shepherd named Mohammad Ed Dhib entered one of the many caves overlooking the sea where he found some jars which contained leather scrolls, wrapped in linen cloth. Later, more caves were discovered containing thousands of fragments of Old Testament scripture.

These materials are now preserved in Jerusalem where they are examined almost daily. Since the discoveries of these scrolls, numerous others have been located in the same region. In one cave alone portions of almost every book in the Old Testament have been found.

Near the caves, archaeologists have done extensive digging. Their excavations have disclosed a fortified structure where a community of people worked and studied and worshipped. This community, known as Qumran, was composed of a deeply religious sect of Jews called Essenes who copied their ancient texts and stored them in the caves for safe keeping.



The plan of Qumran reveals sights of special interest, including a large assembly hall and a scriptorium. The scriptorium was undoubtedly where a large number of scrolls were produced.

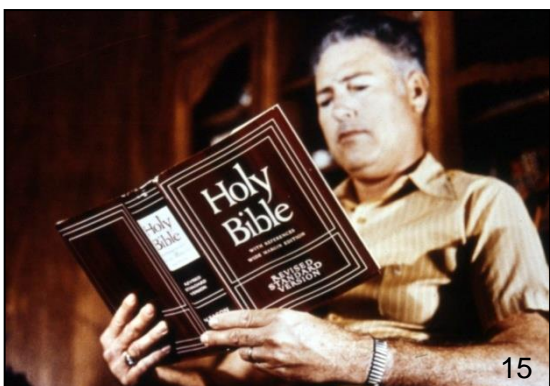
The most amazing discovery made in the caves near Qumran is a scroll of the book of the prophet Isaiah (13). It is a complete copy except for a few words, and dates back to the 1st or 2nd centuries before Christ. This is a thousand years earlier than the oldest previous Hebrew manuscripts. The Isaiah manuscript confirms in a remarkable way the accuracy of our present Old Testament text.



Altogether, hundreds of manuscripts have been uncovered; most of them fragments of books. Trained experts are able to piece these fragments together, and gain much helpful information on the Bible text.

The 20th Century has not only been a century of discovery, but also a century of translation (14). Not since the 16th century have so many English translations been produced. Once again the message of the Bible is in the language of the common man.

The Revised Standard Version (15) of 1946 and 1952 has been one of the most prominent versions of recent years. Strictly speaking it is not a new translation. Rather, as its name indicates, it is a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901. The Revised Standard Version expresses the classic King James style in the Modern English tongue.



The one great advantage that the Revised Standard Version offers over its predecessors is its readability. The Bible of all books needs to be in words that are easy to read and easy to understand.

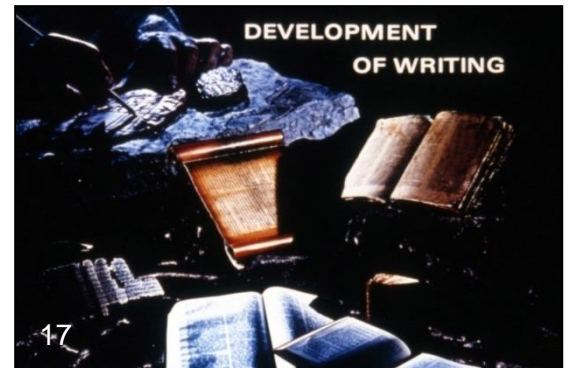
Other recent translations too are of value to the Bible student. Some of the best known among these are Moffet's, Goodspeed's, Philip's, Today's English Version, and the New English Bible. These are independent translations that are not bound by the traditional wording of the older versions.

The careful Bible student will avail himself of many of these Bible tools. Although, he may prefer one translation over another he will gain many insights, as he compares the different translations (16).



The serious Bible student will also keep in mind that some versions of the Bible, such as the New World Translation, by the Jehovah's Witnesses, have been produced by particular denominations and show a bias to the teachings of that particular denomination.

Thus we have seen that the History of the Bible (17) involves a study of the development of writing from the time of the primitive alphabet, through the use of papyrus, and vellum, down to the time of printed books.

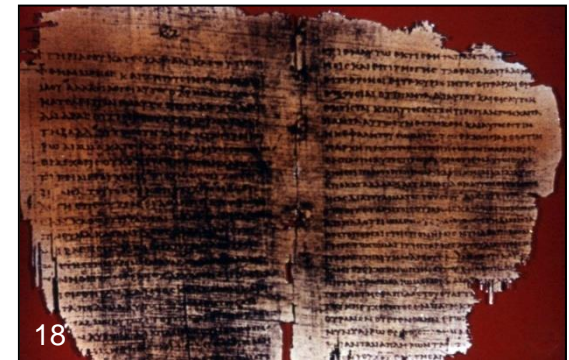


We have learned of the careful preservation of the Bible text, from the Ancient Vatican and Siniatic manuscripts, the Greek texts of Erasmus and that of Wescott-Hort.

We also have seen something of the history of English translations, from the works of Wycliffe and Tyndale, to translations like the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version.

There are good reasons then to believe that we have the Bible like God intended it, and as it was when it was put into writing centuries ago.

The continuing discoveries of manuscripts always point in the same direction. Manuscript finds, such as the recently acquired Chester Beatty Papyri (18), confirm this conclusion beyond doubt. Jack Finnigan, a noted Archaeologist, has written recently on this point. Dr. Finnigan said,



“Here is our oldest copy of Paul’s letters and it emphatically confirms the accuracy and soundness of the general textual tradition.”

The text of the illustrious Isaiah scrolls (19) confirms the reliability of our Hebrew text. Professor F.F. Bruce of Manchester England has made a statement to this effect. Bruce wrote;

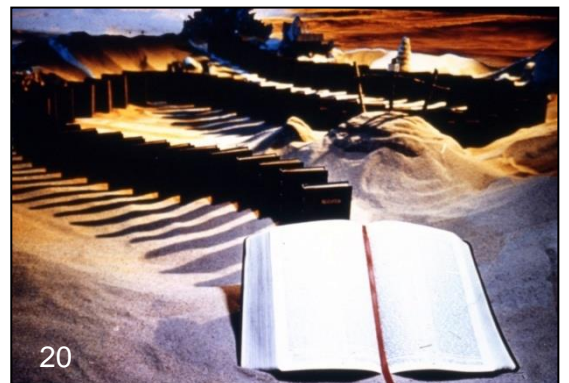


“The new evidence confirms what we had already good evidence to believe. That the Jewish scribes of the early Christian centuries copied and re-copied the text of the Hebrew Bible with the utmost of fidelity.”

Tracing the Bible down through the centuries, presents the human side of How We Got the Bible. From a different standpoint, the story of how we got the Bible begins and ends with God.

The Bible itself says,

“All scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
2 Timothy 3:16-17



The Bible also says;

“No prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
2 Peter 1:21

These indeed are great claims. The Christian believes that these claims are in keeping with the unique religion of Christ and contribute to making the Bible the remarkable book it is.



Excellent and much needed advice for 21st century man was written years ago as King James' men encouraged readers to read the Bible. Of the scriptures they said,

"If we be ignorant they will instruct us, if out of the way they will bring us home, if out of order, they will reform us. Take up and read, take up and read the scriptures."

If we are wise enough to listen to their exhortation, a new day will dawn in the lives of each of us (21)...

This concludes lesson 4. Please answer the following questions before proceeding to lesson 5.

- When was the King James Version completed?
 - 1511
 - 1611
 - 1711
 - 1811
- What translation did the Pilgrims bring with them when they went to America?
 - The Great Bible
 - Coverdale's Bible
 - The Geneva Bible
 - The King James Version
- What was the goal of the King James translators in making the King James Version?
 - To make a new translation
 - To make a better translation
 - To revise an old translation
 - None of the above
- How many years was the King James Version accepted by people as the standard translation?
 - 2 years
 - 20 years
 - 200 years
 - 2,000 years
- In 1829, Alexander Campbell published a translation in America called:
 - The Living Oracles
 - The Living Bible
 - The Living Translation
 - None of the above
- Where was Constantine Tischendorf from?
 - France
 - Spain
 - Italy
 - Germany
- Which important Bible manuscript did Constantine Tischendorf discover?
 - The Alexandrian Manuscript
 - The Sinaitic Manuscript
 - The Vatican Manuscript
 - The Ephraim Manuscript
- Tischendorf found it in St. Catherine's Monastery on what mountain?
 - Mount Sinai
 - Mount Ararat
 - Mount Nebo
 - None of the above
- TRUE or FALSE: The King James translators used the Vatican and Sinaitic Manuscripts in their translation.
 - True
 - False
- Wescott and Hort published their Greek text in which year?
 - 1611
 - 1829
 - 1901
 - 1881
- Which of the following Translations was NOT a revision of the King James Version?
 - English Revised Version
 - Revised Standard Version
 - American Standard Version
 - None of the above
- TRUE or FALSE: The Greek used to write the New Testament is a special language, found only in the Bible.
 - True
 - False
- The earliest fragment discovered of the New Testament text is the John Ryland's Papyrus which is a fragment from the book of:
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
- TRUE or FALSE: The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered at the bottom of the Dead Sea.
 - True
 - False

15. The people who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls were called:

- a. Zealots
- b. Pharisees
- c. Essenes
- d. Sadducees

16. The most outstanding manuscript discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls is from the book of:

- a. Isaiah
- b. Jeremiah
- c. Matthew
- d. Genesis

17. The Revised Standard Version is a revision of which translation?

- a. The King James Version
- b. The American Standard Version
- c. Both A and B
- d. None of the above

18. The Bible student will gain more insight if he uses:

- a. Only one translation
- b. Only translations approved by his church
- c. Many different translations
- d. All of the above

19. TRUE or FALSE: There are NO translations that have been made that show bias for the teachings of a particular church.

- a. True
- b. False

20. Which of the following is not a reason new translations need to be made?

- a. The teachings of Christ have changed
- b. Languages change and meanings of words change
- c. New Biblical manuscripts may change the text of the Bible
- d. None of the above

21. TRUE or FALSE: Fragments of Bible books are useless to translators.

- a. True
- b. False

22. What is the difference between the American Standard Version and the English Revised Version?

- a. The date they were published
- b. The figures of speech
- c. One was done by American scholars and the other by British scholars
- d. All of the above

23. What do we learn from 1 Timothy 3:16-17?

- a. All scripture is inspired by God.
- b. Men wrote their own opinions
- c. The Bible is a commentary on life
- d. Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God

24. What do we learn from 2 Peter 1:21?

- a. All scripture is inspired by God.
- b. Men wrote their own opinions
- c. The Bible is a commentary on life
- d. Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God

25. TRUE or FALSE: Because of the evidence of new manuscripts being discovered daily and the constant work on deciphering texts we can have more confidence that the Bible we have is as God intended it to be.

- a. True
- b. False

Lesson 5

WHICH BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?

Anyone who believes in God knows about the Bible. If you are reasonably active in your faith, then you have probably heard people discuss and perhaps even debate the question, "Which books belong in the Bible?" You have probably also heard that some Bibles have different numbers of books in them. In this lesson we will try to explain the basics of this question "Which books belong in the Bible?"

THE CANON

When you do research to try and find answers to this question you will come across a term which is very important to understand. That word is **CANON**. The English word "canon" (Greek "Kanon"; Hebrew "qaneh") means "reed" or "cane" -- a measuring rod which could be used as a standard or rule. When referring to the Bible people use this word to represent the "official" list of books which should be found inside our Bibles. It should be pointed out that this word IS NOT found anywhere inside the Bible. It is also important to know that there is **NO PLACE** in the Bible where the writers give us a list of books which belong in the Bible (a canon). It must also be understood that the writers never explained to us the way we can determine if a book belongs in the Bible or not.

Another thing to keep in mind is the fact that none of the existing religious groups "created the **canon**". The way the books of our Bible came together was not through an institution voting to decide which books they felt should be included in a list.

The books that belong in the Bible came into existence through hand-picked individuals guided to write messages from God. The people who received these messages knew the writers, knew that the writers were guided by God in a special way, and knew that they should accept and share this message with others.

The Old Testaments books which God intended for us to have were already completed by the time Jesus came to the earth. The New Testament was completed by the time the second generation of Christians died. We believe that this statement is true because by the time we get to the third generation of Christians, all of the original writers and all of the recipients of the original letters had died and the people who were left behind (and all following generations after that) needed to know the original message Where else could they get the original message if not from copies of these written documents?

John 16:12-15 - *"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

2 John 1:9-11 - *"Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work."*

Unfortunately, the absence of God-given instructions has not kept people from looking deeper into the question of "Which books belong in the Bible?" This has resulted in volumes of literature containing a variety of theories, speculations and suggested explanations about how the Bible as we know it came into being. Many of the people that we have seen mentioned in our lesson material so far, have played a significant role in the modern day issues surrounding the canon. To better understand the situation let us examine some of the more popular ideas.

MAN'S ANSWER

Throughout time, men have felt a need to organize (canonize) which books belong in the Bible for many different reasons and, they have developed over time a type of criteria which has been used to determine which books should be considered as inspired. There were basically **five guiding principles** used to determine whether or not a book is canonical or Scripture.

These are the questions they ask:

1. **Is it authoritative** - did it come from the hand of God? (Does this book come with a divine "thus saith the Lord"?)
2. **Is it prophetic** - was it written by a man of God?
3. **Is it authentic?** (The fathers had the attitude of "if in doubt throw it out" policy. This enhanced the "validity of their discernment of canonical books.")
4. **Is it dynamic** - did it come with the life-transforming power of God?
5. **Was it received, collected, read and used** - was it accepted by the people of God?

(This list is from Geisler and Nix. - Geisler, Norman L. and William E. Nix. A General Introduction to the Bible. Moody Press. Chicago, Illinois. 1968)

In order to be accepted in the canon, the documents must deal with Jehovah's affairs on earth, turning men to his worship and stimulating deep respect for his work and purposes in the earth. They must give evidence of inspiration, that is, be products of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:19-21 - *"So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women **moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**"*

There must be no appeal to superstition or creature worship, but, rather, an appeal to love and service of God. There would have to be nothing in any of the individual writings that would conflict with the internal harmony of the whole, but, rather, each book must, by its unity with the others, support the one authorship, that of God. Also, there are special circumstances that apply to the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament and others to the Christian New Testament that help in determining the establishment of the Bible Canon.

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The reasons the Jews came to accept the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Scriptures are largely lost and therefore unknown. The main reason given in the rabbinic discussions revolves around their **inspiration**; they truly believe they come from God. But, why were these books believed to be inspired or God-breathed? There are several different theories on this that we will not go into. We do know, however that the **Hebrew Bible** that is accepted by the Jews, contains the scriptures from Genesis-Malachi. The arrangement of the Hebrew Bible contains a count of anywhere from 22-27 books depending on which early list you look at.

- Early writers like Josephus and Origen speak of a 22 book canon (this number corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet).
- Jerome also speaks of a 22 books, again drawing a parallel with the Hebrew alphabet but he adds the 5 Hebrew consonants that are written in alternative forms making his count 27.
- The order the books which are assigned in the synagogue scrolls is seen to contain 24 scrolls - five Law, eight of the Prophets, and eleven of the Writings. Although the order and divisions in which the books are arranged is different they are the same books. They are also the same 39 books found in our modern day Bibles. (Some of the books were combined and counted as one etc.)

The Hebrews **never** refer to these books as the "Old Testament", it is called *Torah, Nebi'im and uKetubim* (**Law, Prophets, and Writings.**) The Greek names for these divisions are also in common use, they are *Pentateuch* (*having five books*), *Prophetes* (*the prophets*), and *Hagiographia* (*holy writings*).

From the **fourth century BC** onwards it was the conviction of the Jews that the voice of God had ceased to speak directly. This view is already reflected in passages such as **Zechariah 13:3**. *'And if any prophets appear again, their fathers and mothers who bore them will say to them, "You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD"; and their fathers and their mothers who bore them shall pierce them through when they prophesy.'*

CHRIST'S WITNESS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

Jesus Christ himself is a help for us when it comes to determining which books belong in the Old Testament. When you read the gospels you see that he often makes reference to Old Testament books and quotations of prophecies. Let's look at some passages when he speaks about the Hebrew Scriptures.

In **Luke 24:44** he indicated the three sections into which the Hebrew Bible was divided - the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

"Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-- that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Luke 24:44

In his travels Jesus often spoke of how he disagreed with the oral traditions of the Pharisees. However, you never find him disputing their scriptures. There is no evidence whatever of any dispute between Him and the Jews as to the canonicity of any Old Testament book.

John 10:31-36 - *"The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God." Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods'-- and the scripture cannot be annulled-- can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"*

Jesus once refers to the martyrs of the Old Testament "...from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah." Jesus here confirms His witness to the extent of the Old Testament canon. Abel, as everyone knows, was the first martyr (Genesis 4:8). Zechariah is the last martyr to be named having been stoned while prophesying to the people "in the court of the house of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 24:21). Genesis was the first book in the Hebrew canon and Chronicles the last book. The Old Testament which Jesus knew was a collection of books from Genesis to Chronicles (which was the books in chronological order). Jesus basically said "from Genesis to Chronicles," or according to our order "from Genesis to Malachi."

Luke 11:51 (also Matthew 23:35) - *"from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation."*

THE NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

In the New Testament we find 160 different quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. These are found in 20 of the 39 Old Testament books. The following are just a few of these:

Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56	Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17;	1 Timothy 5:18
Luke 24	Romans 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26	2 Timothy 3:16
John 2:22-26; 5:39; 10:35	1 Corinthians 15:3-4	2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:16
Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28	Galatians 3:8; 3:22; 4:30	

OUTSIDE WITNESSES

Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote about AD 100 saying that the Jews have only 22 books. He combines them differently but they are the same 39 books we have in our modern Old Testament canon.

"For although so great an interval of time (since they were written) has now passed, not a soul has ventured either to add or to remove or to alter a syllable; and it is the instinct of every Jew from the day of his birth to consider these books as the teachings of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to lay down his life for them." – **Antiquities, Josephus**

At the close of the 1st century Jewish leaders at Jamnia, Palestine, confirmed these books as the canon of the Old Testament. At this council, vigorous debates took place on the question of the canonicity of certain books. This council raised questions about the presence of certain books in the canon. Among their debates they considered whether canonical recognition should be accorded to the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Esther. Objections were raised on various grounds: Esther, e.g., did not contain the name of God. But the outcome and benefit of the Jamnia debates was the firm acknowledgment of all these books as Holy Scripture. No formal or binding decision were made, none-the-less the discussions helped **crystallize and to fix firmly the Hebrew canon.**

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

About the time the text of the Old Testament books assumed a standard form, the apostles were writing books that would later form the New Testament. When the church was born on Pentecost it had the **same Bible** as the Jewish synagogue.

As the apostolic writings began to circulate, they too were read in the assemblies of the church. The New Testament books were not available to the church during the first few decades of its existence. It is believed that the earliest of our four gospels, was not written until 30 years after Jesus ascended to heaven. For an entire generation after Christ's death the teachings of Jesus were transmitted **orally**.

You might ask why the delay in writing the apostolic books. **The apostles were living books**. As long as the apostles were present in the church there was not a great need for written records of the life and sayings of Jesus. They were the eyewitnesses who knew not only the facts but they could also give the inspired explanations of these facts because they were guided by the Holy Spirit.

The important place eyewitnesses had in establishing the truth of the gospel can be seen, for example, from 1 Corinthians 15:6 where Paul mentions some five hundred witnesses to Christ's resurrection most of whom were still alive.

*"Then he appeared to more than **five hundred brothers and sisters** at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died."* **1 Corinthians 15:6**

To some degree the **Holy Spirit** worked in the lives of the Christians in the early years of the church. It would seem that this age of special guidance came to an end some time near the beginning or middle of the second century.

The need for **written records** became more pressing as time went on. The apostles who were establishing new churches all over the empire found it necessary to write **letters** (epistles) to these churches, to instruct, correct, encourage, and caution the young Christians. Later, when the apostles and eye-witnesses were no longer around a written record of the original teachings of Christianity became necessary **to preserve the true message**. This was especially important as the church spread into the Graeco-Roman world because as time passed, and more of the original leaders died, the danger of **false teachings** became an ever increasing threat.

The original letters of the apostles were copied and circulated among the churches as Christianity continued to spread into new regions. The New Testament that we have today is a collection of the most commonly circulated letters from the time of early Christianity.

EARLY CANONS

Before the end of the second century there is universal acceptance of the four Gospels, the book of Acts and 12 of Paul's letters. Only a few of the smaller writings were doubted in some areas, because such writings were limited in their initial circulation for one reason or another, and so it took longer for them to become established as canonical.

One of the most interesting early lists is the fragment discovered by L.A. Muratori in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, Italy, and published by him in 1740. **The Muratorian Fragment**, which is in Latin, dates to the later part of the 2nd century, and is a translation from a Greek original. From the standpoint of the Muratorian Fragment, the New Testament is regarded as definitely made up of the four Gospels, The Acts, 13 epistles of Paul, the Apocalypse of John, three of his epistles, Jude, and 1 Peter.

Origen, about the year 230 AD, accepted among the inspired Scriptures the books of Hebrews and James, both of which are missing from the Muratorian Fragment. While he indicates that some doubted their canonicity, this also shows that all the congregations by this time were in agreement about the canonicity of **most** of the Greek Scriptures, only a few doubting some of the less well known epistles.

Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 367) gives us the earliest list of New Testament books which is exactly like our present New Testament. Shortly after Athanasius, two writers, Jerome (394) and Augustine (397) defined the canon of all 27 books.

You might ask, however, why do we not find exact lists earlier than the Muratorian Fragment? It was not until men like **Marcion** came along in the middle of the 2nd century that the need arose to catalogue the books Christians should accept. Marcion constructed his own canon to suit his doctrines, taking only certain of Paul's letters, and an expurgated form of the Gospel of Luke. (Marcion founded the anti-Jewish sect that acknowledged no authoritative writings but those of Paul.) This, together with the mass of apocryphal literature by now spreading throughout the world, made it imperative to pronounce a clear-cut distinction between what could be received as Scripture and what could not.

THE APOCRYPHA AND OTHER WRITINGS

In studying about which books belong in the Bible you may come across the term **APOCRYPHA**. "Apocrypha" means **secret** or **hidden** or **concealed** (from the Greek word - apokrupnos). It was used very early in the sense of secretive or concealed, but also was used in reference to a book whose origin was doubtful or unknown. Eventually the word took the meaning of **non-canonical**. In Protestant circles it is used to refer to those extra books that are found in the Catholic Old Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

The Old Testament Apocrypha include either 14 or 15 books, depending on the method of counting, which were written in the period of 200 BC to 100 AD. The names of these books are in the chart to the right.

You may wonder why the Protestant Bible's do not include these books. When scholars researched and studied to find whether these books should be included in the Old Testament canon they gave five reasons why they should not.

OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS	
1 & 2 Esdras	Judith
the Rest of Esther	Tobit
Song of the Three Holy Children	Wisdom of Solomon
History of Susanna	Ecclesiasticus
Bel and the Dragon	Baruch
Prayer of Manassas	1 & 2 Maccabees
Three of them (1&2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh) are not considered canonical by the Catholic church.	

- 1) These books were **never** included in the Hebrew Canon of the Old Testament
- 2) These books were **never** quoted from by Jesus and His Apostles in their writings.
- 3) These books were **not accepted** as Scriptures by some early Jewish writers of the 1st century. (Philo and Josephus; the Jewish council at Jamnia (90 AD); and other early "Christian" writers Origen and Jerome.)
- 4) These books have been **shrouded with uncertainties**.
- 5) They show **no evidence of inspiration** (in one, the author even claims that it is a narration) Portions are legendary and fictitious. Often there are certain historical, chronological, and geographical errors.

For these reasons the Protestant Bibles do not include the apocryphal Old Testament books into their canons.

NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

Although the term apocrypha is used mainly in regard to the unaccepted Old Testament books it is important to note that there are also **apocryphal books of the New Testament**. They include a variety of literary types: Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypses. There are many of these writings but most of them have never been accepted as scripture. There is not as much controversy over these books and so we will not be discussing them. We only mention them so you will be aware that they exist.

SUMMARY

It is interesting to trace the history and development of the canon. There were hundreds of people spanning close to 2000 years which contributed in some way to the Bible we hold in our hands. There is no doubt that the most important question on our minds is, "How do we KNOW that the Bible we hold in our hands is the one God revealed to mankind 2000 years ago?" Admittedly we cannot say for certain that the one we have is EXACTLY the same. We must remember that we do not have any of the original autographs (original copies of the books). Also, we do not have the list of books that should be accepted, written down for us by the inspired writers of the Bible or by God himself.

We do know this, however. The Old Testament books in our Bibles are the same ones accepted by the Hebrew people (God's chosen people at the time it was written). We also know that the New Testament books that we have in our Bible have, from the fourth century onward, been **accepted** as a "fixed" canon in the eyes of most churches. It is also important to observe that the list is not the product of any single person or church council, but many people down through time have been involved in working to establish it.

Because of what we have seen we can have confidence that the Bible that we have is as God intended it to be and study it to find God's will for our lives in this day and age.

This concludes lesson 5. Please answer the following questions before proceeding to lesson 6.

1. What does the word CANON mean?
 - a. A Medieval Weapon
 - b. Reed or Cane
 - c. A Ruler
 - d. The list of books in our Bibles
2. TRUE or FALSE: The Catholic Church created the canon.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The Old Testament Canon was complete by the time that who was born?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Adam
 - c. Abraham
 - d. Jesus
4. TRUE or FALSE: Everyone today agrees on **WHICH BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?**
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Which of the following is not a question people ask to determine if a book is canonical?
 - a. Is it authoritative?
 - b. Did the Pope accept it?
 - c. Is it dynamic?
 - d. Is it prophetic?
6. When we ask "Was it received, collected, read and used?" who was to have accepted it?
 - a. The people of God
 - b. Christians in the 1st Century
 - c. The Jews
 - d. All of the above
7. When we say that the books of the Bible must be inspired, we mean they must be from:
 - a. The Holy Spirit
 - b. A Ghost
 - c. Jesus
 - d. None of the above
8. Why did the earliest scholars put the number of the Old Testament books as 22?
 - a. The number of letters in the Greek Alphabet
 - b. The number of letters in the Latin Alphabet
 - c. The number of letters in the Hebrew Alphabet
 - d. All of the above
9. Which of the following words is not referring to the first five books of the Old Testament?
 - a. Torah
 - b. Nebi'im
 - c. Pentateuch
 - d. None of the above
10. Which of the following words does not mean "Prophets"?
 - a. Prophetes
 - b. Nebi'im
 - c. UKetubim
 - d. None of the above
11. Which of the following words does not mean "Writings"?
 - a. Torah
 - b. Hagiographia
 - c. UKetubim
 - d. None of the above
12. After which century did the Jews believe that the voice of God had ceased?
 - a. 3rd BC
 - b. 4th AD
 - c. 3rd AD
 - d. 4th BC
13. The New Testament contains how many quotations from Old Testament books?
 - a. 100 quotes
 - b. 160 quotes
 - c. 200 quotes
 - d. 260 quotes
14. TRUE or FALSE: Josephus' record of the Old Testament Canon has only 22 of the 39 books.
 - a. True
 - b. False
15. What was the decision made by the Council of Jamnia held in the 1st Century?
 - a. Esther would not be included in the Old Testament Canon
 - b. They would include all books thought to be non-canonical before that time
 - c. The Hebrew canon was fixed as it was
 - d. All of the above
16. TRUE or FALSE: On the day of Pentecost the Bible of Christians was the same as that of the Jews.
 - a. True
 - b. False
17. How were the teachings of Christianity first transmitted?
 - a. Orally
 - b. Through letters
 - c. The Gospels
 - d. All of the above

18. TRUE or FALSE: The delay in making a written record of Jesus and his teachings was due to the fact that while there were still eyewitnesses alive that they were living books.
- True
 - False
19. The apostles wrote letters to young churches called:
- Epithets
 - Episcopalian
 - Epicureans
 - Epistles
20. The earliest canon discovered is called the:
- Muratorian Fragment
 - Marcion Fragment
 - The John Ryland's Papyrus
 - The Alexandrian Manuscript
21. Apocrypha means:
- False
 - Hidden or Secret
 - Non-Canonical
 - Lie or Untruth
22. The Old Testament Apocrypha were not accepted for which reasons?
- Jesus never quoted them
 - They were not accepted by Josephus and other Jewish writers
 - They have no evidence of inspiration
 - All of the above
23. TRUE or FALSE: There are only 5 apocryphal books of the New Testament.
- True
 - False
24. TRUE or FALSE: God made a list of books for us to include in our Bibles.
- True
 - False
25. What is the reason we can trust the books we have in our Bibles today?
- Our Old Testament books were accepted by the Hebrews
 - Our New Testament books have been accepted by people from the 4th Century onward
 - The Canon is not a product of one person but many years and many people
 - All of the above

Lesson 6

TRANSLATIONS BEGIN...

Soon after the New Testament was completed, translation work began. The first translation was probably into Latin. This was the official language of the Roman Empire, though Greek was the most widely spoken language among Christians, even in Italy. At first Greek was used in most churches, but from the second century on many local translations were made. Eventually, however, people felt that there should be a standard text that could be recognized and used by everyone. In this lesson we are going to talk about some of the major contributions and contributors which brought the Bible into the 21st Century.

In about AD 384 Pope Damasus instructed his secretary to revise the Latin New Testament. This man was **Jerome**. He is the first Bible translator whose name has come down to us. His Latin translation, the VULGATE (or Common Version), has been the standard Bible of the Roman Catholic Church ever since. Scores of other translations have been made from it, including the first English ones. Jerome was a good scholar and he did his work well. In order to translate the Old Testament he learned Hebrew, living for many years in Bethlehem.

During the **Middle Ages**, (the centuries following the break-up of the Roman Empire in the West), Christianity was spreading fast, especially in Northern and Eastern Europe. As the church grew, parts of the Bible were translated into many new languages. Most of the early works of translations that have been found are only portions of the scriptures, rather than our whole Bible.

In the latter part of the Middle Ages the **Protestant Reformation** began. During this a number of new Bible versions appeared. These were designed to be read by ordinary Christians and the work was supported by people who were critical of the official church leadership.

One of the main characters involved in the Reformation was **John Wycliffe**, an Oxford theologian. He became convinced that the Bible was so important that it must be available to everyone. As a result, he began translating and by 1384 the Bible had been translated into English. Wycliffe made an English translation of the Latin Vulgate. Most of the translating was done, not by Wycliffe, but by John Purvey, Nicholas of Hereford and other followers of Wycliffe. In the translation the Latin text was closely followed, even in its very un-English order of words. It was later revised to have better and clearer English.

Another great effect on the Bible occurred around 1450 AD at Mainz, Germany. Before this time, any copying of manuscripts, including the Bible, had to be done by hand. **Johann Gutenberg**, a printer by profession, pioneered the process of printing from movable type. His work began a new era in the history of books, and with them of the Bible. One of the first works to come from the press was the Bible (1456) - in Latin.

Until 1516, all versions translated were based on existing original manuscripts or translated from the Latin. But with the revival of learning, texts in the original languages began to be studied more. Jewish scholars had preserved the Hebrew Bible and in 1488 they printed it in Italy. The Greek New Testament was first published by **Erasmus** (a Dutch scholar) in 1516.

William Tyndale, who had been a scholar at Cambridge, was influenced by the writings of Erasmus, began to translate the New Testament into English. The church authorities gave him no encouragement so he went to Germany to finish his work. The first New Testament printed in English appeared at Worms, Germany in 1526. Copies soon reached England and were eagerly studied but authorities denounced them and even bought and burned them. This did not stop Tyndale. His reaction was to publish a better version and print it again. By 1566 it had been printed forty times. Tyndale was eventually killed, but his work started a movement which eventually led to the Bible being available to be read by anyone in their own language.

In 1535, **Miles Coverdale** published the first whole Bible in English. It was printed abroad but made its way to England. Coverdale did not work from the original Greek and Hebrew. He based his work on that of William Tyndale, Martin Luther (a reformer who made a German translation) and the Latin versions. Coverdale was the first to include chapter summaries, as in the King James Version and to separate the Apocrypha from the Old Testament books. His version later found acceptance from Henry VIII, the King of England.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

In 1537 came the first Bible actually printed in England. It had on it the name 'Thomas Matthew', the pen name of John Rogers, a fellow-worker of Tyndale's. This translation is what we know as **Matthew's Version**. It is made up mostly of Tyndale's translation, and contains a good deal of extra material in the form of indexes and notes. It was the first Bible to be published 'with the King's most gracious license'.

In 1538 an order was issued with the king's authority that the clergy must provide 'a book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English' to be set 'in some convenient place within the church, where the parishioners may most conveniently resort to the same and read it.' The book the king intended was the **Great Bible**, Coverdale's revision of Matthew's Version. It appeared in 1539. Its second edition contained a preface by Archbishop of Cranmer encouraging everyone to read the Bible. It also contained the note: 'This is the Bible appointed for the use of the churches.' The Great Bible remained in the churches throughout the reign of Edward VI and some even in the reign of Queen Mary of England (1553-58).

The **Geneva Bible** appeared in 1560. It was the work of scholarly English exiles who worked in Geneva, Switzerland (which is where it gets its name). This version was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I. It contained the first translation of Ezra to Malachi directly from Hebrew. The Hebrew idiom was kept whenever possible, in the New as well as the Old Testament. They also included the Apocrypha and study guides, marginal notes and maps to aid the Bible student and became a very popular Bible. In Britain and Germany it was printed seventy times. In Scotland this was the Bible officially read in churches.

The **Bishops' Bible** was completed in 1568. This Bible was mainly the work of the bishops with Archbishop Parker in the lead. This is why it has the name of the Bishops' Bible. It was a revision of the Great Bible commissioned by the Church of England. The revisers aimed to improve the accuracy of the text, to change expressions offensive to public taste and to avoid controversial notes and interpretations. The result of this revision was not as good as the Geneva Bible and as a result was not a popular.

King James I of England, when he came to the throne, agreed to create a new revision of the Bible. He himself took a share in organizing the work which was entrusted to six teams of scholars. The work was based on the Bishops' Bible, but using the original Hebrew and Greek. This famous translation, the **King James' Version**, was completed in 1611. It is called the Authorized Version although it was never formally authorized. There was a dedication to James and a long preface, 'The translator to the Reader' was added that answers criticisms and states the translators' purpose, stresses the care taken in making it etc. This version had enormous prestige for 350 years.

One year before the Authorized Version, in 1610, the standard Roman Catholic version, the **Douai Bible** was published. This was the work of Gregory Martin and others at the English College at Douai, France. His New Testament appeared in 1582 when the college was at Rheims. He tried to translate the Vulgate word for word, sometimes making little sense. Many found the language of the Douai Bible hard to understand and so revisions of much of it were done. Much of the revisions were influenced by the Authorized Version.

MODERN TRANSLATIONS

A number of private revisions of the Authorized Version and new translations were made in the following centuries. Some of them were based on much older and more reliable Greek manuscripts than the 'Received Text' from which the Authorized Version was made.

In 1870 the Church of England made a decision to make a revision of the Authorized Version, making only necessary changes. This was the **English Revised Version**. The New Testament is based on a far more ancient Greek text than the Authorized Version, relying chiefly on the fourth-century Vatican and Sinaitic Codices. This translation was introduced in 1898.

The American scholars who had been associated with the English Revised Version produced the **American Standard Version** in 1901. This version is basically the same as the Revised Version except for differences in American and English idiom.

In 1937 the council which held the copyright for the American Standard Version decided to make a revision. This is what we know as the **Revised Standard Version**. The New Testament appeared in 1946 and the Old Testament in 1952. Its language is a compromise between the outdated language made familiar by the King James Version and modern English. Most of the outdated words are gone. In Isaiah some changes have been introduced because of new information available in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1973 a new edition, known as *The Common Bible*, was issued. It was authorized by Roman Catholic authorities as well as the RSV committee.

In 1946 the Church of Scotland approached the main British churches and suggested an entirely new translation, the **New English Bible**. The idea was welcomed and soon scholars began work. The New Testament appeared in 1961 and the Old Testament in 1970. The New English Bible takes all the latest research into account. The Dead Sea Scrolls have given new information on the Old Testament Text. Newly discovered documents in languages related to Hebrew have revealed the meanings of some difficult words. This translation was intended to be in modern English without the old-fashioned 'biblical' language of the Authorized Version.

In 1966 Roman Catholic translators published the **Jerusalem Bible**. This was a new version made from the original languages. It was similar to the French *Bible de Jerusalem* and included the introductions and notes from the French translation. This translation has been widely used by Protestants as well as Roman Catholics. Its language is more lively and modern than that of the Revised Standard Version.

The **Good News Bible** was produced by the American Bible Society. The New Testament was published in 1966 and the Old Testament in 1976. The aim of this translation was to be a reliable and accurate translation using words which make the meanings clear to everyone. Even those who have no Bible background and who use English as their second language can use this translation without much difficulty. Its basic aim is to provide in English the closest natural equivalent of the original language. A second aim concerns the level of language, to be more readable than most. Scholarly, poetical and technical religious terms are avoided and so are slang expressions. The result is a 'common language'.

The **New International Version** is one of the most popular of the more recent translations to be published, particularly to Protestant religious groups. The Old Testament was published in 1972 and the New Testament in 1979. The translation was made by a team of Protestant evangelical scholars, mainly from the USA. This translation uses the most recent results of research and archaeology to try and make an accurate translation in the tradition of earlier English Bibles.

OTHER MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

In addition to the many translations we have looked at a great number of translations came into being in the twentieth century. Many of the following versions were translated by individuals or a group of people from a specific religious group.

The **Twentieth Century New Testament** (TCNT) came into print in 1902. The translation was made by thirty or so British translators including ministers, housewives, schoolteachers, etc... however no textual experts. They used the translation text created by Wescott and Hort, an early text giving it more accuracy than some of the earlier translation. It is an easy to read and understand translation. Unlike most translations it orders the books of the New Testament in the order they were written.

The first edition of the **Weymouth New Testament**, also known as the New Testament in Modern Speech came to shelves in 1903. It was translated by a man named Richard Francis Weymouth but was edited and published a year after his death in 1902 by his secretary Ernest Hampden-Cook. Weymouth made his translation using the translation text he put together. The version divides long sentences and includes section headings, and it uses dignified and sometimes old-fashioned language.

A New Translation of the Bible, completed in 1926 was translated by James Moffat, a theologian and minister of the Free Church of Scotland. His translation was not a revision of an old translation but a brand new translation from the original languages. He states in his preface that "*The aim I have endeavoured to keep before my mind in making this translation has been to present the books of the Old and the New Testament in effective, intelligible English.*" Though his translation was very readable, his version was very different from some of the traditional translations.

Edgar J. Goodspeed, a Baptist scholar, published **The Complete Bible: an American Translation** in 1935. His translation was meant to be a very readable translation and even included the Apocrypha in 1939. The Old Testament was the work of four other scholars.

The Basic English Bible, completed in 1949, is a translation of the Bible into Basic English. Professor S. Hooke used 850 Basic English words, 100 poetry words and 50 "Bible" words, for a total of 1,000 words.

An Anglican minister named J.B. Phillips produced **The New Testament in Modern English**. During World War II Phillips began rewording the text of the epistles for his youth group who met in bomb shelters in 1947. He continued

working through the rest of the New Testament until he completed his translation in 1958. His version is a paraphrase which is not so well known.

The Berekley Version is a conservative Bible version completed in 1959. The New Testament was translated by Dr. Gerrit Verkuyl; the editor in chief. The Old Testament was translated by a team of scholars in the USA. Since its completion a reversion has been done and is known as *The Modern Language Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English*.

The Amplified Bible was first produced in the USA. It took several years to complete the whole Bible revision from the NIV. The full Bible was published in 1965. This version is a paraphrase and includes alternative and additional words to bring out the meaning of the passages.

Kenneth Taylor produced **The Living Bible** in 1971. This was a revision made from the American Standard Version. Taylor started this work by rewording his family’s daily devotional reading in simple English so his children would be able to understand. It is a paraphrase primarily designed for family reading.

New American Standard Version is a revision of the American Standard Version published in 1971 using modern English. Another revision of a famous translation is the **New King James Version**, also known as the **Revised Authorized Version**, published in 1982. This was a revision of the KJV made to deal with changes of language and the meaning of words since the 1611 edition.

The **Easy to Read Version** was completed and published in 1987. This translation was made with the goal of creating a simple to read and understand translation for those who are deaf. This translation uses simple English and short sentences to convey the Biblical message. The World Bible Translation center used the earliest available translation texts for this version.

Translation Statistics	
Almost 7,000	Approximate number of languages spoken in the world today
2,300+	Number of translations to new languages currently in progress
1,300+	Number of languages the New Testament has been translated into
500+	Number of languages the Bible (Protestant Canon) has been translated into
From www.wycliffe.org (2015)	

Many more translations have been made than what we have listed. Evidence of this can be seen when you walk into any bookstore and go to the section on religion and look at all the Bibles available.

The Reformation in the sixteenth century ushered in a new age for the Bible and its availability to people. The Bible was now translated into all major European languages. With the birth of the modern missionary movement, the Scriptures have been translated into many hundreds of languages. And while there are still hundreds of language groups without the Word of God,

English-speaking readers of the Bible are almost embarrassed by the large number of versions available today.

REASONS FOR VARIATIONS IN TRANSLATIONS

You might ask why there are so many translations available for us today. This question makes it difficult for some Bible readers to know which version to use. Because these versions differ from one another, people can become confused. Let’s look at some of the reasons we have so many versions.

1. Use of different original texts - Translators do not always use the same Hebrew and Greek texts for their translations of the Old and New Testaments. As we learned in our earlier lessons, we only have copies of the original manuscripts and none of these copies are free from all errors. Every translator or reviser, therefore, has to decide which readings he is going to follow.

For example: The ending of the gospel of Mark. All major manuscripts end this Gospel at 16:8. But because the wording of the verses seems abrupt the longer ending, found in other manuscripts, is added in most modern translations, either as a footnote or in brackets, indicating that Mark 16:9-20 is not found in the better Greek manuscripts or ancient versions.

2. Hebrew and Aramaic are Semitic languages and have different sentence structure from that of English, and even the Greek of the New Testament. The way that things are said in Hebrew and Greek can be worded differently. Sometimes words are left out or added in and there are some words that do not translate word-for-word into the English language.

For example, look at Mark 13:1. If we were to translate into English the order of the Greek words we would have “And going out he from the temple he says to him one of the disciples of him, Teacher...” The translators change the word

order to make it more readable. Since the sentence structure of the original Biblical languages is different from ours, the translations of this language into English will vary. The same applies to Hebrew.

3. Hebrew and Greek have different verbal systems, and the tenses of the English verb have to be adapted to these.

Greek for example has four past tenses. Each of these tenses has its own subtle variations. A translator must study the context and determine for himself what to use and how to translate the passage. Obviously, not every translator will agree with the others.

4. There are rarely EXACT equivalents in English for Hebrew and Greek words.

For example, the Greek word *parakletos*. Should we translate *parakletos* as “comforter, helper, advocate, encourager, consoler, counselor, or friend”? There are many words that could be used. This is just one word!

5. Besides having a list of options, a translator will not always translate the same word in the same way in every passage because some words have a certain meaning in a certain context.

For example, the English word “bar” can be used in several ways. “A candy bar”, “a bar of soap”, “he was admitted to the bar”, “He put a bar across the window” or “he goes to the bar for a drink”. This is why translations don’t always render the same Greek or Hebrew word by the same English word.

6. Transliteration. To transliterate is to write a word from another language down in English letters. Sometimes, translators are hesitant to give their interpretation, and choose to transliterate. The Greek word *parakletos* may be used in English as “Paraclete”, but that is not an English word. Another example is the word *baptizo*. It is normally not translated at all, but transliterated as “baptize”.

7. At times a Greek word may appear to have an exact equivalent in English, but the cultural context gives it a different ring.

Example: John 2:4 - When Jesus addresses his mother as “woman” that sounds discourteous to us, but it wasn’t in Jesus’ day. So what does a translator do? Some have tried to soften the words by using the word “madam” or “my dear woman”, etc.

8. English is constantly changing. Since living languages are constantly changing words take on new meanings, and new words are formed. Many words that were familiar to English readers in 1611 for example when the Authorized Version was published are no longer common words or have changed their meaning. Words like “hath, saith, thou, thee”, etc.” Some words whose meanings have changed are “allege” was used for “prove”, “communicate” for “share”, “suffer” for “allow”, “allow” for “approve”, “let” for “hinder” as well as other.

9. Different ways of translating. Every translator (or translation team) must agree on some basic principles according to which the translator are to work.

a. First it must be decided whether the new version is to be a revision of existing versions, or a fresh translation. If it is a revision then the reviews must agree on whether it is only the English that is to be revised or whether the revision will reflect also a different textual base from that of the parent version. For example the English Revised Version of the New Testament (1881) was a revision of the Authorized Version (1611), but it followed a text that was different from that of the Authorized Version in numerous places. The Revised Standard Version was basically a revision of the American Standard Version (1901), but strove to retain as much of the Authorized Version language as modern English would allow.

b. Translators must decide whether they are going to follow the word order of the Hebrew and Greek as much as English allows them to do, or whether they are going to do a sense translation. If the version is to have reasonably good English, then a “literal” translation is impossible. On the other hand, if one seeks to transfer the meaning of Hebrew and Greek sentences into English, then one opens the door a bit more widely to interpretation by the translator.

c. Translators must decide how much explanation their version is to have. In other words how much will be paraphrased.

d. Translators have to agree on the cultural level of the English they are going to us. This also includes the style of English used.

e. Translators must agree on how to deal with special problems in translations:

- **How will they render the name of God?** Should it be Jehovah, Yahweh, Lord, Master, etc.?
- **Will they use punctuation?** Since the early manuscripts have few punctuation marks the translator has to supply them. This can sometimes cause different translations to render the same reading as a question or a statement and can sometimes change the meaning completely.
- There are still words in Hebrew and Greek whose meanings are not absolutely clear to this day. Ex. What does Behemoth mean? It has been translated as hippopotamus, crocodile, elephant and just behemoth, in different translations.
- **How will they translate words dealing with money?** One way is to simply transliterate and use words like denarius, drachma, talanton, etc., and then let the reader seek to discover their current values. Obviously an American version will differ from a British version if they seek to use current monetary terms. The same thing applies for weights and measures. Even if one uses the current monetary terms, one still has to know the buying power of the original term in order to give the approximate current value.

CHOOSING A BIBLE

Now we need to look at the question, “**Which is the best English version?**” Here are some things to consider in choosing a Bible:

Accuracy. The accuracy of a Bible translation is very important. A version must, first of all, be based on the most accurate Hebrew and Greek texts, and the texts must also be translated accurately. Almost all Bibles have a “Preface” at the beginning. In this preface, you can find out information like:

1. Who were the translators? (You need to ask questions like: Was it made by one man, or a group of men? A particular religious group? What are the credentials of those involved in the translating? Do they have any knowledge of the original languages? etc... A reader is safer in choosing a version that has been done by a broadly based translation team rather than by one individual.)
2. Where the work was done and procedure followed in making the translation? (The way a translation is made has a great effect on its accuracy)
3. What manuscripts, or texts, did the translators use as their basis of translation?
4. What was the translators’ reason for making this translation? (The reasons behind a translation are also important to consider. You can find out whether the translation was made because a particular teaching is favored. You can find out who the intended readers are, for example, the deaf, the young, a certain age group. And, you can find out if it was made by or for a particular religious group. Etc.)

Who will be using the Bible? If for example you are looking for a Bible for children, then you would look for one written in simple English and maybe with illustrations and pictures. If you are looking for a study Bible then you might choose one that is translated more literally. If you are looking for one to use for every day reading a different style may appeal to you. When choosing a version you must ask what it is to be used for. What is best for one reader may not be the best for another.

Paraphrased Bibles. Some Bibles are what we call paraphrased. These Bible are commentaries. The translators do not attempt to make an exact translation; rather they read the original text, decide what they think it says and then word it the way they feel it should be worded to get the message across to the average person. These Bibles do not deserve to be called “translations”, because no translation takes place. They are all paraphrases.

It is not wise to limit yourself to one version, but to several, especially if you want to study the Bible seriously without knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. If a Bible student uses only one version for Bible study there is always the danger on building too much of particular wording found in one version.

Few translations are deliberate distortion of the Biblical message and so we can read most versions with considerable confidence. No translation is PERFECT, but if we will use several versions, so that one serves as a check on the other then the chances of our being misled decrease dramatically than if we rely on only one version of the Bible. If you keep these things in mind when studying and choosing what Bible to use you will have a better understanding of what God says in his word and will not be deceived.

This concludes our study of **How We Got the Bible**. We hope that you have enjoyed learning about the journey the Bible we have today has gone through to get to us. It is an amazing journey and is not over yet! The Bible is not going away and will probably be around for many more centuries to come...

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. **1 Peter 1:24 -25**

This concludes lesson 6. Please answer these questions and submit all answer sheets to your teacher.

1. The first language the New Testament was translated into was:
 - a. Greek
 - b. Aramaic
 - c. Latin
 - d. Coptic
2. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was completed:
 - a. 1384
 - b. 1611
 - c. 1901
 - d. 1501
3. TRUE or FALSE: John Wycliffe completed all of his translation on his own.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. All translations were made from the Latin text until:
 - a. 1501
 - b. 1516
 - c. 1523
 - d. 1560
5. Miles Coverdale based his 1535 translation of the whole Bible on the work of:
 - a. William Tyndale
 - b. Martin Luther
 - c. The Latin Versions
 - d. All of the above
6. Matthew's Version was a translation made by:
 - a. John Rogers
 - b. William Tyndale
 - c. Thomas Matthew
 - d. None of the above
7. The Geneva Bible, which was done in Switzerland, was dedicated to whom?
 - a. King James I
 - b. Queen Elizabeth I
 - c. Prince Edward IV
 - d. King Henry VIII
8. The Douai Bible was translated from which text?
 - a. Erasmus' Greek Text
 - b. An Aramaic Translation
 - c. The Latin Vulgate
 - d. None of the above
9. TRUE or FALSE: The first revision of the KJV was the Revised Standard Version.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. In the RSV, the text of Isaiah comes from which important Biblical discovery?
 - a. The Dead Sea Scrolls
 - b. The John Ryland's Papyrus
 - c. The Oxyrynchus Papyrus
 - d. The Ben Asher Codex
11. *Bible de Jerusalem* is the French counterpart of which translation?
 - a. The New English Bible
 - b. The Good News Bible
 - c. The New International Version
 - d. The Jerusalem Bible
12. The New English Bible was first suggested by which religious organization?
 - a. The Church of England
 - b. The Church of Scotland
 - c. The Catholic Church
 - d. The Greek Orthodox Church
13. An characteristic of the Twentieth Century New Testament is that:
 - a. The translators were not textual experts
 - b. It orders the New Testament in the order in which they were written
 - c. The translators used a text created by Wescott and Hort
 - d. All of the above
14. TRUE or FALSE: The Complete Bible: An American Translation included the apocrypha.
 - a. True
 - b. False
15. The Basic English Bible used how many words from the English Vocabulary?
 - a. 100
 - b. 50
 - c. 525
 - d. 850
16. The Living Bible, published in 1971, was made for what purpose?
 - a. Family reading
 - b. Sermon preparation
 - c. The deaf community
 - d. None of the above
17. How many of the world's languages has the New Testament been translated into?
 - a. 6,900
 - b. 1,300
 - c. 1,185
 - d. 451

18. One of the reasons for the different versions has to do with the differences in:
- The translation texts
 - Language structure
 - Cultural Context
 - All of the above
19. The end of which gospel is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts?
- Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
20. *Transliteration* means:
- To give the meaning of a word in another language
 - To put words in italics
 - To write a word in the alphabet of another language
 - None of the above
21. The English language is constantly:
- changing
 - growing
 - moving
 - None of the above
22. TRUE or FALSE: A translator, or translation team, must decide on some basic principles of translating before they can make a translation.
- True
 - False
23. You can find information on the text and translation principles of a translation in the:
- appendix
 - preface
 - introduction
 - None of the above
24. A paraphrase is:
- a commentary
 - mostly the opinions of the “translators”
 - not really a translation
 - All of the above
25. TRUE or FALSE: It is best to choose one translation to use instead of many.
- True
 - False

Partial List of English Translations of the Bible

American Standard Version. Modern English	1901. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?
American King James Version. Modern English	1999. Revision of the King James Version.
Amplified Bible. Modern English	1965. Revision of the American Standard Version.
An American Translation by J.M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed. Modern English	1935. From the Masoretic Text and various Greek texts.
An American Translation by William F. Beck. Modern English	1976. From the Masoretic Text and various Greek texts.
Analytical-Literal Translation. Modern English.	From the original Hebrew and Aramaic and the Majority Text.
ArtScroll Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English	1996. From the Masoretic Text.
Berkeley Version in Modern English	1958. Translated Afresh From the Original Languages and Diligently Compared With Previous Translations
Bible in Basic English. Basic Modern English	1949. Paraphrase of the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
The Bible in Living English. Modern English	1972. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
Bishops' Bible. Early Modern English	1568. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?
Children's King James Version. Modern English.	Revision of the King James Version.
Christian Community Bible English version. Modern English	1986. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
Clear Word Bible. Modern English	1994. Adopted by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in March of 2007 as their "official study bible"
Complete Jewish Bible. Modern English	1998. Paraphrase of the Jewish Publication Society of America Version (Old Testament) and from the original Greek (New Testament).

Contemporary English Version. Modern English	1995. Paraphrase translation from Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
A Conservative Version. Modern English	2005. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek
Darby Bible. Modern English	1890. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?
Douay-Rheims Bible. Early Modern English	1609. From the Vulgate.
Douay-Rheims Bible (Challoner Revision). Modern English	1752. From the Vulgate.
Easy English Bible. Basic Modern English	2001. Paraphrase of the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
Easy-to-Read Version. Basic Modern English	1989. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
English Jubilee 2000 Bible. Modern English.	1602 From the Valera Edition.
English Standard Version. Modern English	2001. From the Masoretic Text and a critical Greek New Testament text.
Ferrar Fenton Bible. Modern English	1853. From the Masoretic Text and the Westcott and Hort Greek text
Geneva Bible. Early Modern English	1560. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus.
God's Word. Modern English	1995. Paraphrase translation from Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
Good News Translation. Modern English	1976. Paraphrase translation from Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
Great Bible. Early Modern English	1539. From the Masoretic Text the Textus Receptus the Vulgate and the Luther Bible.
Green's Literal Translation. Modern English.	From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
Holman Christian Standard Bible. Modern English	2004. From a critical version of the Masoretic Text and the Nestle-Aland Text.
Jerusalem Bible Modern English	1966. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek with influence from the French <i>La Bible de Jérusalem</i>

Jewish Publication Society of America Version. Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English	1917. From the Masoretic Text.
Judaica Press Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English	1963. From the Masoretic Text.
Julia E. Smith Parker Translation. Modern English	1876. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?
King James 2000 Version. Modern English	2000. Revision of the King James Version.
King James Version. Early Modern English	1611. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus.
Knox's Translation of the Vulgate. Modern English	1955. From the Vulgate with influence from the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek
Lamsa Bible. Modern English	1933. From the Peshitta.
Leeser Bible. Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English	1994. From the Masoretic Text.
The Living Bible. Modern English	1971. Paraphrase of the American Standard Version.
The Living Torah and The Living Nach. Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English	1994. From the Masoretic Text.
The Message. Modern English	2002. Paraphrase of the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek
Matthew Bible. Early Modern English	1537. From the Masoretic Text the Textus Receptus the Vulgate the Luther Bible and a French version.
Modern King James Version. Modern English	1999.
Modern Language Bible. The New Berkeley Version in Modern English	1969. A Completely New Translation From the Original Languages.
Moffatt, New Translation. Modern English	1926. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.

<p>James Murdock's Translation of the Syriac Peshitta. Modern English.</p>	<p>From the Peshitta.</p>
<p>New American Bible. Modern English</p>	<p>1970. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.</p>
<p>New American Standard Bible. Modern English</p>	<p>1971. From a critical version of the Masoretic Text and the Nestle-Aland Text.</p>
<p>New Century Version. Basic Modern English</p>	<p>1991. Paraphrase of the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?</p>
<p>New English Bible. Modern English</p>	<p>1970. From critical versions of the Masoretic Text and the Greek New Testament.</p>
<p>New English Translation (NET Bible). Modern English</p>	<p>2005. From critical versions of the Masoretic Text and the Greek New Testament.</p>
<p>New International Reader's Version. Modern English</p>	<p>1998. Paraphrase of the New International Version.</p>
<p>New International Version Inclusive Language Edition (NIVI). Modern English</p>	<p>1996. Revision of the New International Version.</p>
<p>New International Version. Modern English</p>	<p>1978. From critical versions of the Masoretic Text and the Greek New Testament.</p>
<p>New Jerusalem Bible. Modern English</p>	<p>1985. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek with influence from the French <i>La Bible de Jérusalem</i>.</p>
<p>New Jewish Publication Society of America Version. Tanakh (Old Testament). Modern English</p>	<p>1985. From the Masoretic Text.</p>
<p>New King James Version. Modern English</p>	<p>1982. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus.</p>
<p>New Life Version. Modern English</p>	<p>1986. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?</p>
<p>New Living Translation. Modern English</p>	<p>1996. Paraphrase translation from Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.</p>

New Revised Standard Version. Modern English	1989. Revision of the Revised Standard Version.
New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures. Modern English	1950. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek.
Quaker Bible. Modern English	1764. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?
Recovery Version of the Bible. Modern English	1985. Revision of the American Standard Version.
Restored Name King James Version. Modern English.	
Revised Version. Modern English	1885. Revision of the King James Version but with a critical New Testament text.
Revised Standard Version. Modern English	1952. From a critical version of the Masoretic Text and the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament.
Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. Modern English	1966. Revision of the Revised Standard Version.
Revised English Bible. Modern English	1987. Revision of the New English Bible.
Rotherham's Emphasized Bible	1902. A literal word-by-word translation with added emphasis to further explain the hidden riches of the original languages.
Simplified English Bible. Basic Modern English.	Paraphrase of the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
The Story Bible. Modern English.	From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
Taverner's Bible. Early Modern English	1539. Minor revision of the Matthew Bible.
Thomson's Translation. Modern English	1808. From the Septuagint and the Textus Receptus.
Today's New International Version. Modern English	2005. Revision of the New International Version.

Third Millennium Bible. Early Modern English	1998. Revision of the King James Version.
Tyndale Bible. Early Modern English	1526. From either the Vulgate or from the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus.
Updated King James Version. Modern English	2004.
A Voice in the Wilderness Holy Scriptures. Modern English	2003. From the original Hebrew Aramaic and Greek?
Webster's Revision. Modern English	1833. Revision of the King James Version.
Westminster Bible. Modern English	1936. From the Vulgate.
Wycliffe's Bible. Middle English	c. 1380. From the Vulgate.
Young's Literal Translation. Modern English	1862. From the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus?

List of Major Bible Translations According To Type

Bible Translation Type: **LITERAL** (word-for-word)

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
KJV AV	King James Version (also known as Authorized Version)	1611
YLT	Young's Literal Translation	1862 (Revised 1887, 1898)
ASV	American Standard Version	1901
NASB	New American Standard Bible	1971 (NT - 1963; Revised 1996)
MLB NBV	Modern Language Bible also known as New Berkley Version	1959 (NT - 1945; NT revised 1969)
RSV	Revised Standard Version	1952
BBE	Bible in Basic English	1965
NKJV	New King James Version	1982
KJ21	Twenty-First Century King James Version	1994 (NT - 1992)

Bible Translation Type: **DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE** (thought-for-thought)

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
JPB	J.B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English	1958 (Revised 1972)
GNB TEV	Good News Bible also known as Today's English Version	1974 (NT - 1966; Revised 1993)
NIV	New International Version	1978 (NT - 1973)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version	1990
ICB NCV	International Children's Bible New Century Version	1986 (NT - 1978)
CEV	Contemporary English Version	1995 (NT - 1991)
NIRV	New International Reader's Version	1996
NLT	New Living Translation	1996

Bible Translation Type: **PARAPHRASE**

Acronym	Name	Publication Date
MOF	Moffatt's New Translation	1924 (NT - 1920)
CPV	Cotton Patch Version	1970
LIV	The Living Bible	1971 (NT - 1962)
NLIV	New Living Bible	1996
MES	The Message	1995